Agenda

- Montessori Inclusion Endorsement
- Observation in Montessori and Special Education
- Understanding Psychoeducational Evaluations
- Supporting Children with Exceptionalities with “Evidence Based Practices”
- Partnering with Families Who Have Children with Exceptionalities

Montessori Inclusion Endorsement (MIE)

Purpose: Further the education of Montessori credentialed teachers so that they may apply the Montessori Method to students with varying exceptionalities.

- Seminar I Category-8 days, 7 hours = 56 contact hours plus assignments, which includes 2 days of observation and supervised practicum
- Seminar I/II Category-112 contact hours plus assignments, which includes 6 days of observation and supervised practicum
- Degree Category-BA/MA- contact hours TBD which includes 1 year of supervised practicum
Montessori Inclusion Endorsement (MIE, continued)

- Offered through TEPs (must apply and be approved to offer MIE)
- Overview of exceptionalities, current laws, evidence-based instructional strategies
- Using data to inform practices and develop strategies, adaptations, and accommodations
  - Observations and documentation in the classroom
  - Recording, compiling, and interpreting information
  - Case histories, parent and teacher interviews
  - Understanding assessment reports
  - Evaluation and diverse families

Observation: The Montessori Method

“When a teacher is trained to observe carefully, the classroom becomes a diagnostic environment.”

- Dr. Montessori was scientist
- Observation led her to design a radically different environment, materials & approach
- Key part of teacher training
- Montessori spoke of observation as a form of pedagogy
- Implementation depends upon careful observation

Observation & Special Education

Best practice instruction is based upon and driven by data.

- Also a scientifically based field
- Implementation depends upon careful observation
- Finding baseline, or the child’s current level of performance
- Informed instructional planning of lessons and materials
- Informed adjustments to instruction: responsive teaching
- A way to communicate progress
- As in Montessori, the programs are individualized
- The “match” produces attention & concentration
- Attention & concentration lead to progress across the spectrum of development
- Mastery leads to revision of instruction

Types of Observational Data

- Discrete Trial: Measures the percent trials against the total number of trials
  - Percent correct
- Duration: Measures the length of a target behavior
- Frequency: A simple count of behaviors within an observation
- Interval: Observation is divided into intervals and behavior is recorded within the intervals
- Running Record: Fullest possible description of target of observation

Montessori’s Observation: What Kind of Data?

“I watched the child intently without disturbing her at first, and began to count how many times she repeated the exercise; then, seeing that she was continuing for a long time, I picked up the little armchair in which she was seated, and placed chair and child upon the table; the little creature hastily caught up her case of insets, laid it across the arms of her chair, and gathering the cylinders into her lap, set to work again. Then I called upon all the children to sing; they sang, but the little girl continued undisturbed, repeating her exercise even after the short song had come to an end. I counted forty-four repetitions.”

Excerpt From: Maria Montessori. “Spontaneous Activity in Education.” pg. 142
Montessori’s State of Disorder

Montessori’s Advance Towards Order

Montessori’s Primitive Curve of Ordered Work

Maria Montessori. “Spontaneous Activity in Education.” pg. 198.

Maria Montessori. “Spontaneous Activity in Education.” pg. 200.

Maria Montessori. “Spontaneous Activity in Education.” pg. 193.
A Tool to Use

Educational Evaluations: Key Questions

Psychoeducational Evaluation/Assessment
Neuropsychological Evaluation/Assessment

1. Does the child experience learning differences or special needs?
   - Multiple developmental areas assessed
   - Parents, teachers, OT, PT, SLP, Audiologist, VI, Educational Specialist, Educational Psychologist
   - Rating scales, observation, direct testing

2. What is the child’s current level of performance within each area evaluated?

3. What are the child’s strengths and needs within each area evaluated?

4. What are the appropriate recommendations based on the findings?
   - May address all areas evaluated or some areas

Organization of Evaluative Reports

- Demographic Information
- Background Information
- Testing Results
- Diagnosis
- Recommendations
  - Environmental Modifications = changes to the environment based on diagnosis/need
  - Therapeutic Interventions = specialized intervention/therapy used to treat or cure
  - Compensatory Strategies (accommodations) = recommendations that will help the student minimize the impact their diagnosis.
Evidence Based instructional Practices (EBIPs) To Support Children with Special Needs

Overview: What are EBIPs and where do they come from?
- Research based, many originally identified for children with autism spectrum disorder (ASD)
- Vanderbilt University’s EBIP resources: https://vkc.mc.vanderbilt.edu/ebip/
- Examples: communication, challenging behaviors, social/emotional development
- National Professional Development Center on Autism Spectrum Disorders (directed by the University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham Center) provides overviews and step-by-step procedures regarding implementation: http://autismpdc.fpg.unc.edu/evidence-based-practices
- Wong (2014) et al’s meta-analysis of over 1,000 articles identified 27 EBPs for children with ASD

Three EBIP Examples That Align Well With Montessori Practices
- Modeling (MD)
- Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention (PMII)
- Social Narratives (SN)

