

Desired Learner Outcomes Common to Montessori Education

Montessori agenda of learner outcomes are as follows:

- ❖ **Independence:** Is the child able to choose his or her own work, apply energy to that work, complete it to a personal criterion of completion, take and return the work to the place it is customarily kept, in such a way that another child will be able to find the work ready to do? Is the child able to seek help? Is the child able to locate resources to continue the self-chosen task without necessarily involving the teacher?
- ❖ **Confidence and Competence:** Are the child's self-perceived successes far more numerous than his or her self-perceived failures? Is the child capable of self-correcting work, upon observation, reflection, or discussion? Can the child manage the available array of "stuff" with a clear sense of purpose?
- ❖ **Autonomy:** Can the child accept or reject inclusion in another child's work or work group with equanimity?
- ❖ **Intrinsic Motivation:** Is the child drawn to continue working for the apparent pure pleasure of so doing? Does the child, once having achieved a particular competence, move on to revel in mastery by showing others?
- ❖ **Ability to Handle External Authority:** Is the child able to accept the "ground rules" of the group as appropriate in his or her dealing with other children? Is the child, distant from the teacher, able to function as if the teacher were nearby?
- ❖ **Social Responsibility:** Independent and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. The loss of these qualities by one of a group is a loss for all. Do students attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility?
- ❖ **Academic Preparation:** In Montessori education, children learn to learn by learning. Academic preparation entails activation and cultivation of inherent powers and processes through which the learner becomes a supplier of meanings or of things-meaningfully-known. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing. Do students acquire academic skills and apply them in learning to learn?
- ❖ **Spiritual Awareness:** Montessori views the child as a spiritual embryo. Implications are conveyed by the metaphor. All humans are spiritual beings as well as physical beings. They have spiritual health as well as physical health. Montessori sees no need to establish whether or not the source of spirit is theological and does not offer theological explanation. The spiritual embryo simply thrives on spiritual investment. The investment can be theological, humane, or a combination of the two. What are the spiritual outcomes of school experience?
- ❖ **Citizens of the World:** All children are part of both a world political system and a world ecological system. Both systems have their constitutions and all must learn to live by the letter and spirit of their laws. As a naturalist, Montessori knew about the laws of mind and of nature and understood the consequences of disobeying either of them. What are the citizenship outcomes of school experience? Are the children acquiring civic virtue? Are they acquiring dispositions to understand the natural world, to cherish it, and to live harmoniously within it?

Habits of Mind (After Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, *Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series*, Copyright © 2000)

The Habits of Mind are an identified set of 16 problem solving, life related skills, necessary to effectively operate in society and promote strategic reasoning, insightfulness, perseverance, creativity and craftsmanship.

- ❖ **Persisting:** Sticking to task at hand; Follow through to completion; Can and do remain focused.
- ❖ **Managing Impulsivity:** Take time to consider options; Think before speaking or acting; Remain calm when stressed or challenged; Thoughtful and considerate of others; Proceed carefully.
- ❖ **Listening with Understanding and Empathy:** Pay attention to and do not dismiss another person's thoughts, feeling and ideas; Seek to put myself in the other person's shoes; Tell others when I can relate to what they are expressing; Hold thoughts at a distance in order to respect another person's point of view and feelings.
- ❖ **Thinking Flexibly:** Able to change perspective; Consider the input of others; Generate alternatives; Weigh options.
- ❖ **Thinking about Thinking (Metacognition):** Being aware of own thoughts, feelings, intentions and actions; Knowing what I do and say affects others; Willing to consider the impact of choices on myself and others.
- ❖ **Striving for Accuracy:** Check for errors; Measure at least twice; Nurture a desire for exactness, fidelity & craftsmanship.
- ❖ **Questioning and Posing Problems:** Ask myself, "How do I know?"; develop a questioning attitude; Consider what information is needed, choose strategies to get that information; Consider the obstacles needed to resolve.
- ❖ **Applying Past Knowledge to New Situations:** Use what is learned; Consider prior knowledge and experience; Apply knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learned.
- ❖ **Thinking and Communicating with Clarity and Precision:** Strive to be clear when speaking and writing; Strive be accurate to when speaking and writing; Avoid generalizations, distortions, minimizations and deletions when speaking, and writing.
- ❖ **Gathering Data through All Senses:** Stop to observe what I see; Listen to what I hear; Take note of what I smell; Taste what I am eating; Feel what I am touching.
- ❖ **Creating, Imagining, Innovating:** Think about how something might be done differently from the "norm"; Propose new ideas; Strive for originality; Consider novel suggestions others might make.
- ❖ **Responding with Wonderment and Awe:** Intrigued by the world's beauty, nature's power and vastness for the universe; Have regard for what is awe-inspiring and can touch my heart; Open to the little and big surprises in life I see others and myself.
- ❖ **Taking Responsible Risks:** Willing to try something new and different; Consider doing things that are safe and sane even though new to me; Face fear of making mistakes or of coming up short and don't let this stop me.
- ❖ **Finding Humor:** Willing to laugh appropriately; Look for the whimsical, absurd, ironic and unexpected in life; Laugh at myself when I can.
- ❖ **Thinking Interdependently:** Willing to work with others and welcome their input and perspective; Abide by decisions the work group makes even if I disagree somewhat; willing to learn from others in reciprocal situations.
- ❖ **Remaining Open to Continuous Learning:** Open to new experiences to learn from; Proud and humble enough to admit when don't know; Welcome new information on all subjects.