



Q & A

How does the Montessori Method...

...capitalize on a child's interests and imagination at the elementary level?



One of the main strengths of the Montessori approach is that the child is allowed time to pursue his or her own interests. The elementary Montessori teacher is more of a guide than an instructor. She provides a blend of structure to ensure all the "basics" are mastered then encourages and guides the children as they explore topics and ideas that capture their imagination and interests. Rather than present a student with all the "right answers" the teacher asks the "right questions" and challenges students to discover the answers on their own or to find solutions. With this approach, the teacher is attempting to inspire the child towards academic excellence and nurture the curiosity and imagination hidden within every human being.

...use a "hands-on" approach at the elementary level?



At the elementary level learning continues to be a hands-on experience as students learn by trial, error, and discovery. For example, hands-on projects and activities might be used for a report on Greek mythology. A group of students might build a model of ancient Athens or learn an ancient skill such as flaking flint to make stone tools. However, the student is making an exciting transition called a "passage to abstraction." The child is developing a more sophisticated way of thinking, away from dependency on concrete materials, that visually represent abstract concepts, towards the ability to solve problems with pen and paper alone. This is possible partly because of the growing child's ability to grasp abstractions and also has been enhanced by the countless hours of work with concrete materials.