GUIDE FOR THE APPLICATION OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD TO TEACHING 2nd LANGUAGE IN ADULT EDUCATION

Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership in the Field of Adult Education
Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults - MMTLA
Project Number : 2019-1-TR01-KA204-074258

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PREFACE:

Educational innovation is a high priority contributing to key targets on adult learning, up-skilling and modernization of training in the Europe 2020 strategy and the European agenda for adult learning (European Commission, 2013; Barroso, 2012; Council of the European Union, 2011). The Montessori Method is a rather old but very effective educational method that has been implemented especially for the education of children. It is based on the individual needs of each learner and therefore it can address the learners' needs in different education fields and training sectors and take into deep consideration the personal attitude, learning time and psychological blocks. According to Ryniker and Shoho (2001), the Montessori approach is based on the idea that learners learn most effectively when information is developmentally appropriate.

The main objective of the project 'Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults-MMTLA' is to define a method for language teaching based on the concept of the Montessori' methodology which can be adaptive, intuitive, easy to implement, practical and easy way for people of all ages to understand the concept of learning language and improve much better and learn languages.

This manual guidebook is prepared by the full contribution of all project partners for the transfer of the Montessori Method in language teaching/learning to adults. The manual guidebook contains the philosophy of Montessori Method, its principles and the reports of teacher training activities in partner countries.

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PART 1

THE MONTESSORI METHOD FOR ADULTS

1. Introduction – Montessori Method for Adults

'My vision of the future is of the individual passing from one stage of independence to a higher, by means of their own activity, through their own effort of will, which constitutes the inner evolution of the individual.'

Maria Montessori, 1996 [1948]

Who is Maria Montessori?

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was born in Chiaravalle, Italy. She was the first woman to practice medicine in Italy. She developed interest in education for children with mental retardation and studied with Jean Itard and Edouard Séguin, two pioneers in this field.

In 1901, she was assigned as the director of a psychiatric clinic associated to the University of Rome that was dedicated to the care of children with mental retardation. There, she put into practice the idea of having a scientific approach in the field of education, a theory taken from her two references and based on observation and experimentation. In two years, she succeeded in helping eight children from her institute to pass the official exam in reading and writing competences for normal children of the same age. This "miracle" that amazed the world made Maria Montessori reflects on the state of general education:

"While the whole world admired the progress of my disabled children, I searched the reasons why children at normal schools were kept at such a low level, that even my unfortunate students were able to equal them in exams that measure their intelligence! I started to convince myself that if similar methods were applied on normal children, they would develop or free their personality in a surprising and wonderful way".

With this conviction, and with the purpose of preparing herself for her new role as an educator, Montessori studied Philosophy, Psychology, Education and Anthropology. In 1907, she had the opportunity to implement her ideas when she was offered to create a nursery for children between 2 and 6 years old in a housing development in San Lorenzo, an impoverished town in Rome where families with illiterate working parents lived. This nursery was called "Casa dei Bambini" (Children's House**).**

The environment itself will teach the child, if every error he makes is manifest to him, without the intervention of a parent or teacher, who should remain a quiet observer of all that happens (Montessori, 1972, p. 38).

Based on her observations, Montessori implemented a number of practices that became hallmarks of her educational philosophy and method. She felt by working independently, children could reach new levels of autonomy and become self-motivated to reach new levels of understanding. She also experimented that with allowing children free choice of the materials, uninterrupted work, and freedom of movement and activity within the limits set by the environment. She saw that independence as the aim of education and the role of the teacher as an observer and director of children's innate psychological development.

One of the basic tenets of Montessorian education, in fact, is that learners should be given the opportunity to come to grips with the problematic aspects of the reality they encounter every day. Thus, little children in Montessori schools learn to come to grips with the problems of equilibrium they encounter daily by using special tower-building materials and playing special movement games.

What adult learners collide with, in encountering a new and different cultural reality (on a trip abroad or in a conference with numerous foreign delegations) is not the strangeness of the other party's use of grammar – indeed, their grammar may not even be perceived. What adult learners collide with empirically is exactly what little children and illiterate immigrants collide with, in interacting with speakers of other languages: the strangeness of the sounds and rhythms and prosodic effects that their interlocutors emit, the strangeness of their behaviour or expectations or assumptions; the strangeness of their "way of saying things", in particular their idiomatic usages. Learning to come to grips with these problems and others like them – not with the target language grammar or vocabulary per se – therefore constitutes the priority in any Montessorian language course for adults. Such a course addresses the needs arising from the felt experience of learners in real-life situations.

The methodology of Montessori Method is adaptive and easy to implement teaching language to adults. Moreover it is accepted by other members of the European Community as an intuitive, practical and easy way for people of any age to understand and learn languages effortlessly. It addresses the needs of learners in different education and training sectors and combine traditional face-to-face workshops with e-learning and ICT based learning.

As Boldrini said 'Some authors affirm how the formal education risks being not inclusive if it doesn't take into account the personal and social background of the adults (Gardner and Novotni, 2003). To interact effectively with others, an individual must be attentive, responsible and able to control impulsive behaviours (Landau, S., & Moore, 1991). Adults with disadvantages are often inattentive and forgetful and typically lack impulse control. Their social situation can become an "invisible disability" creating further barriers towards the reintegration in the labour market.'[1]

[1] Boldrini, F. (2015) Montessori method for orienting and motivating adults a model for the application of the method in adult education.

2. Experiences and Indications for Teachers, Experts and Common

According to the linguist and interculturalist Patrick Boylan, "*language is an overall modulation of social behaviour created by repeated reactions to meaning-sharing events and by repeated attempts at (co-)producing such events in response to a felt need to represent something (to oneself, to others), to do something (through representation), and in any case to be something (through representation)*" (Boylan, 2002: p. 167)

According to Pallotti "*second language*" is "*any language learned after the first, then also [the] third, [the] fourth, etc.* ..." (Pallotti, 1998: p. 13). He also reminds us that "*the expression 'second language' is often used in contrast with the expression 'foreign language'. A second language would be a language learned in a country where it is regularly spoken [… while] a foreign language would be a language learned in school or training settings, in a country where it is not spoken*" (Pallotti, 1998: p. 13, our translation).

Pallotti's distinction is, however, a useful reminder to teachers of languages in school and training settings, to find ways to furnish occasions for real-life contact with speakers of the language being taught. Each adult learner has his/her own learning needs and priorities. Therefore, language teachers, at the beginning of a course, must discuss at length, with their students, the most likely specific future uses of the language to be taught and, once the varieties and social contexts have been defined, prepare appropriate learning materials, useful for cross-cultural communication. Teachers should be careful while choosing appropriate textbook or didactive videos to teach the target language exclusively.

At the same time, teachers should help learners to discover, any inner motivations for choosing to study a second language that these students might have.

Three such motivations, frequently encountered in adult learners are:

- The desire to escape from their daily routines and discover new cultures and ways of life through learning a new language;
- The desire to redeem a previous unsuccessful (and perhaps unhappy) language learning experience by successfully (and enjoyably) acquiring a needed second language;
- The desire to acquire the breadth of vision (and social prestige) associated with bilingualism and acquired when languages are taught not just as grammatical systems, but as new ways of seeing as well as using it.

Teachers should permit learners to discover their passion to learn second language by letting them freely choose their learning materials and learning activities not only in the classroom but also the resources they can find in their home towns. They could be invited to try to establish contacts with native speakers (tourists or foreign students spending a semester in a local university etc. or all native speakers in case of L2. They could also search for institutions related to the culture of the target language they are studying. In seeking out native speakers, learners will inevitably use the language they are studying and discover, from real life experience, how behavioural factors affect the quality of their reciprocal understanding, more than the purely verbal aspects.

In addition, let us not forget that Montessori's first aim was not to pour knowledge into the minds of learners, but to form rich and autonomous personalities.

The environment itself will teach the child, if every error he makes is manifest to him, without the

intervention of a parent or teacher, who should remain a quiet observer of all that happens (Montessori, 1972, p. 38)

Although these quotes refer to children, we can easily adapt them to learners of all ages. In case of quote 1, Montessorian language teachers must respect the intelligence as well as the idiosyncrasies of their adult learners; thus, they must let the inner needs of their learners manifest themselves by offering them a non-linear, non-pre-established syllabus, i.e., a syllabus that evolves as learners gradually discover, from lesson to lesson, what really interests them in their encounter with a second language and culture, and manifest their interests by the activities they choose to undertake and the degree to which those activities seem to absorb them. This means, first of all, that the teacher must give up her/his preconceptions about what "good teaching" entails and what students "ought" to be doing during a lesson. The teacher should provide students with the tools that allow them to solve, on their own, the problems they are facing, or simply to achieve, on their own, the learning goals they set, and which may evolve over time.

