

# **A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND ALTERNATIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION, SUCH AS THE MARIA MONTESSORI METHOD, REGGIO EMILIA PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH**

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## **AUTHOR'S DATA**

**Mariana Avetisyan**, PhD, Associate Professor

Chair of Applied Psychology,

Khachatur Abovian Armenian State Pedagogical University, Republic of Armenia

Contacts: [mariana\\_avetisyan@yahoo.com](mailto:mariana_avetisyan@yahoo.com)

**Hasmik Konjoyan**, PhD student, Certified Montessori Educator

Contacts: [jasminekonjoyan@gmail.com](mailto:jasminekonjoyan@gmail.com)

## **ABSTRACT**

*This article aims to conduct a comparative analysis between early childhood traditional education and alternatives in primary education, such as the Maria Montessori method and Reggio Emilia approach. This article will be relevant and advisable for educators and parents to understand the key differences between each approach. There is no doubt that early childhood education plays an essential role in educating young minds. The question is how to find the best way to educate young children, what to choose: teacher-centered or child-centered models of teaching? Furthermore, from a parental view, the question is not only which method works the best, but also which one is more beneficial for “My Child”. Parents have difficulty choosing the right teaching option specifically for their children, which would help them become successful members of modern society in the future.*

*Taking into consideration our teaching experience of more than twenty-five years, along with researching many pedagogical and educational books and articles, we came to an interesting conclusion about both – traditional and alternatives in teaching young minds. Alongside, we discovered that no matter how beneficial is the true idea of any teaching method, unfortunately, not every school is a true barrier to the philosophy, theory, and teaching approach behind the school's name brand.*

*These and other disputable issues will be discussed in this article.*

**Key Words:** *early childhood traditional education, child-centered education, alternative primary schools, Montessori method, Reggio approach, independent learning, teacher's role, prepared*

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Montessori and Reggio pedagogical methods were both founded in Italy decades ago, and have successfully spread first throughout Europe, then to many other countries, including the United States and Canada, and are still effective today. The innovation or novelty of this article lies in the fact that the analysis will be made from several points of view: pedagogical, psychological, aesthetical, as well as parental. Relying on our personal work experience in childcare centers and preschools in the United States, as well as in Montessori Schools and preschools that adopted the Reggio Emilia approach as an early childhood alternative education, we will try to highlight the benefits and challenges of the above-mentioned pedagogical models.

Supporters of progressive education are looking to find out the best pedagogical approach for nurturing a child's independence, creativity, focus, critical thinking, and love for learning - important qualifications to be successful in the future. Is there a right or wrong in education? Maybe "One Model Fits All" doesn't work in teaching methods, since not every student learns the same way.

Even though there have been a few comparative studies designed to evaluate the relative benefits of teacher-centered and child-centered approaches, nowadays, the problem is still actual. As such, many times, during our observations of the parents at the playground, it was obvious that they were trying to share their thoughts and concerns regarding the right choice for primary school. Almost all of the parents observed had child or children ages 2 to 6 years old. They were looking for the best educational, safe, and natural environment for their children. In the current century, industrial development and the accelerating pace of life are distancing growing children from nature. Most of the children living in big cities have no idea how daily bread is prepared, or how fruits and vegetables grow and ripen in natural conditions. Children in developed countries have almost everything, but in their daily school life still are missing basic life skills and hands-on experience with everything natural.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

There are many discussions in today's world about students losing interest in learning and education. Year after year it gets harder to motivate students to read books, study and value the knowledge. This problem exists in many countries. "To get to a place where student motivation is a valued process and outcome, policies should inform the training of our next generation educators... Finally, policies should go beyond strict performance standards and consider multiple indicators of student success that include student interest." (Harackiewicz, Smith & Priniski, 2016). Interest is a powerful learning motivation since children are naturally curious. Beyond question, interest-based child learning (IBL) is more

effective. It allows the child to explore and expand their interests. According to some research, the more children participate in interest-based everyday activities, the greater the growth in the child's communication and language learning opportunities (Dunst, Raab & Hamby, 2016). Interest-based child-directed learning leads to a better engagement of the child with materials or people for a longer period compared to teacher-directed activities.

Even though education officials are working to find the perfect solution, it is hard to find a panacea that works the best for every student. For instance, there are school programs that encourage parental involvement in class, which helps with children's smooth adaptation to the school environment, and there are parents who are actively engaged in their children's education to improve their attendance, behavior, and social skills. Some schools are trying to integrate alternative education models such as the Montessori pedagogical method or Reggio Emilia educational approach to improve the situation.

