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Using ABA Tools to Train Non-Montessori Teachers on the Core Principles of the Montessori Method in Primary Education

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ABSTRACT

Background: This study examined the impact of a two-month theoretical-practical training program incorporating Behavior Skills Training (BST), Self-Monitoring, and Observational Learning. The goal was to adapt the teaching style of a non-Montessori primary school teacher by introducing foundational principles of the Montessori method.
The participant was a 30-year-old teacher with prior experience in traditional teaching at international schools. *Methods*: A single-subject experimental design was employed, consisting of pre-probe, post-probe, and follow-up phases. The dependent variable was the adoption of Montessori-style teaching observable during the participant's teaching performance, evaluated using a 17-indicator checklist (Appendix 1) and the percentage value derived from the scores assigned to the participant's responses on a 13-item Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2). The independent variable was the training program focused on key Montessori pedagogical principles.
Results: Data collected by the researcher and evaluated by Montessori experts revealed the program's effectiveness in integrating Montessori principles into the participant's teaching practices.
Conclusions: The study also reflected on the duration of training and the potential for broader involvement of educational staff in similar initiatives.

Keywords: Aba, Training, Teachers, Primary, Montessori

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Introduction

In the evolving educational and societal landscape, teachers must embrace continuous professional development to meet the multifaceted demands of 21st-century education (Perla, 2014) and to strengthen their ability to engage meaningfully with students and all stakeholders; this requires moving beyond simply imparting knowledge to fostering the ability to teach students "how to learn," equipping them with the skills necessary to navigate life and adapt to an ever-changing world (Zecca, 2021). Such an approach shifts the focus from passive assimilation of pre-constructed knowledge to developing competencies that empower learners.

However, traditional teaching approaches often fail to address the socio-educational goals of contemporary schooling, leaving teachers insufficiently prepared with the tools needed to bridge this gap (Perla, 2015). Additionally, practical training frequently lacks the critical reflection necessary for effective pedagogy, reinforcing the divide between academic theory and classroom practice (Perla, 2014). This lack underscores the need for teacher preparation programs to integrate theory and practice seamlessly.

Montessori teacher training is a standout example of an alternative preparation model. It seamlessly links theoretical principles with practical application to foster a transformative approach to education. Despite its transformative contributions to modern educational practices and its enduring influence on contemporary schooling systems, Montessori pedagogy is often afforded only cursory attention in traditional teacher training programs. In her *article "Culture, Craft, & Coherence: The Unexpected Vitality of Montessori Teacher Training*," Cossentino describes Montessori training as " *like discovering a new and better way to educate and learning how to do it." This training integrates theoretical principles with practical techniques addressing the multifaceted challenges of learning to teach"* (Hiebert et al., 2002). At the heart of Montessori pedagogy is a radically reconfigured vision of childhood, where children are deeply engaged in their own development and capable of achieving their potential through self-construction. Within this framework, the teacher's role radically changes. Education using the Montessori approach is viewed as a support for life, emphasizing the teacher's role in facilitating the child's natural development by removing barriers to their growth. Montessori educators are tasked with shifting away from merely imparting knowledge to placing trust in the child's innate developmental instincts, responding to their unique cues, and guiding their self-directed learning process with care and commitment (Whitescarver et al., 2007).

Becoming a Montessori educator and receiving credentials requires mastery of the technical procedures and theoretical and cultural principles underpinning Montessori pedagogy. A key component of Montessori teacher training involves memorizing detailed procedures developed by Maria Montessori, preserved and transmitted by experienced trainers who act as custodians of this

knowledge. Trainees acquire technical expertise through imitation and repetition, ensuring consistency in using Montessori materials and techniques. This integration of the "how" and "why" underscores Montessori's vision's coherence and transformative potential for educators (Cossentino, 2009).

In Italy, Montessori specialization for primary school educators is an advanced program for certified teachers who have completed traditional training. The program comprises 550 hours of coursework, including 100 hours dedicated to practical exercises and observational internships in Montessori schools. In the context of Applied Behavior Analysis, all stakeholders focused attention on the role of teachers and the impact of their training on their ability to implement effective teaching practices. Research has identified specific strategies that are particularly effective in teacher training programs. These include Behavior Skills Training (BST), Observational Learning, and Self-Monitoring. Studies indicate that BST is highly effective in teaching new skills and is widely applied to teach individuals with disabilities, professionals, healthcare providers, parents, and other personnel, as well as in the training of children (Buck, 2014). An important aspect highlighted in the literature is that Behavior Skills Training (BST) is adaptable and flexible, allowing for implementation across diverse settings and with varying resources. It has been noted that BST can be effective for teachers with different levels of experience (Arèchiga et al., 2024).