The second quote is closely connected to the first one: educate the learner to become independent. Let learners freely invent solutions to their learning problems.

The third quote refers specifically to the ethical sensitivity of the child and considers the moral and spiritual dimensions of each learner. This perception of the child's radical integrity, extended to adult learners, requires the language teacher to tell the truth about what it means to learn a language means (and also what institutional impositions, if any, have to be dealt with). "What it means to learn a language" is an act of discovery.

The Montessorian teacher does not offer a pre-programmed package of what the "best" textbooks propose as model curricula, but seeks to discover what really helps specific learners grasp what they see as problematic in encountering second languages and cultures in their real-life manifestations.

3. The Principles of the MMTLA Model

Montessori is driven by respect for the child, by non-judgmental observation and compassionate kindness, and by a nurturing environment that gives autonomy with support. This approach will be a mirror of the Montessori classroom in the adult world, too. Adults, like children, are naturally peaceful, and curious, and good. And what is needed are structures and practices that give the freedom and support for the inherent goodness, peacefulness, and curiosity of the adults to blossom; in the way that the Montessori method does so for children.

Montessori language teaching can be defined as an approach based on a full immersion in a language environment with self-corrective activities, fostering autonomy and the quintessence of problem-solving learning by developing the critical ability towards a foreign language.

Montessori language teaching with adults and young adults can be defined as an approach based on activities aimed to the development of each learner's criticism towards foreign language studies and how to succeed. To reach this goal, most activities are self-corrective, to encourage the autonomous learning. The full application of these principles and the methodology allows a natural language learning among adults over 20 years old, by eliminating or, at least, alleviating the major causes of stress and inhibition.

Language teachers often meet the same problems, above all with adults, immigrants or young adults over 20, such as a refusal to learn new languages and trainees' early abandon of their training course, often due to the lack of time and the idea that in adult age, learning a language is much more difficult. This is mainly due to an obsolete approach to languages, often too standardised, without keeping in due consideration the adults' psychological blocks and individual learning times.

The Principles of the Montessori Method for the actualization of the Montessori Method and its application in adult education are:

- The Absorbent Mind
- Learning Environment
- Experimentation and Exploration
- Observation
- Independence.

4. About the Project and Target Groups

In recent years, sustainable social and economic development, along with intercultural dialogue, has been sought through efforts to ensure universal access to high quality education (UNESCO, 2013; Europa 2009). In parallel, individual nations, and economic groupings such as the European Union, have been calling for a fundamental transformation of education to develop new competences among their citizens if they are to remain competitive. Educational innovation is a high priority contributing to key targets on adult learning, up-skilling and modernization of training in the Europe 2020 strategy and the European agenda for adult learning (European Commission, 2013; Barroso, 2012; Council of the European Union, 2011).

The Montessori Method is a rather old but very effective educational method that has been implemented especially for the education of children. It is based on the individual needs of each learner and therefore it can address the learners' needs in different education fields and training sectors and take into deep consideration the personal attitude, learning time and psychological blocks. According to Ryniker and Shoho (2001), the Montessori approach is based on the idea that learners learn most effectively when information is developmentally appropriate. From this perspective, this approach encourages learners to create an atmosphere in which everybody works cooperatively not competitively. Personal independence, self-discipline and initiative are other important tenets of this approach. Learners decide what to do and when to do freely, there is no interference. They also develop creative and critical thinking abilities with self-corrective activities, thereby enabling them to be autonomous learner.

The main objective of the MMTLA project is to define a method for language teaching based on the concept of the Montessori- methodology which can be adaptive, intuitive, easy to implement, practical and easy way for people of all ages to understand the concept of learning language and improve much better and learn languages. With this through this project it is also aimed at introducing the Montessori Method to the field of language learning as for adults and promoting the acquisition of key competencies and skills throughout the education and training system.

This manual guidebook is prepared by all partners for the transfer of the Montessori Method in language learning to adults. It is primarily addressed to language teachers and describes analytically

how to implement the principles of the Montessori Method to adults over 20. Then each partner country will organize face-to-face and online training workshops for at least 15 language teachers (per country) on Montessori Method. The target group of the project is language teachers and adult trainers and adult trainees (immigrants, young adults who want to learn target language).

The expected results of the project are;

- The language teachers trained on Montessori approach can also apply this method in their trainings and courses.
- Low-skilled adults (over 20) will learn 2nd or 3rd language and can find better jobs to work that can give a chance of promotion and improve his/her living standards.
- Refugees and immigrants who learn native language of the country will integrate with citizens easily.
- Immigrants and refugees(especially women) can realize their daily routines without asking for help.

PART 2

THE PRINCIPLES OF MONTESSORI METHOD FOR ADULTS

PRINCIPLE 1: THE ABSORBENT MIND

1.1. Introduction and the General Principles

The absorbent mind is the sponge-like capacity to absorb from the environment what is necessary to create an individual from his or her specific culture. It is the quality of the child's mind up to the age of about six, when there is a transition to the reasoning mind we have as adults. Every little child learns to speak his mother tongue. And no one teaches him the vocabulary, the grammar, or the syntax. It happens every day in every country at just about the same time. It's a rather amazing feat! If you have tried to learn a foreign language later in your life, you know it is not so easy. Yet every little child does it effortlessly. How? Through the absorbent mind. If the child is in an environment where he hears the language, he will speak it. As the child absorbs words and their meaning along with the context and the emotions behind the words, she begins to construct the ability to communicate. Children absorb not only their language, but the traits of their families and communities. They learn how and what we eat, and how to behave in certain situations. Some of it is consciously taught, but a great deal of it is simply absorbed through this powerful child mind. Children absorb through a process Montessori called "mental chemistry," and actually build themselves and their identity through what they absorb. To compare the absorbent mind with the reasoning mind, let's compare a photograph with a drawing.[2]

Both of these images are of a cup.

In the photograph, every detail is captured exactly as it is: the colour, the texture, the angle, the background. It is fixed and it remains as it was at the moment the picture was taken. In the drawing,

[2] http://ageofmontessori.org/the-absorbent-mind/ retrieved on Jan.20,2021

the detail is as much or as little as the artist chooses. It may be the artist's idea of the cup rather than any specific cup, and it may or may not include background. The absorbent mind is more like the camera. What the child takes in during the absorbent mind period is taken in effortlessly and remains as the foundation of his or her personality. What the child takes in later in the reasoning mind is taken in through conscious work and memory, and is not so foundational to the personality. Montessori's understanding of the power of the absorbent mind in the first six years of life is a great gift. It teaches us that we can prepare a rich environment for the young child and, as he simply lives in the environment, he absorbs from it and learns. In the Montessori early childhood program for ages 2½ through 6, we introduce the children to all manner of interesting activities, including language, mathematics, the sciences, music, art, and geometry. Through the power of the absorbent mind, we can give our children a broad and deep foundation, when it is completely effortless for them to learn. Through the amazing "mental chemistry" of the absorbent mind, the child builds his or her identity with wide interests. The child learns through self-chosen, engaging activity and builds a solid base habit of thoughtful concentration and structured learning.

Children between the ages of 0 and 6 have a different mind than adults. Their cognitive processes are different both in times and potential. Maria Montessori calls it the "absorbing mind", comparing it to a camera that can capture any image at any time, preserving all its details.

In Maria Montessori original theory this mind has the characteristic of absorbing the elements present in the child's living environment: through experience the child stores elements without the slightest effort, such as norms, languages and modes of behaviour. The child learns without the real will and consciousness to do so. This period of the child's life is very valuable because the foundations of character, intellect and personality are laid; day after day the child builds himself according to the experiences he makes in the world.

The absorbing or absorbent mind allows the realization of the realization of a phenomenon that Montessori, with a beautiful expression, defines as "mental chemistry": it is as if a chemical reaction were created between the environment and the child, which causes the impressions of the former to become incarnate in the mind of the latter, forming and transforming it, to the point that he ends up resembling what surrounds him: "Children become like the thing they love".[3]

In this sense, therefore, the mind of a child is different from that of an adult: it does not possess logical thought, rationality, conscious memory; it is an unconscious mind, not rational, assimilating and omnivorous, since, being still incapable of selecting the elements around it, it impregnates itself with everything that its environment communicates to it.

