

Introduction

The Montessori lower elementary curriculum covers the first three years of elementary school. At the Montessori School of Pullman, we also have an all-day kindergarten option for students aged 5 – 6 to spend half the day in the elementary room, being introduced to some of the lessons from this curriculum, and the other half of the day in the 3 – 6 year old classroom, having the opportunity to develop their leadership skills.

The Montessori elementary curriculum, like the curriculum for the 3 – 6 year olds, offers the elementary child freedom of movement and freedom of choice, within a carefully prepared, beautiful environment, full of hands-on, engaging and interesting materials. The students choose activities that appeal to their interests and match their abilities, guided by a Montessori certified teacher. The curriculum offers an individualized educational plan for each child, all within a supportive community. There are also many group activities, so students learn how to work cooperatively and problem solve with others. The curriculum and environment encourages cooperation, not competition.

The schedule and curriculum encourage students to delve deeply into the different subjects. There are prolonged and unbroken work times to aid in the development of concentration. The different strands of the curriculum are woven together to form a cohesive whole. For example, please read below about the five great lessons in history that provide a framework and help develop within the child an awareness of the connectedness of everything in the universe. Similarly, the ongoing study of the common needs of humans provides a framework for studying human history, and can be adapted to the study of plants and animals, because all living things have common needs.

The Montessori elementary curriculum aims to ignite the imagination, curiosity and sense of wonder in the child, and thus inspire an excitement about learning that will last a lifetime.

Language Arts



We all appreciate how fundamental language is to communication. For children, the ability to speak opens doors; the ability to read opens minds. Our Language Arts program builds on the foundation laid in preschool, which sets the stage for the children to master tasks such as: Reading, Writing, Spelling, Dictionary Skills, Poetry, Novel Studies, Penmanship & Handwriting, Parts of Speech and a love of literature. Each skill builds on another and forms a solid base, which leads to ease of integration with other subjects. Writing a research project on whales or explaining how a math equation is worked out is easily achieved as a result. In addition the children learn to value reading for pleasure as is evidenced by how much they enjoy book browsing, reading with a friend, reading to the teacher or a volunteer, reading in a small group, and listening to stories read by the teacher. (Anything written in italics is taken from the

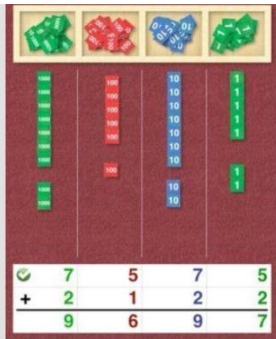
website of the North American Montessori Center's website. We use their curriculum materials in our school)

Many of our other academic areas also support the language arts, especially vocabulary development. As an example, in geometry lessons, we learn what the root word of a shape name means. Triangle means three angles, quadrilateral means four lines, etc. In history, we learn the origins of the names of the week. Monday is named for the moon, Sunday for the sun, etc. In geography, we learn that hemisphere means half of a sphere or globe, and the equator is related to the word for 'equal' as it is an imaginary line that divides the earth into two equal halves. In math, we learn that the word 'fraction' comes from the Latin 'fractus', meaning to divide or break into parts. In this way, children develop a rich and well developed vocabulary, and a fascination with words.

Our language curriculum is enriched with the introduction of another language, currently French, through songs, games, stories and conversations. Ms. Sudha, our current lead teacher, is also introducing the students to Hindi. In this way, we plan to give the children a strong foundation in acquiring other languages, and a passion and interest for other world languages.



Math



There is nothing in our world that does not in some way relate to mathematics. Being able to apply mathematics skills in other areas, such as language arts and music is most beneficial. The four operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division) are taught in detail building on skills learned in preschool. A fair portion of the curriculum is devoted to Geometry and related lessons including use of the Geometry Cabinet (study of plane shapes), Constructive Triangles (exploring the triangle as a basic building block of other shapes), sticks and nomenclatures (used to explore many geometric concepts, such as parallel, vertical, horizontal, diagonal, convergent and divergent lines, etc.). Rounding it off is the introduction to fractions and factors & multiples.

Through repetition and practice with many different hands on materials children develop a deep understanding of the decimal system and place value, and how the various operations work. Children also begin to memorize facts for all four operations.

Physical and Cultural Geography



The Earth is our home, but what do we really know about it? In our Geography curriculum we look at the formation of the Earth, its place in the solar system, its atmosphere, weather and seasons and its various land and water features. We also explore ways of representing these features through the use of maps - finding our way with lines of longitude and

latitude and a compass. A major component of this curriculum is the study of continents, countries of the world and their capital cities. The curriculum is enriched with cultural experiences, such as celebrating the Lunar New Year, a major celebration for many people, explorations of the celebrations of light (e.g. St. Lucia, Diwali, Hanukkah), and many other experiences. We welcome families into the classroom to give presentations about their culture and traditions. Such presentations might include holidays, music, dance, food, traditions.

