

# THE RELEVANCE OF THE MONTESSORI METHOD, IN AN AUTHENTICALLY INCLUSIVE PERSPECTIVE

D. Chiusaroli

*University of Cassino and Southern Lazio (ITALY)*

## Abstract

This contribution intends to highlight how much the relevance of the Montessori method does not lie in a single teaching practice, but as a whole, which creates a unitary path from childhood to adolescence under the sign of an education in which the know-how, the knowing how to be in oneself, knowing how to be with others and for others converge. Maria Montessori is internationally recognized as one of the innovators of pedagogy. Her method lays on solid scientific foundations confirmed by current neuroscientific research.

For a long time, and in part still today, the Montessori method has been labeled with activism, therefore seen as obsolete in the face of the innovative schools of cognitivism and structuralism. Some scholars have highlighted, however, the actuality of Montessori's thinking precisely in relation to its interconnection with the currents of structuralism on the one hand and cognitivism and neuroscience on the other. Montessori's thinking inserts pedagogical and didactic practice into a global vision of the human being and society. It rewrites the very concept of knowledge, conceived as a unicum, in which the very idea of school is renewed, understood not as a transmission of knowledge but as a fundamental place of individual growth and stable and responsible construction of the new generations.

In this perspective it is possible to identify two paths: on the one hand the development of a teaching and educational method based on the analysis of the characteristics of each age group and, on the other, the construction of a global structure of knowledge based on "cosmic education", as a vehicle for the growth of a society based on responsibility and conscious freedom, on the balance between man, environment and culture, which connects the various disciplinary areas together and standardizes each educational action to its being functional to the global organization of historical, scientific and humanistic knowledge. The personalized or individualized teaching in use today in the school, in particular with pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), has been taken as an integrated practice in the Montessori method, in an authentically inclusive perspective.

Furthermore, in the pedagogical field, according to the Montessori method paradigm that sees the teacher as "facilitator and guide" finds its fundamental application in current teaching practice.

Maria Montessori argued that knowledge must create connections, the material used must therefore allow the child to manifest intuitions and understandings of fundamental disciplinary concepts through his personal path of discovery and training, thanks to which he has the opportunity to realizing how it operates, thinks, adopts hypotheses, conjectures and solutions, how it ranks, solves problems by modifying its mental representations. In this sense, the material also has a metacognitive value.

Today, thanks to the contribution of neuroscience, we find further confirmations about the scientific significance of the Montessori method. In particular, the scientific discoveries on mirror neurons, thanks to which their role has been found in helping to absorb the information of the environment through the senses, in promoting the ability to communicate with the word, in sensing the emotions of others and in learning by watching, they find full confirmation in the ideas that Maria Montessori has spread through her observations.

Keywords: Observation, neuroscience, learning environment, inclusion, didactic mediators.