Montessori

In a



Nutshell

The main concept of Montessori education is to promote the joy of learning in a stimulating, child-oriented environment.

A Montessori classroom is set up very differently from traditional classrooms. You will see:

* Room on the floor for students to roll out rugs and work alone or in small groups. This is because rather than having one lesson led by a teacher that everyone does at the same time, students choose materials to work with. When they are done, they put back the material and choose another.
* Students concentrating closely on their task. Montessori classrooms tend to have a calm, focused hum. To quote Maria Montessori, “The greatest sign of success for a teacher... is to be able to say, 'The children are now working as if I did not exist.'”
* Shelves that house the various materials students work with. There are six areas in a Montessori classroom:
  + Practical life materials teach self-reliance and independence. For young students, this helps improve hand strength and fine motor coordination, which are skills needed for writing.
  + Sensory materials develop students’ cognitive powers through direct experiences of hearing, tasting, smelling touching and movement.
  + Math materials use tangible objects to sequentially build toward abstract math concepts, from place value to trinomial equations. In the elementary class, this includes a section on geometry.
  + Language arts materials (sometimes supplemented with additional reading supports) also use concrete objects to teach abstract ideas like grammar.
  + Science materials introduce botany, zoology, geology, and astronomy from an early age. Students are encouraged to follow their sense of curiosity and wonder by carefully observing and experimenting.
  + Culture and Geography materials, including puzzle maps, flags, and resources on people around the world help students see themselves as part of a larger human society.

The Montessori environment is a prepared classroom with materials that meet the student’s needs and interests, academic levels and developmental needs. The materials are introduced and demonstrated in a sequential manner laying the foundation for independent learning, fostering freedom within limits. In a public Montessori elementary program, students learn the same content as any other public school student, but the manner in which they learn it is different. The heart of the Montessori Method is the concept that mastery of a material is best achieved through exploration, imitation, repetition and trial and error.