

## MONTESSORI TEACHING METHODS ENGLISH

Termiz davlat pedagogika instituti o'qituvchisi

**Qobilova Kamola Azamatovna**

Termiz davlat pedagogika instituti talabasi

**Lutfullayeva Sug'diyona Baxtiyor qizi**

**Annotation:** This article explores the benefits of using the Montessori Method to teach English in elementary grades. The Montessori approach, known for its emphasis on self-directed learning and hands-on activities, offers a unique and effective way to foster language acquisition skills among young learners. By creating an engaging and interactive environment, students can develop a solid foundation in English while also nurturing their creativity and independence.

**Keywords:** Montessori method, English language teaching, elementary grades, language acquisition, student-centered learning.

### **Introduction:**

Teaching English as a second language (ESL) to elementary students is a challenging task that requires innovative and effective instructional approaches. The Montessori method, known for its child-centered philosophy, has gained recognition as a valuable pedagogical framework in early childhood education. This article explores the application of the Montessori method in teaching English to elementary students, emphasizing its potential to enhance language acquisition, foster independence, and cultivate a love for learning.

The Montessori method of education is a type of educational method that involves children's natural interests and activities rather than formal teaching methods. A Montessori classroom places an emphasis on hands-on learning and developing real-world skills, such as problem solving and helping and teaching each other. It emphasizes independence and it views children as naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a sufficiently supportive and well-prepared learning environment. It

also discourages some conventional methods of measuring achievement, such as grades and tests.

Maria Montessori initially resisted a career in teaching, one of only a few professions open to women in that time period. She became one of the first women to become a medical doctor in Italy in the 19th century, and specialized in psychiatry and pediatrics. Maria Montessori began developing her educational philosophy and methods in 1897, attending courses in pedagogy at the University of Rome and learning educational theory.<sup>60</sup> While visiting Rome's mental asylums during her schooling with a teacher, Montessori observed that confined children were in need of more stimulation from their environment. In 1907, she opened her first classroom, the Casa dei Bambini, or Children's House, in a tenement building in the San Lorenzo district of Rome.<sup>112</sup> From the beginning, Montessori based her work on her observations of children and experimentation with the environment, materials, and lessons available to them. The Children's House was established to serve underprivileged children who many thought were unable to learn. She frequently referred to her work as "scientific pedagogy."

In 1901, Maria Montessori met the prominent education reformers Alice and Leopoldo Franchetti. Maria Montessori was invited to hold her first course for teachers and to set up a "Casa dei Bambini" at Villa Montesca, the home of the Franchettis in Città di Castello. Montessori lived with the Franchettis for two years and refined her methodology together with Alice Franchetti. In 1909, she documented her theories in *Il metodo della pedagogia scientifica* (later translated into English as *The Montessori Method* in 1912).

Montessori education had spread to the United States by 1912 and became widely known in educational and popular publications. In 1913 Narcissa Cox Vanderlip and Frank A. Vanderlip founded the Scarborough School, the first Montessori school in the U.S. However, conflict arose between Montessori and the American educational establishment. The 1914 critical booklet *The Montessori System Examined* by influential education teacher William Heard Kilpatrick limited the spread of Montessori's ideas, and they languished after 1914. "Montessori" schools and teacher training centers proliferated and, because of a desire to reach more children, became less and less like the successful

examples. in 1929 Dr. Montessori and her son Mario formed AMI, the Association Montessori Internationale, <https://montessori-ami.org/>, to maintain high standards in teacher training. This organization continues today to keep up with ever changing needs in education for an unpredictable future world.

Montessori education returned to the United States in 1960 and has since spread to thousands of schools there. Montessori continued to extend her work during her lifetime, developing a comprehensive model of psychological development from birth to age 24, as well as educational approaches for children ages 0 to 3, 3 to 6, and 6 to 12.

