

Montessori vs. Traditional Education

The goals of both Montessori Education and Traditional schooling are one and the same: they both seek to educate children. The method in which this education occurs, and the learning cycles are very different in both school systems. Montessori fundamentally believes that the education of the whole child is crucial in the development of citizens of our future world.

Montessori	Traditional
Emphasis on cognitive, social and physical development on an individual level	Emphasis on Rote Learning, with cognitive social and physical development addressed as a whole group
Child is taken from current ability to develop to his fullest potential	Empty Vessel Model—assumes that children come in without prior knowledge
Teacher has a guiding role: assists child in auto-learning	Teacher controls classroom and is the central figure of the environment
Environment assists children in developing social responsibility and self-discipline and problem solving abilities	Teacher is the primary enforcer of discipline and central to problem solving
Mainly individual/small group instruction	Mainly whole group instruction
Mixed age groups	Uniform age in the class
Grouping encourages children to collaborate, teach and reinforce knowledge	Teaching is done by the teacher only, collaboration is discouraged
Child chooses work with guidance from the teacher	The curriculum is decided for the child
Child discovers learning through self-corrective materials and exploration	Child is directed to concepts by the teacher
Child is given time to complete lessons/work	Child is allotted specified time for work
Motivation is fostered by a learning pace based on the interests and ability of the child	The mid-line students dictate the pace of work
Child reinforces learning by repetition of work	Learning is reinforced externally based on rewards and punishment
Child can choose where he works but must respect others work needs	Child is usually assigned a seat or placed in a designated group by the teacher
Multi-sensory materials for physical exploration encourages learning care of self, the environment and the global community at large	No organized program for learning care of self, the environment or the global community—this is left primarily to the parents
A non-competitive environment with assessment focused on learning/ discovery process	Competitive environment with report cards focused on product
Hands-on approach to learning with materials designed for specific purposes/learning goals	Focus on verbal instruction with an emphasis on rote learning
Emphasis on building a strong sense of community through meaningful social interactions	Designated social interaction time such as recess