

The Montessorian

Pakistan Montessori Association
Seminar
Education for Life



“Montessori is an education for independence, preparing not just for school, but for life.”

“We are all so engrossed with the progress of our environment and of the ideas embodied in it, that we have not yet turned our attention inward towards ourselves: towards life.”

María Montessori

Education for Life – Seminar 20th January 2018

Pakistan Montessori Association held a seminar on education for life, mainly to bring awareness of Montessori education to the public.

PMA President Zohra Gaya welcomed the speakers and spoke about the importance of Education for life.



Farida Akbar, Director of training, Montessori Teachers Training Centre, Karachi (MTTC) spoke on education as an aid to life. She began by saying that our system of education today as seen by the traditional institutions and the teachers is based on expecting best grades for the children in class. Everyone agrees that our system of education is limited to schooling and rote learning. We need to change the system based on scientific research on how children learn which is what Dr. Montessori believed in. She has based her system on laws of nature. Mrs Akbar briefly mentioned the basic ideas on the Montessori system such as the absorbent mind, the sensitive periods, the prepared environment, the role of directress, freedom of choice and movement, importance of concentration and control of error. She explained briefly the qualities of a normalised child and that normalisation starts at around 3 years in a Montessori environment. These qualities help to prepare a child to face the challenges of life and it becomes possible to achieve balance and harmony in all what he does.



Begum Shahnaz Wazirali, who has been awarded the Sitara e Imtiaz by the government for her services to education is President of Szabist and Board of Trustee and Chair to Board of Governors, Nasra School, spoke on the importance of an early start in education in Pakistan. She mentioned that the Montessori system comes to her mind when she sees young children. Policy prescription is the larger issue and it is the government's responsibility to take children in school at the age of three years. Malnutrition in children in government schools is the greatest problem as brains do not function well without the required nutrients.

While interviewing for jobs at the University, she asks which school and pre-school they have attended. She urged the importance and need to bring Montessori education further to the whole of Pakistan with the help of the Montessori Teachers Training Centre and Pakistan Montessori Association.



Asiya Sachwani, Assistant Professor Ziauddin University, Speech Language Pathologist, Educational Consultant and AMI Elementary trained Directress (6-12) gave a presentation on Executive Functional Skills, Academic Achievement and ADHD.

Asiya's presentation was mainly about brain functioning in ADHD and how Montessori addresses executive functioning skills. She explained in detail about EEG brain research and other issues. She is delighted by her elementary training and definitely wants to do primary AMI diploma for 3-6 year olds. An in depth presentation of pros and cons of ADHD useful to parents and teachers as according to research one in six people have ADHD. Makes one wonder!



And lastly, a theatrical presentation on issues of ADHD and Dyslexia produced by Sheema Kermani, social activist and theatre director, Tehrike e Niswan.

This was a story about a Pakistani family having a dyslexic child. A neighbour, who had just moved in, was a teacher, helped the family with the child. It was about bringing awareness about dyslexia and ADHD to parents and teachers. It was a very entertaining and thought provoking reminder to teachers, parents and guests.

The group sings a humorous song requesting the guests to switch off their mobiles



Neighbour discussing how to cope with the dyslexic child



Neighbour playing games with the child

Vote of thanks by Kishwar Allawalla

And last but not least, PMA General Secretary, Kishwar Allawala proposed a vote of thanks. She thanked the Chief Guest, speakers, volunteers, helpers and Pak-American Cultural Centre.



PMA President Zohra Gaya thanks the speakers

Begum Shahnaz Wazirali SI



Farida Akbar



Asiya Sachwani



Sheema Kermani



*Imagination does not become great until human beings, given the courage and the strength, use it to create. ... It is like the sun which appears at dawn or a flower just beginning to bloom. **Education** cannot be effective unless it **helps** a child to open up himself to life."*

Are We Meeting the Needs of the Child in Casa and Beyond

Subika Raza Shahab is an education activist advocating child - centred and activity - based learning. She took her AMI Montessori Teachers Training from Vancouver, Canada and AMI Elementary Teacher's diploma from Connecticut, USA. In her presentation, Subika compared the Montessori system with the traditional system. A summary of the presentation at the PMA March meeting follows:



Mistake # 1 Creating groups of children according to age. We sort them into class 1, 2, 3 or different levels in Montessori.

The need that is denied Social connection

Montessori principle Mixed age group

Mistake # 2 Having time slots of several different activities during the day. Circle time, snack time, Quran time, writing time.

The need that is denied Repetition, Self perfection, Concentration

Montessori principle Uninterrupted 3 hour work cycle

Mistake # 3 Using stars and stickers, smiley faces, prizes and penal ties, or honours and humiliation

The need that is denied Exploration, Imagination, Curiosity, Self- perfection, Independence, Adaptation,

Montessori principle No Reward, No Punishment, Self correction

"No one who has ever done anything really great or successful simply because he was attracted by what we call a 'reward' or by the fear of what we call a 'punishment.'"—Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*

This empty praise may discourage children from trying new activities at which they might fail.

Mistake # 4 Telling the students what to do

The need that is denied Self-control, Curiosity, Orientation, Work, Exploration, Logical thinking, Abstraction

Montessori principle Freedom of Choice, Control of Will

Mistake # 5 Giving tests, grades. To evaluate and judge

The need that is denied Self control (Self-evaluation), Self-perfection (self-esteem)

Montessori principle No tests no grading

Mistake # 6 Discipline through firm rules and surveillance, desks, chairs, restricted movement, restriction on talking

The need that is denied Self control (the control of Will), Respect, Independence, Communication, Socialization, Movement.

