



The Montessori Foundation's Scope and Sequence Has Been Adopted by The Montessori Compass Online Classroom Management Software

Summary: March 11, 2013

Montessori Compass announced today that it plans to incorporate The Montessori Foundation's *Scope and Sequence* into its record keeping and parent communication software. This will provide schools with a comprehensive curriculum scheme from infant programs through age 12. From age 5 through 12, it will be aligned to the national *Common Core Curriculum*. In addition, Montessori Compass will provide families in subscribing schools with a wide-array of parent and teacher resources from The Montessori Foundation, including *Tomorrow's Child* magazine, videos, articles, webinars, and much more.

Background: For almost one hundred years, Montessori guides have used a simple clipboard note-taking system to keep a record of their students' progress. Most of us use the same three-step rubric, represented by a triangle, to record that a student has been introduced to a lesson, are working toward mastery, and have attained "mastery" of each material or lesson.

Traditionally, schools have thought in terms of groups of students covering a pre-planned course of study at a pre-planned pace for the entire class. Content is organized into grade levels. Good teachers in conventional schools individualize as much as they can by creating sub-groups of children within their classroom, there is a clearly defined set of skills and knowledge that children are expected to achieve before advancing from

one grade level to the next. In this way of thinking about schooling, the curriculum can be thought of as a stairway, which children climb up from kindergarten through high school graduation in a clearly defined timeline.

Teachers plan in terms of whole-group lessons or projects, and commonly students are grouped according to their perceived ability, with that group moving at more or less the same pace.

In contrast, Montessori curriculum is organized as an inclined spiral plane of integrated studies. Whereas in a traditional model, the curriculum is compartmentalized into separate subjects, with topics considered only once at a given grade level, in Montessori, concepts are introduced simply and concretely in the early years and elaborated upon over the years at increasing degrees of abstraction and complexity.

Montessori recognizes that children learn in many different ways and at their own pace. Montessori is consciously designed to recognize and address different learning styles, helping students learn to study most effectively. Students progress as they master new skills, moving ahead as quickly as they are ready.

Because of Montessori's unfamiliar methods of organizing curriculum and thinking about student progress, parents of children attending Montessori schools tend to find it difficult to get a good sense of what their children are learning. This lack of understanding

tends to make it more difficult to convince parents to stay with Montessori for the kindergarten year and the elementary program beyond. With a growing emphasis on well established educational standards, and the rise of tracking software used in many public schools, parents in Montessori programs tend to worry whether their children are learning what they need to know.

Montessori educators know from personal experience how misguided this fear is, yet it persists, and today most Montessori schools are seeking ways to more effectively track student progress and communicate this progress to busy parents.

The Collaboration between The Montessori Foundation and Montessori Compass

For some time, The Montessori Foundation has extensively researched current software options available to Montessori schools. We found that most were not very user-friendly and were lacking a number of critical features.

Two years ago we were introduced to Montessori Compass, a new online record keeping system developed by Montessori parents, Anita and Rob Amos.

When we had the opportunity to view this latest effort to bring Montessori record keeping online, my expectations were not very high. To our surprise, Montessori Compass appeared to be different in a number of ways that seemed to be important to us.

While still an incomplete beta-version at the time, we found its design and intuitive nature to be refreshing. It was clear that a lot of effort was put into making it easy to input classroom activity without a lot of cumbersome steps. The software still had a long way to go, but we were intrigued by its potential. Most importantly, Rob and Anita were not so far along into the software development process that making major modifications were prohibitively expensive.

As a result of both the user-friendly approach built into their software and Rob and Anita's openness to incorporate our suggestions into their development, The Montessori Foundation decided to informally collaborate on their project. We worked very closely with their team, advising them on many key areas that we felt would greatly benefit Montessori educators. We were impressed with their ability to develop elegant technical solutions that aimed to alleviate many of the unique challenges faced by Montessori educators. Montessori Compass officially launched in early 2012, and, just over a year later, has grown into one of the most widely-used software solutions serving the international Montessori community.

As of April 1, 2013, we are pleased to announce that Montessori Compass will provide The Montessori Foundation Scope & Sequence as the software's default curriculum. This comprehensive *Scope & Sequence* was carefully developed by the Foundation and is in the process of being aligned to the Common Core Standards.

With nearly all 50 states adopting the Common Core Standards, it has become imperative that Montessori schools begin using a system that provide standards reporting to regional accreditation agencies. Montessori Compass removes this headache by enabling educators in the classroom to stay focused on what they already know, without the need to worry about standards.

Teachers can simply type in a few letters of a lesson or Montessori material and the software provides a list of learning objectives that are aligned to standards. A single Montessori material may have multiple learning objectives that meet multi-

ple standards. Montessori Compass performs the alignment behind the scenes, giving teachers and schools the ability to run a standards-based report at any time.

Montessori Compass also allows teachers to send out simple and informative reports to parents about what their children are doing in school. These can easily include personalized notes to individual parents with digital photos of their child at work and even video clips if teachers wish to include them.

Montessori Compass will also equip schools with a variety of parent resources and publications from the Foundation, aimed at bridging the communication gap between home and school. These will include digital editions of *Tomorrow's Child*, *Montessori Family Life* videos on the Montessori-inspired home and partnership parenting, suggestions for terrific home activities, books, and resources, live webinars for parents and educators, and more.

As many schools struggle with high attrition rates in Kindergarten and First Grade, it is vital to effectively educate parents on the benefits of continuing their child's Montessori education. We have found that Montessori Compass provides a comprehensive solution that makes it easy to enhance a school's com-

munication and parenting education programs.

As part of the Scope and Sequence, schools will have the option to share photos, videos, and descriptions of lessons. In addition to videos produced by the Foundation, if they wish, individual schools can record lessons and classroom activities, upload them to Montessori Compass, and the software provides the option to share this information via its online parent portal. This is a very powerful tool that will help parents stay engaged throughout the school year and gain greater insight into their child's Montessori education.

We believe that Montessori Compass provides the most comprehensive and easy-to-use software system presently available to Montessori schools, and warmly suggest that you give it a try!

For more information, visit Montessori Compass at www.montessori.compass.com or call 1-888-619-2229.

I am available to discuss this exciting new collaboration and can be reached at 941-729-9656.

—Tim Seldin

President, The Montessori Foundation
Chair, The International Montessori Council (IMC)



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***Now featuring the Montessori Foundation Scope & Sequence with Common Core Standards Alignment!**

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