

Montessori 3-6 Curriculum and Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards Crosswalk
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Introduction

- Early Childhood educators are facing increased standards-based accountability with an overwhelming majority of states having developed early learning standards for their youngest students, those in preschool and kindergarten. More recently, 46 state boards or departments of Education approved adoption of the national Common Core Standards.
- Pennsylvania’s Early Learning Standards serve as comprehensive model for quality early childhood education programs in the state.
- 122 Montessori programs in state of Pennsylvania, majority operating independently. 1/3 officially affiliated with AMS or AMI, less than 10 fully accredited. (Shapiro, 2010)
- Thesis aims to research alignment of standards with early childhood curriculum and develop a crosswalk document aligning the PA Early Learning Standards and the Montessori 3-6 Curriculum.

Research Questions

- How does the Montessori 3-6 curriculum align with the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards?
- Are the state standards met by the Montessori curriculum?

Methodology

- Project is a crosswalk document of the Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards for both Pre-K and Kindergarten and the Montessori Curriculum.
- Basic qualitative research aligning curriculum and standards, includes literature review focusing on standards-based accountability in early childhood education.
- Makes meaning of Montessori curriculum in view of typical expectations for young children in Pennsylvania.

Pennsylvania Key Learning Area	Standard	Montessori Curriculum
<p><i>Key Learning Areas are specific areas of development that, when combined, represent the whole child.</i></p> <p><i>The Key Learning Areas of the PA Pre-K standards are:</i></p> <p><i>Approaches to Learning</i> <i>Creative Arts</i> <i>Language and Literacy</i> <i>Logical-Mathematical</i> <i>Personal Social</i> <i>Physical-Health</i> <i>Program Partnerships</i> <i>Science</i> <i>Social Studies</i></p> <p><i>The Kindergarten Standards list Creative arts as arts and humanities,</i> <i>Program partnerships as family-school-community partnerships,</i> <i>and Language and Literacy as Reading, writing, speaking and listening</i></p>	<p><i>The standards are general statements in each key learning area that identify what children should know or be able to do.</i></p> <p><i>Indicators further define the standards and provide examples of knowledge and skills.</i></p> <p><i>Indicators are not used for this project.</i></p>	<p><i>The Montessori work, activity, prepared environment or class routine that aligns with the standard will be listed here.</i></p>

Findings

- Early childhood professionals believe in educating children across commonly accepted domains: physical, social and emotional, approaches to learning, language and communication, and cognitive and general knowledge. This is in keeping with the principles of developmentally appropriate practice and the whole child philosophy of Montessori education.
- Early Learning Standards address all the domains inherent in quality early childhood education. There is, however, a majority focus on language and cognition.
- **Montessori Curriculum aligns with Pennsylvania Early Learning Standards. There is at least one aspect of the Montessori curriculum for each PA Early Learning Standard. Many standards have multiples examples of alignment within the Montessori curriculum.** These findings are incomplete at this time as this is an ongoing project. It appears that there will be numerous Montessori works, environments, or routines that align with each early learning standard.

Implications

- This document can be used to prove alignment between the Montessori curriculum and the Pennsylvania standards. This is a practical application for not only the Montessori program at the Campus School of Carlow University; but to all Montessori 3-6 programs within the state of Pennsylvania.
- Due to its previously mentioned independent nature, Montessori is generally unfamiliar to many educators and education policy-makers. Alignment of the PA Early Learning Standards and the Montessori curriculum will demonstrate the high quality of Montessori in a manner recognized and accepted by the larger educational community.
- This project will be shared with the Pennsylvania Montessori Alliance. The PMA held its founding meeting in the fall of 2010. One of the three main goals of this statewide group is the alignment of the Montessori curriculum with the PA standards. There are a number of people who have done such an alignment independently; with varying degrees of depth. Participation in and sharing with the PMA will allow for a standardized format and a cohesive curriculum. The next meeting of the PMA is scheduled for April, 2011.

Limitations and Next Steps

This project began with the intention of aligning each and every Montessori work with an appropriate PA standard. It quickly became evident that this was too difficult a task to undertake alone and as part of a Master’s level program. This is something that can be more appropriately and sufficiently done by a curriculum director who can work on the alignment as a full time job or by a doctoral student as a dissertation. I believe that as the Pennsylvania Montessori Alliance grows and strengthens that such an alignment may be an appropriate eventual project for the members of the curriculum committee. It is still my hope that such an alignment can be completed to demonstrate the breadth and depth of Montessori education.

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Montessori Material	Purpose Aim (direct or indirect)	Montessori Area of Learning	Pennsylvania Key Learning Area	Pennsylvania Standard/ Indicator	Lesson Description
<i>Each individual material or “work” will be listed here</i>	<i>All Montessori lessons have a purpose or aim. This is similar to the objective in traditional lesson plans.</i>	<i>Montessori areas of learning are: Daily living Sensorial Language Mathematics Science Geography/ Cultural Art</i>	<i>The Key Learning Areas of the PA Pre-K standards are: Approaches to Learning Creative Arts Language and Literacy Logical-Mathematical Personal Social Physical-Health Program Partnerships Science Social Studies The Kindergarten Standards list Creative arts as arts and humanities, Program partnerships as family-school-community partnerships, and Language and Literacy as Reading, writing, speaking and listening</i>	<i>Individual standards and or indicators will be aligned here</i>	<i>A brief description of the material and the procedure for its use will be listed here</i>