Learner Outcomes - Definitions

Definitions & questions provided by the AMS accreditation handbook

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INDEPENDENCE

Is the student able to choose his or her own work, apply energy to that work, complete it to a personal criterion of completion, and take and return the work to its proper place in such a way that another student will be able to find the work ready to do? Does the student learn through errors encountered in use of the self-correcting materials? Is the student able to seek help? Is the student able to locate resources to continue the self-chosen task, without necessarily involving the teacher?

CONFIDENCE & COMPETENCE

Confidence is built upon success. In a Montessori environment, there are many occasions for success. Are the student’s self-perceived successes far more numerous than his or her self-perceived failures? Is the student capable of self-correcting work upon observation, reflection, or discussion? Can the student manage the available array of tasks and activities with a clear sense of purpose?

AUTONOMY

Grace and courtesy in the classroom contributes to the students’ understanding of each individual’s desire to work alone or with others. Are students able to hone their collaboration, cooperation, and negotiation skills in working through choices of work partners? Can the student accept or reject inclusion in another student’s work or work group with equanimity? These observable skills are evidence of students’ autonomy.

INTRINSIC MOTIVATION

The “work” is “its own reward” in a Montessori class. External rewards and other forms of praise or evaluation undermine the student’s development of intrinsic motivation. Is the student drawn to continue working for the apparent pure pleasure of doing so? Does the student, once having achieved a particular competence, show confidence in accomplishments by showing others?

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Children in Montessori classes are “free” within the carefully crafted, mutually agreed upon limits of the group. Independence and autonomous persons are always a part of a group and must attain independence and autonomy through participation in group activity. The loss of
these qualities by one of a group is a loss for everyone. Do students attain independence and autonomy and, at the same time, develop social responsibility?

ACADEMIC PREPARATION

In Montessori education, students learn to learn by doing. Academic preparation entails activation and cultivation of inherent powers and processes through which the learner becomes a supplier of meanings or of things meaningfully-known. Academic skills are essential to learning and knowing, not the aim of learning and knowing. Do students acquire academic skills and apply them to their learning strategies?

SPIRITUAL AWARENESS / COSMIC EDUCATION

Montessori’s distinctive notion of the child as a “spiritual embryo” emphasized her key principle that the growing human being is not simply a biological or psychological entity, but a spiritual energy seeking expression in the form of a human body within the physical and cultural world. How does the school develop awareness of ecology of existence that gives every living thing a meaningful function in the larger system? How is each student encouraged to make his or her own unique contribution to the cosmic plan, to fulfill his or her own destiny? How does the school cultivate each student’s spiritual sensitivity and allow for emergence of each student’s own inherent nature?

GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

All students are part of both a world political system and a world ecological system. Both systems have their own constitutions and all beings must learn to live by the letter and spirit of their laws. As a naturalist, Montessori knew about the laws of man and of nature and understood the consequences of disobeying either of them. What are the global citizenship outcomes of school experience? Are the students acquiring civic virtue? Are they acquiring an understanding of the natural world and of the necessity to cherish it, respect it, sustain it, and to live harmoniously within it?
Learner Outcomes in Your School:

What we did at Harbor Montessori School to better educate parents on the many ways we measure success in the Montessori classroom.

“WHY MONTESSORI?” EVENINGS

These parent education evenings were based on our highest attrition points: kindergarten and after 6th grade. We also added “Why Montessori?” nights for lower & upper elementary as well during the 2017-2018 school year. During these evenings, we discussed what success looks like in our classrooms through the perspective of our eight learner outcomes.

These parent education opportunities also provided the ability to have our teachers demonstrate how exactly we use Montessori materials and how they build off of each other from program to program.

STAFF EDUCATION OF LEARNER OUTCOMES

As part of our recent AMS accreditation, our school decided to host assistant staff, parents, and community members to complete over 60 observations throughout the school while focusing on specific learner outcomes. This process enabled our staff to reflect on their personal teaching styles as well as their curriculum delivery through the perspective of our eight learner outcomes.

While this process was at times overwhelming for our staff, they gained a new sense of how to measure student success within their own programs.
INCORPORATING LEARNER OUTCOMES AND PROGRESS REPORTS

Harbor Montessori School issues two progress reports per year; once in the winter and again in the late spring before dismissing for the summer. These progress reports have traditionally listed lessons introduced to students by curriculum subject with a masterable rating attached to each lesson.

This year, we created custom progress reports to include narrative observations in relation to all eight learner outcomes as well as the above mentioned format. We also included the learner outcome definitions at the bottom of the progress reports for parents to reference.