BST has been employed to train teachers in implementing a wide range of interventions. Among these, Naturalistic Developmental Behavioral Interventions (NDBIs) have gained attention for their substantial potential. These naturalistic interventions contain some fundamental Montessori principles. When combined with effective teacher training through BST, these interventions offer a promising approach to maximizing learning opportunities within naturalistic settings (Slane et al., 2021). Recent studies have recognized observational learning as a highly effective tool for enhancing workplace learning (Derwik, 2021). Within the educational field, observation is considered a key method for evaluating, reflecting on, and enhancing the quality of teaching and learning. Beyond directly impacting teaching and learning, it is also particularly effective in supporting quality assurance frameworks and continuous professional development programs.

While Observational Learning offers significant potential for enhancing teaching and learning, there are notable challenges regarding unclear objectives, misaligned goals and outcomes, and inadequate implementation strategies that can undermine their effectiveness (O'Leary, 2012). Establishing clear objectives, aligning them with desired outcomes, and adopting thoughtful, well-structured implementation practices to maximize their impact is essential. Self-monitoring has proven to be an effective tool for enhancing teaching practices and managing behavioral interventions; however, its successful implementation requires individualized training (Rispoli et al., 2017).

This study reports on developing and implementing a two-month training program for a non-Montessori teacher working as a co-teacher in a primary school with a strong Montessori focus.

The training program employed a combination of these tools, which are effective according to Applied Behavior Analysis research. It was structured into three phases: providing instruction, modeling, and offering practical application with feedback (Prince, 2016). During the program, the participant observed experienced Montessori teachers using a 17-indicator checklist of Montessori behaviors (Appendix 1). This checklist aimed to guide and enhance the effectiveness and objectivity of the observations. Subsequently, the participant had opportunities to practice applying these observations and engage in Self-Monitoring using the same checklist (Appendix 1).

This study investigated how to modify the participant's teaching style by learning basic Montessori principles. The study explored how acquiring foundational Montessori principles could modulate the participant's teaching style.

Method

Participants

This study involved a single participant, T., a 30-year-old teacher newly hired at a private educational center that served as the research site. This private educational center included a nursery, a kindergarten, a primary school, an extracurricular service, and a language school. The environment was bilingual (Italian–English) and incorporated multiple pedagogical approaches, strongly focusing on Montessori pedagogy. Before joining this private school, T. had experience teaching in international schools that followed a traditional approach and had not received Montessori training or worked in a Montessori setting. During the first four weeks of employment, T. primarily conducted play-based activities in a non-Montessori extracurricular program within the setting. At the beginning of the fifth week, T. began teaching first-grade students (aged six) within the primary school, which followed Montessori principles. Montessori training commenced for T. at the end of the fifth week, allowing sufficient time to become acquainted with the new environment and the children. This arrangement provided T. with sufficient time to become acquainted with the classroom setting and students before collecting pre-training data, thereby minimizing the influence of initial unfamiliarity with the teaching context. As a result, any observed changes in teaching performance could more reliably refer to the training intervention rather than external factors, ultimately enhancing the pre and post-training data's validity.

Dependent Variable

The dependent variable in this study was the participant's Montessori-style teaching behavior, assessed using two distinct methods. The first method involved the Teaching Style Self-Assessment

Questionnaire (Appendix 2), a 13-item instrument designed to measure teaching style, with responses scored as a percentage. The second method employed a Checklist of Montessori Teaching Behaviors (Appendix 1), consisting of 17 indicators to evaluate the participant's rate of Montessori teaching behaviors.

Independent Variable

The independent variable in this study was a two-month training program designed to familiarize the participants with key components of Montessori pedagogy. This program consisted of three phases:

- Phase 1: Two instructional sessions on foundational Montessori principles.
- Phase 2: Two observation sessions in which the participant used a checklist (Appendix 1) to observe the classroom behavior of a lead Montessori teacher, followed by a brief discussion with a supervisor to reflect on these observations and to provide feedback and targeted guidance.
- Phase 3: One month of classroom teaching practice, including self-monitoring with the checklist (Appendix 1) and biweekly feedback sessions with the supervisor.

Material and Setting

We conducted this study in a private educational center offering multiple services, including a nursery, kindergarten, primary school, extracurricular service, and a language school. Montessori pedagogy was one of the primary approaches adopted, and data collection took place in the primary school premises. We used a 13-item Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2) to assess the participant's educational approach and teaching style. Each item was open-ended and designed to allow non-Montessori teachers to freely articulate the pedagogical principles underlying their practice. The questions focused on four main areas: (1) educational principles, (2) teaching-learning methods, (3) lesson organization (space, time, materials, activities), and (4) group management. The Checklist Observation of Montessori Teaching Behaviors (Appendix 1) was developed by operationalizing Montessori pedagogy to assess specific teaching behaviors. It addressed the same thematic areas as the Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2): educational principles, teaching-learning methods, lesson organization (space, time, materials, activities), and group management.

