

# #11802

## MARIA MONTESSORI: HER LIFE AND LEGACY

DAVIDSON FILMS, 2004

Grade Level: 12-13+

35 Minutes



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# LEARNING GUIDES

## MARIA MONTESSORI: HER LIFE AND LEGACY

with Annette Haines, Ed.D.

[Approximately 35 minutes]

*"We discovered that education is not something which the teacher does, but that it is a natural process which develops spontaneously in the human being. It is not acquired by listening to words but of experiences in which child acts on his environment."* -- Maria Montessori

### Introduction

- Training session for people preparing to be Montessori teachers.

### Montessori's Background

- Born in 1870 in Italy
- First woman in Italy to graduate from medical school
- Spoke out for women's rights at an international congress
- Worked with the mentally retarded

### Educational Principles / Children's House

- Founded the Casa dei Bambini in Rome in 1909
- Gained immediate acclaim

### **Three elements of education**

- Learner
- Child constructs knowledge
- Two streams of energy in a child
- Physical energy
- Mental energy

### **“Normalization”**

Uniting these energies occurs when child becomes absorbed in work and concentrates

- Prepared environment
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Child can work independently
- Three year age span in classes
- Activities are carefully designed with specialized materials
  
- **“Sensorial”** activities help the child organize and refine sensory impressions (ie: the pink tower, color tablets)
- **“Practical life”** activities are designed to help the children gain self confidence in their abilities to take care of themselves. Also to understand the sequence of an activity from beginning to end (ie: hanging sweat shirt, washing cloths)
- **“Mathematics”** starts with concrete representations and moves to the abstract. Children in Montessori classrooms are introduced to math earlier than in other traditions.
- **“Language”** Children begin by learning the sound and shape of letters and then move on to constructing words. Reading comes later.

- **"Fine Arts"** art and music
- **"Grace and Courtesy"** Montessori children are helped to develop self-discipline through their experience of the classroom balance of freedom and discipline

Children learn to move around classroom and work together

Children learn to take care of the materials

### **Trained adult**

- Montessori teacher seems less active than traditional teachers
- Is responsible for caring for the environment
- Gives lessons on the use of the equipment and concepts

#### **Three period lesson"**

Naming "This is a \_\_\_\_\_"

Recognition "Show me the \_\_\_\_"

Remembering "What is this?"

- All lessons require the child to be actively engaged

### **Expanding the Range**

- *The Montessori Method*, 1909
- Training is through an oral tradition
- Visits to the United States
- Had a demonstration class at the Panama Pacific Exposition of 1915
- Erik Erikson and Jean Piaget were trained in Montessori methods
- Gandhi invited her to set up schools in India
- While in India consolidated her ideas of human development

Each stage is different and education should reflect these differences:

**Ages 0-6 Absorbent Mind**

Child learns effortlessly

0-3 child absorbs impressions

3-6 child organizes impressions, learning is no longer unconscious

**Ages 6-12 Time for acquisition of culture and symbolic thinking**

Child is more social

Teachers are more active

**Ages 12-18 Time of transformation**

Young person should be doing real work

- Brain scans confirm that the neural growth Montessori projected does occur

**Montessori's Legacy**

- Montessori died in 1952

Educational principles that are accepted by many:

- Critical importance of first six years of life
  - Classroom environment is child oriented
  - Multi-aged groupings and blocks of free time
  - Construction of knowledge
- 
- Montessori's faith in the power of intrinsic motivation

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