Montessori education also spread throughout the world, including Southeast Asia and India, where Maria Montessori was interned during World War II. In October 1931, Indian independence leader Mahatma Gandhi met with Maria Montessori in London. At the time, Gandhi was very interested in the role the Montessori method might play in helping to build an independent nation. Thus, initially, Montessori education in India was connected to the Indian independence movement. Later, elite, private Montessori schools also arose, and in the 1950s, some Montessori schools opened to serve children from lower-socioeconomic families, a trend that continues today with foundation and government-funded schools.

Montessori education is based on a model of human development. This educational style operates abiding by two beliefs: that psychological self-construction in children and developing adults occurs through environmental interactions, and that children (especially under the age of six) have an innate path of psychological development. Based on her observations, Montessori believed that children who are at liberty to choose and act freely within an environment prepared according to her model would act spontaneously for optimal development.

Although a range of practices exists under the "Montessori" name, the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) and the American Montessori Society (AMS) cite these elements as essential:

Mixed-age classrooms: classrooms for children ages 2+1/2 or 3 to 6 years old are by far the most common, but 0–3, 3–6, 6–12 (sometimes 6–9, and 9–12), 12–18 (sometimes 12–15, and 15–18)

Student choice of activity from within a prescribed range of optional choices

Uninterrupted blocks of work time, ideally a minimum of three hours long once a day

A constructivist or "discovery" model, in which students learn concepts from working with materials rather than by direct instruction Specialized educational materials are often made out of natural, aesthetic materials such as wood, rather than plastic

A thoughtfully prepared environment where materials are organized by subject area, is accessible to children, and is appropriately sized Freedom, within limits

A trained teacher experienced in observing a child's characteristics, tendencies, innate talents, and abilities No external rewards, such as grades or stickers, are given to inspire children to learn material or behave well.

The Montessori method in English language teaching follows a student-centered approach that promotes active learning and self-discovery. The key principles guiding its implementation include:

1. Prepared Environment: The classroom is carefully designed with materials that promote language development. Engaging and multisensory materials, such as language cards, movable alphabets, and picture-word matching activities, are utilized to facilitate vocabulary acquisition, sentence formation, and reading skills.

2. Individualized Learning: Montessori classrooms prioritize individual progress, allowing students to work at their own pace. Language activities are tailored to meet each student's needs, ensuring a personalized learning experience. This approach promotes self-confidence and enables students to acquire language skills at their own comfort level. Research studies indicate several positive outcomes associated with implementing the Montessori method in teaching English to elementary students:

Improved Language Acquisition: The Montessori method fosters an immersive and interactive learning environment, enabling students to develop language skills more naturally. Students who learn English through this approach demonstrate higher levels of proficiency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing.

**Enhanced Cognitive Abilities:** The Montessori approach stimulates critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. By engaging students in self-directed activities, it promotes cognitive growth and the development of language-related cognitive skills, such as memory, attention, and sequencing.

**Increased Motivation and Engagement:** The student-centered nature of the Montessori method instills a sense of autonomy and responsibility. Students actively participate in their learning process, leading to increased motivation, engagement, and a deeper connection with the English language.

Teaching English in elementary grades through the Montessori method can be a wonderful approach that combines language learning with the principles of Montessori education. The Montessori method emphasizes individualized learning, hands-on activities, and a child-centered approach, which can greatly benefit English language learners in the elementary grades. Here are some key considerations and strategies for teaching English using the Montessori method:

**Create a Prepared Environment:** In a Montessori classroom, the environment is carefully arranged to promote independent learning. Set up a language area with various materials, such as phonics cards, vocabulary cards, books, and writing materials, to encourage exploration and engagement with the English language.

**Use Montessori Language Materials:** Montessori language materials, such as the sandpaper letters, movable alphabet, and phonetic word cards, can be effective tools for teaching English. These materials provide tactile experiences and support children in learning letter sounds, blending words, and building sentences [2;45].