A panel of six experienced Montessori teachers (three at the elementary level and three at the kindergarten level) validated each indicator using a five-point Likert scale (0 = completely non-Montessori, 4 = typically Montessori), indicating a strong consensus on their Montessori specificity, based on their specific expertise in the Montessori method. All indicators received the highest

possible rating (4). After this validation, we assessed the participant's Montessori behaviors using the checklist. (Appendix 1).

Experimental Design

This study utilized a single-subject experimental design with pre-probe, post-probe, and follow-up phases (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2007).

Procedure and Measures

The procedure consisted of four phases: during the initial pre-probe phase, on the participant's first day at the school, the Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2) was administered at 9 a.m. before introducing the pedagogical approach, school tour or interaction with colleagues. During the first four weeks of employment, the participant attended the school's extracurricular programs, which did not follow a Montessori-based approach. The participant started teaching first-grade students (aged six) in a Montessori classroom environment in the fifth week. Following five weeks of employment, the participant had sufficient time to acclimate to the work environment, after which we began observing their teaching performance. T.'s teaching performance was observed at the primary school five weeks after arrival, allowing sufficient time to familiarize the children and the work environment before receiving specific information on Montessori principles. We recorded the percentage of Montessori-style behaviors using the 17-Indicator checklist (Appendix 1). Following the pre-probe phase, we implemented a two-month training program consisting of three components: (a)formal training involved two instructional sessions that covered fundamental Montessori principles; (b) two observation sessions of the Montessori teachers' behavior in the classroom were conducted by the participant with the support of a checklist (Appendix 1). A brief discussion with the supervisor followed, focusing on the participant's observations, followed by feedback from the supervisor with targeted suggestions; (c) Teaching with self-monitoring of the participant's performance using a checklist (Appendix 1) and receiving biweekly input from the supervisor.

The first phase of the intervention (a) consisted of two training sessions, each lasting two hours. The first session was a lecture introducing key aspects of the Montessori method and the rationale for the school's adoption. The second session focused on a deeper exploration of Montessori principles, supported by concrete examples from daily practice and the introduction of relevant Montessori materials. We presented the 17-indicator checklist (Appendix 1) during this session and encouraged questions. In the second phase (b) of the intervention, the participant observed the teaching behaviors of Montessori educators in the classroom during two one-hour sessions spread throughout the school

day. The checklist (Appendix 1) supported the observation, enabling the participant to identify the main Montessori behaviors quickly. At the end of these two observation sessions, the participants met with the supervisor, during which they could express any doubts and receive targeted guidance based on their specific needs. In the third phase of intervention (c), the participant conducted lessons for one month using the self-monitoring checklist and held biweekly 30-minute meetings with the supervisor, during which we provided feedback. During the post-probe phase, after the two-month training, we observed the participant's teaching performance for twenty minutes, conducted without using the checklist (Appendix 1). Then, we recorded the percentage of behaviors related to the Montessori teaching style (Appendix 1). Two months after the post-probe, we conducted a follow-up. In this phase, the Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2) was re-administered to the participants, and their teaching performance was observed for twenty minutes, recording the percentage of target behaviors related to the participant's Montessori teaching style (Appendix 1).

Data Collection

Data for this study were gathered by the researcher and evaluated by a panel
of expert Montessori teachers. In the pre-probe phase, the collected data referred to: (a) the percentage value derived from the score assigned by Montessori experts to the responses given in a self-administered questionnaire consisting of 13 items on teaching style. We assigned each response a score ranging from 0 to 4 on a Likert scale, based on the raters' specific expertise in the Montessori method, where 0 indicated a completely non-Montessori behavior, and 4 indicated a typical Montessori behavior. The final score indicated the extent to which the participant's teaching style was consistent with Montessori principles (Appendix 2); (b) the presence, absence, or non-observability of specific behaviors was recorded, and the percentage of target behaviors observable from the checklist (Appendix 1) related to the participant's Montessori teaching style was calculated.

In the post-probe phase, the collected data referred to the percentage of target behaviors related to the participant's Montessori teaching style during their teaching performances after the two-month training (Appendix 1). In the follow-up phase, the collected data referred to: (a) the percentage value derived from the score assigned by Montessori experts to the participant's responses in the second administration of the Teaching Style Questionnaire (Appendix 2) and (b) the percentage of target behaviors observed, related to the participant's Montessori teaching style (Appendix 1).

We recorded the participant's teaching performance on the video during the pre-probe, post-probe, and follow-up phases to facilitate inter-observer agreement (IOA).

Inter-observer Agreement

We assessed the inter-observer agreement (IOA) according to the participants' teaching sessions during the pre-probe, post-probe, and follow-up phases. The evaluations focused on analyzing the Montessori teaching style through the 17-indicator checklist (Appendix 1). We applied the Trial-by-Trial IOA method, and agreement was calculated for the indicators deemed mutually observable by both observers. This analysis yielded an overall agreement rate of 76%.

