

# Inspiring Personal Progress through Practice : A Model of Montessori Pedagogy in the Primary Classroom

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## Abstract

Learning to read is a complex process that involves skills, knowledge, and other important constructs such as motivation and executive function. This research represents one component of a dissertation that used grounded theory to study the process of learning to read in the Montessori Primary classroom. Through interviews with experienced Montessori Primary teachers and classroom observations, a model was developed to illustrate how children, through engagement with the Montessori curriculum, learn to read.

Given the unique context of the Montessori classroom and the Montessori instructional approach, the data were also analyzed to explore the Montessori pedagogy. The resulting model describes the instructional strategies that teachers employ when teaching children to read and the intentions behind those instructional strategies. This model illuminates how the Montessori pedagogy itself contributes to reading achievement through supporting children's development of reading motivation.

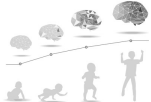
## Qualitative Research Design



Studies reading as a holistic and complex process rather than sum of component skills.



"Captures the participants' experiences" (Creswell & Guetterman, 2019), leveraging teachers' extensive knowledge.



Exploratory -- little is known about learning to read as a continuous and integrative process that begins in early childhood

Fills a gap in research base; expands what can be known beyond quantitative research.



## Participants

Pseudonym	Year of Experience	School Type	Bilingual Students?	Low-Income Students?
Molly	17	Private	No	No
Nancy	21	Private	Yes	No
Emily	38	Public Charter	No	Yes
Helen	14	Public District	No	Yes
Sally	15	Private	Yes	Yes
Allison	10	Private	Yes	No
Melinda	15	Private	Yes	No

## Data Collected

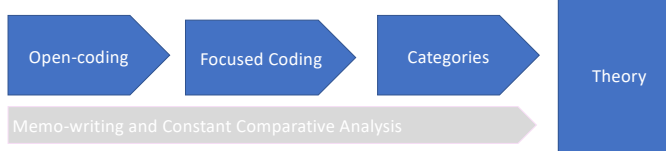
In-Depth Interviews • All Participants	Photographs • 5 Participants	Classroom Observations • 1 Participant
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## Research Question

How does the Montessori pedagogy support the process of learning to read in the Primary classroom?

## Methodology: Grounded Theory

Uses data analysis to build a new theory based in the data.



## Findings:

Context: Enabling Choice

"[Children] are not just doing [an activity] because 'my teacher told me.' Never. They do it because it looks attractive to them." -- Melinda

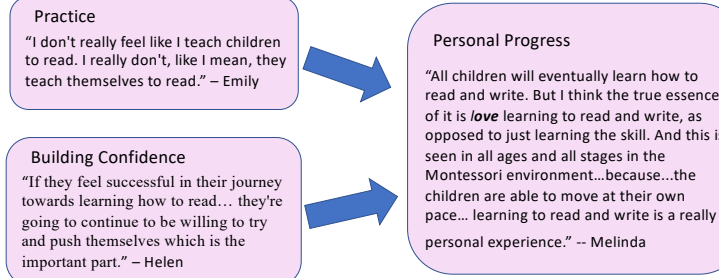
Input: Observing

"I was really watching carefully this child's moveable alphabet work and noticing that ...the encoding process had become more thorough, like the sounds between the beginning and ending sound were filling in more deeply" -- Nancy

## Instructional Strategies

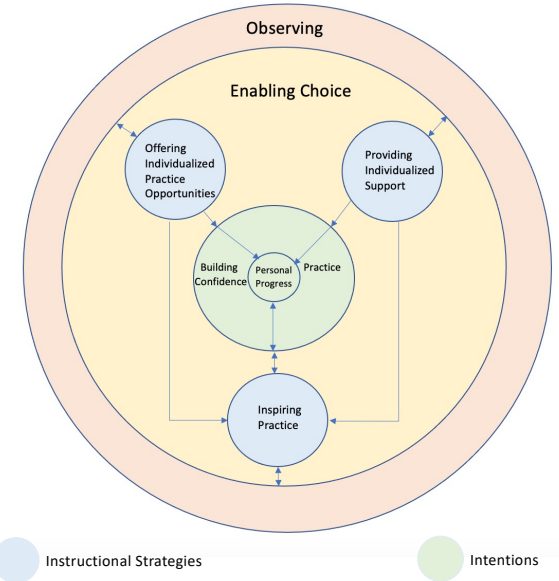
Offering Individualized Practice Opportunities	Inspiring Practice	Providing Individualized Support
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individualizing pacing</li><li>Closing a skill gap</li><li>Increasing difficulty incrementally</li><li>Providing opportunities for success</li><li>"We're not expecting them to do everything together the same day, the same way, the same page kind of thing." - Mary</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Leveraging children's interests</li><li>Making it fun</li><li>Having compelling materials</li><li>Encouraging repetition</li><li>Cultivating a learning/working classroom community</li><li>Modelling a love for language</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Individualizing support based on personality and circumstance</li><li>"Whatever help they need is what we will provide" - Helen</li></ul>

## Intentions



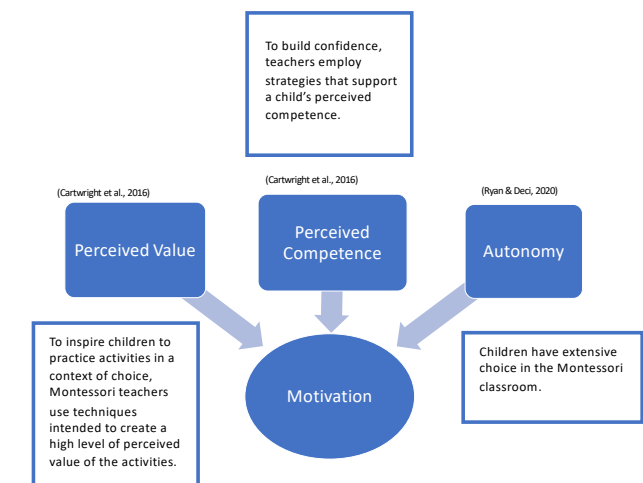
## Conclusion

A model of Montessori pedagogy in the primary classroom: Inspiring Personal Progress through Practice



## Discussion

Aligning motivation theory and Montessori pedagogy



Cartwright, K. B., Marshall, T. R., & Wray, E. (2016). A longitudinal study of the role of reading motivation in primary students' reading comprehension: Implications for a less simple view of reading. *Reading Psychology, 37*(1), 55-91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07072701.2014.959484>

Ryan, R., & Deci, E. (2000). Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being. *American Psychologist, 55*(1), 68 - 78. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>