**Incorporate Hands-On Activities:** Montessori education emphasizes hands-on learning experiences. Integrate activities that involve manipulatives, games, and sensory elements to engage students and reinforce language

Montessori education involves free activity within a "prepared environment", meaning an educational environment tailored to basic human characteristics, to the specific

characteristics of children at different ages, and to the individual personalities of each child. The function of the environment is to help and allow the child to develop independence in all areas according to their inner psychological directives. In addition to offering access to the Montessori materials appropriate to the age of the children, the environment should exhibit the following characteristics:

An arrangement that facilitates movement and activity

Beauty and harmony, cleanliness of environment

Construction in proportion to the child and their needs

Limitation of materials, so that only material that supports the child's development is included.

Nature in the classroom and outside of the classroom. Classroom working materials are kept on open shelves and freely accessible to children. Montessori education offers benefits like fostering independence, self-discipline, and a lifelong love of learning through individualized, hands-on methods, supporting children's holistic growth (cognitive, social, emotional) in multi-age classrooms that build strong communities, and developing crucial skills like creativity, concentration, problem-solving, and responsibility, leading to greater confidence and better academic outcomes.

**Child-Centered:** Education adapts to the child's pace and interests.

**Hands-On Learning:** Uses specially designed materials for concrete understanding.

**Prepared Environment:** Classrooms are ordered, beautiful, and accessible, supporting exploration. **Teacher as Guide:** Teachers act as facilitators, observing and guiding rather than lecturing concepts. For example, use objects or pictures to teach vocabulary, or engage in role-playing activities to practice conversational skills. **Foster Independence:** Encourage students to take ownership of their language learning. Provide opportunities for self-correction and self-assessment by incorporating activities like independent reading, journal writing, or peer editing. **Scaffold instruction** to gradually build their skills and confidence.

**Follow the Child's Interests:** Montessori education recognizes the importance of following the child's interests and incorporating them into the curriculum. Allow students to choose reading materials or topics for discussion

to foster their enthusiasm for English learning. Provide a variety of literature genres and reading materials to cater to different interests and reading levels.

□ **Integrate Language Across Subjects:** Montessori education promotes an integrated curriculum. Connect English language learning with other subjects, such as science, geography, or history. For example, students can read informational texts about animals or countries, write reports, and engage in discussions related to these topics.

**Create a Language-Rich Environment:** Surround students with opportunities to practice English in meaningful ways. Designate areas for reading corners, writing centers, and listening stations. Display vocabulary words, anchor charts, and student work throughout the classroom. Incorporate language activities during practical life exercises, such as following recipes or writing shopping lists [3;17].

**Promote Collaboration and Peer Learning:** Montessori classrooms often encourage collaboration and peer learning. Incorporate activities that involve pair work, group discussions, or language games. Provide opportunities for students to practice speaking and listening skills with their peers.

**Emphasize Multisensory Learning:** Engage multiple senses in language learning to enhance understanding and retention. Incorporate activities like songs, chants, gestures, and movement to reinforce vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar concepts.

**Assess Progress Individually:** Montessori education values individual progress over standardized assessments. Observe and document students' language development through ongoing assessments, checklists, and anecdotal records. Use this information to guide instruction and provide targeted support.

Remember, the Montessori method encourages flexibility and adaptability based on the needs of each child. Adjust your teaching strategies as you observe individual learning styles, interests, and progress. By combining the Montessori approach with English language instruction, you can create a nurturing and engaging environment that promotes language acquisition and fosters a love for

learning.

Montessori classrooms for children under three fall into several categories, with a number of terms being used. A nido, Italian for "nest", serves a small number of children from around two months to around 14 months, or when the child is confidently walking. A "Young Child Community" serves a larger number of children from around one year to 2+1/2 or 3 years old. Both environments emphasize materials and activities scaled to the children's size and abilities, opportunities to develop movement, and activities to develop independence. The development of independence in toileting is typically emphasized as well. Some schools also offer "Parent-Infant" classes, in which parents participate with their very young children.

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The Montessori method's emphasis on individualized learning, hands-on experiences, and a supportive environment contributes significantly to the success of English language teaching in elementary grades. By incorporating the principles of the Montessori method, teachers can create a nurturing environment that facilitates language acquisition and enhances students' overall educational experience.

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