The Montessori Difference

Montessori education provides many advantages that traditional education does not. The pedagogy is based on scientific observation and is centered around human developmental needs and stages. Freedom of choice and movement are strongly encouraged within limits as the child develops their will and ability to self-discipline. The child's inclinations towards independence and responsibility are supported as part of their preparation for life. Additionally, children are able to engage in purposeful work that connects the mind and the hand.

Montessori is also unique in that it places importance on moral development to form principled individuals. The classroom fosters a strong sense of kinship as children both find belonging and opportunities for contribution within their school community. Within the classroom environment, the teacher takes on a more humble and reserved role than that seen in traditional education. The Montessori teacher prepares the environment carefully to serve the child and supervises their development. Children are viewed with a deep-seated sense of respect and personhood.

Montessori education differs from traditional approaches in several key ways, reflecting a unique philosophy and methodology. Here are some of the primary distinctions:

Montessori	Traditional
School meets the needs of the student	Student fits the mold of the school
Child has freedom within healthy boundaries	Child is restricted to schedules
Mixed-age groups	Single-age group
Older children guide younger ones	No opportunity for older students to guide younger ones
Lessons individualized to student needs	Group lessons
Goals set by child & Common Core standards	Common Core standards
Child chooses their work	Teacher assigns work
Environment and Method encourages self-discipline	Teacher enforces discipline
Child sets their own learning pace	Pace forced by the group
Child reinforces own learning by internal feelings of success	Learning is reinforced by rewards and punishment
Child spots their own errors through self-correction, the use of self-correcting materials, and feedback	Errors in the child's work our highlighted by the teacher
Lessons in grace, courtesy, and care of the environment	No organized program for self-care instruction - left up to the parents
Process focused	Product focused
International developed curriculum	Narrow, unit focused
Children move constantly throughout the day as they work and carry supplies	Children sit in desks and PE is required for activity
There is no set snack time - the child may choose to have a snack when hungry	Children must all eat snack at the same time
Only one copy of each material is available - children develop patience by waiting their turn	Many of the same types of toys are available
Children learn with real life, child-sized tools	Children play with fake toys