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Research for practitioners, researchers, and community members

MONTESSORI MEMO™

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The Center for Montessori Studies collaborates across the Montessori community, Association Montessori International and American Montessori Society, and values the institutional collaborations with and among KU Center for Montessori Research, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, and Montessori Public Policy Initiative.

RESEARCH: MONTESSORI

Title   The Use of Pedagogical System of Maria Montessori in Ukrainian Education

Citation

Link   http://lssp.dspu.edu.ua/article/viewFile/175703/178933

Summary/Abstract   The article reveals the features of the formation and development of the pedagogical system of M. Montessori, which is relevant in the context of the modern tendency of education in introducing the ideas of child-centrism. The basic philosophical foundations of this pedagogical system are analyzed and its advantages in the process of raising a child in conditions of independent development are determined. The system of preschool education is highlighted as the initial one in the process of educational practice. The requirements for the formation of a special educational space in the process of child development are defined; the features of the methodological foundations in preparing teachers for work with children of preschool and primary school age are highlighted. The conditions of the activity of the school «Smiley», which works on the M. Montessori's system in the city of IvanoFrankivsk, are described. The conditions for improving the activities of children and teachers in order to individualize the educational process, promote the development of children in a nature-friendly environment, and develop their own strategies for cooperation between parents of pupils and teachers are highlighted. The pedagogical level of the M. Montessori's system contributes to the implementation of the theory of child-centrism and meets the conditions of child development in a democratic society, since it treats the problem of interaction between an adult and a child in the process of educational activity as a free

expedient activity of children in specially organized didactic conditions. The methodological level of the M. Montessori's system reveals specific techniques and means of raising and educating children, an experimentally tested methodology for working with a complex of original didactic Montessori materials. Pedagogy of M. Montessori puts the interests of the child at the forefront in the organization of education, providing conditions for individual development. This approach ensures the implementation of the basic humanistic traditions of Ukrainian ethnic pedagogy, where the child is the subject of social development. And the Ukrainian model of the Montessori-school, created over the past decades, confirms the relevance of this system for solving the modern needs of society in raising a free, independent, proactive, civic responsible, intellectually literate person. The article emphasizes the advantages of using the pedagogical technology of M. Montessori in working with children of preschool and primary school age in one educational space, where the child's development system is implemented sequentially on the basis of continuity.

Title   Pretend Play and Fantasy: What if Montessori Was Right?

Citation

Lillard, A. S., & Taggart, J. (2019). Pretend play and fantasy: What if Montessori was right?. *Child Development Perspectives*, *13*(2), 85-90.

Link   https://srcd.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/cdep.12314

Summary/Abstract   Pretend play and fantasy are staples of childhood, supported by adults' provision of encouraging tools (like dress-up clothing and play kitchens) and by media. Decades ago, Maria Montessori developed a system of education based on close observation of children, and she concluded that pretend play and fantasy were not as helpful for children's development as the zeitgeist suggested (and still suggests). In this article, we present her views and relevant evidence, and ask: What if she was right? What if, as a culture, we are putting great effort and faith into activities and contexts for children that we believe help development but that might actually be less helpful than engaging in the real world?

Title   Integrated STEM in Practice: Learning from Montessori Philosophies and Practices

Citation

Livstrom, I. C., Szostkowski, A. H., & Roehrig, G. H. (2019). Integrated STEM in practice: Learning from Montessori philosophies and practices. *School Science and Mathematics*, *119*(4), 190-202.

Link   https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1111/ssm.12331

Summary/Abstract   In theory, STEM (interdisciplinary science, technology, engineering and mathematics) is cross-disciplinary and situated in real-world problem-solving contexts. In practice, STEM disciplines are often implemented separately using contrived contexts. This paper examines theoretical and empirical aspects of Montessori middle school science in the United States, and its alignment with the conceptual framework of integrated STEM. We selected Montessori adolescent environments because the Montessori philosophy involves interdisciplinary application contextualized in purposeful work and learning. Our research sought to investigate how Montessori middle schools have designed their science programs, and to situate these findings within the current landscape of STEM education and reform-based science. Based on the results of our survey of 96 U.S.