Let's bring some numbers for comparison:

According to "Association Montessori International" there is a report article from the 2022 Global Montessori Census that estimated 15,763 Montessori schools in 154 countries around the globe (Debs, et al., 2022). Countries with the largest number of Montessori schools are the United States, China, Thailand, Germany, Canada, and Tanzania. The United States, Thailand, the Netherlands, and India have the largest number of government-funded or public Montessori programs. According to the American Montessori Society (AMS) only in the United States there are 5,000 Montessori schools, 4,500 of them are private, and 500 schools are public Montessori schools. These numbers show that 10% of total Montessori schools are public. Furthermore, according to the Montessori Foundation, International Montessori Council (IMC), and Montessori Family Alliance (MFA) there are approximately 22,000 Montessori schools worldwide and this number is rapidly expanding.

According to Reggio Children International Network, there are 5,000 Reggio Schools in the world in 34 countries, in all the continents. Only in the United States, there are more than 1,200 schools that fostered Reggio Emilia Approach. The number might be more than that since there are many private or charter schools in the country, that are calling themselves Reggio-inspired schools.

However, based on our experience, we can see that the fostering of these educational methods is sometimes interpreted and applied not the way they authentically should, disqualifying or weakening the real values, capabilities, and philosophy behind each method. The purpose of this paper is to provide detailed research and discussion of the methods above, as well as the study and presentation of the advantages and downsides of each method when applied or adopted in modern preschools and kindergartens. But before we discuss the scientific theories, let's talk a little about the person behind the presentation of any teaching method, the person who shapes our future citizens and society, let's talk about teachers and their important role in any educational field.

Being a teacher is not just a profession, it is a way of life. It takes a lot of effort, patience, strength, and dedication to teach not only how to read, count, and write; but also to teach how to make friends, respect family values, and live according to the universal rules. There is nothing new under the sun. Let's take a short excursion into ancient history.

For centuries the question of “How” to educate children has found its place in the works of philosophers, pedagogues, and psychologists. For example, despite Plato's work "Republic" being more about justice, there is also a dialogue presenting his beliefs on aesthetic education and education in general: “Education in music (which includes speeches) begins with the telling of tales in the earliest years of childhood because that is when people are most pliable. Tales must be strictly censored because young children are malleable and absorb all to which they are exposed. Through the telling of carefully crafted tales, mothers and nurses will shape their children's souls (377c)” (Dillon, 2004).

Since ancient times, V-IV centuries BC in the schools of ancient Rome, Athens, and Sparta there were formed programs aimed at the educational goal for children. The programs mentioned above differed from each other in content. However, one of the key identical goals was identifying and developing the positive characteristics of a person, as well as the transfer of knowledge. Dr. Jason from the University of Pennsylvania described Plato's work in his detailed research discussion of "Plato's Allegory of the Cave": Education might appear to be putting knowledge into the empty vessel of a soul. "True education consists in reorienting the soul in the proper direction" (Jason, 2017). Education, according to Plato, should be started from an early age, since the most important thing for the young is the beginning.

Let's have a closer look at today's early childhood and bring some numbers. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) in The United States: there was a total of 70,055 public prekindergarten, elementary, and middle schools in 2020 - 21. There was a total of 18,870 private prekindergarten, elementary, and middle schools in 2019 - 20. This number will increase if we take into consideration many private preschool centers and family daycares with traditional early childhood education.

Traditional early childhood education is teacher-centered. Playtime in child-care centers occurred between teacher-guided lessons. They do have an inflexible, very structured, and routine-based program, and the children's progress is based on the success of the majority of students. Classes, as a large group of same-age children, are following the same lesson, there is no individually tailored approach towards each student's level of development or abilities. In traditional preschool the classroom setting is different: often colorful and visually busy, full of toys. Preschool classrooms have designated areas or stationaries for different types of play such as block building, puzzles, etc. There is an area where imaginative role-play takes place, which is very important for children to gain communication and

problem-solving skills, creativity, and self-esteem; it is also a fun method to involve kid's fantasy and learn about many professions by using themed props, or everyday life situations when children pretend to be a nurse or a teacher, policeman or a firefighter and so on. During the day children could choose what to play with, but the schedule is pretty pre-determined and the children will rotate through activity stationaries. There are other activities for kids provided by their teacher like story time, finger plays, music, and art.

