



**Montessori Principles
in adult education and training:**

**is the Montessori Methodology suitable for
adults?**

The Italian experience at Lingua Più - Città di Castello

**PREMISES of
Montessori approach with
adults**

**We will quote Maria Montessori
to better explain**

why

**Montessori Methodology
can be applied to adults :**

“This book of methods compiled by one person alone, must be followed by many others.

It is my hope that, starting from the individual study of the child educated with our method, other educators will set forth the results of their experiments.

These are the pedagogical books which await us in the future’

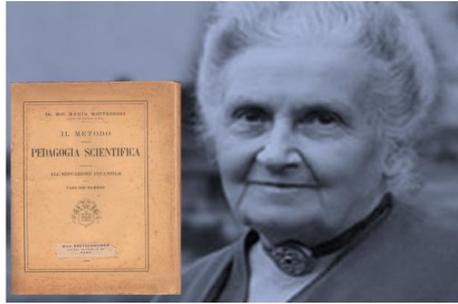
(Conclusion (Chapter XXII) to first Montessori’s publication in English, *The Montessori Method*, Montessori, 1912, p. 374).

**Lingua Più started to
pilot the application with
adults
in foreign languages a
few years ago**

WHY?

**BECAUSE OF
MARIA MONTESSORI 'S STRONG
CONNECTIONS WITH CITTA' DI CASTELLO**

IN FACT:



Maria Montessori printed her first book, “Il Metodo della Pedagogia Scientifica” in Città di Castello, in 1909



Still in Città di Castello, in the same year, Maria Montessori held the first training course for teachers



Later, Maria Montessori started some primary schools in Città di Castello where she applied her methodology, together with her friend, the local Baroness Alice Franchetti

Laura Gastaldi and *Roberta Marsili*, teachers at *Lingua Più*, started testing the basic **Montessori principles** in adult training,

because:

- we needed to find new effective approaches for teaching adults during our lessons
- those principles match with our methodology, soft skills and teaching attitude
- Maria Montessori represents for us a model as a woman and as an educationalist

How?



**Studying and adapting the 12
Montessori principles that we
considered suitable to adults**

- ➡ **Self-directed learning**
- ➡ **The teacher is an "observer" not a lecturer**
- ➡ **Sensitive learning periods**
- ➡ **Better learning through repetition**
- ➡ **Suitable environment**
- ➡ **Self control of mistake in didactical material**
- ➡ **Choose own learning time**
- ➡ **Learning by doing**
- ➡ **Movement analysis**
- ➡ **Silence exercise**
- ➡ **Good manners**
- ➡ **Tidy rooms**

The full application of these principles could revolutionize adult teaching and training, fostering:

✿ **Self – confidence in learning**

✿ **Autonomous learning**

through

the *elimination* or at least the alleviation of the major causes of stress and inhibition in adult learning

FOR A FASTER
LEARNING

The good results we reached by applying the Montessori principles strengthened our opinion that, even in the 21st century, the **Montessori Method** is still *an effective* approach adaptable to a different target group:

ADULTS

Our good practice resulted in two European projects



Lifelong
Learning



“Frojol – Free Style Montessori on the Job Learning”

target group :

- ✿ VET teachers/ trainers**
- ✿ Trainees’ tutors at companies/job agencies, etc..**



Participant countries:

Italy

The Netherlands

Poland

Spain

France

Austria



“MMLT – Montessori Methodology in Language Training”

target group:

- ✿ Language teachers/ trainers to adults 20+
- ✿ Language trainers of trainers
- ✿ Students of language teaching
- ✿ Language students



Participant countries:

Italy
Greece
Romania
Hungary
Poland
Great Britain

HOW WE WORKED WITH



FROJOL – Freestyle Montessori on The Job Learning

We adapted **the 12 principles** to the **six Montessori characteristics** selected by the Dutch Montessori Association:

- ✿1 Head, heart and hands
- ✿2 Learning by choosing
- ✿3 Reflection
- ✿4 Social learning
- ✿5 Integrated learning
- ✿6 In and outside the school building