Montessori middle schools, we argue Montessori offers an integrated educational approach that meaningfully situates academic disciplines to mirror local and global challenges, well supported by theory and literature on STEM and situated learning theories. We assert that integrated STEM happens organically in many Montessori middle schools, and takes place through authentic work in communities of practice. Our research communicates the value of looking outside traditional school settings to examine alternative formal education spaces, like Montessori classrooms where integrated STEM happens organically.

RESEARCH: RELATED

Title   How Peace Education Motivates Youth Peacebuilding: Examples from Pakistan

Citation

Cromwell, A. (2019). How peace education motivates youth peacebuilding: Examples from Pakistan. *International Journal of Educational Development*, *66*, 62-69.

Link   https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0738059318305388

Summary/Abstract   This article examines the impact of four peace education programs involving Pakistani youth to illuminate peace education's role in peacebuilding efforts in conflict contexts. It argues that alumni tried to replicate their individual transformations as stimulated by these peace education programs. They did so through community-level projects modelled after the same program processes that had transformed them. Impact on peacebuilding was supported by peace education programs combining different theories of change, focusing on follow-on projects, and providing support structures for alumni. Because alumni modelled their projects after their program experiences, programs should be more transparent in order to maximize impact.

Title   Anthropomorphic Media Exposure and Preschoolers' Anthropomorphic Thinking in China

Citation

Li, H., Eisen, S., & Lillard, A. S. (2019). Anthropomorphic media exposure and preschoolers' anthropomorphic thinking in China. *Journal of Children and Media*, *13*(2), 149-162.

Link   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17482798.2019.1570960

Summary/Abstract   Children's media is replete with human-like portrayals of animals and objects that wear clothing, speak, drive cars, and experience human emotions. Recent research has shown that anthropomorphic portrayals of animals in books lead children to think anthropomorphically about real animals. Here we asked whether this is also the case for an inanimate object. Specifically, does exposure to an anthropomorphized train, as compared to a real train, increase children's tendency to make anthropomorphic attributions to real trains? We also investigated whether this effect with books extends to another common medium of presentation: video. Chinese preschoolers (*n* = 258) ages 4–6 were randomly assigned to watch a video or listen to a book about either a real or an anthropomorphized train. Before and after this exposure, children completed a modified Anthropomorphism Questionnaire–Child Form (IDAQ-CF), which included questions about trains.

Children who were exposed to the anthropomorphic book significantly increased in their tendency to view real trains as having human-like qualities, as compared to control children who had no exposure. Video exposure had no effect on the anthropomorphism of trains.

Title   The Worldview Spread of Peace Education: Discursive Patterns in Publications and International Organisations

Citation

Pineda, P., Celis, J., & Rangel, L. (2019). The worldwide spread of peace education: discursive patterns in publications and international organisations. *Globalisation, Societies and Education*, 1-20.

Link   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/14767724.2019.1665988?journalCode=cgse20

Summary/Abstract   To investigate the spread of peace education (PE), we examined 685 documents in SCOPUS between 1970 and 2018 in 70 countries and triangulated the information with 11369 news articles and 22 international organisationś founding dates. PE emerged in scientific databases in the 1970s, lost momentum in 1990 and then globalised after 2003. PE's institutionalisation was furthered by: (a) the increasing search for discourses that highlighted individual agency of self-declared 'peace educators'; (b) educational expansion that generated a greater demand for so-called best practices; and (c) the active role of professionals working on organisations such as UNESCO, UNICEF and the identified international organisations. We recognised five loosely coupled narratives: PE's (a) philosophical foundations and relationship to critical pedagogy; (b) application to improve international relationships; c) solution to internal conflicts; (d) measurements of interventions; (e) linkages to religion. We reflect on the implications of PE as an educational discourse in curricular reforms.

