

A Primitive Revelation to Reading

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to reveal to society the importance of getting public school children enrolled in not only pre-kindergarten programs, but also public Montessori pre-kindergarten programs. Montessori offers a more varied curriculum as opposed to the Primary Year Program (PYP) International Baccalaureate Program (IBO), the Home Schooled Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum (chosen by parent, and has several dependent variables based on state approval), and the Direct Instruction Curriculum for the Pre-Kindergarten students. The title of the article, “A Primitive Revelation to Reading,” implies that early exposure to reading offers the pre-kindergarten student a better chance of developing a stronger foundation for reading and a more solid foundation for overall academics. The authors indicate that the earlier a child is exposed to reading opportunities, such as recitation of rhymes, singing songs, being read aloud to, given the opportunity to help create his/her own poems, prompted to create his/her own stories, the better.

A revelation is defined as an act of revealing or opening to view (Webster, 2000)

Maria Montessori shaped an educational practice that helped children develop creativity, problem solving, social, and time management skills. This practice also allowed children to contribute to society and the environment, as well as to become fulfilled persons in their particular time and place on Earth. The basis of Montessori practice in the classroom is respected individual choice of research and work, and uninterrupted concentration rather than group lessons led by an adult (National Montessori Reporter, 2005). Maria Montessori developed what became known as the Montessori method of education. This method has now been implemented into some Texas public schools, and the results of the implementation have had positive impacts on pre-kindergarteners' reading development.

Focus of the Article

The purpose of this article is to reveal to society the importance of getting public school children enrolled in not only pre-kindergarten programs, but also public Montessori pre-kindergarten programs. Montessori offers a more varied curriculum as opposed to the Primary Year Program (PYP) International Baccalaureate Program (IBO), the Home Schooled Pre-Kindergarten Curriculum (chosen by parent, and has several dependent variables based on state approval), and the Direct Instruction Curriculum for the Pre-Kindergarten students. The authors indicate that the earlier a child is exposed to reading opportunities, such as recitation of rhymes, singing songs, being read aloud to, given the opportunity to help create his/her own poems, prompted to create his/her own stories, the better.

The Montessori Method Offers the Child Opportunities

The Montessori Method offers a child these opportunities and it is quite unique, in that it is based on a sensible balance between freedom and structure (Malloy, 1974). Montessori also gives the child a strong basis, in his/her most formative years, for developing into a well-rounded, responsible, happy, and fulfilled adult. The materials in a pleasant Montessori environment are carefully devised to meet the child's natural needs. For example, there is a piece of work called sandpaper letters. The sandpaper letters are mounted, and cut out letters that allow the child to learn the shape of each letter through touch and to associate the sound each letter makes with its shape. Another example of a type of Montessori material includes metal insets. With metal insets, there are ten geometric shapes, with knobs on each of them for lifting and replacing. The student is then required to trace the outline of each of the insets. This concept helps to prepare the students' hand for writing and his/her eyes for reading. The Montessori Method offers color-coded reading series.

There is a pink, blue, and lilac word series. Each color represents a different concept for reading. The pink reading series offers the student the consonant/vowel/consonant word. There are pink phonic picture cards to use with the moveable alphabet (individual blue consonant letters and individual red vowel letters). Along with the phonic picture cards are phonic booklets and word lists. These word lists are in alignment with the student's reading readiness level and pace. Blue reading series involve consonant blend/vowel/consonant words. This series involves consonant blend picture cards, phonic booklets with sentences. The student is expected to complete more challenging work and continue to move at his/her own pace. The lilac word series involves mystery words; puzzle words, and 500 Dolch words on the Pre-kindergarten through second grade reading levels. What separates Montessori from other reading methods most, are the individual hands-on objects that students are exposed to and expected to name, and eventually learn to spell. Here, the child is connecting past learned information to present and expound upon that. Objects that are included for children to recognize are: airplanes, alligators, ants, apples, bags, basket, ball, balloon, cap, candy, car, dish, dime, deer, dog, egg, eyes, elbow, elephant, flag, fish, fan, fence, girl, goat, gift, giraffe, hand, hat, hammer, horse, insect, instrument, infant, igloo, jar, jet, key, kitten, kangaroo, etc., to name a few. The recognition enhances the pre-kindergarten student's vocabulary and continues to lay a rich foundation for comprehensive reading to take place (The Public School Montessorian/Summer 2005, p. 2). Now, let's look at some practical ideas for professionals that may consider implementing the public pre-kindergarten Montessori program.

Five Practical Ideas

Five practical ideas to help public school professionals especially interested in implementing Montessori at the pre-kindergarten level include: (1) Staying current on trends in early childhood education that focus on reading (2) Knowing his/her own personal visions/goals for reading, at his/her own campus (3) Having a plan/mission in place for the implementation of the prospected goals (4) Having designated personnel in place to assist in/with meeting student needs- i.e. counselor, social-worker, school nurse, certified Bilingual/ESL teachers (5) Incorporating weekly/monthly parent nights with the theme focusing on reading. This will increase parental involvement and allow parents to become active stakeholders in their children's educational process. These five practical ideas are extremely essential in the up-keep and productivity of a well organized and well-versed public pre-kindergarten Montessori program. Without them, the school leader has limited curriculum alignment and limited climate structure. Again, these fundamental attributes must be incorporated.

Concluding Remarks

In conclusion, “A Primitive Revelation to Reading,” discusses the importance of the Montessori Method and why it should be implemented in a public school setting for pre-kindergarten students. “A Primitive Revelation to Reading” also discusses five fundamental practices for professionals to incorporate, when creating a reading program for public pre-kindergarten students. Overall, the article’s purpose is to inform society about the importance of enrolling your student in a pre-kindergarten program, and in the event that your young child will be attending a public school, enroll the student in a public, Montessori pre-kindergarten program. As a school leader, it is vital to provide the best, applicable methods and practices for the assurance of student success. The school leader must consider the student population and the community he/she serves. After this has been established the leader must keep in mind that there is a primitive revelation to reading.

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