Let's come back to our topic to compare the traditional and some alternative methods in early childhood. In modern society, there are multi-content programs and methods of primary education. Educators and parents understand deeply the importance of a good start. In 20th-century Europe, alongside traditional educational methods, some new approaches in early childhood education were founded, which were so effective that they immediately found their followers around the world.

Below we will introduce the basic ideas of two child-centered educational methods in primary education, with some historical facts and pedagogical philosophy. Then, we will share our thoughts based on our working experience. To conclude, we will discuss the advantages and the downsides of each approach: Traditional compared to, Montessori and Reggio in Primary Schools.

**The method of Maria Montessori** and the schools bearing the name "Montessori" are widely spread around the world. In classical pedagogy, education is considered to be teacher-centered and controlled by the teacher. Meanwhile, the Montessori method is considered to be a child-centered approach, since the center of Montessori's educational philosophy is the child, with his self-directed activity, and individual learning based on his developmental stage and interests.

The first Montessori environment was opened on January 6<sup>th</sup>, 1907 in San Lorenzo, Rome (Italy) by Italian physician and educator Dr. Maria Montessori. It was called "La Casa Dei Bambini" which means "The House of Children". She was the first female doctor in Italy. At the beginning of her career in 1890-1900, she was working with children who were developmentally delayed (Kramer, 2017). Maria Montessori gave such a description of her work: "I don't know what came over me but I had a vision and inspired by it, I was enflamed and said that this work we were undertaking would prove to be very important and that someday people would come from all parts to see it." (Montessori, 1949). Later, through observation and work with children, Dr. Montessori discovered their astonishing, almost effortless ability to learn. Children taught themselves. "...We discovered that the education is not something which the teacher does, but that is natural process that develops spontaneously in the human being/child" (Montessori, 1949).

In other words, when we educate the child, the focus should be on the child and his activity rather than the teacher's talk. It is important to take into consideration the child's developmental stage, and interests. Maria Montessori's theory is about children's sensitive periods – critical stages in human

development when they can learn a subject the best. The child has the power to teach himself. The child absorbs the impressions from his surroundings, not with his mind, but with his life itself. Those impressions did not just enter his mind, they formed it. The child creates his mentality using everything he finds in the world around him. This type of mentality Dr. Montessori called the "Absorbent Mind". Besides many articles and books, she gave a detailed description of it and the Montessori theory in the book with the same title "The Absorbent Mind" (Montessori, 1949). The discovery that the child's mind can absorb knowledge and gain experience on its own explains, that adults or teachers should help the child's mind in its work of development: with knowledge of sensitive periods, active discipline, special educational methods, and the prepared environment. When Maria Montessori speaks about discipline, it is not the discipline that an individual mutes or is silent. We can call the individual disciplined if he/she can regulate himself when needed and knows how to follow some rules. Maria Montessori also mentioned that the "Liberty" of the child should have its limit. Besides the main five curriculum areas and the learning subjects of Montessori, she was paying special attention to children's aesthetic education, including "Grace and Courtesy" as a part of practical life skills. The five curriculum areas of Montessori educational method are:

- Practical Life Activities (including care of self and care of the environment) and Grace and Courtesy;
- Sensorial (exploration and exposure to sensory information such as shape, dimension, color, smell, taste and texture);
- Mathematics (introduction of quantity and numbers, then gradually moving from concrete to abstract thinking - place values, addition, subtraction, multiplication, and fractions);
- Language (listening skills, comprehension, vocabulary, reading and writing skills);
- Culture (introduction to history, zoology, botany, science, art and music, cultural studies and geography).

The Montessori method is based on scientific observation of children, which is recorded by the teacher every day. It values the development of the whole child: social, emotional, mental, aesthetical, physical, and cognitive. There are many unique components regarding the Montessori primary classes: mixed-age children's groups (3 to 6 y.o.); specifically created didactic, self-correcting materials; three-hour time frame of work, guided by a specially trained educator, the prepared environment and of course scientifically designed method, which emphasizes self-directed activities, individual and group work/play, hands-on learning. The aim of all these activities is a sense of order, concentration, coordination, independence, and child-nature interaction. It is meaningful to present a citation from the book of Paula Lillard, the educator, whose books related to Maria Montessori's life, works, and method were translated into multiple languages and presented to teachers and parents globally: "In today's world

children do not have this needed relationship with nature. In our time and the civilized environment of our society children, however, live very far distant from nature, and have few opportunities to enter into intimate contact with it or of having direct experience with it... We have all made ourselves prisoners voluntarily, and have finished up by loving our prison and transferring our children to it" (Lillard, 1972). Unfortunately, this dilemma still exists today.

