

Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
<b>Subject Name</b>	<b>Education</b>
<b>Course Name</b>	<b>Contemporary Indian Education</b>
<b>Course Code</b>	<b>EDU501</b>
<b>Module Name/Title</b>	<i>Educational thoughts and practices: critical reflection on the educational thoughts and practices of Montessori with respect to the relevance in the present education system.</i>
<b>Module Code</b>	<b>CIE015</b>
<b>Pre-requisites</b>	<b>Knowledge about Educational Contribution of Frobel, Early Childhood Care and Education.</b>
<b>Learning Outcome</b>	<p>After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to understand the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Apply Educational thoughts &amp; Educational Practices of Madam Maria Montessori in new situations.</li> <li>• Evaluate by making comparisons and judgements on educational thoughts and educational practices of Maria Montessori.</li> <li>• Gather information, conclude and evaluate the present education system.</li> <li>• Critically relate the educational thoughts &amp; principles of Montessori with present educational system.</li> </ul>
<b>Keywords</b>	<b>Montessori, Methods of Teaching, Planes of Development, Didactic Apparatus</b>

1. Development Team

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### 1. Introduction

The Montessori Method of education is developed by Dr. Maria Montessori, which is a child-centered educational approach. This approach is based on scientific observations of children from birth to adulthood. This approach is used in different cultures across the countries and tested in different setting since last 100 years and proved its worth in field of pre-primary and primary education. Madam Montessori opines that child is one who is naturally eager for knowledge and capable of initiating learning in a supportive, thoughtfully prepared learning environment. This approach advocates the overall development of child i.e. physical, social, emotional and cognitive along with values and human spirit. Montessori approach comprises of multiage groupings which advocate peer learning and group learning. In addition, the teacher, child, and environment create a learning triangle in classroom.

The environment of classroom and learning material is meticulously arranged which creates aesthetically pleasing environment. The role of teacher is to provide freedom to children with limit and encourage their independence and a sense of order. The child makes individual choice and use of what the environment offers to develop him and whenever needed child interact with the concern teacher for support and/or guidance for personal development. Montessori Method is based on multiage groupings, which is a hallmark of this approach. In this process younger children learn from older children; older children reinforce their learning by teaching concepts they have already mastered to the younger ones.

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## 2. A Biography of Dr. Maria Montessori

Maria Montessori was born on 31<sup>st</sup> August, 1870, in the provincial town of Chiaravalle, Italy (Montessori, 2014). Her parents are well educated and they belong to middle-class strata of society. During this time Italy held conservative values about women's roles in society, but since her childhood Montessori achieved great success and she consistently broke out of those proscribed gender limitations. Further she developed her aptitude towards math's and science subjects, particularly biology. Montessori became the first female doctor in Italy and as a doctor she chose pediatrics and psychiatry as her specialties. Dr. Montessori's keen interest in children's health and in pedagogy prompted her to observe little children. In 1906, when given the opportunity, she started an experimental school in the slum areas of Rome (Scheerenberger, 1983). In doing so Montessori treated many poor and working-class children, here she found that intrinsic intelligence was present in children of all socio-economic backgrounds. In 1900, she became the director of the Orth phrenic School for developmentally disabled children and started her research work on early childhood development and education. Through these experience and researches she started to develop her own method of teaching to early childhood children and she tested through hands-on scientific observation of students at the Orth phrenic School. She found positive result and she spread her research findings in speeches throughout Europe, also using her platform to advocate for women's and children's rights. Montessori established school called Casa die Bambini (or Children's House), where 60 students were studying form slums. Here she creates "prepared learning" environment, where teachers were encouraging to stand back and follow the child for their overall development. Gradually Montessori's ideology spread all over Europe and United States and more than 1000 school followed her ideology.

During the World War II period, she was forced to flee to India. After coming in India, she developed a program called Education for Peace. Due to this great work she was honored by two Nobel Peace Prize nominations. Montessori died on May 6, 1952, in Noordwijk aan Zee, Netherlands. Today, Montessori's teaching methods continue to "follow the child" all over the globe.

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### **3. Montessori works in India**

Madam Montessori came to India in 1939 and worked for seven years up to 1946. Mostly she was engaged herself in training teachers for small children according to her method in Madras. The programme developed by her on Early Childhood Education was also known as Education for Peace. This task earned her two Nobel Peace Prize nominations.

