

Full Transcript of: Montessori Language Curriculum Demonstrations

Introduction to Montessori Language Demonstrations (Disclaimer)

This program is intended to give the viewers a general understanding of the presentation of Montessori materials to children. It is not intended as a course in The Montessori philosophy or background of each material.

The materials of themselves do not constitute the Montessori method. Those trained in the Montessori philosophy understand that the materials are secondary to the principle of developing independence through freedom of choice. It is this brain-driven developmental urge which the adult is trained to observe and support. With that training, the adult links the child to the self-teaching materials which match her interest.

A complete knowledge of the materials and their function requires a certified Montessori Education Program which traditionally requires at least a year of training and internship. Montessori materials are usually presented at a child-sized table, or on the floor. Floor materials require a rug to differentiate the material from the surrounding space and to provide an orderly environment in which to work.

Overview of the Demonstrations

The Montessori environment should be beautiful. Materials are designed to be colorful and pleasing to the eye. Whenever possible the materials stimulate the child's sense of touch, hearing, and even his taste or smell to maximize learning.

The materials are presented in a carefully planned order that provides the child with new challenges when he is ready to take them on. A new material may provide new small muscle challenges or more abstract thinking. The teacher's role is to observe when the child is ready and introduce new work accordingly.

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The emphasis in a Montessori classroom is the love of learning. It is not important that a child learn faster than his classmates. Every child works at his own pace, moving on when he is ready. When a child is working, he is rarely interrupted. By giving the child control of his own work, Montessori makes learning a powerful experience that keeps the child motivated. Montessori children love learning because it is fun, it is beautiful, it is age appropriate, and is designed to meet their needs.

1. Language Cards

The Montessori language curriculum begins with a variety of sets of Language Cards. In this example, the cards represent materials found in the Montessori classroom. The top card in the box indicates the contents. Any objects from plants and animals to tools and road vehicles can be used. The purpose of the language cards is to build the child's vocabulary. The teacher reviews each card with the child. If the child successfully names the object, the card is put aside. If the child is not sure, the teacher identifies the object and places it in a separate pile. Once the teacher has completed reviewing the cards, she goes back to the stack of unfamiliar cards and chooses three with contrasting appearance and proceeds with a "Three Period Lesson."



The teacher lays out the cards. The first step is identifying each card. The binomial cube. The child repeats, the binomial cube. The spindle boxes. The child repeats, the spindle boxes and finally the painted globe.

The second step of the three period lesson is to ask the child to show you the card. "Where is the painted globe?" the teacher asks. The child points to the globe. "Show me the binomial cube." The child points to the card.

The teacher mixes up the cards and practices again with the child using the second step in the three period lesson.

Finally, in the third period or step, the teacher asks the child, "What is this?" and the child will respond. "This is the painted globe."

The three period lesson is frequently used to make learning new words fun. The teacher is able to observe the child and move ahead to the next step when he is ready.

2. Sound Games

The Sound Game is played with a set of objects that begin with distinctly different sounds. Usually the teacher will have several children play the sound game together. Here the teacher introduces each one by emphasizing the initial sound, In my hand I have a t, t, t tomato. In my hand I have a c, c, c, cup. In my hand I have a b, b, b box. In my hand I have a h, h, h, horse. After each is introduced, she will ask, "Show me something on the rug that starts with c." The child would answer "cup."

Many different objects can be used for sound games. There are also sound games based on the middle sound, the ending sound or words that all have the same sound.

3. Sandpaper Letters

Sandpaper Letters are used to practice beginning letter writing and the sounds of the alphabet because reading requires one to know the sound the letter makes, not its name. The letter names are not difficult to learn once the child is reading. The first letter here is mmmm. The teacher traces the letter once or twice and repeats mmmmm. The teacher passes the letter on to the child and gives some examples of the sound in a word, mmilk or mmmarshmellow. The child repeats the process tracing and saying the sound.

The teacher introduces a second letter "t" in the same manner. She passes it on to the child and says turtle. The third letter is the vowel "a." Vowels are color-coded blue.

A three period lesson can be used to reinforce the child's memory of the sounds.

3. Sand Tray

The Sand Tray is a very popular material for most children. The child chooses several sounds that she is familiar with. The teacher presents each letter by tracing it and then repeating the process in the sand. After each tracing, the sand tray can be shaken to restore it to an even surface. If a mistake is made, the child shakes the sand tray and it disappears, allowing the child the opportunity to begin again with a fresh start.

