

Montessori Education for Autism
MEFA

Out of Education - Into Employment
Workshop 1(c): Why Montessori?
Wendy Fidler

Learn 2012- Inclusive Education and Vocational Options
28-29 January 2012
Taj Connemara, No 2 Binny Road, Anna Salai, Chennai, 600 -002

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Multi-grade learning

- Frequently, one hears complaints about having to deal with a multi-grade class in government schools and it is seen as a disadvantage for the teacher and for the child. Many in the field of education want to convert these into one-room, one-class and one-teacher systems. But in Neel Bagh, and also in the Montessori approach, a mixed age group, a multi-grade environment is the preferred way of working.
- It is thought of as an ideal learning environment for the child.

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Can such practice be replicated?

- Each person brings into the school his or her unique self. The teacher and others working in schools need help to think through ideas, look at unexamined feelings and have classroom skills at their fingertips, so that they can arrive at a practice that is essential for children.
- This is a **serious step-change** for teachers in cultures where education is perceived to be synonymous with teaching.

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Authority or Equality?

- Most people have grown up in families that are intrinsically authoritarian and then have attended schools, which are again rather dominating.
- To get out of this cloak of power and domination and work in an egalitarian fashion needs to be done professionally in the training programmes.
- Any so-called ordinary teacher can be helped to become a good teacher. In Neel Bagh, the teacher was from the nearby town of Madanapalle and was trained to be a special kind of a teacher.

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Each Child Learns Differently

- We cannot all be David Horsburgh, and that is not the intention, but we can each be our own David and battle against the Goliaths of the system to ensure a better learning world for our children.
- And one of the Goliaths is the assumption that all children can learn the same thing, at the same time and in the same manner. They cannot do so.
- Each child learns differently and there is an urgency to recognise this principle in our schools today.

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Read more about Neel Bagh

- The author is an Education Consultant in UNICEF, Bhubaneshwar;
- This article about Neel Bagh was accessed from The Hindu magazine:
- <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2004/01/11/stories/2004011100190700.htm>

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Read the Evaluation of ABL

- There is a detailed evaluation of the efficacy of ABL at:
- <http://www.educationforallindia.com/evaluation-of-activity-based-learning-of-tamil-nadu.pdf>

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Relevance of Montessori to Transition

- Montessori education has a proven record in India, here in Tamil Nadu, also in Andhra Pradesh (RIVER programme) and elsewhere;
- Montessori urges a step-change in our approach to education
- Education is a process which children engage with – not front of class teaching.
- In Montessori we FOLLOW THE CHILD

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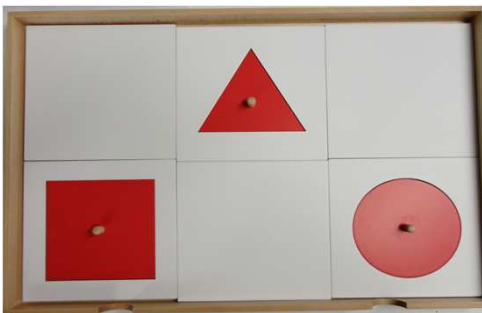
Montessori – how does it work?

- From the concrete to the abstract
- Let us take the cabinet of geometric shapes and remove the draw with the most simple shapes – a circle, a square and a triangle
- NB This is the order in which children learn to draw shapes ...
- As with the Insets for Design, we use our finger tips to trace round the shapes ...

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Geometric Shapes (2D Solids)



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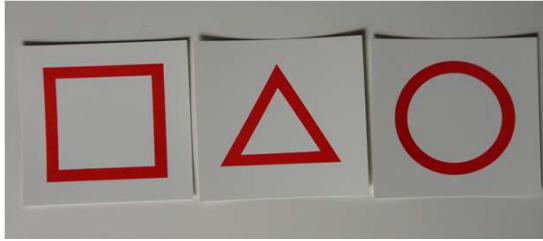
Geometric Shapes (ID Solid)



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Geometric Shapes (1D Thick Line)



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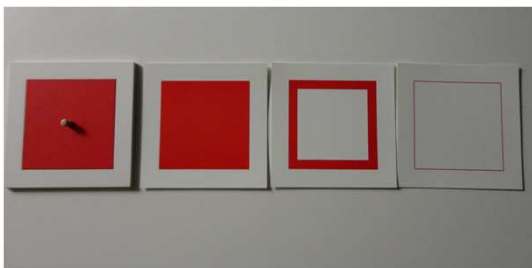
Geometric Shapes (1D Thin Line)



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From the Concrete to the Abstract



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Progression



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Namaste!

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