

Montessori Memo

Quarterly, Curated, and Collaborative
Research for practitioners, researchers, and community members



MONTESSORI MEMO™

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IN MEMORY OF J. COSENTINO

We, the colleagues at the Center for Montessori Studies at the University of Hartford, were saddened to learn about the passing of Dr. Jacqueline Cosentino. Her contributions to the field of Montessori education are impressive, impactful and vast. Given the research focus of the Montessori Memo, we honor Jackie's contribution to the field by dedicating this issue to just a small sample of her academic research.

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The Center for Montessori Studies collaborates across the Montessori community, Association Montessori International and American Montessori Society, and values the institutional collaborations with and among KU Center for Montessori Research, National Center for Montessori in the Public Sector, and Montessori Public Policy Initiative.

Title Culture, Craft, & Coherence: The Unexpected Vitality of Montessori Teacher Training

Citation

Cosentino, J. (2009). Culture, craft, & coherence: The unexpected vitality of Montessori teacher training. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(5), 520-527. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022487109344593>

Summary/Abstract This essay examines the how's why's and what for's of Montessori teacher training. Treating the Montessori system as an illuminating case of alternative teacher preparation, three concepts common to the lexicon of teacher education - culture, craft, and coherence - are explored in detail. Drawing both from both mainstream teacher education research and ethnographic studies of Montessori teacher training, the essay probes several conceptual puzzles aimed toward reconsidering key ideas related to the development of cultural and technical expertise.

Title Montessori and the Mainstream: A Century of Reform on the Margins

Citation

Whitescarver, K., & Cossentino, J. (2008). Montessori and the mainstream: A century of reform on the margins. *Teachers College Record*, 110(12), 2571-2600. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/263351421_Montessori_and_the_Mainstream_A_Century_of_Reform_on_the_Margins

Summary/Abstract Montessori education has flourished as an alternative approach to schooling for a hundred years. In the century since the first Montessori school opened in the slums of Rome, the movement has undergone sustained growth while simultaneously enduring efforts to modify the method in order to reach a wider audience. Despite Montessori's endurance and reach, the movement remains largely unstudied by educational researchers. This article is an examination of the American Montessori movement as it has evolved over the course of the past one hundred years. Situated within an international context, the study traces the development of the movement from its failed introduction to the United States in 1991, to its rebirth in the 1960s, to its current resurgence as a time-tested alternative to conventional public schooling. Key questions revolve around Montessori's ongoing status as an influential yet marginal force in American educational reform.

Title Big Work: Goodness, Vocation, and Engagement in the Montessori Method

Citation

Cossentino, J. M. (2006). Big work: Goodness, vocation, and engagement in the Montessori method. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 36(1), 63-92. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-873X.2006.00346.x>

Summary/Abstract This article examines the origins, uses, and effects of the rhetorical construct of “work” in the Montessori method. Grounded in analysis of classroom interactions in a Montessori primary (3–6-year-olds) classroom, I argue that Montessori's conception of work substantially revises prevailing assumptions about the nature of childhood, the roles of teachers, and the purpose of schooling. In this way, Montessori rhetoric and practice serve as an existence proof of an alternative educational worldview. This close look at how an alternative rhetoric is constructed in and around the practice of Montessori education sheds new light on both the specifics of the Montessori worldview and, more generally, the ways in which reform rhetoric shapes perceptions, reifies assumptions, and choreographs the policy and practice of educational reform.

Title Ritualizing Expertise: A Non-Montessorian View of the Montessori Method

Citation

Cossentino, J. (2005). Ritualizing expertise: A non-Montessorian view of the Montessori method. *American Journal of Education*, 111(2), 211-244. <https://www.doi.org/10.1086/426838>

Summary/Abstract This article examines the practice of Montessori education through the lens of ritual. Anchored by description and analysis of a lesson in an elementary classroom, the lesson is viewed as a series of ritualized interactions in which both teacher and student act out multiple layers of expertise within the cultural frame of the Montessori method. Analysis is grounded in frameworks drawn from ritual theory (Bell 1992; Douglas 1973; Turner 1969) and explores the role of ritual activity in delineating both the contours of Montessori practice and the boundary between Montessorians and non-Montessorians.

Title Becoming a Coach: Reform, Identity, and the Pedagogy of Negation

Citation

Cossentino, J. (2004). Becoming a coach: Reform, identity, and the pedagogy of negation. *Teachers and Teaching*, 10(5), 463–487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1354060042000243033>

Summary/Abstract This article examines one US high school teacher's attempt to become a coach by enacting what I call 'a pedagogy of negation'. For this teacher, the challenge of becoming a coach is nested within a wider agenda of social and personal transformation. That agenda is symbolized first in words as she constructs 'a language of coaching' to inform her interactions with students and content as well her conception of herself as a teacher. Second, talk is transformed into pedagogical action through, as described by Driver, the 'playful work' of ritualized negation. I argue that the phenomenon of negation is a logical sense-making strategy for teachers attempting to realise transformed pedagogical identities. Negation also reveals a range of uncertainties involved in enacting the practice of coaching. As this case reveals, the pedagogy of negation is constructed as a corrective to restrictive and oppressive forms of schooling. It serves as a mechanism for 'becoming' a different, presumably better, kind of teacher. And though the results are mixed, this portrait of practice in the midst of change illuminates the complex and reciprocal links between identity and practice entailed in becoming a coach.