Montessori teaching methods continue the “Follow the Child”, which gain highly praised all over the world and people are using till date. “Montessori is a method of education that is based on self directed activity, hands on learning and collaborative play. In Montessori classrooms Children make creative choices in their learning, while the classroom and the teacher offer age appropriate activities to guide the process. Children work in groups and individually to discover and explore knowledge of the world and develop their maximum potential” (Nagaraju,2017). The learning process according to Montessori defines learning process in three different stages of learning. Those are as follow:

1. Introduction to a concept (by a lesson, a reading, a lecture).
2. Processing the information and developing an understanding of the meaning through work, experimentation, creation, this gives the child a real ability to learn and remember what he/she has learned. This is the most important stage since it puts emphasis on the concepts of developing, experimenting, creating and transforming.
3. “Knowing”, processing the information demonstrated by the ability to teach or explain to others, or to express easily.

### **4. Philosophy of Education according to Montessori**

According to Montessori, children are natural learners and they underwent extraordinary transformations in overall happiness, self confidence, and self discipline when they were allowed to follow their innate needs. Therefore, working with children is totally different as compare to working with adult. She was also of the opinion that children learn through their senses and built on their physical experiences of the world through their senses. Children also need freedom for making spontaneous and creative individual, in which they can develop their personality. According to Montessori

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teachers play many important roles as she directs guides her students. Teachers are also skilled observer, who comes to know each student's interests, learning style and temperament. He understands the student's developmental needs and is receptive to her "sensitive periods". Teachers are also Creative Facilitators, who serves as a resource as students go about their work. As students progress, the teacher modifies the classroom environment, adjusting the learning materials to meet the student's changing needs. Here teacher's play role model for the students. Teacher exhibit models values such as empathy, compassion and acceptance of individual differences and encourages the students to be like same with other. According to Montessori teacher should care for the child like a gardener who cares for the plants so that natural growth of the child is properly guided and aided in the process of unfolding itself.

## **5. Montessori Method of Teaching**

The Montessori method of teaching is a new and innovative educational movement that persuades teachers to see and understand children and classroom from different point of view than the routine classroom process. In this teaching method, focus shifted from routine teaching to individual child and priority was given to children's freedom. Here more importance was given on respecting and encouraging each child's individual differences, group work and providing a nurturing environment to teach social interaction and emotional skills. The Montessori Method is most often applied and suitable at the early childhood education because mostly this method focuses its activities and task due to its center of attention on early child development.

The philosophical principle behind the Montessori method is that the teacher has to acts as a guide, observing classroom to remove obstacles and hurdles from learning but not participating as a direct instructor and children have their own internal guidance for self-directed development. Task given by the teacher often involve how to use or play with the various instructional toys in the classroom.

According to Dr. Montessori, child development occurs through several stages, for each stage it requires unique and a slightly different teaching

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learning process or strategy. The first stage occurs between birth and age six, which represents the time when infants, toddlers, and children acquire language and emotions and begin to experience the world for the first time. Here child develops ego, where the child begins to first differentiate between self and other. The second stage occurs between the ages of six and twelve. During this stage child begin to develop the capacity for independent thought and abstract reasoning. This stage is marked by the desire to interact socially and emotionally with others. The last stage in development is adolescence, where children gradually entering into youth and major physical, social and emotional happen in this stage.

Montessori teacher will offer guidance rather than instructing or giving lecture or providing handouts of worksheet in the class. The environment of class is created in such a way that child ultimately became responsible for his or her own individual learning. The classroom will often contain several stations, each containing toys and other learning material which allow children to explore themselves and learn individually. For example, a common station in a Montessori classroom will have a bucket of Lego blocks and several pictures of simple objects like an apple or a house, which the children can build if they want. Other stations might have books, crayons, a xylophone, or other engaging activities. The whole philosophy behind the Montessori classroom is providing children freedom and allowing children to learn through playing.

Montessori Method classrooms are created with the help of age groups of children, which is unique features of Montessori classroom. Children are separated by ages and grade levels in western countries. This groups are interacting primarily with children of their own age. In Montessori classroom children are together of different age, that might be three to six age groups children. Here concept of peer learning comes in to effect. Children of old age group will often teach to their younger age group or younger age group children will observe the older age group students, this how the learning takes place in Montessori classroom. This process is known as scaffolding or social learning and was formulated by Lev Vygotsky.