Results

We assessed changes in teaching style incorporating fundamental Montessori principles through percentage scores assigned by Montessori experts to the participant's responses on the Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2), administered during the pre-probe and follow-up phases. Figure 1 shows results. Out of 13 responses, each rated on a scale from 1 to 4 by Montessori expert teachers, we obtained the following percentage results: teacher one assigned a score of 32% during the pre-probe and 61% during the follow-up; teacher two assigned a score of 27% during the pre-probe and 59% during the follow-up; teacher three assigned a score of 40% during the pre-probe and 67% during the follow-up. These results represent an average 30% increase in the Montessori-aligned teaching style observed between the pre-probe and follow-up phases. Figure 2 illustrates the percentage of Montessori-style behaviors observed during the pre-probe, post-probe, and follow-up phases. The 17-indicator checklist (Appendix 1) formed the basis of the observation, although the researcher deemed only 12 indicators observable. The presence of target behaviors was recorded at 15% during the pre-probe, 65% during the post-probe, and 50% during the follow-up phase.

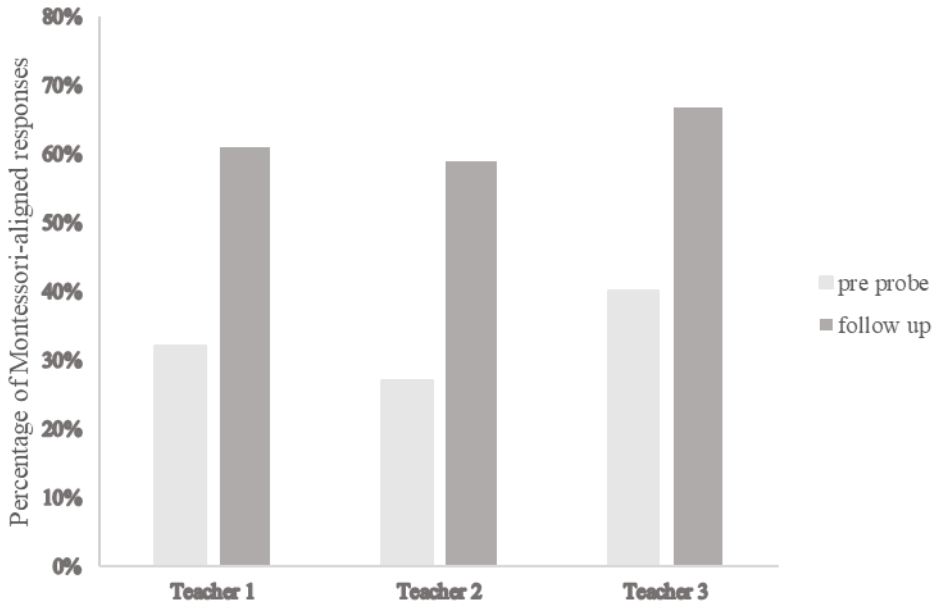


Figure 1 – Percentage score assigned to the participant's teaching style questionnaire in the two administrations (pre-probe and follow-up)

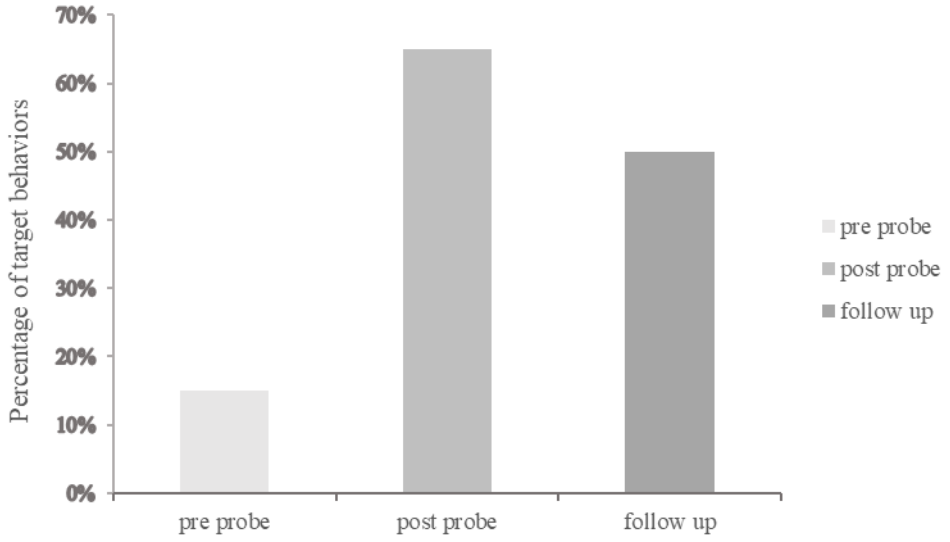


Figure 2 – Variation in the Percentage of Target Behaviors Related to Montessori Teaching Style Observed During the Probes and Follow-Up.

