

The Canadian Montessori Teacher Education Institute

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ELEMENTARY MONTESSORI GEOGRAPHY ALBUM



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Introduction

Maria Montessori challenges us to discover each child as a person in becoming, to observe his natural needs, to analyze his inner potentials and to prepare such an environment where he can be introduced to Reality:

- his own reality
- the reality of things
- the reality of others.

Knowing that the young child starts to be aware only of himself, as he grows and reaches outward, both physically and mentally, he becomes aware of objects that exist independently of him and of other people living around him as well. He begins to figure that he belongs to a larger family and a larger world.

In his daily experience with objects, he is acquiring rudimentary concepts of space and time. As he is first introduced by his parents, he is beginning to be aware that he takes place in the universe. His awareness of the Cosmos depends on his very first discoveries as well as his contact with the world around him. Searching to become the human being he is called to be, his development depends essentially on people. It is through our awareness and educational approach that the child will be introduced to Cosmic Reality.

As educator, we expose the child to Cosmos by successive contacts, every day more meaningful. The approach to Cosmos will always be sensory-motor experience based on activities where each child can distinguish, compare, name, figure out and think. Because our task will be to enable the human intellect to develop in accordance with natural laws (concrete first / abstract after), we will choose observation as a basic method, always inviting sensory-motor stimulation and direct contact with reality.

A prepared environment contains specific materials to stimulate the child to distinguish, classify, name and understand. Because “organization” is present in all Matter, a well thought out environment and specific materials providing a global view of Reality and introducing scientific classification becomes apparent. An environment in contact with the universe provides constantly both aspects:

- Experiencing the concrete (observation of the reality before abstracting)
- Relating to the whole of the Cosmos.

A prepared environment introduces the child to life connected to:

- **matter** –living or non-living or once-living
- **energy** – man made transformation of matter
- **space** – where we are: here and all around
- **time** – now, before, after

Knowing that each human being relates to Matter and Energy, to Space and to Time, our choice will be to highlight the child’s relationship to **Matter** through planned concrete experiences.

Overview of the Elementary Geography Curriculum

The constant point of reference in this Curriculum is the EARTH and all the lessons and experiments are an ongoing story revolving around the:

1. Universe, the Solar System and Earth
2. Law of Order and Harmony in the Universe
3. Movement of the Planet Earth
4. Lithosphere
5. Atmosphere in Motion
6. Hydrosphere and Its Phenomena
7. Biosphere
8. Humans and Geography

The study of Geography appeals to the imagination of the Elementary age child through the use of experiments to clarify concepts, the charts, the cosmic tales and the great lessons and involves his/her participation.