4. Movable Alphabet



The first step in the presentation of the moveable alphabet is to prepare a space on the floor in the classroom by laying out a rug. The child retrieves the Movable Alphabet from the shelf.

Prior to beginning the work, the child should straighten any letters in the box and make sure that all the letters are in the proper slots. The vowels are located in a row at the top of the box and are color coded blue. The consonants are color coded pink.

The first step may be matching sandpaper letters with the moveable alphabet letters. The child may retrieve sandpaper letters from the shelf and then match them side-by-side with the moveable alphabet.

The material allows the child to write out words and eventually to construct simple sentences.

In this presentation, the teacher says, I'm going to make "hat." As she lays out the letters, she repeats the letter sounds. h, a, t. hat.

Next the child chooses a word, "mom." "mmmm o mmmm. mom."

The child can continue to make words with the assistance of an adult.

When the work is completed, the child places the letters back in the slots and returns them to the shelf.

5. Metal Insets

This is the triangle Metal Inset. This work develops hand/eye coordination and the beginning small muscle skills of writing.

The work is brought to a table and the pieces are removed from the tray .

The outside frame of the triangle is placed on the paper and the edge is slowly and carefully traced. The proper holding of the pencil is emphasized.

The outside frame is replaced and the triangle inset is next placed on the paper and the child traces again with the goal of matching the original triangle.

After completing the triangle, the child fills in the triangle with curved lines, taking care to come as close to the edge as she can without touching it.

There are eight metal insets representing common geometric shapes. Repetition using all eight insets will result in significant improvement in the child's ability to manage a writing instrument.

6. Handwriting Practice – Unlined Chalkboard

Handwriting practice begins with the Unlined Chalkboard. This material follows extensive practice with the sand tray and the metal insets. The child chooses three letters for practice from the sandpaper letters.

The teacher demonstrates the tracing of the letter repeating the sound of the letter, t, t. She then writes the letter on the chalkboard continuing to say the sound. After she is done, she erases the chalkboard letter and hands the sandpaper letter to the child

The child follows the demonstrated procedure, tracing the letter several times and then writing it on the chalkboard repeatedly.



7. Lined Chalkboard

The Lined Chalkboard is more difficult than the unlined chalkboard because the writing space is defined. The child may begin using a double line or if he has the skill, can attempt the more difficult task of writing within a single line..

Often the child chooses letters he is familiar with and practices these letters, writing rows of each letter for practice.

Eventually, the child will practice words and sentences that he knows from working with the moveable alphabet.

When the child begins working with the lined chalkboard, he is usually ready to begin writing on paper and may do this activity simultaneously.

8. Phonetic Object Game

The Phonetic Object Game begins with a box of objects that contain only phonetic sounds. The work also includes a writing tray that provides all the supplies needed to complete this work. This tray is for the teacher. A simpler tray is available for the child to use for independent work. In this case the objects are a lamp, a bell, a sun pendant, and a fan. The teacher and the child look at each object and repeat the name carefully sounding out each phonetic sound in the word. l-a-m-p, s-u-n. b-e-l-l, f-a-n.

Then the game begins. The teacher says, "I'm thinking of one of these objects. Which one do you think I am thinking of?"

"The child says, "fan."

The teacher replies, "No, not the fan. I'm going to make you a clue." She selects a slip of paper and slowly writes "bell." Usually, before she is done, the child names the object, "bell", getting the clue from the initial consonant "b."

The teacher continues with each object until all four are labeled. Once all four labels are completed, the teacher asks the child to choose a color for his book cover and she constructs a book with the four words the child can successfully sound out. The book is dated and becomes the possession of the child.

The teacher returns the teacher's tray to its place and the child returns the phonetic object box to the shelf and picks up the independent phonetic object work. The independent box usually has the same objects, although they may be slightly different in appearance. Also, a set of word cards are provided for the child to match with the object. Each word is phonetically sounded out prior to matching it with the object.

The child can use his book as a control of error for this work.

9. Phonetic Reading Cards

The Phonetic Reading Cards move beyond objects but continue to focus on words that can be sounded out. Each card is color coded in the same manner as the moveable alphabet. The vowels are blue and the consonants are pink.



One-by-one the child removes the cards and sounds them out. ddd aaa ddd. “dad.” ccc aaa nnn. “can.”

Initially, each set of cards may have the same vowel sound or beginning sound. As the child becomes proficient in reading phonetic words, the cards may become two and three syllables using all the vowel sounds.