This does not mean that the mind of a child is inferior to that of an adult (as we are often led to believe): it is simply different. Certainly, not all these complicated processes follow the functioning that is established in the adult, because the child has not learned a language as we could learn a foreign language, with the effort of our mental faculties, but he has acquired a stable construction, exact, wonderful, like the embryonic constructions of an organ in an organism. That is, there exists in the little child an unconscious state of mind which is creative, and which we call the "absorbing mind". And the absorbing mind builds not through voluntary efforts, but on the guidance of "internal

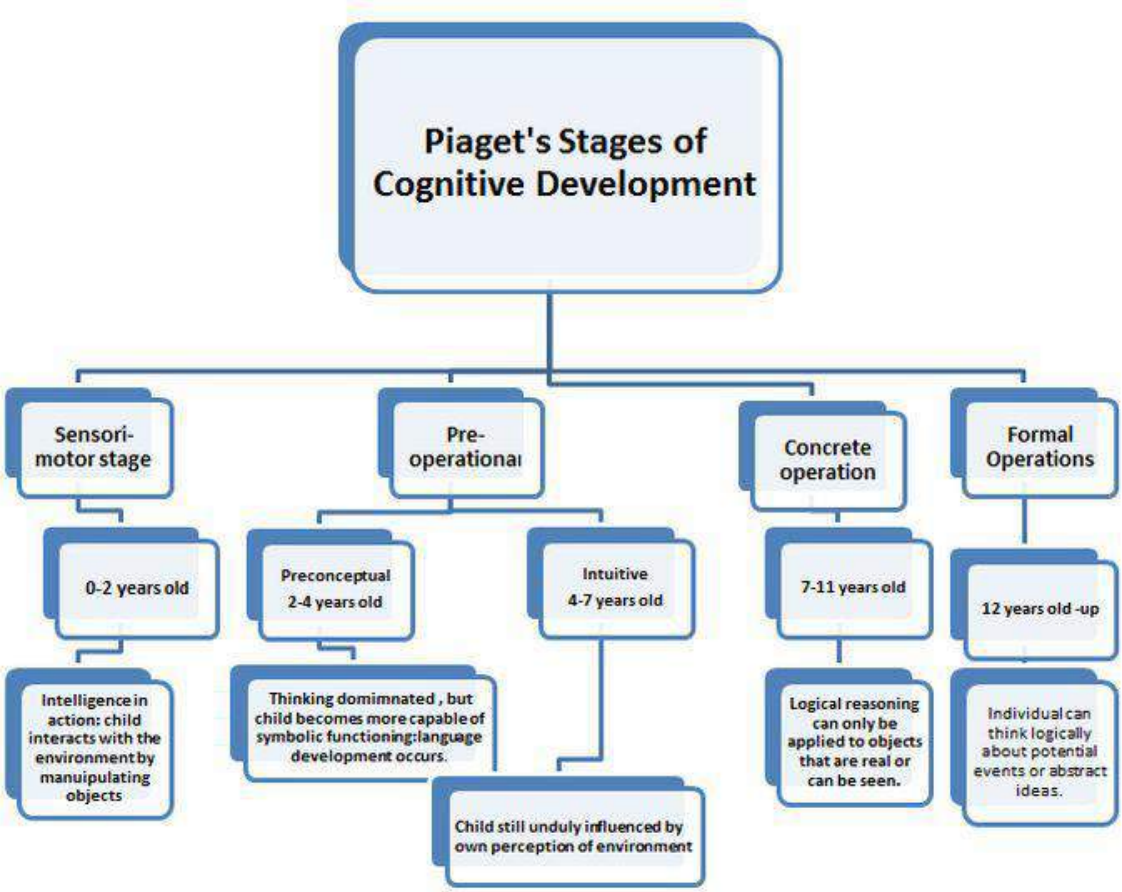
[3] The absorbent mind, 1949

sensitivities", which we call "sensitive periods", because the sensitivity lasts only temporarily, it lasts until the purchase that nature must make is completed. So, for example, if in a child the language nebula finds obstacles to development and the constructive auditory sensitivities do not work, the result could be a deaf-mute who has all the hearing and speech organs perfectly normal.[4]

1.2. Technical Characteristics: Related Concepts

Children between the ages of 0 and 6 have a different mind than adults.[5]

Concepts are fixed in the child's subconscious as on photographic film and are processed by the unconscious. In this way, for example, the child absorbs language: processing it for a long time within himself and then suddenly starting to say the first words.



[4] The absorbent mind, 1949

[5] https://www.stateofmind.it/2016/05/sviluppo-cognitivo-piaget/

The absorbent mind develops in two stages: **UNCONSCIOUS AND CONSCIOUS**

UNCONSCIOUS (0 to 3 years old) the first three years are called the spiritual embryo years, a period in which the absorbing mind is unconscious and cannot be influenced directly by the adult, but only by the environment. During this period the child absorbs the environment around him and the countless pieces of information that come to him through the senses. He is guided by his own inner teacher and forms the character of the adult he will become. In the unconscious mind the various difficulties that we experience in learning, for example, a very simple language or an extremely complicated language are not encountered. Evidently, as there are no difficulties, there are also no gradual developments relating to these difficulties. The whole is taken in the same time period. Now this acquisition is not comparable to the effort of memory that we have to make, nor to the lability of our memory which easily lets its evanescent purchases escape; because in the unconscious age language is indelibly printed and becomes a character that man finds established in him. No language that is added to the mother's language will become a character, and none will be as sure of possession as that. [...]

CONSCIOUS (3 to 6 years old) the second stage of the absorbing mind, which runs from three to six years old, is called the social embryo. At this stage the child begins to be autonomous, having developed primary skills including movement and language. His mind is still absorbing, but he is also able to learn new skills through conscious and free effort. His mind is therefore referred to as the 'conscious absorbent mind'. The child becomes an integral part of society. He is able to leave the family for short periods of time, seeks integration with other humans, and begins to show signs of empathy and understanding of social conventions. The first six years of life are of paramount importance because at the end of them the basic personality will be complete.

The concept of absorbing mind allows the child to assimilate what is external to him and then to know what he has accumulated in the so-called MNEME (term of Percy Nunn to indicate that vital, superior memory that he does not remember consciously). Unlike the adult, he embodies in himself all the things he sees and hears but does not remember them. For example, in language it does not remember sounds, absorbs them and then pronounces them perfectly. The adults, then, acquire knowledge with their intelligence, while the little ones with their psychic life.

On this level, Maria Montessori formulated the concept of nebula, understood as a mysterious potentiality closely linked to sensitive periods (first discovered by De Varies). The nebula of language does not possess the particular forms of language, but offers the possibility of building one through the unconscious process of learning. Each acquisition is made easily if it occurs in the corresponding sensitive period, otherwise it will be obtained with effort and effort. From the nebula of language, the child receives stimuli and directives to create in him the mother's language which is peculiar to his environment and which he absorbs according to certain laws. Thanks to the nebular energies of language, the child becomes able to distinguish the sounds of spoken language from other sounds and noises that come to him from his environment.

"The child is therefore clear; he does not inherit a pre-established language model, but the possibility of constructing one through an unconscious absorption activity"

"The child is directed by a mysterious, wonderfully great power, which he gradually embodies: he thus becomes a man and is made a man by his hands, by his experience: first through play and then

through work."

1.3. Absorbent Mind and Learning Language

It is clear that in the psychic "creation" of man there must be a secret fact. If we learn everything through attention, effort of will, intelligence, how can the child who is not yet endowed with intelligence, will and attention undertake his great construction? It is evident that a mind with powers all different from ours acts in it and that therefore a psychic functioning different from the conscious mind can exist in the unconscious.

Language is the example that can lend itself more clearly to giving an idea of this difference of mentality, because it lends itself to a direct and detailed study of observation.

Let's take language for example. It is certain that man must possess and be inherited the whole new quality of playing a language that is related to intelligence and the need to transmit thought for social cooperation. But there is no particular language. Man does not "speak a language" just because he grows up; like a little dog, which, in any part of the world, even if isolated from other dogs, barks. Language comes little by little, and will develop precisely during the inert and unconscious era of early childhood. It is at two years or two years and three months that the child speaks distinctly and precisely reproduces the language that those around him speak. It does not hereditary reproduce the language of the father and mother. In fact, if a child is estranged from his parents and his people, he is put in another country where another language is spoken, he assumes the language of the place where he is. [...][6]

Language therefore develops from scratch from the child himself. It develops it naturally, yes, that is, it has this hereditary power, but it develops it itself, in itself, taking it from the environment. Nothing is more interesting than recent psychology studies of exact observations of language development in children.

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Language comes little by little, and will develop precisely during the inert and unconscious era of early childhood. It is at two years or two years and three months that the child speaks distinctly and precisely reproduces the language that those around him speak. It does not reproduce hereditary language of the father and mother. In fact, if a child is estranged from his parents and his people, he is put in another country where another language is spoken, he assumes the language of the place where he is. [...][7]

Children absorb language, certainly unconsciously, in a grammatical way; and while they remain apparently inert for a long time, all of a sudden (or rather in the space of about two years and three months), they show an almost explosion phenomenon of a language already fully formed. Thus there

[6] Dr. Montessori, The absorbent mind, 1949
[7] ibid

was an internal development during the long period in which the little one was unable to express himself. It was processing all the language in the mysteries of its unconscious, with the rules that put words in the grammatical order that is necessary to express thought. This is what children do with respect to all possible languages.