History

*The Five Great Lessons are detailed in a series of stories and lessons that are designed to provide an **understanding of the history of the universe** with a focus on humankind's place in that continuing story. The Lessons are divided into five unique parts: 1. The Story of the Universe; 2. Life Comes to Earth; 3. The Coming of Humans; 4. The Story of Writing (or Language); 5. The Story of Numbers (Mathematics). Cosmic education in the Montessori curriculum sets the stage to develop more caring and peaceful citizens. Throughout all subjects, the Montessori teacher has the opportunity to instill in her students a sense of being **connected to all things in the universe**.*

*Man has always been curious about the past. In History, we review the **origin of the universe**, explore the concept of time and visit in capsule form how the ancient civilizations evolved. Intertwined with this is a study of the common needs of people and how they apply to each time period. The common needs of people framework allows us to study how different peoples have met their needs for shelter, clothing, food, transportation, defense, government, community, spiritual needs, such as art, music, dancing, spiritual expression. How different people have met these needs depends on when and where they lived, what challenges they faced and what resources were available for them to use.*

History lessons also include learning about the measurement of time, using clocks, calendars and timelines. Important annual events of the calendar, such as Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Presidents' Day, Independence Day, etc., provide opportunities for us to explore America's history.

Natural and Physical Sciences



Botany: Plants are one of the key components that sustain animal life on earth. In our Botany studies, we learn about the plant anatomy, plant physiology, plant geography, plant industries and horticulture. Children use charts and reference materials to learn how to classify the plants around them.

Zoology: Animals have inhabited the Earth for millions of years, growing from simple one-celled organisms to the diverse variety we see today. Our Zoology studies encompass an **overview of the animal kingdom** and classification suitable for the Elementary classroom. We also explore animal needs and how they are met.

Physics and Astronomy: Supernovas, stars, asteroids, meteors, satellites and galaxies! Students discover the wonder and power of a tiny atom, and



all its potential. This comprehensive curriculum provides plenty of activities to explore the mysteries of the universe, to discover many answers to why and how things exist and behave, and to seek further answers to questions that inevitably arise.

The Science curriculum allows opportunities for students to see **scientific demonstrations** and carry out their own **experiments**. Opportunities exist to explore concepts such as sink and float, magnetic and non-magnetic, effects of various conditions on plants, the water cycle, etc.

The Creative Arts



Our music specialist visits the elementary classroom three times a week, and introduces the children to concepts such as rhythm patterns, tonal patterns, singing a melody, and keeping a steady beat. The children sing songs and accompany the songs with rhythm instruments and tonal resonator bars. The children are also introduced to written music and keyboarding skills for piano and keyboard.

The visual arts are integrated into the curriculum, with children having the opportunity to illustrate stories and research projects. Various media are available for the children's use – paints, markers, colored pencils, pastels,

Cosmic Education and Peace Curriculum

This is a unique and important part of the Montessori elementary curriculum, and an extension of the Five Great Lessons in history, where children explore the interconnectedness of all living things.

This cosmic view, especially the view that the Earth must be respected and preserved, leads humankind in our search for meaning and purpose. The answer is the cosmic task - to help our children become adults who strive to achieve a peaceful coexistence in a sustainable environment.

As the Montessori teacher sets the framework for the understanding that all living creatures are important and interconnected, the next step is to encourage in each child the skill and ability to become the peacemaker.

The Cosmic Education and Peace curriculum provides helpful lessons to guide the children to become defenders of the environment and peace makers in their families, classrooms and communities.

Health

As part of the "Cosmic Education", Maria Montessori believed that a healthy mind, body and spirit are essential elements for success on the universal path of progress and development. With

these, a human being has a better chance of making a positive contribution to the world than one who does not take care of his physical, mental, and emotional development.

Our elementary students participate in a weekly Amazing Athletes program, where they are introduced to and practice skills for the following sports – football, soccer, basketball, tennis, golf, volleyball and hockey. They also engage in aerobic activities, and safe stretching, warm up and cool down activities.

The students also participate in weekly class meetings, where they learn emotionally safe ways to talk about emotions, relationships and to solve problems.

The Montessori School of Pullman encourages excellent nutrition as part of our health curriculum. We provide opportunities for children to prepare and serve healthy snacks.

Students also study the various systems of the body, and how the systems work together (e.g. the respiratory and cardiovascular systems, the skeletal and musculature systems).

Advanced Practical Life



The module encompasses topics such as cooking, gardening, sewing, care of the environment and basic etiquette (grace and courtesy, good manners) that will help a child develop a high level of concentration and improve fine motor skills while evoking a sense of respect for others and the environment.