

The Delightful World of Spinning Plates

Elementary Class Management

The environment, the often overlooked and/or forgotten member of Montessori's educational trinity – student, teacher and environment. When things are not moving along as smoothly as you may like with a student, family, a group in your class, or with the whole class, search out these categories, and see if there is something you can change to bring about a more satisfactory result.

Many of the plates that we get to spin in our classrooms

1. Organization of a day

- Beginning routine
- Snack
- Jobs
- Recess
- Lunch
- Silent reading/writing
- Work periods – silent work times, humming work times
- Read aloud

2. Organization of a week

- Specials/tutors
- Work expectations for a week
- Homework
- Weekly traditions
- Presentations of work to class or school
- Field Trips/Outings

3. Organization of a block of time (6-7 weeks)

- All class studies
- Fine/Performing arts projects
- Seasonal traditions

4. The physical classroom

- Light
- What is on the walls?
- Work spaces: group, individual, standing, sitting, floor, halls
- Flight paths
- Traditions – old and new -
- Plants, pets and pencils (oh my!)

5. Whole Group Times

- Circle
- Gym
- Field Trips
- Recess
- Lunch

6. Small Group Times

- By Grade
- By Interest
- By Subject
- By Project (short or long)

7. Independent Times

- Journaling – Silent Reading/Writing
- Quiet Independent Work times
- Check – Ins
- Tracking progress/Assessment

8. Work Cycles

- Planning
- Recording
- Feedback
- Errors
- Moving Along – Redirections
- Speed-up
- Slow down
- Don't start
- Declare victory
- Divert, stop and come back later
- Independent vs. Group vs. Directed
- When to work, where to work, who to work with

9. Specials

- As much a part of class rhythm of the class
- Does everyone participate or not
- Art, music, physical education, enrichments

10. Communication with Parents

- Conferences – how often?
- Curriculum Nights
- Silent Journey
- Parent Night
- Electronic communications/updates
- No surprises
- Help them make choices about their child

11. Conflict Resolution

- Make sure the scene is safe
- Listen
- Be patient
- Pray for wisdom
- Redirect
- Let it go
- Forgive