Title The Math Studio: Harnessing the Power of the Arts to Teach across Disciplines

Citation

Cossentino, J., & Shaffer, D.S., (1999). The math studio: Harnessing the power of the arts to teach across disciplines. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 33(2), 99-109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3333689>

Summary/Abstract First conceived by Arthur Loeb,¹ the math studio applies the attitudes and environment of the artist's atelier to the skills and concepts of mathematics. Besides "getting help," as the students put it, from mentors and peers, students received feedback from the software used in Escher's World. In the Escher's World workshop, six students had six right answers, each reflecting a different aspect of the problem. [...]this multiplicity of solutions helped students-and helped us-focus on constructive criticism. Using this particular technology as a medium helped keep the focus on expression, and the technology, in turn, facilitated revision. [...]keeping the focus on the creation of a satisfying design made this version of "authentic" assessment truly authentic.

RESEARCH: MONTESSORI

Title Self-Efficacy Perceptions of Teachers on Using the Montessori Method in Special Education in North Cyprus

Citation

Ender, D. & Ozcan, D. (2019). Self-efficacy perceptions of teachers on using the Montessori method in special education in North Cyprus. *Cypriot Journal of Educational Science*, 14(4), 652-660. <https://doi.org/10.18844/cjes.v11i4.4480>

Summary/Abstract The aim of this study is to determine the self-efficacy perceptions of special education teachers about the use of the Montessori method by a valid and reliable scale developed by the researcher.

The model of the research is a general descriptive model of quantitative research methods. In the 2017–2018 academic year, 67 special education teachers who work under the Directorate of Primary Education of the Ministry of National Education of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus participated in this research universe, which comprise 29, 12, 20, 4 and 2 teachers from Special Education Application Centre, Special Education and Work Application Centre, primary schools, kindergartens and school for visually impaired, respectively. This study was conducted only with all the special education teachers in the universe not by any sampling method. The general proficiency perceptions of the special education teachers for the use of the Montessori method were at the level of instability. According to the general competency perceptions of the female teachers on the use of the Montessori method, it was found that their responses were more positive than the males.

RESEARCH: RELATED

Title Assessment of Interior Design Requirements of Classes within Pre-K Educational Models

Citation

Özdamar, B.B., & Robledo Mendez, A.P., (2019). Assessment of interior design requirements of classes within pre-k educational models. *The Journal of International Social Research*, 12(68), 615-627. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17719/jisr.2019.3853>

Summary/Abstract This study aims to analyze the interior design of a learning space based on three alternative teaching models applied nowadays. The study gathers the overall information of interior space design, alternative teaching models, children's needs and analyzes the interaction of the three selected teaching models with classroom design, besides it suggests what educational institutions can do at a general level to contribute to the improvement of early education. The study is designed using descriptive research model, scientific observation and to collect factual data 72 teachers from Ankara (Turkey) were surveyed. Three different schools were analyzed by means of teaching model application within interior space design, a survey was administered in order to determine how classroom design supports the teaching-learning process and follows the principles of the teaching models. Research findings suggest that special attention should be given to classroom interior design since young children's behavior and social interactions with their peers and teachers are influenced by the spatial arrangement in classrooms. Likewise if the interior design of the classroom is based on teaching models' learning outcomes, the capacity and attitude of both teacher and student in the educational process are improved, while appropriate conditions are created for a pedagogical practice in the classroom.

Title Work Life Balance and Working Indian Mothers: An Empirical Study

Citation

Pandey, N., & Dhanopia, M. (2019). Work life balance and working Indian mothers: An empirical study. *International Journal of Engineering Applied Science and Technology*. 4(7). 119-124. <https://www.ijeast.com/papers/119-124,Tesma407,IJEAST.pdf>

Summary/Abstract Like the whole world, our Indian society too has undergone many changes. Indian women have become very aware of their rights. Now she does not want to depend on her husbands, for this she tries to be self-sufficient and independent. But the circumstances are not so simple. Managing work and family responsibility can be very difficult for the women employees. And if the woman is a mother, things get even more difficult, because responsibility also gets bigger. A woman who work or do any business or other work especially working mothers has to perform multiple roles in balancing their work life and personal life. Each role has its own set of demands and when such role demand overlaps/interacts, a difference is created leading to stress, attrition, absenteeism and other health issues etc.

Thus, there is an increasing need for organizations to address these demands of working mothers by implementing innovative HR policies. Work-life balance is one such HR practice that enables the employees particularly working mothers to give proper prioritization between work and lifespan roles. Hence, work-life balance has become a growing concern in all the sectors. Indian women have created a history in every domains of life today. She is now more being confident and positive. The present paper based on empirical research, delivers a deep insight of work-life balance of working mothers the problems faced by them in different phases of life. With the passage of time the relevance of work life balance becomes very important for working women when family responsibilities increase and care for children and other dependent become priority.

