

How montessori environmet differs than traditional setup



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Montessori environment differs from traditional education in many ways. Only a few of them are discussed below: In a Montessori environment the support is given to the natural development of the human being. The emphasis is on cognitive (the emergence of the ability to think and understand) and social development. Whereas in a traditional classroom, prescribed or arranged blocks of knowledge are transmitted into the child. The areas to focus on are rote (memorization technique based on repetition) knowledge.

It is as if the information is poured into the brain of a child without much understanding of the process. In Montessori setup the child is not just there in the classroom to listen and receive whatever the teacher is "lecturing" him about (without even understanding a word). But he is there to think and ponder upon the work that is presented to him. Why and how the child arrives at what he knows is just as important as what he knows. In a Montessori classroom, the independent activity is 80 % of the work, and the teacher directed activity accounts for the remaining 20 %.

The reverse is true for the traditional setup. When the child is in a Montessori class, he has shown the activity once (if needed it can be presented again) and then it is up to him to choose from variety of activities that he was shown earlier. The child is allowed to choose his work, take it to his work space and repeat it as much as he wants. This whole process calls for independence. In a traditional classroom, the teacher is the one who decides what the child has to learn, also the pace of the learning process as well as how the learning will take place.

The teacher is in control of the whole scenario so most of the activity takes place through her. Self corrected materials are used in a Montessori
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environment. A child relies on impersonal judgement that comes from his senses. Each material is prepared with control of error. Whereas an external force, means a teacher, is the one who corrects in a traditional way of learning. By using the self corrected materials the child acquires independence. If he makes a mistake, he can correct himself without any help from an adult. In a traditional classroom, the child always depends on the teacher to correct his mistakes and to tell him if he has done his work correctly or not. This way the child looks for appraisal and always asks for teacher's approval. The child does not do his work for his own inner satisfaction but he is always looking for outward reward or punishment. The Montessori way of learning puts emphasis on (self) discipline and freedom (within bounds). On the other hand, the point of view in a traditional setting is that children are inherently disorderly and that their willfulness and impulses must be inhibited by an external discipline.

Montessori educators believe that children cannot develop a sense of inner discipline if all of the control comes from the outside. In a Montessori classroom, the child is free to choose his work (freedom of choice) but at the same time, he can only choose out of those activities that are already presented to him (freedom within bounds). He is free to do any work he wants or wishes to do but he has to follow an order in which the work was presented to him by the directress. In a Montessori environment the teacher's role is that of a facilitator and guide while the role of the child is an active one.

In a traditional classroom, the teacher plays a very dominant role in the classroom while the child is passive. The teacher, in a Montessori classroom,

is mostly in the background. She just steps in when she feels that there is a need. She does not teach, in fact she directs and makes learning smooth and enjoyable, as compared to the traditional setup where the teacher mostly talks and the child just listens. Mix age group is one of the most important aspects of a Montessori environment. Same age group is the norm of a traditional education. Mix age group in the Montessori classroom helps the teacher as well as the students.

The elder children act as role models, direct the younger ones, and feel the sense of responsibility whereas the younger children look at the older ones with fascination. This sort of collaboration can be a helping hand for the teacher. The environment, in a Montessori classroom, is tailored according to the child. On the other hand, in a traditional classroom, the child has to adapt according to the environment. One of the main purposes of the Montessori education is to make the child independent and this can only be achieved if we cater to the needs of the child.

Montessori classroom belongs to the child and that's why the whole setup is child sized. The child in the Montessori environment is the center of everything. Montessori environment emphasizes that learning should be done through all five senses. Whereas, in a traditional setup, learning takes place mostly through listening, reading and watching. In a Montessori classroom hands on activities are used so that the child can use his senses to absorb the information (this way the information that is absorbed is long lasting) as compared to the traditional set up where the child sits passively, and listens to the teacher.