The next pedagogical approach we would like to present is the Reggio Emilia. According to "Handbook of International Perspective on Early Childhood" (Edwards & Gandini, 2018) the Reggio Emilia approach is an internationally known educational philosophy and pedagogical approach to early childhood education. This approach was created by the Italian teacher, philosopher Malaguzzi (1920-1994) in Italy in the city with the name Reggio Emilia.

Reggio's educational approach emphasizes child development based on the expression of children through different "Natural Languages" like dramatic play, music, drawing, painting, sculpting, baking, and preparing food. In "Reggio Emilia Atelier" (a term used instead of class or environment) the educators (educator with a creative art background who works with classroom teachers to guide students' learning experiences, who also takes care of ongoing documentation of students learning and progress). "Attelierista" pays close attention to every detail in the classroom, since the environment is considered the "Third Teacher" which should invite children to create and stimulate their imagination. It is a child-centered approach, where children are the initiators of their learning process without following a strict curriculum. The focus is on collaboration, hands-on exploration, and classroom learning projects. Reggio's theory promotes children's development, based on children's self-expression, based on their interests, for example, painting, music, sculpture, dramatic play, etc. According to the Reggio Emilia theory, everyone has the right to education, especially children. Society must educate and raise children, which will enable the discovery and development of the individual. In Reggio schools, alongside following their natural interests, children are learning how to live and work side by side without restricting each other's freedom, and how to communicate with each other peacefully.

The Reggio Emilia school is equipped with so-called workshops, where there is a large kitchen for daily food preparation or baking bread. All this is also a teaching environment, where educators record student's creative processes and where direct participation of children's family members is welcomed. Thus, teaching at the Reggio Emilia School has a creative nature. For example, paints used in painting can be obtained from natural materials like spices, flowers, vegetables, and so on. After obtaining the main colors, yellow, red, and blue, by mixing those colors children can get the necessary shades or secondary colors. The teacher is guiding children to achieve the desired goal through various experiments. Reggio Emilia school's furniture is mostly made of natural materials, classrooms are provided with toys or natural objects, stimulating children's development. Engagement with nature and

everything natural like shells, stones, flowers, and baskets also helps children to appreciate beauty and nature. Teachers observe and record students' work and discussions. Usually, all those observation results or events are presented to parents in the form of notes, photos, or videos. All this makes the learning more visual and helps parents understand what children are learning in school, as well as helps children feel the importance and appreciation of their work.

## **METHODS AND RESULTS**

In this article, we used the case study method, as well as the method of observation. Since as a teacher, we had access to students' natural, real-life school environment, we had an opportunity for direct behavioral observation for a long period. To demonstrate ideas or theories, we used a case study, which is a method in psychology to gather comprehensive data that would help understand a particular situation or individual. It is a comprehensive, qualitative research of a single person or occasion that offers in-depth knowledge and insight into the subject's behavior, experiences and thought processes. In case studies we often use observations, interviews, and the investigation of records, papers, and other artifacts. Case studies can be used in various fields: psychology, medicine, education, anthropology, political science, and social work. The purpose of a case study is to learn as much as possible about the individual or group to explore the complexity of human thoughts, behavior, patterns, and themes (Crowe, et. al., 2011).

Our case study was based on several observations: My pedagogical journey started first as a music teacher in traditional schools and preschools long ago. Later, in addition to that, I started to work in Montessori schools and schools that fostered a Reggio-inspired approach. In traditional schools, I have seen more or less similar classrooms. In schools with alternative teaching approaches the classroom structure had notable differences. Years ago, I was working in Boston (Massachusetts, USA) as a teacher and music teacher in Montessori Primary Classes. What captured my attention the most, was the difference in children's behavior. In addition, despite preschool children's short attention span, I noticed that the Montessori students were able to concentrate their attention and learn more challenging things in music like music theory. For the fall season, I prepared same level music program for kindergarteners of all of these schools for the same period. Usually, the music teaching program for preschool-age children consisted of songs, movements, tap and clap rhythmic and educational musical games, playing on some musical instruments, and so on. In one word, it was the music teacher's job to create an engaging, fun, and entertaining musical atmosphere for children. I worked with many preschool children with different learning or musical abilities, that were trying to do their own best. Only in Montessori primary classes, my experience was quite different. Students were able to concentrate more and listen carefully, they were trying to create a simple melody and play it on the xylophone. I even started to