Table 1 presents the percentage of Montessori behaviors observed in the participant's teaching performance during the probe and follow-up phases, as assessed by the researcher and an additional observer.

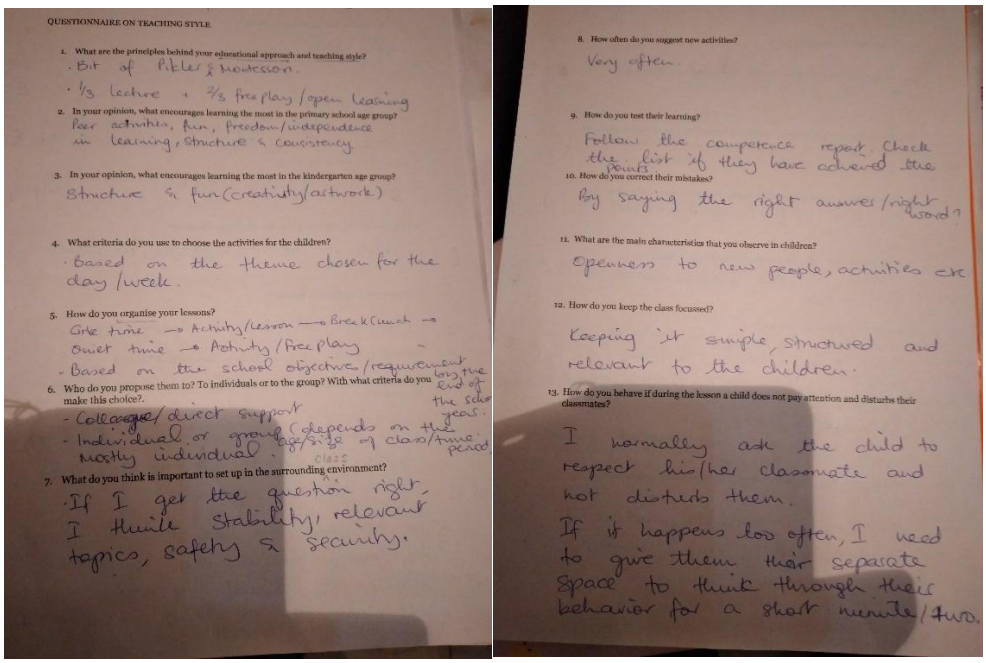
Table 1. *Percentage of Montessori behaviors observed among those detectable in the participant's teaching performance*

Observers	Pre-probe	Post-probe	Follow up
Researcher	15%	65%	50%
Additional Observer	33%	88%	90%

The researcher identified 15% of Montessori behaviors in the pre-probe, 65% in the post-probe, and 50% in the follow-up. Meanwhile, the additional observer recorded 33% of Montessori behaviors in the pre-probe, 88% in the post-probe, and 90% in the follow-up. These discrepancies in the results primarily arose from differences in the number of behaviors each observer deemed observable or unobservable, reflecting variations between the researcher's in-person observations and the additional observer's video-based review. Additionally, a degree of subjectivity influenced the outcomes of both observations.