10. Phonogram Alphabet

When the child has become comfortable with the phonetic sounds, the teacher may present the Phonogram Alphabet material. Usually the adult will carry one tray and the child will carry the other.

As with the moveable alphabet, the letters may need to be straightened out prior to beginning the work.

As the letters are being organized, the teacher may ask, “What do you notice about these boxes?” The child may reply, “One of them has black letters and one of them has red letters.”

The Phonogram alphabet introduces print letters with the letters in a 26 slotted box in a-z order.

The red letters are reserved for the phonogram in the word. A phonogram is a combination of letters that make a sound, such as “c- h, ch; t-h, th or p-h, f.”

There are 96 phonograms in the English language.

In this case, the teacher introduces the word corn. It has the phonogram “or” so the “o” and “r” are written with red letters.

The teacher asks, “Can you think of another word that has “or” in it? The child may reply, “horn.” The child can spell out the word using red letters for the phonogram.

11. Phonogram Object Box

Like the Phonetic Object Game, the phonogram object box begins with objects to sound out. The four objects from the box are laid out.

basket, pen, tub, corn.

Only one of these words has a phonogram in it. The teacher says, “If you notice only one of these words cannot be sounded out. “b a sss ka t – basket, p e nnnn – pen. t u b. tub”, but if you sounded out c-o-r-n, it would be “carn.”

Upon completion of this work, the teacher takes the words she has written out and makes another book, placing the phonogram at the back of the book. The book is the child’s to keep as a record of his new knowledge.

Here we see a sample of some of the phonogram objects.

12. Puzzle Words

The Puzzle Words are words that cannot be sounded out, or that the child should recognize quickly in a sentence. Like the language cards, the teacher reviews the puzzle words with the child to identify which words come easily and which remain difficult. At the end of this

presentation, three of the words that the child could not identify are chosen for a three period lesson.

As the three words are laid out, it is good to use the word in a sentence to further emphasize the word's meaning. "Have, I have a bracelet on." for example.

"This, this is my favorite day of the week." It is good to use each word in a sentence. The teacher continues with a three period lesson.

It is a good idea to keep a record of which puzzle words have been presented to a particular child. There are many puzzle words and good records prevent needless repetition of words the child has already learned.

13. Reading Classification

Reading Classification introduces more complex words that are used to describe things in nature or in our own environment. In this case, we are doing classification work on land and water. The four cards are labeled, island, lake, straight and isthmus.

The child lays out control cards with the picture and the word written below. To check the work, the child reads the classification word at the bottom of each card.

The next step is to lay out four definition cards. Each card describes one of the four examples in the previous work.

A body of water bounded on two sides by land. It connects two larger bodies of water.

The child matches the word *strait* with its definition.

After all four definitions are matched, control cards are used to verify the child's work.

A booklet accompanying this material can also be used to check the child's answers.

The final step is to take cards that have the components of the definitions cut into strips. The child must assemble the cards to create definitions of each word. The booklet or control card can be used to verify the work.

Reading classification is used for many areas of interest including botany, geometry, items you might find at home, transportation, or works of art.

14. Functions of Words: The Farm

In most Montessori classrooms, you will find the Farm. These familiar animals and farm scenes are used in a variety of language-building activities. The farm's *primary* role is to introduce the functions of words.

The teacher writes, "the pig" on a slip of paper and asks the child to find that animal on the farm and bring it back to the table. The teacher responds, "no, that is not the pig I wanted. Let me give you another clue." She writes, "the spotted pig." The word "spotted" is moved before and after the slip and read. "The pig spotted. Spotted the pig." The teacher says, "That doesn't sound right." She cuts "the pig" into two words and then tries several other possibilities until she arrives at the correct order, "the spotted pig." Now the teacher says we are going to match the words with a symbol. She draws a large black triangle and says to the child, "This is the symbol for what – what did you bring?" The child responds "the pig", so the black triangle is placed above the word pig representing a noun.



She then asks, “Which word told you which one to bring?” The child responds “spotted”. The teacher places a small dark blue triangle above the adjective spotted.

Finally the teacher asks, “Which word told you any one or a particular one?” The child responds, “the.” The teacher places a smaller light blue triangle above the article “the.”

In Montessori, there are symbols that represent each part of speech. The child learns to visualize these symbols as a method of identifying the function of each word.