Title   Supportive Indoor Environments for Functional Play in ECEC Institutions: A Strategy for Promoting Well-being and Physical Activity?

Citation

Sando, O. J., & Mehus, I. (2019). Supportive indoor environments for functional play in ECEC institutions: A strategy for promoting well-being and physical activity? *Early Child Development and Care*, 1–12. doi: 10.1080/03004430.2019.1651305

Link   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03004430.2019.1651305?journalCode=gecd20

Summary/Abstract   The physical environment in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) institutions provide children with possibilities for play. This study describes a physical environmental intervention aiming to increase the possibilities for functional play in the indoor environment, and its influence on children's well-being and physical activity. The intervention involved the establishment of a tumbling space with soft surfaces, mats and big construction materials. The sample consists of video observations of 65 children's free play in seven ECEC institutions at two data points. Multilevel regression analysis indicates that children's physical activity and functional play is strongly related to the use of a tumbling space, and that the intervention group had a higher increase in functional play

following the intervention compared to the control group. The impact of the tumbling space on well-being is limited. The results indicate that targeting children's possibilities for functional play may be beneficial form a health promotion standpoint.

Title   The Current Landscape of US Children's Television: Violent, Prosocial, Educational, and Fantastical Content

Citation

Taggart, J., Eisen, S., & Lillard, A. S. (2019). The current landscape of US children's television: violent, prosocial, educational, and fantastical content. *Journal of Children and Media*, 1-19.

Link   https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/17482798.2019.1605916

Summary/Abstract   The present study examined currently popular children's television shows to determine the prevalence of violent, prosocial, educational, and fantastical content (including fantastical events and anthropomorphism). Network, style, and content ratings were collected for 88 shows using a combination of Common Sense Media and laboratory ratings applied to two randomly-selected episodes of each show. Overall, currently popular children's television shows were most often animated and contained little violent, prosocial, or educational content, but a great deal of fantastical content. Interrelations among variables were also examined. Shows with fantastical events were both more violent and more prosocial than shows without, and shows with anthropomorphism were more prosocial than shows without. The network on which a show aired predicted violent, prosocial, and educational content, but not fantastical content. Children's television today is not as violent as might be believed, but nor is it particularly prosocial or educational. It is highly fantastical. The implications of the landscape for children's behavior, learning, and cognition are discussed.

POLICY PAPER & BRIEFS:

Title   Child-Care Subsidies and Montessori Education

Citation

Child-care subsidies and Montessori education [Policy Brief] (2019). *Retrieved from https://montessoriadvocacy.org/resources/#research.*

Link   https://montessoriadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CCDF-and-Montessori-Brief-FINAL.pdf

Summary/Abstract   The Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) provides financial assistance (subsidies) to low income families to pay for childcare and also supports quality improvements in early learning. At the state level, subsidies are funded through a combination of:

- Child Care Development Fund dollars which are authorized through both the Child Care and Development Block Grant Act (CCDBG) and Section 418 of the Social Security Act

- State matching funds required to receive federal CCDF dollars

- Any TANF dollars that a state chooses to allocate to child-care subsidies

Montessori programs are well positioned to serve child-care subsidy eligible children. This brief outlines the various parameters of CCDF, considerations particular to Montessori programs, and recommendations for Montessori advocates.

Title   Head Start and Montessori Education

Citation

Head Start and Montessori education [Policy Brief] (2019). *Retrieved from https://montessoriadvocacy.org/resources/#research.*

Link   https://montessoriadvocacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Head-Start-and-Montessori-brief-FINAL.pdf

Summary/Abstract   Head Start funds early childhood education and comprehensive wrap-around services for low income families. Head Start is not itself a curriculum but does require programs to use a research-based curriculum that is aligned with the Head Start Early Learning Outcomes Framework. Montessori programs can increase access to high quality Montessori education by serving Head Start eligible children. This brief outlines the various parameters of the Head Start Act, considerations particular to Montessori programs and recommendations for Montessori advocates.