The simplest, such as those of certain African tribes, and the more complicated, such as the German or Russian, are all absorbed during exactly the same period of time; and in each race the child begins to speak around two years of age. This was certainly the case in the past as well. Roman children will have spoken that Latin language so complicated in its cases and declensions and so difficult to be learned by the young people of our times who attend high school; and, in India, little children will have spoken Sanskrit, which is of almost insuperable difficulty for today's scholars.[8][...]
Maria Montessori, la mente Del bambino

1.4. Montessori Inspired Projects in the Adult Education

The principles of the absorbent mind can be applied in the initial phase and during the adult learning process both in relation to the learning environment, but above all to the motivation and welcoming, orienteering of the learners, and the work is only at the beginning very much: there is still a lot to study and experiment.

The approach of the MOMA project[9], for example, is based on the effort to overturn the traditional assumptions of being Montessori with characteristics suitable for the involvement of vulnerable target groups in formal education systems. In recent times and in the terms expressed by social pedagogy, these problems have been clearly expressed by Paulo Freire in his important book 'The pedagogy of the oppressed'. Freire's conclusions[10] are in favour of the application of a specific pedagogy and of a consequent “special” teaching aimed at making these obstacles less evident and at creating a learning environment capable of responding to the needs of adults. But, if the educational tradition shows that the issues raised by inclusive teaching are clearly evident to authors and pedagogues (Knowls et al.). The consequent potential revolution of methods in terms of preventing the concrete risks of a didactic approach not dedicated to adults can turn out to be just a paper revolution. The MOMA project therefore has the ambition to take established and tested conclusions: those of Montessori teaching, to suggest a change of vertical and horizontal target: change recipients, who become adults; change perspective and define the contents in terms of "lifelong learning”. The expected results on which the hypotheses underlying this project are based on, therefore, the proposal for an effective application of the teaching of Maria and Alice to vulnerable target groups, whose difficulties in being involved in a formal educational path may also originate in the cultural resistance of adults and their distrust of education as a chance to have a better future. Naturally, the Montessori Method must be thought of in a different context, especially taking into account the influence that social communication and technologies also have in the new research paths show us the way to adults.

[8] Dr. Montessori The absorbent mind, 1949)
[9] https://www.montesca.eu/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/MOMA-MANUAL_IT.pdf
[10] P. Freire, La pedagogia degli oppressi, BO, Feltrinelli, 1968

Here lies the future work of researchers who want to create new paths inspired by Maria Montessori's method, trying to find out to what extent her studies, her theories and her achievements are applied in adult learning from a lifelong learning perspective.

PRINCIPAL 2: LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

In using the Montessori Method, either for children or for adults, the learning environment is a crucial aspect, which has to be taken into consideration by the teacher.

Learning environment refers to both the physical and emotional setting in order to enhance results, make learning a natural process and keep the learners engaged into the activity.

Since students may learn in a wide variety of settings, such as outside-of-school locations and outdoor environments, the term is often used as a more accurate or preferred alternative to classroom, which has more limited and traditional connotations—a room with rows of desks and a chalkboard, for example. So, a crucial responsibility of a teacher is to develop a learning environment where students feel motivated to learn within the boundaries and expectations of a safe classroom. Regarding physical space, there are numerous studies which show that a less crowded, clean and ergonomic placement of furniture and learning materials clear the mind of stress and make it ready for learning.

Concerning the emotional environment, it is important to focus on creating a safe and open space for the learners. A positive learning environment should be: a safe place that students feel comfortable, an active, engaging atmosphere, where an instructor and learners can communicate freely and effectively.[11]

Humans naturally take in information more easily when they are at ease. Stress not only hinders our learning but actually goes so far as to make us forget what we've learned before. Considering that you are teaching adults, open communication is not only the best option but also the key to make them feel heard.

By modelling and encouraging a safe environment and purposeful rules, learners feel motivated to learn and to help one another.

2.1. Learning Space One Other.

The Montessori classroom environment is unique, characterized by a student-centred approach that enables students to manage time, exercise choice, organize themselves, and practice self-regulation within a group context. This development of independent self-management is crucial to succeeding.

Montessori's idea of the prepared environment was that everything the student came in contact with would facilitate and maximize independent learning and exploration. This well-ordered environment has a lot of movement and activity. Learners are free to choose their activities. Here, they experience a combination of freedom and self-discipline, as guided by the environment.

[11] How To Create A Positive eLearning Environment With Animation, https://elearningindustry.com/create-positive-elearning-environment-with-animation, accessed on 24 December 2020

The purpose of the Montessori environment is to develop the whole personality of the learner, not merely his intellect. By guiding the student through the five areas of the Montessori curriculum (Practical Life, Sensorial, Language, Mathematics, and Cultural subjects), he has the structure which is at the forefront of the creative work in a Montessori classroom. So, the environment must give the student the opportunity to choose what he does. Montessori furniture should be laid out in an open plan that encourages learners to move from area to area to learn. The room should have plenty of natural lighting, preferably with at least two walls facing the natural outdoor environment. There should also be an open door so learners can go in an out as they wish. Instead of harsh fluorescent lighting, use soft floor lamps or table lamps to supplement the natural sunlight and make your Montessori room feel homey.

In other words, some of the key elements that would define the Montessori environment are: natural materials instead of synthetic (make best use of the natural lightning, use soft colours, wood - avoid plastic and cluttered areas), no rigid focal points (organize a fluid learning environment – avoid the teacher being the sole focal point, or orienting all furniture towards a board, for example), accessible learning materials (allow learners to choose freely their resources of interest, be sure to encourage creativity within limits).[12]

2.2. Montessori Classroom Organization. The Concept of Mixed Different Ages And Levels

In Montessori classroom, there are adequate spaces for group and individual activities. In them, the learner can develop and enhance their skills. All the areas are designated for certain purposes in the classroom. There are shelves or tables with a variety of attractive materials.

One of the first things you notice when you walk in a Montessori learning area is that the rooms are not divided by age. You will see learners of different ages working together and socializing happily.

In a Montessori classroom, learners operate within a balanced structure of freedoms and responsibilities, free to follow their inspirations with work that stimulates and satisfies their inner motivations, while remaining responsible for tackling challenging and difficult work head-on. The concept of mixed ages promotes an atmosphere of cooperation, teamwork, and peer teaching. The design of the materials and the structure of the tasks lead students in the development of self-

[12] The Montessori classroom: inspired design, https://montessoriacademy.com.au/montessori-classroom-design/

discipline.

Regarding adult education using Montessori principles, the mixed learning environment could be obtained by mixing different level learners, in order that the less experienced can learn from the more experienced ones. At the same time, coaching skills are trained, as well as cooperation and mutual understanding between learners.

2.3. Resources

In the learning process, it is the hand operating the brain that creates learning. Montessori called the hand „the instrument of the intelligence". One of the educational tenets of Montessori education is that we should never give to the brain more than we give to the hand.[13]

The resources which are available in a Montessori class for adults should be displayed within easy reach for all of the participants. These materials are not for the use of the instructor but for the adults who are participating in the class. They would have to be displayed according to their interests. The materials that the participants will use should be specially projected, which would stimulate them to engage in learning activities chosen freely.

Photo by Cottonbro on pexels.com

The resources should be put on open shelves, visible to all the participants and grouped on all four areas of development: practical life, language, Math and sensorial life. Each resource must have its own place every time. These materials represent the curriculum which the instructor wants to

[13] Paula Polk Lillard (7 September 2011). Montessori Today: A Comprehensive Approach to Education from Birth to Adulthood. Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group. p. 27. ISBN 978-0-307-76132-3. Retrieved on 30 May 2013.

present, offering the possibility for adults to work independently, with great pleasure and interest, thus stimulating their attention and self-control.

The adult is free to choose any material which has been presented to him/her and after they are done getting information from it, he/she should put it back in its place. In order to arouse their interest this material should contain new, complex forms, to develop their intelligence and their physical balance.

The following materials could be used in a Montessori class for adults: English dictionaries and thesaurus which represent the first materials from which the adult can form a holistic image on the language that he is studying and which he/she could use to search the meaning of new words and improve their vocabulary. They can also see the pronunciation of new words. Of great help could be English newspapers and magazines, which could be used for developing their reading and comprehension skills.

A variety of online resources could also be offered on a computer which could be helpful for improving their vocabulary, learning new expressions. There can also be displayed novels, not only from popular British and American writers, but also books on History, Science, Arts, Philosophy, thus, the learners can broaden their cultural knowledge. There is no time limit for an adult learner in the Montessori class for any material. He/she can use it as long as they are motivated to use them. They are offered the freedom of choice in a proper environment which can satisfy their own needs.