Discussion

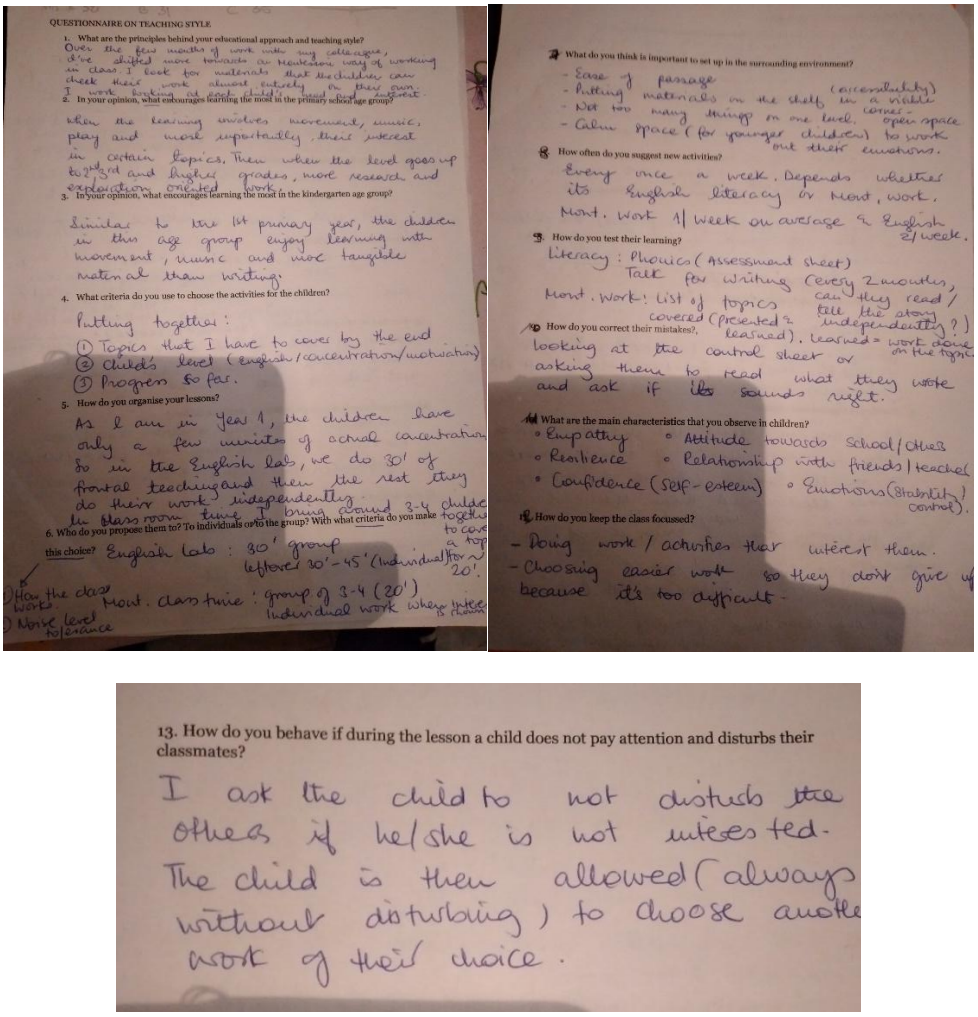
The study demonstrated that the training program, which combined techniques such as Behavioral Skills Training (BST), Observational Learning, and Self-Monitoring, was effective in helping the participant integrate fundamental Montessori principles into their teaching style. Additionally, the program proved valuable for introducing a new non-Montessori teacher into a school context strongly oriented towards the Montessori method. It provided a comprehensive overview of the Montessori approach's key principles, tools, and strategies, allowing the participant to observe better and understand the technique. The program also fostered the ability to ask relevant questions and offered the opportunity for periodic feedback. The increase in Montessori-aligned behaviors from 15% in the pre-probe to 65% in the post-probe, with stabilization at 50% during the follow-up two months after the training concluded (Table 1), highlights the effectiveness of the training program in equipping the teacher to integrate new pedagogical strategies. We achieved this without significantly altering the participants' inherent teaching style or natural inclinations. Additionally, the participants' responses to the Teaching Style Self-Assessment Questionnaire (Appendix 2) indicate a marked shift toward a Montessori-oriented perspective. This transformation is particularly evident when comparing pre-probe results (Figure 3) with follow-up findings (Figure 4). Significant changes were observed in key areas, including selecting and proposing activities, preparing the environment, observing children, correcting errors, and maintaining class engagement, as outlined in questions 4 to 7 and 10 to 13 of the questionnaire (Appendix 2).



QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHING STYLE

1. What are the principles behind your educational approach and teaching style?
- Bit of Pikler & Montessori.
- 1/3 lecture + 2/3 free play / open learning
2. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the primary school age group?
Peer activities, fun, freedom/independence in learning, structure & consistency
3. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the kindergarten age group?
Structure & fun (creativity/artwork)
4. What criteria do you use to choose the activities for the children?
- Based on the theme chosen for the day/week.
5. How do you organise your lessons?
Circle time → Activity/Lesson → Break/Lunch →
Quiet time → Activity/Free play
- Based on the school objectives/requirement
6. Who do you propose them to? To individuals or to the group? With what criteria do you make this choice?
- Colleague/direct support
- Individual or group (depends on the age/size of class/time period)
Mostly individual.
7. What do you think is important to set up in the surrounding environment?
- If I get the question right, I think stability, relevant topics, safety & security.
8. How often do you suggest new activities?
Very often.
9. How do you test their learning?
Follow the competence report. Check the list if they have achieved the points
10. How do you correct their mistakes?
By saying the right answer/right word?
11. What are the main characteristics that you observe in children?
Openness to new people, activities etc
12. How do you keep the class focussed?
Keeping it simple, structured and relevant to the children.
13. How do you behave if during the lesson a child does not pay attention and disturbs their classmates?
I normally ask the child to respect his/her classmate and not disturb them.
If it happens too often, I need to give them their separate space to think through their behavior for a short minute/two.

