

# Montessori method

Profession, Teacher



The Montessori Method is a teaching or rather an educational method that was originally conceptualized by Maria Montessori. It involves the education of a child with the view that education should be centered on the self.

Education in the Montessori Method involves a flexible teaching style that allows the child to learn at his or her own pace and level. This means that the child is in charge of the direction of his or her education and the teacher acts as a natural observer and guide to the development.

Montessori classrooms are comfortable and welcoming. They engender an atmosphere of warmth and readiness to learn. The students in a Montessori classroom are not only subjects to an educational method that is unorthodox but are also the members of a culture that is hard to understand for outsiders who haven't experienced the same educational method. One of the most essential factors of Montessorian education is the culture it fosters and also the numerous personal, social, and behavioral rituals form the body of this culture. (Cossentino, 2005)

Although all schools are ritualistic in nature, as evidenced by curricula and the like, the rituals in Montessori schools are stressed because of the severity of the levels of their rituals. Rituals such as a student placing a hand on the teacher's shoulder to gain attention are examples of how such acts in Montessori schools go beyond just rituals of behavior but rather rituals involving training of a specific culture, in this case a culture that involves patience and actively seeking out help. (Cossentino, 2005)

The main thrust of the Montessori method involves the individual assessment of what aspects of education the child is having problems with.

This will be derived from an observation of the child. After assessing the areas the child has difficulty with, the teacher will then guide him or her through a lesson slowly and with much patience. Teaching is individualized. But teaching is simultaneous in a classroom.

A teacher might, for example, guide a student through a difficulty and then have him or her continue practicing on his or her own at which point the teacher will move on to another student. It should be noted here that a teacher is simply a guide in the Montessori method. The teacher guides through the environment and through an interaction that is unnatural to traditional educational methods. Students learn through interacting with the environment the teacher prepared and sometimes through direct questioning of the teacher. (Cossentino, 2005)

The Montessori method, although unorthodox, is effective in aiding the child in his or her development. There is a need for non-Montessorians to understand that there are many lessons to be learned from the methods of a Montessori classroom. Teaching expertise in any educational form must take into consideration the culture it exists in. (Cossentino, 2005) There should be a conscious effort to acknowledge the importance of ritualizing interactions. It is with the use of these rituals that teachers may be able to more effectively teach and guide students. Rituals can serve more than just the purpose of delineating acceptable behavior but can also be used as a means of teaching principles and values that go beyond the lessons at hand.

Analyzing the Montessori method, one understands the importance of understanding the reasons behind the lessons being taught. When one is

able to identify the goal of the lesson, new avenues of teaching can be explored and more culturally-appropriate methods can be applied, methods that are more easily applicable to the individual students culture and life. Teaching is not just about giving a lesson. It is not just about speaking in front of a classroom and delivering a set of information. Teaching has goals and reasons. As such, Cossentino (2005) emphasizes the need to monitor teaching practices closely and to enhance these to better serve the purposes of education.

#### Reference

Cossentino, J. (2005). Ritualizing expertise: a non-Montessorian view of the Montessori method.