



Educational Technology

Elixir Edu. Tech. 47 (2012) 8639-8642

Elixir
ISSN: 2229-712X

Application of montessori method at pre school level

Fauzia Khurshid and Wajeeha Aurangzeb

Department of Education, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received: 7 April 2012;

Received in revised form:

15 May 2012;

Accepted: 28 May 2012;

Keywords

Application,
Montessori method,
Pre school level.

ABSTRACT

The study was designed to explore the different aspects of application of Montessori Method at pre –primary. Population of the study was comprised of parents and teachers of Montessori level students and purposive sample of 30 teachers and 30 parents from SLS Montessori & School, was collected to meet the research objectives such as to assess the effectiveness of prepared environment, to determine teachers' and parents' role in its implementation, to explore the effect of full diploma and short courses in application of this method and to search out about its application along with traditional method of education. The results of this study gave a clear picture of the need and proper implementation of Montessori Method. It has shown that the positive impact on the overall development of a child is obviously attainable through a prepared environment. The teacher also gains individual refinement through this method as she gets inner satisfaction when her students have met their objectives. The importance of parents' role has also been emphasized for pursuing this method in home environment also. This study would give a newer dimension towards the implication of Montessori Method along with traditional education.

© 2012 Elixir All rights reserved.

Introduction

Montessori Method of education was given by Dr. Maria Montessori (1870-1952). She based her teaching on observation and experimentation upon children of poor families and having special needs, even the intellectually deficit ones. She used different teaching equipment in order to satisfy children's learning needs. She always referred her teaching methodology as a scientific pedagogy as it was a step by step approach focusing upon control of error before the child moved to next level of difficulty. Montessori Method is based upon the philosophy of freedom, liberty, self direction and auto education. According to its founder, a child grows from within. There are certain human tendencies e.g.; exploration, repetition for correction, abstraction, self perfection and mathematical thinking. A prepared environment, if provided, helps a child to explore the world through his senses as these senses are gateways of knowledge.

This method focuses upon prepared environment which should be set according to the needs of children. They can move freely in this environment and enrich their learning experiences through development of senses. The child of age 0-6 years is considered to be having an absorbent mind and if he is provided freedom, order, beauty, harmony in addition to special Montessori material, he learns according to his mental level and needs and become a free, independent, creative thinker in the upcoming years of his life.

This method is based upon teaching through didactic material. This material is instructive and engages the mind of children to move towards auto education and self correction. It includes sensorial apparatus, mathematical as well as language material. Some apparatus related to culture is also a part of didactic material. Another important aspect of teaching through this method is EPL (*exercises of practical life*). These exercises help children towards their self care, grooming and becoming good citizens with all the grace and courtesy. In this method, a

child directs his own learning in a prepared environment and continues till the mastery of a specific skill or subject is attained by him / her. The prepared environment in this teaching method has warmth, attractiveness, freedom, liberty, order and closeness to nature. The teacher is the directress who guides the child towards the achievement of objectives which are set by the child himself. The activities are decided by the child but the Montessori curriculum includes exercises of practical life, sensorial material, arithmetic, language, cultural apparatus and art and craft. This approach holds the philosophy of development of a child in a well -designed environment and follows the principles of respect for the individual differences, age 0 -6 years as absorbent age, sensitive periods which are characterized by various stages of development, the prepared environment and self- education or auto learning (G.S. Morrison, 2009).

Montessori training is being conducted at various institutions throughout Pakistan. Notable among them are Mujahida academy, Agha Khan Early Childhood Development Programmes and Pakistan Montessori Council. The latter two are serving to different geographic regions specially Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, Karachi, Sialkot and Gilgit. A certified Montessori diploma is of one year duration however short courses ranging from 2 weeks to 6 months are also conducted. The teachers getting this diploma are mostly serving in private sector as there are almost no job outlets for Montessori trained teachers in public sector. Early childhood education has been emphasized over time in public sector but till now there is not much doing in this regard in this sector. Private sector is pursuing this ECCE concept willingly and wholesomely and before class one, at least 3 year stage of ECCE is being followed from year 2.5/3 to 5.5/6 years. It is an admitted fact that students having strong foundations at preprimary level, do better academically in higher classes.