These materials also offer the possibility of self-evaluation. The adults must also respect the cultural diversity and the freedom of exploration. In this environment, the adults can actively explore the materials but also they can interact with the other adults exchanging ideas and having conversations about the topic they have studied.

All of these resources form an important part of a Montessori class. They can lead to developing the learner's language skills and motivation.

2.4. Space Management

The task of a teacher in a Montessori class is to support, to coordinate and to lead the activity of the adult. The instructor holds the role of a guide. He/She assures and leads the use of educational means, clarifies and facilitates each type of activity that the adult chooses to have during the class. He/she also reduces the waste of time, guides if there is a certain imbalance which occurs in the activity of the adult.

The space in a Montessori class has a different dimension as opposed to the traditional education. The display of the furniture and of the resources is according to the areas of development and allows each adult to easily choose the area that he/she wants to do a research from. In the composition of the school furniture, it is very important to have such pieces of furniture for places of study for the adults. Also, from a pedagogical perspective, the pieces of furniture and the resources must be installed and placed according to the educational objectives which the instructor wants to have.

The educational space in a Montessori class follows a few guidelines: simplicity, functionality, durability and modularity. All these attributes offer the adult functional autonomy and also the possibility to organize the educational activity according to the Montessori education, i.e. on area of development.

PRINCIPLE 3: EXPERIMENTATION AND EXPLORATION

It is widely known and accepted that since people are so different, they respond better to different approaches in detriment to others. Therefore, there are different learning styles that correspond to different profiles of people and that is why the teachers must be aware of their students' reactions to how they are introduced to information in classroom in order to be successful in their job.

A largely accepted categorization of learners divides them into visual learners (people that need to see images and graphs to understand information), auditory learners (people that need to hear the information they are given), and kinaesthetic learners (people who need to be involved in an activity to understand information), logical-mathematical (these are methodical people that think in logical order), social-interpersonal (they communicate well with the others and like to discuss ideas and solve problems in a group) and solitary-intrapersonal (these people prefer to work alone in a quiet environment). Therefore, it comes as no surprise that they cannot be approached in the same manner in a learning context.

Bearing these differences in mind, some educational models and theories have evolved that seek to explain and guide education professionals in their work as teachers and/or trainers of adults.

Some models have been created like the 70/20/10 model that consists of 4 learning steps: empirical, referential, relational and formal and this model is specially focused on learning within organizations. This model is based on the idea that 70% of the learning results from day-to-day working activities, 20% results from the relationships with the others (observation of people and ideas) and 10% from formal education. There are also the VARK and Kolb learning theories specially focused on learning within organizations. This last theory was created by professor David Kolb in 1984 that developed an experiential learning cycle.[14]

3.1. Practical Activities Montessori Inspired To Be Used In The Teaching Of Adults

As we have seen, the Montessori Method is based on five principles: respect for the child, the absorbent mind, sensitive periods, the prepared environment, and self-education and was developed having as starting point the observation of children and the accepted fact that as any individual a child is different from the next one and must be respected as such and consequently, they are interested in different things, they learn in different manners at different paces and these differences must be respected in order for education to be successful.

We believe this is the reason why this method can be adapted to teach adults assuming that teachers develop activities that adapt to each type of identified learner and by now, we know that a diversified learning environment is the best way to achieve success in education. The more varied

[14] VAK Learning Styles Self-Assessment Questionnaire – BusinessBalls.com. Businessballs.com. (2020). Retrieved 26 December 2020, from https://www.businessballs.com/self-awareness/vak-learning-styles/.

activities we use the better the learners react and the better they learn and improve their abilities.

3.2. Preparing The Set

Therefore, the first task of the teacher is to identify the learner profiles present in a given group while bearing in mind, however, that they may have characteristics of more than one type of profile.

Observation (one of the key ideas behind the Montessori Method) is key in this identification process and, obviously, this is done on a daily basis and enables the teacher to adapt the activities as an ongoing interactive process with the group but other tools such as questionnaires can also be used to better understand the type of learners and their needs and preferences, such as for example the VAK Questionnaires.

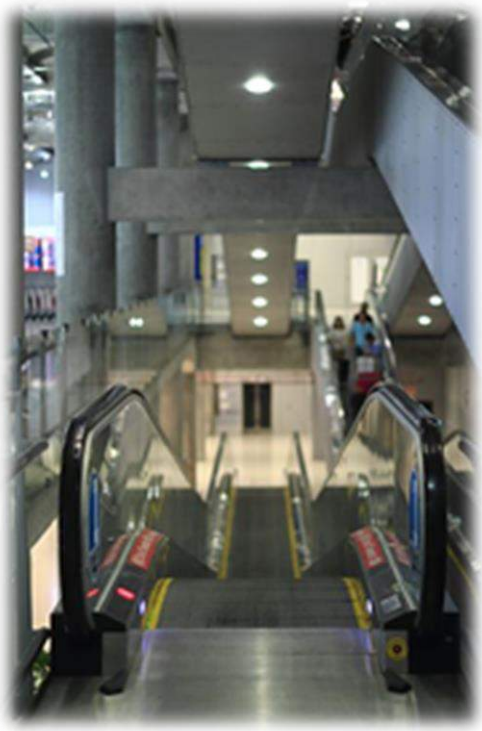
Once the teacher knows the type of learners present in a group it is time to prepare lessons and activities.

Based on the prepared environment principle, the first step is to always have the room set up according to the type of activity to be carried out, for example, having the people sitting in groups of 3 or 4 if there is group work to do since that enables interaction between learners or having a u-shaped configuration if there is a debate planned because this allows people to see everybody at the same time while discussing.

It is now time to think about different experimentation and exploration activities aimed at engaging all learners in the learning process in a motivating and appealing way to them.

3.3. Activities With Real-Life Situations

Since the Montessori Method gives importance to problem-solving in order to enhance independent behaviour an activity like role play can be very useful in teaching a foreign language to adults. This can be done through simulations of real-life situations, for example, going shopping, going to the restaurant, going to the bank, going to the immigration services. Learners are given a set of specific vocabulary and some conversation prompts and are allowed to choose which part each one will play, they are given time to prepare and finally they will role play the situation in front of the group. This type of activity helps building confidence, develop their speaking abilities, allow them to interact with each other, learn from each other, some will take the lead and help the others and their performance can be assessed by the entire group in the room



Games can be used to teach for example vocabulary since there is something that may appeal to everybody, including images (appealing to the visual learners), sounds (appealing to the auditory learners) and usually people learn without realizing they are learning.

3.4. Activities Meant To Develop Listening and Writing Skills

Having students watching films in class and then debating, listening to songs and then having them writing a song on their own is an interesting activity that will appeal to different types of learners and help them improving their listening comprehension skills and their writing skills.

With more advanced groups of learners learning a foreign language, translation is a useful tool because it enables several activities. The group is divided into 3 or 4 different groups and they are given the same text to translate. After this first task is completed, they will exchange translations and each group discusses the other's translations. They may correct mistakes, improve the translation and present their points of views to the entire class. Finally, they will try to come up with a single final version of the translation. This type of activity is based on the principle of self-education, people can learn on their own when they are involved and they can learn from the others as well.

3.5. Activities to Develop Fluency, Creativity And Critical Thinking

Another example of experimentation activity is to have students presenting a topic in front of the entire class. They may choose a painting to describe (this will appeal to learners attached to art), a country they visited, they may give a cooking class, preparing a traditional dish and having the entire group tasting it and commenting on it.

By enhancing the development of independency in learners, the Montessori Method also intends to promote the expanding of creativity and critical thinking. With this in mind, the emphasis should be placed on imagination and expanding an individual's capability to formulate an argument or rationale. The reasoning, the ability to defend that reasoning, and process used to create it should be the main issues about the learning process at this stage.

Debates stimulate people if the topic is controversial enough and allow them to interact with each other and it is a possibility of having everybody involved. The group may be divided into 2 sub-groups, they are given a topic and they have to come up with a list of points they want to put forward. One of the students may be chosen as a coordinator for the debate.

3.6. Going Outside the Classroom

Out-of-school activities, like school trips, could be a very important tool since they can promote self-learning, independency and self-confidence. As an example, we can suggest a visit to a museum where each leaner would choose a specific piece of art form, either paintings or sculptures and collect photos and every sort of input information about it. Further on, the learner would research about it, exploring the historical and artistic context of this piece, the story behind it and interesting and curious facts about it. The result would then be shared with the rest of the class. Several forms could be adopted to convey the resulting work either through PowerPoint presentations, postcards, videos, role-plays, etc.

Since some of the main concerns of our civilization are environmental problems, these should be brought to the class highlighting the importance of the preservation of natural environments as a priority for our survival and well-being. In that sense, a school trip to a spot in the countryside, where nature is the dominant factor could be used to develop this mind-set. As a result of this contact with nature, the strategy would be to lead the learners in the writing of Haiku poems.