Montessori principle Balance between Freedom and Responsibility, Freedom of Choice, Freedom of Movement

Mistake # 7 Different subjects taught by different experts

The need that is denied Self control (the control of Will), Respect, Independence

Montessori principle Preferably only one directress/teacher

Mistake # 8 Homework

The need that is denied Social connection (gregariousness), Freedom, Observation, Orientation

Remedy Home time is to learn from parents their skills and to socialize

Sow the seeds and do not rush for the fruit

"When confronted by situations which concern the child and seem difficult to solve, do not seek outside remedies but concentrate upon the nature of the child and the essential **NEEDS** of his development"

The above summary of presentation by Subika was inspired by her Montessori Casa and Elementary Training and John Taylor Gatto's Book, "Dumbing Us Down".

Courtesy: presentation given by Subika

Understanding the Nature and Notions of Learning with an emphasis on Active Learning Strategies.

Facilitators: Dr. Nilofar Vazir and Fatima Obaid

Supervising an activity at the workshop

PMA April meeting enjoyed an inter active workshop whereby various activities were given to the participants to get to know each other by moving around and finding out their names, favourite colour, movie, friends within a given time. Some activities had participants in five groups and one in three groups to discuss subjects given by the Facilitators.



Dr Nilofar Vazir discussed the theory of learning, Socrating and other learning forms.

She discussed John Dewey and Chicago schools with the have nots, John Piaget who experimented the haves with his seven children, Montessori worked with children from World War 1 and Vegosky who discovered zone of proximal development.

The reflective activity, included Name of Knowledge, Nature of Teaching, Nature of Learning, Role of Teacher, Role of Student, Classroom Environment and Assessment of Learning.

Participants were given forms to fill in and discuss as below. In all it was a very enlightening and mind broadening experience. When Dr. Nilofer Vazir was asked the question where she put Montessori on her list, she replied by saying she takes the best from all psychologists mentioned.

Questionnaire for Teachers (W/S 1)

“What Kind of Learner Am I?

Please circle which is the most valuable or most important element that fosters your learning.

Questions and Answers time

Which sense/senses promote most effective learning for me?

Auditory(Hearing)- Visual(Seeing)- Tactile(Touching)- Taste

Q and A time



Which social context is most suitable for my learning?

Alone Pair Small group Large group

Whom do I consider to be the best partner for me to learn with?

Peer Adult Both

What place suits me most effectively for learning?

Classroom Home Library Park Any other place(specify)

Which gender do I feel comfortable to learn with?

Male Female Both

What activity promotes my learning most effectively?

Reading Writing Repeating Drawing Doing Rote Learning Reading/writing Listening/watching any other(specify)

When is the best time for me to learn?

Early morning Afternoon Evening Night

What atmosphere is best suited for my learning?

Quiet Noisy Any Other

Why do I Learn?

I learn because -----

I learn best from

Someone who knows more than me

Someone who is as knowledgeable as me

Someone who knows less than me

Any other



L to R: Zohra Gaya, Farida Akbar, Begum Shahnaz Wazirali, Asiya Sachwani



Front row: PMA committee members at the Seminar



L to R Farida Fazal, Banoo Kijat, Zohra Gaya, Farida Akbar, Asiya Sachwani, Sheema Kermani



L to R Banoo Kijat, Zohra Gaya, Zubeda Mustafa, Salma Intiaz

PMA Committee members 2016 – 2018



Front Row: L to R Masooma Alibhai, Nilufer Ahmed, Zohra Gaya, Farida Fazal, Banoo Kijat
Back Row: L to R Kishwar Allawala, Maheen Pasha, Zubaida Asghar, Shireen Gaya, Farah Sarfraz, Zeeba Rizvi, Nargis Sheerazi

Photos by Maheen Pasha, Farah Sarfraz, Zubaida Asghar, Saveen Gaya

AMI wishes to announce the passing, on 30th March 2018, of Dr Silvana Quattrocchi Montanaro, AMI Trainer and author. Dr Montanaro was a pioneer in spreading globally the insights of Maria Montessori and her close collaborator Gianna Gobbi enlivening this knowledge with her own deep psychological study of pregnancy and the first three years after birth. She was also instrumental in the revitalisation of AMI's 0-3 course and in training many of AMI's leading 0-3 trainers and practitioners. Her work embodied the vision and spirit of Maria Montessori and lives on in all the children and adults with whom she both directly and indirectly interacted.

Courtesy: AMI facebook



AMI 2018 AGM and Montessori Forum
13-15 April 2018,
Amsterdam.



6th Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières

We are pleased to announce that the Sixth Assembly of Educateurs sans Frontières (EsF) will be held in Stellenbosch, South Africa from 4-18 August, 2018



29th International Montessori Congress Bangkok, Thailand 16 - 19 July 2021

Managing Committee

Zohra Gaya – President
Farida Fazal – Vice President
Kishwar Allawala – General Secretary
Banoo Kisat – Treasurer
Farah Sarfraz – Joint Secretary

Other Members

Nilufer Ahmed
Shireen Gaya
Maheen Pasha
Zeeba Rizvi
Nargis Sheerazi
Masooma Alibhai
Zubaida Asghar (co-opted)

Thanks to: Zohra Gaya, Farida Fazal, Kishwar Allawala, Banoo Kisat, Masooma Alibhai, Maheen Pasha, Zubaida Asghar

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Mail your contributions to pakistanmontessoriassociation@gmail.com

43-3G/6, PECHS, Karachi – 75400 Tel: 3454 3952, 3454 9103

Website: www.pakistanmontessoriassociation.org; AMI Head Office: www.montessori-ami.org