Title A Critical Social Psychological Contribution to (Global) Citizenship Education: Seeing Oneself through the Eyes of the ‘Other’

Citation

Park, E., Tsirogianni, S., & Sklad, M., (2019) A critical social psychological contribution to (global) citizenship education: Seeing oneself through the eyes of the ‘other’. *Annual Review of Critical Psychology*, 16, 1330-1358. <https://go.aws/2tkuWDR>

Summary/Abstract Taylor (2004) argues that the Western moral order is characterised by three key forms— the market economy, public sphere, and self-governance. These forms entail contradictory tendencies for the concept of selfhood and our relations with each other. We do endorse an autonomous and free self, who should pursue her goals, but is also expected to act ethically towards others through mutuality, equality, and collectivity. However, we are concerned with being authentic, i.e. being true to ‘ourselves’, as well as with recognising the needs and differences of the ‘other’. This moral order is based on notions of political equality, democracy, freedom, human rights, and privatised economic prosperity. Moving ‘with Holzkamp beyond Holzkamp’ (Teo, 2016), in this paper, we present a method to foster the skill to step out from one’s moral matrix, the invisible normalised moral order, and view oneself through the eyes of the ‘other’. Focusing on food practices, we developed a method for social self-clarification (Holzkamp, 1995). The skill to see oneself through the eyes of the ‘other’ is necessary in realising one’s entanglement in a global institutional order that foreseeably and avoidably produces severe inequalities.

Title Child-Centered Education: Criticisms

Citation

Shah, R.K., (2019). Child-centered education: Criticisms. *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, 8(1), 22–37. <https://doi.org/10.34293/ education.v8i1.1253>

Summary/Abstract There have been quite a lot of concerns and arguments over the appropriateness of CCE for developing countries where the social and cultural values, educational traditions, and available resources are so different from the West. Most of the educationists argue for the teacher-centered formalistic approach, which is believed to be more suitable for contexts where resources are sufficient, and teacher professional capability is very high. Issues related to CCE in developing countries have been the focus of discussion from the 1980s and particularly the 1990s. The primary intention of the present study to explore the significant criticisms related to child-centered education. Eleven serious objections: danger of centeredness; absenting knowledge; learner centeredness: scientifically validated?; freedom versus discipline; practicality of learner-centered teaching; individual and society; the absence of authentic social relationships; teacher’s roles; natural Sequence of development; the powerless female teacher and child; and the free and individual child: an illusionary and decontextualized construct have been discussed in the present article.

Title Study of Imaginative Play in Children using Neutrosophic Cognitive Maps Model

Citation

WB, V., Kandasamy, I., Devvrat, V., & Ghildiyal, S. (2019). Study of imaginative play in children using Neutrosophic Cognitive Maps Model. *Neutrosophic Sets & Systems*, 30, 241-252. <http://fs.unm.edu/NSS/StudyOfImaginativePlayInChildren.pdf>

Summary/Abstract This paper studies the imaginative play in young children using a model based on neutrosophic logic, viz, Neutrosophic Cognitive Maps (NCMs). NCMs are constructed with the help of expert opinion to establish relationships between the several concepts related with the imaginative play in children in the age group 1-10 years belonging to socially, economically and educationally backward groups. The NCMs are important in overcoming the hindrance posed by complicated and often imprecise nature of psychological or social data. Data was collected by video recording of children playing and the interpretations given by experts. Fifteen attributes / concepts related with children playing with the same toy were observed and according to experts several concepts were related and for some the relations between concepts were indeterminate, so it was appropriate to use NCMs. These NCMs were built using five expert's opinion and the hidden patterns of them happened to be a fixed point.

Title Education about Colour: A Look at Some Authors from the 19th and 20th Centuries in Italy: Corrado Ricci, Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni

Citation

Zuccoli, F. (2019). Education about colour: A look at some authors from the 19th and 20th centuries in Italy: Corrado Ricci, Maria Montessori and Giuseppina Pizzigoni. *Color Culture and Science Journal*, 11(02), 43-48. <https://doi.org/10.23738/CCSJ.110205>

Summary/Abstract In this contribution, the aim is to juxtapose three figures who, in spite of their very different skills, were interested in the element of colour. The first is Corrado Ricci, an illustrious art critic and historian, who started to study children's drawings at the end of the 1800s, making him one of the first in Italy to do so. In 1877, he published a small pamphlet called *L'arte dei bambini* (The art of children), which included a special reflection about the theme of colour. Conversely, the other two authors are pedagogists: Maria Montessori (1870–1952), an internationally renowned figure who also dealt with the theme of colour through her method, equipment and tools, and Giuseppina Pizzigoni (1870–1947), a pedagogist who dedicated positivist attention to the theme of colour, which she linked to natural aspects and a connection to the vegetable garden, a cornerstone of her method. At the end of this historical overview, a survey that was conducted by the Istituto Comprensivo Rinnovata Pizzigoni is presented, in an attempt to observe the colour-related proposals that have been made.

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