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A Montessori classroom is special in number of way and these specialties encourage children to develop independently and make them a perfect individual with creative thoughts. In this classroom children have to play instead of sit and listen to teachers, they are free to do activities which they like and teacher allows children to develop the motivation to learn and explore. Montessori method offers empirically-supported benefits to children above and beyond normal development and learning.

The major aim of Montessori education is to grow from childhood to maturity by providing different task which develop their inner construction. The Montessori Method was successful in work in the field of early childhood teaching across countries, cultures and religious boundaries because, the principles upon which the method is based extend from the natural development of the child.

## 6. Key Concept in Montessori Method

### A. Human Tendencies

Through the Montessori Method and well define Prepared Environment, Montessori education take actions to the natural Human Tendencies. Human Tendencies are tendencies and inclinations of humans that are universal, innate and present throughout life.

1. Order
2. Orientation
3. Exploration
4. Communication
5. Activity (work)
6. Manipulation (hands-on exploration)
7. Repetition
8. Exactness and precision
9. Abstraction
10. Self-perfection

### B. Four Planes of Development (Grazzini, 2004)

The Montessori Method is based on the developmental needs of children at different phases of growth. Dr. Montessori referred to these as the

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Four Planes of Development. The child in each plane is unique plane and has different needs, modes of behavior and specific characteristics. The Montessori Method and Prepared Environment at different stage of plane correspond to the academic, psychological, biological and social needs of the children. (Montessori, "The Four Planes of Education", p.10, reprinted 2004)

1. *First Plane (Birth to 6+ yrs)*: This plane is again divided in to two sub plane 0-3 years i.e. Spiritual Embryo or Unconscious creator and 3-6 years i.e. Social Embryo or Conscious Worker. Here children try to adapts his/her time and place and becomes at one with nature and particular human group. At this plane child mostly learn with senses and they explore with it, constructing their intellects by absorbing every aspect of their environment, their language and their culture. At the end of this plane they try to achieve physical independence and sense of "I can do it by myself" developed.
2. *Second Plane (6+ to 12)*: This plane is also considered as "The Age of Rudeness" or "The Age of Serenity". Here child is hungry for new knowledge and wants to know about world and his/her place within it the interconnectedness of it all. Children become conceptual explorers. They develop their powers of imagination and abstraction and apply them learn skill and knowledge to understand the world around them. At the end of this plane they try to achieve intellectual or moral independence and sense of "I can think for myself" developed.
3. *Third Plane (12- 18yrs)*: This plane is considered as "The Age of Newborn Adult". This period is known as period of transition from childhood to adulthood. Here psychological, sociological and emotional changes take place. Children become humanistic explorers, seeking to understand their place in society and their opportunity to contribute to it. At the end of this plane they try to achieve intellectual or emotional independence and sense of "I can stand on my tow feet" developed.
4. *Fourth Plane (18- 24yrs)*: This plane is considered as "The Age of Happiness". Here Young adult tries to get knowledge of one's own place within the world and one's aspirations and connect with one's personal mission. Young adults also become specialized explorers, seeking a



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niche from which to contribute to universal dialogue. At the end of this plane they try to achieve economical independence and sense of “I can make this work for myself” developed.

### C. Sensitive Periods

It should be noted that for Montessori the goal of education is to allow the child’s optimal development (intellectual, physical, emotional and social) to unfold (Montessori, 1988). These are critical periods in a child’s development between birth and age six that show key sensitivity for the child’s attention and exploration of their environment. Dr. Montessori referred to the Sensitive Periods as a time when the child has “an irresistible impulse toward something in the environment which makes the child repeat with great interest so he can establish a function”. The purpose of each sensitive period is to help them acquire a certain skill or characteristic necessary for their growth. During these periods, the acquisition of each particular skill is almost effortless on the part of the child.

As children acquire the skill or characteristic, their sensitivity for it decreases and another sensitivity increases. The Sensitive Periods may overlap and their time frames differ. The main sensitive periods for children between the ages of birth and six years include: Order, Movement, Language and Refinement of the senses. Other Sensitive Periods from birth to six years include; Social behavior (Grace and Courtesy), Spatial relationships, Music, Reading, Writing, Mathematics.

