

THE COMMUNICATOR

MONTESSORI CHILDREN'S COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

This edition's theme:
Three Period Lesson

Upcoming Dates:

May 10: Senior Project Presentations

7pm: Lower Elementary Classroom

May 11: Coffee With School Head

9am: Chadwick St. House

Children's House



Montessori teachers use the term, Three-Period Lesson, to refer to a fundamental approach to introducing vocabulary and concepts to children. It is used to move the child from basic understanding to mastery.

- First Period is the Introduction (Naming) of the vocabulary word or the concept ("This is").
- Second Period is the Association, Recognition, and Identification. This is the longest period and involves repetition through games and activities that ask the child to interact with the information ("Show me").
- Third Period is the Remembering and Cognition ("What is this?").

The Second Period is the one in which the learning takes place. It is the experiential part of the lesson - the part that is usually not used in classical education. The Second Period is the time that the "google boys" - Sergey Brin and Larry Page - claim that they learned to experiment, create, and innovate.

Lower Elementary

The three period lesson helps Montessori teachers to structure their delivery of instruction for the child. In Lower Elementary, we call the first period "The Gift." This is when an idea or concept is first delivered. It is truly a time for the teacher to present and for the child to receive. Like a gift, it should be imparted as something valuable to be treasured. The first period is meant to leave a strong and lasting impression on the child, building a reserve of background knowledge from which the child can draw from when making connections between ideas. The second period is where the true learning occurs for the child. This is where the child is practicing and implementing an idea. It is when the child is working with the material, problem solving, generating questions. It is the point in a child's learning when the teacher is giving independence to experiment and fail, but also when the teacher is providing supports and reteaching as needed so that the level of difficulty is manageable. The third period is assessment and extension. It is when the child has reached proficiency, and we test their knowledge by giving them situations to apply it in situations where they can display their mastery. All of this provides a structure and cohesion to how we advance students through lessons, concepts, and ideas to balance support, independence, accountability, and genuine application.



Upper Elementary

At every level, the Montessori method of teaching involves three periods. The first period is the “hook”, the story that engages, the direct modeling of the work to be learned. In this period, the teacher leads. In the Upper Elementary, materials are often introduced across the curriculum to assist the students to make connections that will enable them to understand the new concept being introduced. It is during the second period that the children use both the materials and the connections they made in order to complete their practice work. During the second period, the children take the lead and learn in their own way and at their own pace. In the third period, the children are able to demonstrate their learning and understanding, often by explaining the concept to others in writing or orally without materials.



In the picture, the student is doing her second period work, utilizing materials that were introduced to her in a first period lesson on equivalent fractions. As she discovers the patterns involved, she moves on to the third period demonstration of her ability to calculate equivalent fractions abstractly with paper and pencil.

Middle School

The Three Period Lesson is a learning cycle that can help the adult frame and guide the student’s experiences. During the first period, the adolescent guide shares a lesson and poses a challenge. Typically, this lesson is never more than 20 minutes long. The bulk of a student’s time is spent in second period work when they are able to dig deeper into their understanding of the lesson through extended research and exploration. The adult’s role during the second period is to observe and offer assistance when necessary. The third period is intended for the sharing of newly acquired knowledge.

As part of their Occupations work, the Middle School students received lessons on the structure of lab reports and the tilt of the earth. They have since spent three class periods conducting an experiment, analyzing data, and writing a lab report detailing their findings. They will share their work with the class, analyze their collective data, and discuss and draw conclusions about their work.