The teacher then introduces the independent work to the child. The adjective box is marked with a small blue triangle. In this box are a number of phrases referring to farm animals. The child selects “the tiny lamb.” Obtaining a slip of paper from the child’s writing tray, she writes “the tiny lamb” on the slip. Using the scissors she cuts the three words into separate slips of paper and experiments with the order to see which order makes the most sense. When she decides that, “the tiny lamb” sounds the best, she labels the phrase with the appropriate symbols.

15. Detective Adjective Game

The Detective Adjective Game builds on the child’s new understanding of the function of the adjective. A large variety of brightly colored triangles are laid out on a rug. Using adjectives, the child is going to find a particular triangle amongst this maze of different triangles.

The teacher lays out the phrase, “the triangle.” Every object on the rug is a triangle so we need more information. She chooses the word “red” from the box. Now we know we are looking for a red triangle, so all yellow and blue triangles can be removed. The child can then choose a triangle but they are all red. Which one are we looking for? The next adjective is “small.” We can then remove all the medium size and large triangles from the rug. Selecting the next clue takes a bit longer. The first one drawn is large. “No, we don’t have any large triangles.” The next one is medium. “We don’t have any medium triangles either.” The next clue is equilateral. All the triangles that are not equilateral are removed. We now have found the correct triangle. It is a small red equilateral triangle. The child is now ready to play the Detective Adjective Game alone or with a friend.

16. Conjunctions

Here we see the presentation for the Conjunction Symbol. We have the children’s writing tray, the symbol box and a ribbon needed to demonstrate conjunction.

The teacher writes, “the red pencil” and asks the child to get a red pencil from the shelf.

Next the teacher writes the phrase, “the pink pencil” and the student gets a pink pencil.

Finally, the teacher writes, “the black pencil” and the child gets a black pencil.

The teacher asks the child to repeat each phrase, “the red pencil, the pink pencil, the black pencil.” Using two small slips of paper, the teacher adds the conjunction “and” to connect the three phrases, “the red pencil *and* the pink pencil *and* the black pencil.”

The pencils are gathered together and tied into a bundle to represent the role of a conjunction in a sentence.

The phrases are then labeled in the familiar manner. What? The *pencil*. Which one? The *red pencil*. Any one or a particular one? “*the red pencil*”

After labeling all three phrases, the symbol for the conjunction is introduced. “This is the symbol for words that connect. She lays down the conjunction and asks the child to find the symbol for words that connect to label the second “and.”

The child’s work for the conjunction includes a box with phrases and conjunctions to provide practice in understanding how a conjunction works in a sentence. Farm objects are used to help the child visualize the meaning of the sentence.

In a similar manner, the preposition is introduced. In Montessori, the preposition is represented by a green arc.

17. Verbs

The introduction of the Verb Symbol begins with writing out some action words. In this case, the teacher is working with two children. Each child acts out the sound. Cough, (coughing sound) and hummm – hmhhh. The action cough is represented by a big red circle.

The independent work provides the child with a box of verbs. As each is laid out, the child performs the action and then labels it with the red circle. A strong connection is made between the function of a verb and the symbol of action represented by the red circle.

18. Logical Adverb Game

In the Logical Adverb Game, red verb cards are matched with orange adverb cards. Here the teacher lays out four verbs and four adverbs.

The child checks the meaning to see if it makes sense. The first says, “write beautifully.” That makes sense so we go onto the next one. “Weed high” does not make sense so the adverb high is removed. “Sing loudly” and “think quickly” do make sense. We look for an appropriate adverb for weed and “carefully” seems to work well. Now the red circle is used to label each verb and a small orange circle is used to label each adverb.

The symbols were chosen to match the function of the word. The black triangle is a solid pyramid like symbol that represents noun or person – place or thing. A pyramid is a thing in a place where a person is buried. The adjective and articles modify the noun and are smaller triangles with distinct color-codes.

The red circle indicates action and motion, so it is used for verbs. A smaller orange circle modifies the verb, representing the adverb.

19. Sentence Structure

Once the child has become familiar with all the symbols, she can begin to create Sentence Structures.

The teacher writes the phrase Megan rides and walks. Megan can perform the action ‘walk’ while the teacher writes a control phrase. The phrase is cut into separate words and the sentence structure box is opened. Do you recognize any of these symbols? Megan might say, “the circle.” The words *rides* and *walks* are laid out onto two circles with the conjunction and linking them together. Megan is tied to the verbs with two black bars to indicate how the sentence “Megan rides and walks” is structured.