

Ten BIG Differences between Montessori and Traditional Education

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1. **The Prepared Environment.** Montessori classrooms are prepared in advance based on observations of the students' individual needs. They include student-centered lessons and activities. Traditional classrooms are based on teacher-centered lessons or activities.
2. **Active vs. Passive.** Montessori lessons are hands-on and active. Students discover information for themselves. Traditional school lessons are often orated to students who listen passively, memorize, and take tests.
3. **Give 'Em Time.** In the Montessori classroom, children work on lessons as long as need be, and interruptions are avoided whenever possible. Time limitations are mandated by arbitrary schedules in traditional classrooms.
4. **The Teachers' Role.** Montessori teachers act as guides and consultants to students on a one-on-one basis. They assist each child along his or her own learning path. Traditionally, the pace and order of each lesson is predetermined. The teacher must deliver the same lesson, at the same pace, in the same order, for all of the students.
5. **Age Groups and Grade-levels.** In Montessori schools, "grade-levels" are flexible and determined by the child's developmental range, i.e., 0-3, 3-6, 6-9, 9-12, 12-15, and 15-18 years of age. In traditional schools, grade levels are not flexible and strictly defined by chronological age within a twelve-month period.
6. **Adaptable Curricula.** Montessori curricula expand in response to the students' needs. Traditional curricula are predetermined without regard to student needs.
7. **Pace Yourself.** The individual child's work pace is honored and encouraged in the Montessori classroom. Traditional classrooms expect all children to work at the same pace.
8. **Self-Made Self-Esteem.** Montessorians understand that the child's self-esteem comes from an internal sense of pride in his or her own accomplishments. In traditional classrooms, self-esteem is thought to come from external judgement and validation.
9. **For the Love of Learning.** Montessori curricula are intended to appeal to the child's innate hunger for knowledge. Children learn to love learning. Traditional curricula focus on standardized test performance and grades. Children learn because it is mandatory.
10. **Change is Good.** The Montessori Method was created by Maria Montessori and is based on a lifetime of study and observation with regard to the way children really learn. Traditional education is based on...well... tradition.