## 7. Role of Teacher

The role of a Montessori teacher is that of an observer whose ultimate goal is to intervene less and less as the child develops. The teacher’s first objective is to prepare and organize the learning environment to meet the needs and interests of the children as well as promote independence. The focus is on the children, not on teachers teaching. Through careful observation and planning, Montessori teachers remain constantly alert to the direction each child is heading and actively works to help them succeed.

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In an atmosphere of calm, order and joy, the Montessori teacher is there to help and encourage the children in all their efforts, allowing them to develop self-confidence and inner discipline. The children learn from their own discoveries and draw their own conclusions.

With the younger students at each level, the teacher is more active, demonstrating the use of materials and presenting activities based on an assessment of the child's requirements. Children at all levels of Montessori education are actively engaged by the teacher in the learning process which enhances critical thinking skills. The lessons are brief and precise, meant to intrigue the minds of children and encourage further practice or self-directed study.

Montessori teachers are the dynamic link between the children and the Prepared Environment. They systematically observe students to interpret their needs and modify the environment to meet the needs and interests of the children. They present clear, interesting and relevant lessons, model desirable behaviour and evaluate each child's individual progress. Montessori teachers respect and protect their students' independence and are supportive and encouraging without the use of rewards or punishments. They facilitate effective communication and are peace educators, consistently working to teach courteous behaviours and pro-social conflict resolution skills.

## 8. Summary

Montessori education has been in existence for over a hundred years. Such longevity could well be due, at least in part, to its adaptability (Lillard,2012). Montessori educators are specifically trained in the science of observation and child development. They study the philosophy of the Montessori method and the sequence of each material. They learn to use this knowledge to guide each child's physical, emotional, and intellectual growth. With that guidance, each child is continually challenged and encouraged to learn. All children have a natural love of learning. The Montessori classroom nurtures that love of learning and gives each child the confidence to take on the many challenges that life presents to him.

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**Links to web sites giving additional readings, Wikipedia, blogs, open source content etc.:**

[https://perso.telecom-paristech.fr/rodriguez/resources/PEDAGO/montessori\\_works.pdf](https://perso.telecom-paristech.fr/rodriguez/resources/PEDAGO/montessori_works.pdf)

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<http://www.arvindguptatoys.com/arvindgupta/montessori-new.pdf>

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<http://www.teach-nology.com/teachers/methods/montessori/>

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Elw-8bJYKuo>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nb7QLOCW8hs>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_ktR43Z9UcU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ktR43Z9UcU)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-oAzH79niws>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=S9gVy2wB2GQ>

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## **Glossary: -**

**Adaptation** - Related to the idea of an absorbent mind (Haines, 1993) is a special power of the young child that can be called the power of adaptation. This power is a process whereby the young child uses the environment to develop and, in so doing, becomes a part of that environment.

**Casa dei Bambini** – In Italian, “Children’s House,” and the name of Dr. Montessori’s first school.

**Concentration** - Recognizing that 'the longer one does attend to a topic the more mastery of it one has,' the great American psychologist William James remarked, 'An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence.' (1892/1985, p. 95) Montessori, who knew of James, set out to do just that.

**Concrete to abstract** – A logical, developmentally appropriate progression that allows the child to come to an abstract understanding of a concept by first encountering it in a concrete form, such as learning the mathematical concept of the decimal system by working with Golden Beads grouped into units, 10s, 100s, and 1,000s.

**Control of error** – Montessori materials are designed so that the child receives instant feedback as he works, allowing him to recognize, correct, and learn from his mistakes without adult assistance. Putting control of the activity in the child’s hands strengthens his self-esteem and self-motivation as well as his learning.

**Didactic materials** – Didactic meaning “designed or intended to teach,” these are the specially designed instructional materials—many invented by Maria Montessori—used in Montessori classrooms.

**Grace and courtesy** – Children are formally instructed in social skills they will use throughout their lives, for example, saying “please” and “thank you,” interrupting conversations politely, requesting rather than demanding assistance, and greeting guests warmly.

**Human Tendencies** - A central tenet of Montessori philosophy is that human beings exhibit certain predispositions that are universal, spanning age, cultural and racial barriers; they have existed since the dawn of the species and are probably evolutionary in origin. 'Montessori stresses the need to serve those special traits that have proved to be tendencies of Man throughout his history.' (Mario Montessori, 1966, p. 21)

**Montessori** – The term may refer to Dr. Maria Montessori, founder of the Montessori Method of education, or the method itself.