These poems are formed by three short lines and date from the 9th Century.[15] They are considered more than just poems, since they aim to make the individual reflect upon existence itself through the contemplation of the physical world. At the end, the reader should be deeply touched by the message they convey.

So, after being acquainted with the origin and characteristics of these poems, together with examples, that they could research online, the learners would join in groups of three and would write Haiku poems while being surrounded by nature. All the groups would be invited to share the result and talk about the impact of this activity in their view of the world.

[15] Your dictionary (2020, December 17). Examples of Haiku Poems: Traditional and Modern. https://examples.yourdictionary.com/examples-of-haiku-poems.html

3.7. Using Video and Editing

Sharing procedures and practical experiences and learning from this is also another possibility that can be inspired by the Montessori Method. We all know how impactful the theme "Food" is in our lives. First of all, because it is a question of survival. Secondly, throughout the times, food has always proved to be the best reason for gatherings, celebrations, or social events. Food promotes joy, physical and emotional comfort and provides nourishment for our bodies and souls. Therefore, it is normally with enthusiasm that learners engage in the sharing of their culinary experiences or even

practical skills. To allow this in a comfortable and friendly environment, using the necessary tools, learners are invited to film themselves on video at home, showing their culinary skills. The result has to be a recipe that they share with the rest of the class, where every step is clearly explained, starting with the mise-en-place and the description of all the ingredients to the necessary tasks and verbs of preparation used throughout the activity. These videos normally lead to the discussion of procedures, advice, sharing of ideas and recipes and allow even the least exuberant students to engage in the discussion, promoting their self-confidence and self-esteem.

3.8. The Role of Music In The Class

Being a universal language, music has been playing an important role in the learning of languages either in classrooms or even in self-learning environments. The effect the musical sounds have upon people allow them to access a whole range of feelings that can go from sadness to pure happiness, influencing the state of mind or even helping them throughout difficult moments. Bearing this in mind, music can be a source of entertainment or reflection brought into the classroom that may provide a huge difference in the classroom ambience, inviting feelings to arouse and be shared with the group.

Inviting the learners to brainstorm what comes to their mind at the sound of Platoon – *Adagio for Strings*[16] has certainly going to have a completely different effect than doing the same with *Eye of*

[16] Nikhil Newse. (2020, December 17). Platoon Soundtrack – Adagio for Strings [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/kRCubAtPiKg

the Tiger [17]. So, the mood you intend to promote in the classroom implies that the adequate song or music must be chosen in order to allow the learning competences you would like to be acquired to be effectively achieved. Songs like What if from *Cold Play*[18] are an interesting option to promote the language competences to speculate about unusual or impossible situations, introduced by the expression What if…? , for example. You can use it to brainstorm ideas in the beginning, to a listening and gap filling exercise afterwards, and finalizing with a speaking exercise promoting a class discussion about the ideas conveyed by the lyrics of the song and relating them with the learners own experience.

Sharing information call also be a form of developing self-confidence and trustworthiness. So, allowing the learners to work in pairs completing each other's information is another strategy that could be Montessori inspired. That way, each member would have a text with incomplete information that had to be completed by asking the partner questions. The result would then be shared to check information and the completed version would be read to finish the task.

Conclusion

As we have seen, these are brief examples of experimentation and exploration activities that can be used with a group of learners in such a manner as to improve not only their speaking and writing skills when learning a foreign language but at the same time enabling them to enhance their interpersonal skills since most that were given here involve group work. In that sense, the English class sets the path for the development of the individual not only in what concerns the language itself, but most importantly the growth of his/her self-confidence; self-esteem and independence. It is overall the class where the individuals may be trained to be better human beings, better qualified and become better citizens of the world.

[17] Survivor Band. (2020, December 17). Survivor – Eye of the Tiger [Video]. YouTube. https://youtu.be/btPJPFnesV4
[18] Stephen Fiske. (2020, December 17). Cold Play – What if [Video].YouTube. https://youtu.be/FdD6RMICpfg

PRINCIPLE 4: OBSERVATION

Introduction

One of the most vital teaching tools available to Montessori teachers is observation. Scientifically applied observation skills allow the educator to assess situations, students and strategies without judgment. Observation is a critical component of lesson planning and management of the classroom.

When educating the adults, in order to have the opportunity to observe, the educators need to have a specific behaviour. Some educators and trainers sometimes unconsciously and unintentionally tend to bring themselves into the center of the learning environment by directing and imposing solutions and instructions instead of allowing the participants to discover their own solutions.

According to the Montessori Method of educating, the trainer of adults needs to be able to step back, to encourage the idea of reaching the solution among the students, taking into account what the adults knew before the activity started and what they are expecting to know after it finishes.

Through the observation, the educators can learn more about the student from a scientific and objective perspective. It is also a way to reinforce the elaboration of programs and the connection among the students.

4.1. Developing a Method to Allow the Educator to Follow the Progress of the Adult Learners

Maria Montessori in a famous London lecture once said: “Plants can be helped by watering them and fertilizing them, but this is not sufficient “. If the child is furnished with this great power of imagination, it must be put into relation with something—so that it can express itself in interaction with the environment. The child has a great store of deposited energies, which needs to be used.

All the images, the impressions that men gather from the environment are gathered by intelligence and placed in store for further use. Therefore, man’s mind expands and acquires a precise form, and one may say that this practical work is essential for the construction and organization of the imaginative world[19]. The concept and practices of the pedagogy of imagination have been studied by Montessori but also by others, by the Austrian philosopher Rudolf Steiner, who wrote extensively about the nature of ‘imagination’ and ‘imaginative teaching’.

[19] Montessori, Maria, The Montessori Method, New York, USA, 1914

The idea of "cultivating" the nature of adult's developments of imaginative thinking in the frame of the educational activities is a great way through which the teacher can observe the results of adult learners who are not able (not always at least) to have a daily opportunity to observe their progress.

According to recent studies, seven teaching methods ('drama', 'exploration', 'storytelling', 'routine', 'arts', 'discussion' and 'empathy'), mainly rooted in the last conclusions by Montessori and Steiner[20] , can be considered methods for forming powerful means for connecting adults with spiritual-aesthetic, intellectual and physical development. The imaginative approach and the related consequence of considering teaching as the results of multiple facets of human experience have always been common to a holistic view of education[21]. Montessori saw that children need more than intellectual development. Others like Steiner, however, following and drawing upon the holistic tradition, have proven particularly significant to the development of a holistic educational philosophy and method. The seven steps ('drama', 'exploration', 'storytelling', 'routine', 'arts', 'discussion' and 'empathy') applied to adults represent a sort of curricular indication which allows the teacher to have a clear view of the educational progress.

Seven Steps to Observe the Progress of Adult Learners

Step1 Intro: The concept explored by this exercise is the use of a scheduled analysis of an imaginative educational approach for observing the result and the cognitive progress of adults with specific learning needs. The seven steps ('drama', 'exploration', 'storytelling', 'routine', 'arts', 'discussion' and 'empathy') will be analysed in seven monitoring schemes – MS - to be completed for each adult, with the result of the activities described above. MSs are completed at the beginning of the training, halfway through and at the end.

Step 2: The exercises are simple and very short. For each of them the teacher has to write down a brief comment (two lines) about the reactions and the response of the learners 'exercise of drama', 'exploration', 'storytelling', 'routine', 'arts', 'discussion' and 'empathy'.

a. Drama

Choosing a character out of a novel recently read (or read in the past) but also, depending on the nature of the learning contents of the course, a scientist or a lawyer, and interpreting some of their features. (Being the protagonist for five minutes)

b. Exploration

Explain and describe something new that you have just learnt.

[20] Oswald, Paul, Die Pädagogik Maria Montessoris und Rudolf Steiners. Zu dem Aufsatz von H. Kallert/E.-M. Schleuning/Ch. Illert in Heft 5/1984 der „Zeitschrift für Pädagogik" Zeitschrift für Pädagogik 31 (1985) 3, S. 385-396

[21] Miller L., Urwin, C. (1999). International Journal of Infant Observation and Its Applications (1997). L. Miller. Editorial: The birth of a new journal. Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 3–9. Child Psychology and Psychiatry Review, 4(2), 93-96.

c. Storytelling

Tell a funny or dramatic story you have read in the newspaper or you have personally experienced.

d. Routine

Tell and explain how you have used something you have learnt during the course in your daily life.

e. Arts

Write some verses on the topic given by the teacher/educator/facilitator.

f. Discussion

One learner starts with an opinion (whatever) saying; About….I think that…..; the others, forming a circle, in turn have to express their opinions contradicting the opinion expressed by the colleague who has just spoken.

g. Empathy

Express an idea about the difficulties found by your colleagues during the course.