As Maria gave the concept of 'absorbent mind' from age 0-6 years, so the parents' role starts at the birth of the child. Normally a child is admitted in school at the age of 2.5/3 years and the previous years which hold an importance is ignored. Parents have to provide an environment fully loaded with sensory experiences to the child because first 3 years of the life of a child are spent at home. This method can very easily be adopted and implemented at home on daily basis. Schools can guide the parents effectively how to successfully prepare the required environment for the child. Children flourish in a better way if there is complete harmony in the environment of home as well as school as the educational aims and values come in line with each other in both environments. Parents are advised never to do anything for the children that they can do by themselves. Children must not be dependent upon their elders but must be moved towards independence and freedom by making them do the work and activity by themselves. Parents are the most important role models in the life of children. If their values match the expectations of the school, then children develops fully without having any confusion in their mind. For this purpose, parents are required to have frequent meeting with teachers and management so as to get advice from teachers and management upon how to develop the same environment at home also.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of the study was to investigate the application of Montessori Method at pre-school level in private sector schools.

Objectives of the Study

- ❖ To assess the prepared environment for child development.
- ❖ To determine the role and satisfaction of teachers and parents in Montessori Education.
- ❖ To assess the effectiveness of Montessori material.
- ❖ To explore impact of variation in duration of Montessori diploma in effective application of this method.
- ❖ To search out the difficulties in implementing this system in all educational institutions.

Research Questions

- ❖ Does Montessori Method help in overall development of a child?
- ❖ What is the importance of prepared environment in this method?
- ❖ How does the Montessori equipment help in developing students' skills?
- ❖ Can this method be merged in our traditional education easily?

Population and Sample

The population of the study consisted of all the pre-primary branches (10 branches) of SLS Montessori & School in Rawalpindi Region. Only SLS Montessori & School, Harley Street Branch was taken as sample of the study. 30 teacher and 30 parents from that branch were selected as sample for data collection.

Research Instruments

In this study two separate instruments were used, questionnaire containing 19 items was used to get information from teachers and questionnaire containing 9 items was used to get information from the parents of Montessori students.

Data Collection

The data was collected through questionnaires from respondents by the personal visit of the researchers. After data collection it was analyzed using SPSS Descriptive Statistics.

Data analysis of teachers Responses on Questionnaire:

1. Do you get full cooperation of management in implementing Montessori teaching style?
90 % responses were yes, 3.3% were undecided and 6.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
2. Do you agree with Montessori philosophy?
70 % responses were yes, 23.3% were undecided and 6.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
3. Do you agree that traditional education should be infused with Montessori Method?
70 % responses were yes, 26.7% were undecided and 3.3% were in the form of no for this statement.
4. Is Montessori Material easily available to you?
76.7 % responses were yes, 3.3% were undecided and 20.0% were in the form of no for this statement.
5. Do you have children with special needs in your class?
10.0 % responses were yes, 26.7% were undecided and 63.3% were in the form of no for this statement.
6. Fee structure of your institution is equivalent to that of a traditional school?
6.7 % responses were yes, 36.7% were undecided and 16.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
7. Do you take help of other teachers / parents to get new students settled in the class?
53.3 % responses were yes, 20.0% were undecided and 26.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
8. Do you use text books also in this methodology?
96.7 % responses were yes, 3.3% were undecided for this statement.
9. Are there any non-Montessori trained teachers working here?
16.7 % responses were yes, 43.3% were undecided and 40.0% were in the form of no for this statement.
10. Pre –service Montessori training is necessary for teaching through this method? 100% respondents agreed to this statement.
11. Are the observations related to development of students regularly noted by you?
73.3 % responses were yes, 23.3% were undecided and 3.3% were in the form of no for this statement.
12. Do you have knowledge about different learning styles and multiple intelligences?
56.7 % responses were yes, 13.3% were undecided and 30.0% were in the form of no for this statement.
13. Do you follow direct instruction for your students?
43.3 % responses were yes, 30.3% were undecided and 26.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
14. Do you feel satisfied when your students have accomplished the given tasks to the fullest?
70.0 % responses were yes, 30.0% were undecided for this statement.
15. Do you tell parents to provide a prepared environment to their child at home as well?
53.3 % responses were yes, 20.0% were undecided and 26.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
16. Do parents cooperate with you in implementing this methodology?
70.0 % responses were yes, 13.3% were undecided and 16.7% were in the form of no for this statement.
17. Do you shout at students occasionally to maintain discipline in the classroom?

43.3 % responses were yes, 13.3% were undecided and 43.3% were in the form of no for this statement.

18. Do you snub the children when they become too curious?

50.0 % responses were yes, 10.0% were undecided and 40.0% were in the form of no for this statement.

19. Do you refresh your prepared environment on regular basis?

86. % responses were yes, 6. % was undecided and 6. % was in the form of no for this statement.

Data analysis of parents Responses on Questionnaire:

1. Does your child speak positively about his / her teachers and class mates?

78.0 % responses were yes, 6% were undecided and 6% were in the form of no for this statement.

2. Do you think that your child has become creative after joining the school?

80.0 % responses were yes, 10% were undecided and 10% were in the form of no for this statement.