Figure 3 *– Participant's Responses to the Questionnaire (Appendix 2) at Pre-Probe.*



QUESTIONNAIRE ON TEACHING STYLE

1. What are the principles behind your educational approach and teaching style?
Over the few months of work with my colleague, I've shifted more towards a Montessori way of working in class. I look for materials that the children can check their work almost entirely on their own. I work looking at each child's level and interest.
2. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the primary school age group?
When the learning involves movement, music, play and most importantly their interest in certain topics. Then when the level goes up to 2nd and higher grades, more research and exploration oriented work.
3. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the kindergarten age group?
Similar to the 1st primary year, the children in this age group enjoy learning with movement, music and more tangible material than writing.
4. What criteria do you use to choose the activities for the children?
Putting together:
① Topics that I have to cover by the end
② Child's level (English/concentration/motivation)
③ Progress so far.
5. How do you organise your lessons?
As I am in Year 1, the children have only a few minutes of actual concentration so in the English lab, we do 30' of frontal teaching and then the rest they do their work independently. In classroom time I bring around 3-4 children to a table
6. Who do you propose them to? To individuals or to the group? With what criteria do you make this choice? English lab: 30' group lesson 30'-45' (individual for 20')
How the class works
Noise level tolerance
Mont. class time: group of 3-4 (20')
Individual work when interest is shown
7. What do you think is important to set up in the surrounding environment?
- Ease of passage
- Putting materials on the shelf in a visible (accessibility) corner - open space
- Not too many things on one level.
- Calm space (for younger children) to work out their emotions.
8. How often do you suggest new activities?
Every once a week. Depends whether its English literacy or Mont. work.
Mont. Work 1/week on average & English 2/week.
9. How do you test their learning?
Literacy: Phonics (Assessment sheet)
Talk for Writing (every 2 months, can they read / tell the story independently?)
Mont. Work: List of topics covered (presented & learned). learned = work done on the topic
10. How do you correct their mistakes?
looking at the control sheet or asking them to read what they wrote and ask if it sounds right.
11. What are the main characteristics that you observe in children?
- Empathy
- Attitude towards School/Others
- Resilience
- Relationship with friends/teacher
- Confidence (Self-esteem)
- Emotions (Stability/control).
12. How do you keep the class focussed?
- Doing work/activities that interest them.
- Choosing easier work so they don't give up because it's too difficult.

13. How do you behave if during the lesson a child does not pay attention and disturbs their classmates?

I ask the child to not disturb the others if he/she is not interested. The child is then allowed (always without disturbing) to choose another work of their choice.

Figure 4 *– Participant's Responses to the Questionnaire (Appendix 2) at Follow-up.*

Discrepancies in the measurement outcomes (Table 1) underscore the need to further operationalize the checklist indicators (Appendix 1) in future studies, incorporating a broader range of examples. Due to a lack of training in the Montessori method, the external observer's subjectivity highlighted specific features of the approach, particularly the role of the teacher. In Montessori education, the teacher's primary responsibilities encompass preparing the environment, materials, and learning opportunities while maintaining a non-intrusive presence. The teacher observes the child without interrupting their activity or concentration with unsolicited interventions. This methodology fosters independent work among children, enabling them to self-correct errors and progress at their own pace. In the Montessori method, children's motivating operation primarily arises from their intrinsic interest in their work, fostered by the teacher's preparation of the learning environment and materials rather than through adult praise. In the Montessori method, an intrinsic interest in their work primarily drives the child's motivating operation. The teacher has elicited the former by manipulating antecedent conditions rather than through external adult praise. As Maria Montessori stated: "The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say: The children are working as if I did not exist" (Montessori, 1952).

Limit of the research and future prospective

It will be essential to examine additional aspects of the teacher's activities to improve the effectiveness of future observations. This approach will help identify elements not detectable in the current study's observations. Specifically, observing moments of planning and preparing classroom spaces and materials (Appendix 1, indicators 10 and 17) will be valuable. Additionally, we suggest paying attention to the initial stages of lessons to assess whether children can utilize classroom spaces independently (Appendix 1, indicator 5). Furthermore, evaluating whether designated periods for reflecting on children and significant daily events are present or absent (Appendix 1, indicator 6) will provide deeper insights into the teacher's role and alignment with Montessori principles.

To further enhance the efficacy of the training program, we suggest conducting sessions regularly over an extended period throughout the school year, even into a comprehensive training program that facilitates dialogue and exchange among all educational staff, including those already engaged with, trained in, or unfamiliar with the Montessori method, aiming to deepen, develop and share effective pedagogical practices.

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Declaration of Interest statement

All authors must disclose any financial and personal relationships with other people or organizations that could inappropriately influence (bias) their work. The summary declaration of interest must report. If there are no interests to declare then please state this: 'Declarations of interest: none'.

Authors' contribution

TS contributed to the study concept and design, data analysis, manuscript preparation, and editing. BF contributed to the study concept, manuscript editing, data analysis and interpretation, and supervised the study.