Manual available

HOW WE WORKED WITH



MMLT – Montessori Methodology in Language Training

1st step: the “band-aid”

The **12 Montessori principles for the resolution or alleviation** of the main stress causes that adult learners usually face:

- ✿ Fear of teacher’s expectations
- ✿ Need of immediate results
- ✿ Difficulties in memorization
- ✿ Need of grammar structure before starting speaking a foreign language
- ✿ Fear to make mistakes
- ✿ Peer pressure (from class mates)
- ✿ Time pressure due to scheduled programs
- ✿ Sense of loyalty towards own native language and culture
- ✿ Difficult in using the target language avoiding literal translation
- ✿ Lack of self-confidence

2nd step: the full implementation to avoid stress

Main features of the methodology :

For STUDENTS	For TEACHERS
“Diary” → personal course book → final syllabus	Get to know each student → inner motivation
Free Spot	The teacher is a facilitator and not a lecturer
Silence (or a kind of) exercise	The teacher adapts didactical material to match the student’s needs and characteristics
Listening → speaking → writing	The importance of the environment
Students ‘checklist to self monitor improvements	

Peculiarity of Montessori teachers for adult training:

- are respectful**
- cultivate honest relationships**
- get familiar with their students**
- are informal and in constant evolution**
- their teaching is based on the exploration of the
environment**

The 3 Maria Montessori's maxims

In “The Child in the Family” (1950), Montessori lists **3 maxims**:

- 1. Observe all the reasonable activities of the child and try to understand them**
- 2. Satisfy as much as possible the child's desire to act: do not serve him, but educate him to become independent**
- 3. Since children are more sensitive than we think, act honestly with them**

...translated into adult's training...

- ▶ *Really* understand students, from the inside
- ▶ *Really* help them become autonomous
- ▶ *Really* establish a relationship of honesty and trust

And *thus* be open to teach like that!

...that is...

No

institutional programs

individual pre-set learning programs

....but

✿ *evolving research that starts with questions that students feel as urgent*

No

textbooks

exams

....but

✿ *a series of tasks, the sum of which will be the program*

✿ *self-evaluation and group evaluation, with remedial resources available*

KEYWORD:

Self-liberation

The first task for a future Montessori teacher



So...

Do teachers accept to teach like this?

If they do,

then their role will change and will be:

✗ not to teach

✗ not to judge,

✗ not to correct homework

✗ not to correct exams,

✗ not to “program” course syllabi,

✗ not to look up answers to student questions, all the time (they should learn to do it themselves, most of the time),

✗ not to motivate students,

✗ not to discipline students,

✗ not to do anything during a lesson *except* present the materials and then observe how they are used, in order to know what to eliminate, change or introduce for the next time

Most teachers, when interviewed or during seminars, said they are already applying some of the **Montessorian principles** thinking of the **12 principles**....

...but...

what about the internal maxims (the **3 Maria Montessori's maxims**) that should guide their behavior?

➡ **So, we challenged teachers if they really apply these three, asking the following questions, for a self reflection:**



- ✿ Do you really understand your students, from the inside? (also doing things with them?)
- ✿ Do you really help your students become autonomous (meaning self-directed)?
- ✿ Do you really establish a relationship of honesty (questioning things with your students)?

The main result was...

NO!

And now a question to you:



- ✿ am I applying the **12 Montessori principles** and the **3 Maxims** ?
- ✿ do I really know you, your inner needs, aspirations and expectations?
- ✿ am I fostering your autonomy on the matter?
- ✿ am I really establishing a relationship of honesty and trust with you?

NO! Not fully



Erasmus+

**Lingua Più organises refresher courses
for teachers and trainers also financed
under Erasmus+ Program KA1**

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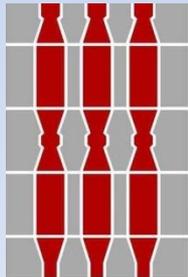
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