

A Comparison of Montessori and Traditional Education

From: *The Essential Montessori* by Elizabeth G. Hainstock

Montessori

- three-year age span
- motivated by self-development
- ungraded
- self-correcting materials
- learning by handling objects and teaching themselves
- individual learning
- teacher is observer and directress
- child completes “cycles of activity”
- few interruptions
- freedom to move and work within classroom
- emphasis on more cognitive learning

- quiet by choice and out of regard for others
- materials used for specific purpose, sequence of steps
- work for joy of working and sense of discovery
- environment provides discipline
- encouraged to help one another
- child chooses materials
- child sets own pace
- child free to discover on own
- emphasis on concrete reality-orientated
- specific places for materials, sense of order

- child provides own stimulus for learning
- child-centered learning environment
- self-education through self-correcting materials
- recognition of sensitive periods
- multisensory materials to develop specific skills

Traditional

- all one age
- teacher-motivated
- graded
- teacher corrects errors
- teacher lectures

- group learning
- teacher is focal point and dominant influence
- activity cycles determined by set time
- frequent interruptions
- assigned seats and specific class periods
- postponement of 3 R's, emphasis on social development
- quiet enforced
- materials used in many ways without previous instruction
- work because they're told to
- teacher provides discipline
- seek help from the teacher
- teacher sets curriculum
- teacher sets pace
- teacher guides child
- emphasis on abstract, much role-playing and fantasy
- random placement, not necessary to return to a specific place
- teacher provides
- teacher-centered
- use of reward and punishment in motivation
- all children treated alike
- play materials for nonspecific skills