Step 3: The MS scheme

Areas: Ability of storytelling, empathy, expression of opinion, discovering

Starting point: (0-10)

Intermediate: (0-10)

Final (0-10)

Comments about Imagination Starting point (0-10)

Intermediate (0-10), Final (0-10)[22]

4.2. Creation of a Personal Educational "Calendar"

Self-regulation and personal approach to education are milestones in the Montessori Method. The guiding idea is to assure a personalized approach to education in order to promote differences of learning styles. Technologies can operate in order to support the process of personalization of learning. The debate about the role of ICT devices and models encounters the theme of the so-called "ubiquitous learning" and difference from the "classic" classroom and book-oriented approaches to learning.

Processes of ubiquitous learning can support the Montessori approach addressed to adults, allowing and facilitating a personal portfolio and a personal calendar. In Villa Montesca at the very beginning of 20th century, Alice Hallgarten and Maria Montessori experimented with the "Montesca

[22] https://www.ch-e.eu/files/content/downloads/Presse/MOMA%20MANUAL.pdf

Calendar"[23] a personal portfolio addressed to children who could "post" daily learning experiences and observations, but also physical objects (flowers, stones etc).

Creation of the Montesca UL Calendar

Step 1: Preparation

The teacher and the adult learner negotiate the time and the organization of the selected topic. In particular, the teacher must facilitate the analysis of problems and critical points which could disfavour taking part in the learning activities.

- Criticalities negotiation scheme (learners should answer the following questions)
- WHEN is learning better for me?
- HOW is learning better for me?
- WHERE is learning better for me?
- What have I at my disposal in order to benefit from UL?

Step 2- Creation of a personal calendar

Each learner will create a personal transparent calendar and the teachers will have a general scheme of negotiated activities. The teacher helps the learners to list the resources they have for learning and which devices are at their disposal (pads, laptops etc…) the teacher indicates the learning calendar, defining the list of tasks learners should accomplish.

Think I KNOW (learning resources and objects that the learner discovered with information and knowledge about the topic of the course) MY notes (personal annotations and contributions about the content of the course). MY results (the feedback to the teacher's requests and assignments). MY Problems (indication about the difficulties the learners encounter in the learning process, contents

[23] http://www.montesca.it/calendar

not understood).

Step 3 - Discussion and debate:

A Montessori teacher should allow the learners to learn from their own discoveries and draw their own conclusions. Rather than supplying the adults with available learning objects from which they can find answers, the Montessori teacher asks them how they would solve the problem, actively engaging them in the learning process and enhancing critical thinking skills.

4.3. Observational Learning

Adults can learn through observation. A great deal of learning happens indirectly, mainly through the process of watching and imitating others. In psychology, this is known as observational learning which is a type of learning that occurs as a function of observing, retaining and replicating the behaviour of others. Observational learning is not the same as pure imitation of another's behaviour. This type of learning also encompasses the concept of behaviour avoidance as a result of seeing another person behave in a certain way with negative consequences.

Observational activities in practice:

Step 1

The teacher presents a case: "There's a job vacancy that can allow you to grow professionally in your field and can make you earn more money". The learners will have to write a convincing letter in the language which classes they are currently attending, proposing themselves as the best candidates. They will have to underline their professional and personal characteristics, their experience in the sector, their qualities and strengths. They will also have to write what challenges this opportunity can represent for them.

Step 2

The teacher will write the right application letter underlining aspects such as: - the fact that the letter represents the only opportunity to introduce oneself and to demonstrate the concurrence between the employer's job requirements and the skills and qualifications of the job seeker - the importance of highlighting specific abilities, experiences and talents which make the job seeker the ideal candidate for the job - the fact that the letter can also be an opportunity for the job seeker to demonstrate his/her ability to write, communicate and articulate ideas effectively. - a good letter will show the employer how he/she will benefit from hiring the job seeker, so it is important to point out which extra skills the candidate will bring with him/her, also mentioning the areas in which these competences could be considered an "added value". It is also possible to show some videos demonstrating how to write the correct letter in the second language, the adult is currently learning.

Step 3

The learners will revise or rewrite their original letter, assessing also the learning process based on observation. Before rewriting the letter, the following checklist should be filled:

Appearance and inclusion of vital information- Is it an original letter rather than a mass-produced copy? -Is the letter clear? - Is it clear where the employer can reach you?

Have you signed your name boldly and confidently? Are the writing style, spelling, grammar and syntax correct? Does the letter tell the employer why you are writing, and does it catch his/her attention in the first paragraph? Have you used action verbs? Is the letter concise and to the point?

Have you avoided needless detail and autobiographical ramblings?

Does it avoid clichés, and have you minimized the use of phrases such as “I feel” and “I believe,” which tend to weaken and dilute the statements you make about yourself?

Tone appeals to the reader;- Is it interesting? - Have you read it from the employer’s perspective? -- Does it project the image of a person the employer would like to get to know better? Etc...

PRINCIPLE 5: INDEPENDENCE

"Never help a child with a task at which he feels he can succeed." – Maria Montessori.

Adapting this principle to our target group: Language teachers and adult trainers and adult trainees (immigrants, young adults who want to learn target language) are the target group of this project Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults, project nr: 2019-1-TR01-KA204-074258[24] , we can conclude that is it is always a goal of Montessori education in the classrooms to make the "learner" independent and be able to do things for him/herself. This can be achieved only if we give our learners the opportunity to express themselves and motivate to be independent and learn in their own time and without impositions.

When an Adult learner is able to do things for himself, there is an increase in their self-confidence and is motivated to look for new tools or ways to learn.

Being independent for an adult means being able to keep social relationships and the opportunity to keep a social role in the community. To express properly their autonomy the adults have to be able to express their social skills[25] :

- Skills related to social perception (accurate perception of others, e.g. their experiences or intentions, as well as understanding and correct assessment of social situations).
- Social sensitivity, empathy and interpersonal de-centration.
- Knowledge of social rules and the ability to properly behave in social situations
- Ability to solve specific interpersonal problems and control social situations.
- Skills conditioning coping in conflict and demanding situations, assertiveness.
- Effective self-presentation and the ability to influence others.
- Communication skills.
- Cooperative skills.

To conclude, it is important to take into account the reflexion from Boldrini & Bracchini: "For the adults, designing the competences needed to be independent means elaborating a set of responses to real and effective problems. The approach cannot be then participative and cooperative. A strategy to assure the basic social skills to adults should be based on a real analysis of real social problems. For these reasons, the activity of education has to be preceded by an activity of focusing during which the adults are called to express their social needs. Some of them could be in difficulty in expressing their social needs, particularly those with real social problems. The support to help them to make the needs come out has to be provided by the Learning Organization, through a process of focusing and facilitating the Community of learners"[26].

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[24] MMTLA, Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults, project, ERASMUS+ Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices, https://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/projects/eplus-project-details/#project/2019-1-TR01-KA204-074258

[25] Knopp, Katarzyna. (2013). Kompetencje społeczne – pomiar i aplikacja praktyczna. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/313877703)

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Some abilities to be developed by the Adult educators and learners to be able to implement the fifth principle of Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults are described below:

5.1. Problem Solving Abilities

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom developed a framework for teaching "thinking." Bloom's taxonomy, it turned out, illustrates different forms of thinking in sequential order, which goes from the most basic cognitive activities to the most complex forms. You cannot understand a concept if you cannot remember it, and you cannot apply concepts or theories if you cannot understand them. Bloom's taxonomy has been adapted over the years to ensure that language and skills reflect the development of education and society. More recent adaptations of the taxonomy refer to creative thinking as the highest order thinking skills[27] .

In Problem-based Learning (PBL), students work in small groups (4-8 students). Collaboration provides a social context in which students gather and share knowledge, challenge the unknown, and develop strategies to fill knowledge gaps. According to Hmelo-Silver, working in groups enables students to "spread the cognitive load" and "negotiate a shared understanding" as they go through the problem. By using the different strengths of group members, students begin to understand their strengths and weaknesses, and also learn how to improve their skills. With regard to the PBL environment, group work is essential as it enables learners to establish their prior and pre-existing knowledge and to assess collective gaps, raising questions about the problem and thus developing new ideas and strategies.

This type of pedagogy challenges students to be actively involved in the learning process rather than passively 'receiving' information. In active learning, students actively create their own knowledge by engaging in learning processes through multiple means such as research, discussion, reflection, processing, analysis, experimentation. In PBL, it is a step further and students are invited to organize and manage their own learning. They do this by setting their own goals.

The competences, skills, and attitudes that help students develop in PBL are:

- Flexible knowledge,
- Effective problem-solving skills,
- Student-oriented skills,
- Effective cooperation skills,
- Internal motivation.