expand the program and give them more details regarding basic music theory. When I was spending more time introducing classical composers, music history, and periods like the baroque or classical era, and discussing the characters in opera or ballet, Montessori school students were able to absorb all this information and ask interesting questions to learn more. This was in contrast with traditional primary classes, where the children were getting a bit tired, I was trying to give the same-age students more detailed and expanded information. Of course, it might seem boring for primary school students to attend a program that suits higher elementary school-age children. To monitor whether the student understands the topic, it is important to see if the child can explain it in his/her own words. So many times, parents were commenting on how their children were trying to explain or talk about this or that opera's characters at home. Parents were surprised by their preschool children talking about the Baroque or Classical period in music, as well as sharing their knowledge about Beethoven, Mozart, or other composers and their famous compositions. That was good proof that students in Montessori were truly engaged in the subject and were able to learn a program that was tailored for students of specialized music schools.

I would like to discuss another case, that I observed in Los Angeles, California. This case is about a kindergartener, let's call him Dave. He was a student in a traditional kindergarten. He was very mature and for his age had advanced knowledge in mathematics. Once he told the teacher, that he knows how to multiply, while other students were just trying to count and write the numerals. Instead of encouraging and giving him advanced math problems to exercise, the teacher just told him: "Well, Dove, that's good, but please do not move forward, please do what everyone is doing". "But I do know how to write or add the numbers already, please give me something challenging", asked the student. The teacher told him, that he needed to follow the class rules and follow the same lesson that his classmates were working on. He was an out-of-the-box thinker, with a bright mathematical mind, but instead of encouragement or an opportunity to work on challenging math problems, he was forced to step back and just write the numerals. Who knows, maybe he is the future Einstein... We don't know. Meanwhile, in Montessori school, every student was observed to understand the student's interests. The goal for each student is to achieve the next level of challenge in the area of his/her interest.

Now let's talk about another case, that I observed in Los Angeles, California. Years ago, I worked as a co-teacher for a school with the Reggio Emilia approach. Once my colleague asked me if I knew any other language besides English. I answered that I speak Armenian, Russian, a bit of German, and Italian. Since I am a musician, the last two languages I learned through classical songs and due to traveling to those countries. She suggested that it would be nice if we could teach children how to greet in different languages. I answered: "Why not? We can do that". In addition, I suggested that I actually could sing German and Italian folk songs. Furthermore, children would be able to listen and remember

how those foreign languages sound; it could help them in the future to learn those languages. But then I was surprised and, at the same time, a bit disappointed with her explanation and interpretation that there is a term in Reggio's approach to "The Hundred Languages of Children," - that is why she wanted to take this opportunity to teach children maybe a couple of phrases in different languages, other than the mother tongue. What a misinterpretation... I understood that she heard about Loris Malaguzzi's book the «Many Languages of Child», but her interpretation was quite incorrect. "A Hundred Languages" that were mentioned in the book are the many ways of self-expression through different talents, interests, endless forms, and abilities that children have, for example, drawing, sculpturing, creating music, and so on.

Based on our observation, it is very important who is providing the educational method. No matter how good is the school's reputation or the main concept of the method, the most important aspect is how professional and experienced is the educator that carries out that method to provide the lesson.

Teachers should be able to deeply understand, that behind every teaching theory or approach, there is a complex of concepts, systems of ideas, and philosophy about the teaching process. They should know how to present and teach the learning material. "The knowledge required for teaching can be divided into three groups: knowledge needed for practice, knowledge used in practice, and knowledge about practice" (Krivokapic, 2018).

## **DISCUSSION**

Despite emphasizing the importance of a professional and experienced teacher, who carries out the educational method, we also would like to show that there are advantages of Montessori education in primary schools.

The above-mentioned alternative pedagogical methods - Montessori and Reggio were founded in Italy. They are both based on the same cultural values and both methods emphasize children's interaction and connection with nature. Both methods promote child-centered and self-guided education. Montessori classrooms are specially prepared, and structured and have 5 main curriculum areas. Most Montessori-specific materials have built-in control of error and students are focused on independent learning, where the teacher doesn't need to step in and correct students, pointing the mistake, as in some traditional early education programs. Students are discovering the right way by themselves. Reggio classrooms are more flexible and open-ended and they focus on play-based collaborative learning. Maria Montessori was following Piaget's ideas of the self-taught child and developmental stages. In Reggio Emilia's approach, Malaguzzi was following Vygotsky's ideas, that children learn through social interactions between adults and students.