3. Does your child come to school happily in the morning?

56.7% responses were yes, 20% were undecided and 23.3% were in the form of no for this statement.

4. Do you frequently help your child in simple tasks of daily life?

73.3% responses were yes, 10% were undecided and 17.7% were in the form of no for this statement.

5. Do you wait to communicate with your child's teacher?

73.3% responses were yes, 26.7% were undecided for this statement.

6. Are you satisfied by the prepared environment of your child? Is it aesthetically beautiful?

63.3% responses were yes, 20.0% were undecided and 16.7% were in the form of no for this statement.

7. Do you provide your child the similar activities as does the school?

53.3% responses were yes, 26.7% were undecided and 20.0% were in the form of no for this statement.

8. Are you observant of the behavioral changes in your child?

70% responses were yes, 15% were undecided and 15% were in the form of no for this statement.

9. Do you set limits for your child at home?

56.7% responses were yes, 30.0% were undecided and 13.3% were in the form of no for this statement.

Discussion

The study aimed at finding different aspects of application of Montessori Method at pre –primary level in private sector in Rawalpindi region. The study was conducted with the help of 30 teachers and 30 parents from SLS Montessori & School, Harley Street Branch.

Objectives of the study included to assess the effectiveness of prepared environment, to determine teachers' and parents' role in its implementation, to explore the effect of full diploma and short courses in application of this method and to search out about its application along with traditional method of education.

In this study 2 separate questionnaires were used for take the desired information from teachers and parents of Montessori students. The questionnaire for teachers contained 19, whereas the one for parents contained 9 items on 3 point scale.

The study was designed to check the application of Montessori Method at pre –primary level in a private school. The results of the study showed that it is a very practical and efficient methodology for teaching young children. Self correction and auto education makes the children learn through their own errors. Individual learning takes place in an efficient

manner and the needs of individual differences are catered to. Before going towards abstract learning, emphasis is placed upon concrete learning. The teacher becomes directress of learning situation and the children "work with the materials" rather than "play with the toys." This material is easily available to the teachers and is not very expensive, if made locally.

The prepared environment has a life lasting image upon the minds of the young learners and parents can also prepare it very easily with taking guidance from the teachers on a regular basis. Montessori is a learning environment having students of multi – age groups, and this adds to efficient use of resources as well. The children are considered to be natural leaders and they are always delighted in the sense of discovery, so this environment fully satisfies their natural tendencies to grow.

The concept of self discipline prevails in Montessori environment, which goes a long way in the life of a child. The expectations from the child are very concisely stated and are equally taken into account by teachers and students.

Two streams are being followed related to training of Montessori teachers; first is a six months short course whereas the second one is the full diploma course of one year tenure. Teachers holding either one of the training are considered equally efficient to handle this methodology.

But it is an admitted fact that any teacher who has not taken a pre-service training related to this methodology will be incapable to handle it. Parents also play a vital role in this method.

Their regular meetings with the teachers help them to give the same prepared environment to the child at home as well. The benefit of this is that the child is not in a confused state about two different environments; one at home and one at school. He grows fully if both environments are interactive and inter dependant with each other.

Recommendations

In the light of findings and conclusions of the study, following recommendations are made:

1. This system can very easily be infused with our traditional system, thus saving the resources as well to run both streams together.

2. The root causes of children who are not happy to come to school have to be explored. It can be lack of sleep or a disturbing home environment as well.

3. Teachers should be more trained to handle students with multiple intelligences, if a teacher having done short Montessori course is inducted, she should be fully supervised by the experienced staff members till the time she achieves excellence.

4. Curious attitude of the students helps them to explore the world through their senses and this is the essence of this method. If children become too curious, they should not be snubbed but their energies should be diverted towards positive side.

5. Parents must be guided through frequent interactions related to the preparation of a prepared environment for the child at home as well. They must be counseled to set limits for the child so that his growth becomes focused towards the desired objectives of this method.

6. Comparative studies related to Montessori Method and Traditional teaching Methods can be carried out in order to assess statistically the outcomes of both streams. The efficiency of this method can be explored fully and then it can be incorporated in B.Ed., M.Ed. programs so as to simplify its implication along with traditional method of teaching.

References

The Montessori Method; Scientific Pedagogy as applied to child education, Maria Montessori. Translated by Anne E. George
Maria Montessori, a biography; Rita Kramer
Early Childhood Education Today, by G.S. Morrison, 2009 edition, p. 140-143.

<http://www.michaelolaf.com/CWcontents.html>

www.montessori.edu/FAQ.html

www.montessoriconnections.com/aboutmontessoried5.html.