Modeling
- Definition
  - Demonstration of a desired target behavior that results in imitation of the behavior by the learner leading to the acquisition of the imitated behavior (Wong, et al, 2014)
- Special education examples
  - Verbal statements (Milk please, Please play with me)
  - Motor skills (sitting, jumping, cutting, prehensile grip)
  - Demonstrating concepts (pointing to shapes, colors, numerals, number sets)
- How MD is implemented in inclusive Montessori environments
  - Reduce number of steps in Practical Life activities
  - Repeat Grace and Courtesy lessons
  - Provide opportunities for guided practice, particularly with conflict resolution
Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention

- **Definition**
  - Supports typically developing peers as they interact with and/or help children acquire new behaviors or communication and social skills by increasing learning opportunities within natural environments. (Wong, et al, 2014)

- **Special education examples**
  - Train peers to prompt and reinforce children as they learn expressive language and appropriate behaviors
  - How PMII is implemented in inclusive Montessori environments (examples taken from manuscript Episkriti, Lindeman & Polychronis submitted for publication in Young Exceptional Children)
    - “Jeff” learns to ask for help swinging
    - “Zed” learns to put on his boots

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“Jeff”

At the beginning of the school year, Jeff did not want anyone other than a teacher to push him on the swings. Teachers coached Jeff’s peers to prompt him to ask for help (a replacement behavior) during whole class Grace and Courtesy lessons. He learned to ask, “Will you please push me on the swings?” The children responded and Jeff replied by saying, “Thank you.” PMII also helped Jeff learn to ask another peer to swing with him if his first peer declined his request.

“Zed”

- His peers have been directed by the teachers to model speaking in a calm voice and ask Zed specific questions such as, “May I help you Zed?” and “Which one would you like to do first, A or B?” Consistent modeling of calm, clear questions helps Zed feel accepted and safe. MD and PMII pair naturally with traditional Montessori Grace and Courtesy lessons.

- Earlier in the year, Zed had difficulty putting on his outdoor clothing for recess. His peers were trained to use a combination of MD and PMII by providing short commands, such as, “Put on your boots first” followed with a reinforcing comment, “You did it, Zed.” A process that was taking up to an hour now takes ten minutes.

Grace and Courtesy + Modeling + PMII = Lovely Days in Lower Elementary
Social Narratives

- Definition
  Descriptions that describe interactions in detail by highlighting relevant cues and offering examples of appropriate responses. (Wong, et al., 2014)
- Special education examples
  - Children with ASD and/or with challenging behaviors: using the bathroom, eating lunch, inviting a peer to play, joining morning circle, listening to read alouds
- How SNs are used in inclusive Montessori environments
  - Michael’s Book of Hope
  - Dom’s Rule Book

Partnersing with Families of Children with Exceptionalities

Range of Family Emotions
- Confusion
- Anger
- Frustration
- Overwhelm
- Fear
- Embarrassment
- Hope
- Despair
- Acceptance
Back again to confusion, anger, hope, etc.

Meeting with Families

- Prepare with careful documentation (have a notepad or laptop with notes).
- Arrange conference time and place (for simulation, simply tell us the time of day you are meeting and why this works well for all involved).
- Greet with positive statement
- Carefully describe concern
- Ask parent/family member for their views
- Listen to parent/family members
- Propose strategies (for simulation, plan this with your group members)

Meeting with Families (continued)

- Ask for parent/family members input to strategies
- Modify according to parent/family members suggestions
- Clarify action plan. State clearly what guides will do, how they will communicate with family, and any agreed-on actions from family. Restate to make all understand plan.
- Set time for follow-up conference
- End with a positive comment about child
- Documentation: concern, family member/parent’s view, agreed on actions, date of next conference

Family Meeting Scenario

- Four volunteers
  - One Casa House teacher/guide
  - One team member (school head, special educator, assistant teacher, etc.)
  - Two family members (parent, grandparent, step parent, etc.)
- Concern
  - Second year child, age 4, is not remembering sand paper letter sounds or sand paper letter numerals; inconsistent in identifying colors and shapes with 3rd period lesson
  - Teacher and team member wonder if child’s difficulty is with attention or hearing or language processing
  - Family members are also concerned; cooperative but fearful
- Five minutes: volunteers prepare, audience silently applies any component of our presentation to your next steps on Monday

Modified Parent/Teacher Conference Steps

1. Greet family with positive statement about child.
2. Clearly explain concerns.
3. Ask for and listen to family members’ perspective.
4. Propose two strategies you can implement at school.
5. Ask for and listen family members’ thoughts.
6. Review what you will do at school. Clarify strategies you will try.
7. Set follow up meeting.
8. Thank parent/family members for partnering with you.

Review of key points

- Montessori Inclusion Endorsement
- Observation and Special Education
- Types of Observational Data
- Ordered Work
- The Observation Tool
- Evidence Based Practices
- Modeling
- Peer Mediated Instruction and Intervention
- Social Narratives
- Partnering with Families: Montessori Teacher Support Roles
- Effective Family Conferences
- Your Next Steps!
Resources and References

- Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: https://csefel.vanderbilt.edu
- Gartrell, Dan: https://dangartrell.net/dans-books/Guidance-for-Every-Child-Teaching-Young-Children-to-Manage-Conflict.

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