

What makes the Montessori system different from Mainstream?

Traditional / Mainstream	Montessori
Teacher's role is dominant and student is a passive participant	While the teacher guides the learning process, the student is an active and primary participant
Group instruction that conforms to adult's teaching style	Individual and group instruction adapts to each student's learning style
Same age grouping	Mixed age grouping
Most teaching done by teacher and collaboration is discouraged	Children encouraged to teach, collaborate, and help one another
Emphasis on rote knowledge (inflexible)	Emphasis on cognitive structures
Teacher is primary enforcer of external discipline	Environment and method encourage internal self-discipline
Child is given concepts by teacher rather than by self-discovery	Child formulates concepts from self-teaching materials
Child sits in assigned seat, not allowed to move about classroom	Concentrated work time on a single subject
Instruction pace set by group norm or teacher	Child sets own learning pace to internalize information
Errors corrected by teacher	Child spots own errors through self-correcting materials
Learning reinforced externally by rewards, punishments	Learning is reinforced through child's own repetition of activity, internal feelings of successful repetition
Few materials for sensory, concrete manipulation	Large focus on Multi-sensory materials
Child is given specific time for work in one subject and then moved on to another subject perhaps before subject has been adequately covered	Child can work where he or she is comfortable, is allowed to move around classroom as long as he or she is not disruptive to others
Emphasis is on the abstract	Emphasis is on the concrete
Teacher provides stimuli to learning	Child provides own stimuli to learning
Teacher centred environment	Child-centred learning environment
All children are treated alike	Child is treated as an individual
Silence is on many occasions enforced	Liberty to speak (without disturbing others) as he pleases
Teacher does all and child is forced to follow	Teacher's part is to guide child to act and think for himself.