

MONTESSORI Workshop



This book contains concise information that explains Montessori education, and describes in detail the proper use and handling of the Montessori didactical materials important to the practical implementation of the Montessori philosophy.

The concrete activities described will help teachers to maintain a learning environment that assists children to acquire knowledge through their own activity.

Over 250 photographs and illustrations of Montessori materials, and children working with these materials, will help parents understand the daily activities of their children at school.

This book is also excellent for home-schooling since it prescribes the progression of activities for all subjects in the pre-school curriculum for children in the 3½ years before primary school.



Carol Guy-James Barratt

“MONTESSORI Workshop” is a procedural manual for working with children of 2½ to 6 years of age. It has been predominantly written to accompany and improve the practical formation of Montessori preschool teachers. It gives detailed descriptions on how to use Montessori didactical material for children in the three and ½ years before primary school. “MONTESSORI Workshop” describes the basic philosophy behind the method and explains how the classroom functions on a daily basis. The manual also facilitates parents comprehension of their children's activities. The author of the book, Carol Guy-James Barratt has devoted her life to the development of children. For over 20 years Mrs. Barratt has worked for the implantation of the Montessori method in a politically and socially difficult country: Haïti. After her professional education in Trinidad and London she trained (and later organised the training of) well over 700 Haitian men and (mostly) women in the use of the Montessori didactical method. This was and still is supported by the Peter-Hesse-Foundation of Germany. The creation of a large number of Montessori preschools is the result of this work. The majority of those preschools continue to work and grow in Haiti in a sustainable way.

What are the reasons for this success?

Certainly the personal engagement of Carol Barratt as well as the enduring motivation of her first students from all social sectors in Haiti. But Maria Montessori is also to be praised for having developed a hundred years ago in Italy a didactical method which is “trainable” – even in oral cultures, where the students have rarely been given a chance to receive a basic education of some quality. “Normally” one needs at least a good secondary school background before being accepted to a professional quality formation of this type. However, the Montessori method is so well adjusted to the needs of the individual development of a child that even students who have merely learned how to handle the didactical material can use this knowledge for the benefit of the learning children. When demonstrated correctly to a child, the Montessori material is self-explanatory and children learn without depending solely on the teacher. In a guided self-learning process children can fully acquire and develop their intellectual as well as physical and emotional capacities – following their own individual learning rhythm.

After many years of practical work with children in this method as well as after over 20 years of Montessori training experience, we are happy to be able to present this English version of the training manual. Recently the French version “Atelier MONTESSORI” (ISBN 978-3-9811650-0-5) preceded this book “MONTESSORI Workshop” (ISBN 078-3-9811650-1-2). Both manuals are for the benefit of children in all French and English speaking countries where governments or private institutions are interested in introducing or improving good quality child-centred early-childhood development. Due to the didactical step-by-step process described in those books, they may also serve as a guideline for parents and in situations, where there are not (yet) any Montessori teachers. Due to many illustrations and precise procedural instructions, readers will be able to understand and eventually even make use of the method themselves for their children.

We warmly thank Carol Guy-James Barratt for not only having sustained our Montessori preschool-project in Haiti during those 20 years since the beginning of the first one-year training cycle in Cap Haitien in 1986 – but also for her valuable contribution to give children in many parts of our world a starting chance in life through the writing of these books. Thus, the key purpose of the Peter-Hesse-Foundation “SOLIDARTY IN PARTNERSHIP for ONE world in diversity” – the improvement of high quality Early Childhood Development in the framework of the “Education For All (Dakar)-goals” of the United Nations – is being fulfilled and can now extend from Haiti's children to many more children in our world.



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Content of the 283 pages of the "MONTESSORI Workshop", a teacher's manual with over 250 illustrations – for work with children from 2 ? to 6 :

The importance of quality Early Childhood Education (page 7 – and here below).
Montessori education (main questions/subjects):
What? How conceived? What after? The philosophy. The teacher's role (pages 8-14).
Technical use of the Montessori material (pages 16-18).
Practical life exercises (pages 19-42). + The sensorial materials (pages 43-83).
Language (extract):
Learning a second language, literacy, materials, the verb game (pages 85-121)
Mathematics (extract):
Numbers, quantities, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division (pages 122-199)
Cultural Subjects (subject-categories):
Geography, history, science, living organisms, craft, art, music (pages 201-254)
Starting your Montessori class (pages 257-272)
On discipline and on evaluation (pages 273-278)
Bibliography (pages 279-282) + On the author Carol Guy-James Barratt (page 283)

The Importance of Quality Early Childhood Education

Quality early childhood education plays an important role in influencing the type of person the child will become, since it deals with the period of life when the base for competence and coping skills is established. Research has demonstrated that the base for competence and coping skills depends on the way the brain develops. The wiring and sculpturing of the brain take place during early childhood, and experience during this period drives the wiring of the brain and builds its basic capabilities.

There are critical periods when a young child requires appropriate stimulation for the brain to develop neural pathways for optimum development of specific capabilities. By age six the critical periods are over or waning. Children, who do not receive the stimulation necessary for the development of specific capabilities during their critical periods, have great difficulty overcoming deficits later on. Although it is possible to develop the brain's capacity to compensate and overcome some deficits, full potential will not be achieved.

Quality early childhood education programs can provide essential experiences for brain development and consequently have a direct effect on cognitive abilities. These experiences can have an enduring effect on intellectual and scholastic abilities and influence future learning capacity. Good early childhood education programs can also help children to develop social skills by providing a stimulating positive interaction with the environment, adults, and other children.

Although individual children develop at their own pace, all children progress through a sequence of physical, cognitive and emotional growth and change. As children develop, they need different types of stimulation to exercise their evolving skills and to develop new ones. By the time they enter school, children who attend high quality programs out-perform children in lower quality programs on measures of learning and development. Quality early childhood education programs give children access to the opportunities that promote school readiness and ensure that the school experience will be successful. The primary goal of a first rate early childhood program is to help each child reach full potential in all areas of life, develop self-esteem, and provide the experiences from which knowledge is constructed. A quality program is important because it allows children to create themselves through purposeful activity during the most important years for learning. Children will not be able to achieve their full potential once this critical period for learning is over.



Carol Guy-James Barratt, born in Trinidad, started her professional career working with delinquent youth at the St Michaels School for Boys in Diego Martin. She was introduced to Montessori education by Sheila John of the Happyvale Montessori School, where she worked for 2½ years before leaving Trinidad for formal training at the St Nicholas Training Center for the Montessori Method of Education in London, and then at the London Montessori College. In 1985 she traveled to Haiti and started working with the Peter Hesse Foundation to train Montessori teachers and promote early childhood education. As Founding Directrice of the Centre Montessori d’Haiti, Carol has dedicated herself to improving the skills of Haitian teachers for child-centered education and training a growing cadre of professionals using the Montessori method. This small project had grown to a network of schools and teacher training centers throughout Haiti. She has also trained teachers in schools in Senegal and South Africa. Her work in early childhood education was recognized by a nomination for the Right Livelihood Award in 1998.

Carol has lived in several countries in Africa, Europe and the Caribbean and traveled extensively. She combined her artistic and professional pursuits when she was invited to design the Early Childhood Exhibit in the Basics Needs Pavilion for the World Expo2000 in Hanover. She is continuing her work to improve the standard of education for under-served children.