Traditional primary schools have standardized programs. There is no flexibility to allow

individualized learning to discover the full potential of each child. Teachers constantly teach the group of children the same way, often using rewards and punishments. Students in traditional classrooms are passive learners. The traditional classroom consists of desks and chairs in rows and most of the time children sit there passively, listening to teachers, repeating for example some facts or numbers taught to them. Students are memorizing things by heart, instead of real learning of the concept. A teacher is the center of the rule-maker. Children can speak only when they are allowed to. In-group learning often creates an atmosphere of fall competition.

In Reggio Emilia school teachers work alongside the students discussing ideas and helping each other with the final decision or outcome. In Montessori school teacher presents the idea or work, often with three three-period lesson (introduction, recognition, recall), then observes how a child comes up with his/her ideas and guide them as needed.

In general, it is not easy to have an active discipline in the classroom. That is why the Montessori technique, method, and special and prepared environment around the child is beneficial to have an active class, where each student is independently working with a material he or she is interested in, at the same time there is no chaos. Students are focused and disciplined. Mixed age classroom idea is also helpful in this case, younger kids also look to their older peers and learn problem-solving skills, and older children in the class take care of and help their younger friends if there is a challenging situation.

Reggio Emilia classroom is a model or an extension of society and emphasizes social interactions between adults, and children and invites cultures and community into the classroom. For example, they could invite a professional musician or an artist to the classroom. Who knows, maybe it would help a student to come up with a new hobby or even a future profession.

The Montessori Method is a Cosmic/Universal Education. Everything has an order and sequence. The word "Kosmikos" or "Kosmos" in Greek means order. The term Cosmic Education in Montessori Philosophy refers to a child's gradual discovery of order, a global, universal view of the past, present, and future. Like the solar system, the planets, the Earth, and all the animals and humans, all the creatures are many components of a large mosaic, the same way the cosmic task is to find the way for a human being in this mosaic of life. So, an adult's or teacher's job is to help the child find his place in the world that he is learning about and make it a better place to live. The primary goal of the routine in the Montessori classroom is to provide a setting that nurtures concentration and work. That is why children are given choice and meaningful, appropriate set of materials and activities for their age development stage. "The environment must be rich in motives which lend interest to activity and invite the child to conduct his own experiences." (Montessori, 1949)

Reggio Emilia-inspired approach is more difficult because clear standards and criteria for what constitutes such schools are perhaps even less defined than for Montessori education (Landi & Pintus,

2022). Both Montessori and Reggio schools are associated nowadays with a life philosophy and quality education. Unfortunately, many Montessori or Reggio schools bear the name only, without a core understanding of method or philosophy. It is hard to find authentic Montessori or Reggio schools. It is also not easy to find creative, caring, well-educated teachers with a deep understanding of the teaching method. Teachers are playing a huge role in shaping students future. Students are imitating the way teachers talk, mimic, move, and dress. Imitation is not just copying; it is much deeper than that. I would like to bring in the citation of the psychologist from the University of Belgrade - Krivokapic: "Pupils' imitation of the teacher's behavior is one of the most important forms of learning according to the opinion of American psychologist Albert Bandura. The pupil imitates behavior patterns, social values, attitudes, and skills or modifies traditional ways of behavior. Imitative learning has a great potential, greater than other ways of learning" (Krivokapic, 2018). According to some researchers: "Individuals learn and adopt behaviors by observing others. Individuals that are observed are called models" (Fryling, Johnston, & Hayes, 2011). Children by paying attention and observing many influential models (parents, friends, teachers, TV, and media characters) may imitate their behavior.

## **CONCLUSION**

We concluded that in the civilized world, alongside traditional school programs, alternative educational programs are of great interest, especially for children of younger school age, and that traditional and alternative educational methods have their advantages and downsides. The traditional pedagogical method is more structured and has fixed subjects and a standardized curriculum. An alternative child-centered approach is more flexible and suitable to the child's learning and interests. As we can see individualized learning is beneficial to discover a child's potential and to support a child's natural learning of self-discipline. There is a famous anonymous quote, that would support our conclusion the best "Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid."

At the same time, we want to emphasize the importance of professional educators. Every student is capable of learning, but each child learns differently. An experienced educator should be able to address all the learning styles and use the right teaching method since we expect students to succeed. A caring, loving, and well-educated teacher gives a part of himself/herself to his students every day. It is one of the most difficult and noblest professions. They have the privilege of shaping our future doctors, lawyers, engineers, musicians, or scientists. We would like to conclude with another quote from world-renowned American psychiatrist Menninger: "What (Who) a teacher is, is more important than what he teaches".

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