5.2. Self-Learning Program

The European Parliament and Council, on December 18, 2006, defined learning to learn as "ability consistent and persistent learning, organizing your own learning process, through effective time

Edizioni. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303247609

[27] N.A (2019 Problem- based learning. Retrieved December 12, 2020, from http://inspirowniaedukacyjna.blogspot.com/2019/07/pbl-problem-based-learning-nauczanie.html

management and information, both individually and in groups". We read further: "This competence includes self-awareness, learning process and needs in this regard, identifying available options and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to be successful in learning. This competence means acquisition, processing and assimilation of new knowledge and skills, as well as exploration and using the tips. Learning allows you to acquire a skill using the previous learning experiences and general life experiences for use and application knowledge and skills in various contexts - at home, at work and in education and training. (...) key factors in developing this competence a person should have motivation and faith in his own abilities[28] ".

For each of the key competences consists of three constitutive features: knowledge, skills and attitudes[29] .

For learning to learn, this is respectively:

Knowledge of:

- your own strong and weaker pages and preferred ways of learning;
- own related goals with learning and knowledge, skills and qualifications necessary to achieve them;
- learning opportunities, training and getting support;

Skills in the field of:

- basic skills of reading, writing and counting;
- persistence in learning, concentration on longer periods and critical reflection on the subject learning goals;
- taking time to both self-study characterized by self-discipline and common work as part of the learning process, reading the benefits of diversity group and sharing acquired knowledge and skills;
- useful information and communication technologies in the learning process;
- searching, acquiring, processing and assimilation of the new knowledge and skills;
- managing your learning, planning and organization patterns in your own learning process, as well as shaping your career and future working life;
- evaluating your work and, if so needs, seeking advice, information and support;
- critical reflection on the learning goal, especially in the long-term time perspective.

Positive attitude with regards to:

- self-motivation and self-confidence learning opportunities and achieving success in that the process throughout life;
- attitudes towards solving problems (it favours learning out, and the ability to self-development and overcoming obstacles);

[28] Lex Access to European Union law. (2006, December 18). Retrieved December 16, 2020, from https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32006H0962

[29] Umiejętność uczenia się jako jedna z kompetencji kluczowych. (2016). TRENDY nr 4/2016. Retrieved December 12, 2020, from http://www.bc.ore.edu.pl/Content/895/T416_Umiejetnosc+uczenia+sie+jako+jedna+z+kompetencji+kluczowych.pdf

- use your own and others life experiences;
- the need to look for new learning opportunities and using it in a variety of situations in the process of life.

5.3. Create Owns' Educational Program

The creation of owns' educational program concern learners and trainees. Learners will create their own programs and ways to learn in self-learning opportunities. The creative process in language classes will be production of different tasks like: creating a story, writing an essay, making its own presentations.

In order for the trainee to be able to create his own presentation about his interests, we first have to teach him how to do it, he must remember the structure we have given, understand its essence and then apply it. The presentation will be correct. However, in a situation where the trainee makes a presentation, reads about the art of presentation on his own or with the trainers' help, he will analyse several presentations that are available on the internet, then evaluate his presentation in terms of what he found out. His presentation will be adapted to his/her expectations.

A trainee who independently develops a curriculum for a given educational stage is obliged to adapt it to the requirements of the core curriculum. The program is a description of how to implement the tasks specified in the core curriculum in a structured course but if we think about non formal education, it can be adapted to the learners' needs.

The learning process is a combination of an active attitude of the trainee and the trainer. Thanks to the interaction of the trainer and trainee, it is possible to build new educational experiences. A curriculum tailored to a given educational institution emphasizes the individual learning conditions of trainees, which is taken into account in the appropriate selection of methods and forms of education.

The main idea when preparing the educational programme is to take into account what adult learners want to know, the relevance of what they are learning and what they want to achieve. To contribute to their personal growth the adult learners require seeing the value of their observations and practical experiences. Adults when participating in language courses look for the opportunity to improve their social and personal position in the society and labour market.

Montessori Method needs to be actualized, especially taking into account the influence of the Information and Communication Technology in the adults' social and cultural background.

Adults learn in different ways:

- Visual learners are stimulated by images
- Auditory learners are stimulated by sound,
- Kinaesthetic or tactile learners are stimulated through touching, feeling and experiencing.

The Montessori Method can stimulate the senses and create a "sensorial" learning environment where new information can be more effectively retained.

5.4. Creation of a Community of Learners Using Social Media

Social media have been tested for their usefulness in teaching and learning, including foreign languages.

"The basis of success in teaching a foreign language is (...) commitment user in communication, his readiness to express himself and to create and maintaining interpersonal relationships. All this can be achieved by using opportunities offered by social media. A sense of trust and belonging is also important here, that appears in the virtual community. This makes it easier to share content and overcoming inhibitions in publicly presenting material, especially created in a foreign language''[30] .

Because COVID-19 and some restrictions to meet face to face with colleagues and trainers, social media is treated by trainees, as an integral part of both their non-formal and informal education.

The creation of a community of learners using social media is a must in these moments. Social media helps very often co-create resources available on the web for joint learning, but also to get feedback, from experts in the field or if it is a closed community, from the leader or trainer. Social Media and other educational and communication platforms allow for development the ability to use foreign languages. After all, learners exchange their experiences on forums, chats and in virtual classrooms if the learning activities are online and using video conferences, present their problems related to the learning process and materials.

Social media and other ICT tools can be used by trainers as well trainees to create new learning opportunities. The community of learners can use the enormous potential of these applications and engage in learning activities within a closed group in self-learning activities.

Benefits of education via social media

- no need of special devices, normal smartphone can be a good start,
- it is possible to learn at any time and in any place with internet access,
- possibility to teach / learn with several people at once (possibility of cooperation and its diversity within a community of learners),
- allows to establish new contacts based on the language, topic interests,
- increase the ability to express one's opinion, view, opinion, also to argue during network and social discussions,
- shapes social skills.

Conclusion

The 5th PRINCIPLE: INDEPENDENCE can be adapted to our project as the main objective of the project (Montessori Method in Teaching 2nd Language to Adults (MMTLA) to define a method for language teaching based on the concept of the Montessori' methodology which can be adaptive, intuitive, easy to implement, practical and easy way for people of all ages to understand the concept of learning language and improve much better and learn languages. Through this project it is also

[30] Garwol, Katarzyna. (2017). Rola mediów społecznościowych w edukacji – stan obecny i perspektywy rozwoju. Dydaktyka Informatyki. 12. 51-56. 10.15584/di.2017.12.6.

aimed at introducing the Montessori Method to the field of language learning as for adults and promoting the acquisition of key competencies and skills throughout the education and training system.

Montessori Method needs to be actualized, especially taking into account the influence of the Information and Communication Technology in the adults' social and cultural background.

Adults learn in different ways:

- visual learners are stimulated by images,
- auditory learners are stimulated by sound,
- kinaesthetic or tactile learners' tare stimulated through touching, feeling and experiencing.

The Montessori Method can stimulate the senses and create a "sensorial" learning environment where new information can be more effectively retained. The Montessori Method is in line with MMTLA guide objectives that is the development of a manual guidebook for the transfer of the Montessori Method in language learning to adults. It will be primarily addressed to language teachers and will describe analytically how to implement the principles of the Montessori Method to adults over 20.

The target group are Language teachers-trainers', adult trainers and adult trainees (immigrants, young adults who want to learn target language).

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As for online documents, the basic structure for referencing is similar to the other references but with the addition of a retrieval source.

All photos included in the handbook are open-source photos.

PART 1

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List of Authors:

Medine GÜNEY- Osmaniye İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü –Osmaniye MEM, Turkey
Luis OCHOA SIGUENCIA - Instytut Badań i Innowacji w Edukacji – INBIE, Poland
Anabella MATHEUS - Cofac Cooperativa De Formacao Animacao Cultural CRL, Portugal
Renata OCHOA-DADERSKA - Instytut Badań i Innowacji w Edukacji – INBIE, Poland
Aydın ALBAK- Osmaniye İl Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü – Osmaniye MEM, Turkey
Noemi Luigina MORRONE- Europe For All –, Italy
Lucia MATEI – Centrul Judetean De Resurse Si Asistenta Educationala Arad - Romania
Liana Maria BARBAZAN - Centrul Judetean De Resurse Si Asistenta Educationala Arad - Romania
Dacian BĂRBOSU - Centrul Judetean De Resurse Si Asistenta Educationala Arad - Romania
Magdalena MILADINOVIC - Vienna Association Of Education Volunteers, Austria
Ozel COSKUNER - Vienna Association Of Education Volunteers, Austria
Ana CUNHA - Cofac Cooperativa De Formacao Animacao Cultural CRL, Portugal
Paula CLARO- Cofac Cooperativa De Formacao Animacao Cultural CRL, Portugal
Antonio CORIGLIANO –Europe For All, Italy

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