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Appendix 1

SELF MONITORING CHECKLIST

BEHAVIOR	PRESENT	ABSENT	NOT OBSERVABLE
1.I prepare engaging, suitable, and aesthetically pleasing activities that are carefully designed. **Example:** After a field trip where children observed and asked many questions about carnivorous plants, I create a booklet for further exploration on the topic. The booklet is well-made, visually cohesive with botanical colors, and features consistent fonts and images. **Non-example:** I offer materials that are damaged or contain errors. 2. I prepare materials that allow for self-correction. **Example:** For an activity where the child matches each flag to its corresponding nation, a control booklet listing the correct pairings is provided 3. I introduce activities to individuals or groups when I assess they are ready. **Example:** I suggest writing a story to children who have already developed writing skills. **Non-example:** I ask children who do not yet know numbers to solve a two-digit calculation.			

4.I make materials available in the classroom so children can work on them independently. **Example:** I arrange activities, complete with control charts for self-correction, on shelves at the child's height. **Non-example:** I place materials at adult height and/or in locations that are not visible or accessible. 5. I allow children to move freely within the space and choose where they prefer to work. **Example:** I let children carry out their activities even while lying on a carpet. **Non-example:** I assign fixed seating arrangements and require work to be done only at desks. 6. I observe the children and document the activities they engage in and key daily events concerning them. **Example:** At the end of the lesson, I write in a diary describing specific behaviors, observed characteristics (e.g., Displayed emotions), and the activities they completed. 7. I observe children engaged in different activities simultaneously. **Example:** I shift my attention from one child reading a science book to another writing a story, and then to a third using a math material. 8. While children work independently, I remain seated			

in a lateral position, where I can observe everyone and be available if needed. **Example:** I sit approximately one meter away, observing different children one by one. If a child approaches, I respond, "Feel free to tell me." **Non-example:** I walk around the classroom asking, "Do you need help?" 9. I allow each child to choose the work they wish to engage in. **Example:** I ask the child, "What would you like to do?" **Non-example:** I say, "Today, you must start with math." 10. I prepare environments where children can easily access activities and all necessary materials to work independently. **Example:** I organize the classroom with shelves and furniture at the child's height, placing materials, school activities, books, and stationery visibly within reach. 11. I refrain from commenting on children's independent work unless they explicitly ask for feedback. **Example:** I observe a child independently working on a writing task and remain silent, even if I notice errors, until the child brings the work to me for correction. **Non-example:** I observe a			

child working on a writing task, interrupt them, and say, “You made a mistake here.” 12. I respond to children’s questions in a way that encourages autonomous reflection rather than providing definitive answers**.** **Example:** When asked, “Does ‘butter’ have a double letter?” I repeat the word, emphasizing the double "t." **Non-example:** When asked, “Does ‘butter’ have a double letter?” I simply reply, “Yes!” 13. I avoid providing responses that devalue the child **Example:** "There’s still something to improve, but you’ve worked really hard!" **Non-example:** "There’s still something to improve; you always get it wrong!" 14. In cases of inappropriate behavior, I provide a model, refer to the rules, and encourage reflection on the reasons and consequences of the behavior **Example:** If children raise their voices during work, I say: "While working, we speak softly so everyone can concentrate better." **Non-example:** If children raise their voices during work, I immediately write a note in the logbook.			

15. I keep my tone of voice appropriate for the classroom environment, avoiding raising my voice to be heard or listened to **Example:** During a moment of confusion, I stand in the center of the classroom where everyone can see me, cross my arms, and speak in a tone of voice either the same or lower than that of the children, saying the rule: "While working, we speak softly so everyone can concentrate better." If needed, I draw the children's attention with the sound of a small bell. **Non-example:** During a moment of confusion, I stand in the center of the classroom and, using a much louder voice than the children, say, "Be quiet!" 16. In case of an error, I help the child self-correct **Example**: I encourage the child to carefully re-read their work; I mark a small dot in pencil near a writing error; I give the child a small hint, such as "Here you could try…" **Non-example**: I mark the error with a red pen. 17. If I notice that an activity does not capture the children's interest because it is not chosen or does not sustain their focus, I modify it or present it differently **Example**: I prepared a science activity, introduced it to the children, and left it available			

in the classroom. Noticing that no one is using it, I make adjustments to make it more engaging by modifying some of its features. **Non-example**: I prepared a science activity, introduced it to the children, and left it available in the classroom. Noticing that no one is using it, I do nothing.			

Appendix 2

TEACHING STYLE QUESTIONNAIRE

1.What are the principles underlying your educational approach and teaching style?

2. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the primary school age group?

3. In your opinion, what encourages learning the most in the kindergarten age group?

4.What criteria do you use to select activities for the children?

5.How do you organize your lessons?

6.Who do you present the lessons to? To individuals or to groups? What criteria do you use to make this choice?

7.What do you consider important to prepare in the environment?

8.How often do you introduce new activities?

9.How do you assess learning?

10.How do you correct errors?

11.What are the main characteristics you observe in the children?

12.How do you maintain the attention of the class or group?

13.How do you handle a situation where a child is not following the lesson and is disturbing their peers?