**Normalization** – A natural or “normal” developmental process marked by a love of work or activity, concentration, self-discipline, and joy in accomplishment. Dr. Montessori observed that the normalization process is characteristic of human beings at any age.

**Normalizing event** – Within the prepared environment of the Montessori classroom, children experience a normalizing event every time they

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complete a basic work cycle, which includes 1) choosing an activity; 2) completing the activity and returning the materials to the proper place; and 3) experiencing a sense of satisfaction.

**Planes of development** – Four distinct periods of growth, development, and learning that build on each other as children and youth progress through them: ages 0 – 6 (the period of the “absorbent mind”); 6 – 12 (the period of reasoning and abstraction); 12 – 18 (when youth construct the “social self,” developing moral values and becoming emotionally independent); and 18 – 24 years (when young adults construct an understanding of the self and seek to know their place in the world).

**Practical life** – The Montessori term that encompasses domestic work to maintain the home and classroom environment; self-care and personal hygiene; and grace and courtesy. Practical life skills are of great interest to young children and form the basis of later abstract learning.

**Practical life activities** – Young children in Montessori classrooms learn to take care of themselves and their environment through activities such as hand washing, dusting, and mopping. These activities help toddlers and preschool-age children learn to work independently, develop concentration, and prepare for later work with reading and math; older children participate in more advanced activities.

**Prepared environment** – The teacher prepares the environment of the Montessori classroom with carefully selected, aesthetically arranged materials that are presented sequentially to meet the developmental needs of the children using the space. In the Montessori environment Orem (1965) stated, the furniture fits the child because it is small just like the child. Well-prepared Montessori environments contain appropriately sized furniture, a full complement of Montessori materials, and enough space to allow children to work in peace, alone or in small or large groups.

**Sensitive period** – A critical time during human development when the child is biologically ready and receptive to acquiring a specific skill or ability—such as the use of language or a sense of order—and is therefore particularly sensitive to stimuli that promote the development of that skill. A Montessori teacher prepares the environment to meet the developmental needs of each sensitive period.

**Sensorial exercises** – These activities develop and refine the 5 senses—seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, and smelling—and build a foundation for speech, writing, and math through the use of sensorial materials. The exercises also bring order to the barrage of sensorial impressions the child experiences from birth onward.

**The 3-period lesson** – A 3-step technique for presenting information to the child. In the first—the introduction or naming period—the teacher demonstrates what “this is.” (The teacher might say “This is a mountain” while pointing to it on a 3-dimensional map.) In the second—the association or recognition period—the teacher asks the child to “show” what was just identified (“Show me the mountain”). Finally, in the recall period, the teacher asks the child to name the object or area. Moving from new information to passive recall to active identification reinforces the child’s learning and demonstrates her mastery.







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- A Insane asylum                      B University  
C Hospital                                D Factory
- 9 What did Montessori want to focus on in the beginning of her career?  
A Poor Children                      B Special Needs Children  
C Kindergarten                        D College
- 10 At the age of 12, Montessori's family moved to \_\_\_\_\_ to give her better educational opportunities.  
A Rome                                    B America  
C Turkey                                  D England
- 11 'Children's House' specifically designed to help children between ages of \_\_\_\_\_.  
A 2½ to 5 Year                      B 2½ to 6 Years  
C 3 to 6 Years                        D 2 to 6 Years
- 12 Maria Montessori is the founder of the Montessori method of education and she started her first classroom Casa dei Bambini in \_\_\_\_\_.  
A 1907                                    B 1709  
C 1979                                    D 1797
- 13 Maria Montessori was influenced by \_\_\_\_\_.  
A Ibnu Sina                              B Jean Piaget  
C Howard Garner                      D Friedrich Froebel
- 14 What are the four areas in which Montessori educated children usually excel in?  
A Self discipline, literacy, dexterity and competence    B Dexterity, social interactions, competence and lifelong learning  
C Competence, self discipline, social adjustment and happiness    D Discipline, competence, happiness and social interactions
- 15 Which statement is incorrect? Montessori classrooms....  
A teaches to individuals instead of groups    B are specifically organised to appear attractive and orderly  
C have an emphasis on self discipline    D have time restraints
- 16 Montessori philosophy says ...  
A lead the child                        B teach the child

