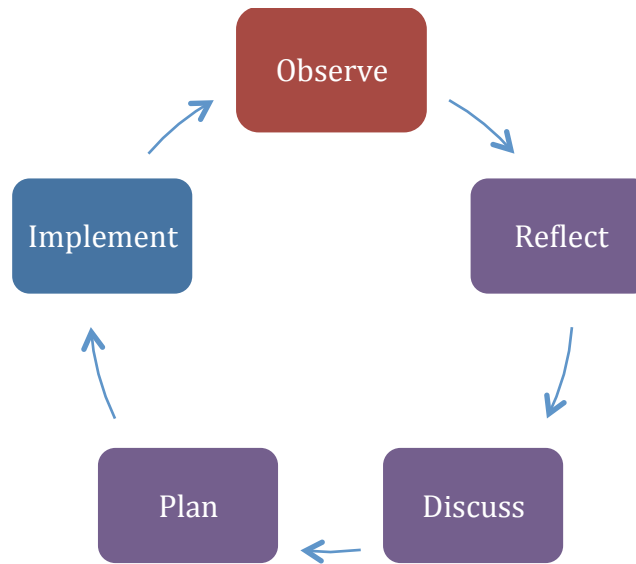


REFLECTIVE PRACTICE



Montessori Guide to Reflective Practice: Enhancing Practice

The rubric is designed to foster the development of Montessori practice through an ongoing process of observation, reflection, and planning. Building on the Foundations of Practice, this rubric provides further points of reflection and growth as practice deepens to a spontaneous integration of theory and philosophy in daily practice. This rubric may be used independently by the guide but is best used collaboratively between a guide and a knowledgeable, trusted, mentor. In this context, the rubric provides a common framework to aid observation and dialogue. In either format, the rubric provides a basis on which to plan and monitor action steps to support the guide's growth.

1. The rubric is organized around 4 domains covering key aspects of practice of the Montessori Guide
 - A. Prepared Environment
 - B. Guide as Dynamic Link: Observation, Planning and Implementation
 - C. Working with Families
 - D. Personal and Professional Development
2. The rubric uses a three-level scale with the following descriptors of the guide's practice. As a tool to support reflection rather than evaluation, these descriptors focus on how the guide is experiencing his or her practice.
 - E – Established (there is a fair degree of consistency in practice)
 - D – Developing (there is an emerging framework of practice)
 - A – Action Needed (these aspects need to be addressed in order to enhance practice)
3. **To Use the Rubric:** The mentor visits the guide's environment and documents observed interactions over several visits. Following the observation, both the guide and the mentor complete the rubric prior to a meeting to debrief the observation. Significant time must be set aside for a meaningful discussion. The guide must leave the meeting with an Action Plan that will identify focus areas and a plan that will help the guide to evolve to a deeper level of practice. The subsequent meeting will use this Action Plan as the basis for discussion.

A. The Prepared Environment

		E	D	A
Physical Environment				
1.	The classroom environment is set up so that children independently carry out their daily life activities – from the preparation of food for various meals, to washing, cleaning and maintaining the environment			
2.	The physical environment reflects the local culture in design and style, giving it the look and feel of “home”			
3.	There is a variety of handmade materials, meticulously made and beautifully presented throughout the environment			
4.	In the Language area, there is a full range of teacher made material for Spoken Language and for Reading			
5.	There is a wide range of cultural material for the children to explore through the various areas in the classroom: Music and Art Appreciation; Cultural practices and celebrations from various parts of the world; a variety of arts and crafts			
6.	Plants have been chosen with consideration for their leaf shapes, texture, shape and smell, as well as with a view to variety in the care that they need			
7.	There are animals in the environment and activities for their care have been organized such that the children carry them out independently			
8.	The indoor and outdoor spaces are well-integrated and thoughtfully planned so that there is free flow between the two areas at all times			
9.	Activities for the care of the outdoor environment have been thoughtfully prepared following the same principles as for all Exercises of Practical Life			
10.	There is variety in shapes, colors, textures and materials in the outdoor environment so as to appeal to the senses of the child and invite exploration			
Socio-Psychological Environment				
11.	The environment is so focused on the needs of the children that they are very much at home in it. They freely initiate activity for their own learning and for the care of the environment or the community			
12.	The classroom community integrates children with special physical and developmental needs			
13.	Children look to one another for help and learning; the adult is working more and more in the background.			
Reflection:				
<i>What areas are going reasonably well?</i>				
<i>What areas are still developing?</i>				
<i>What areas need immediate focus?</i>				

B. Guide as Dynamic Link (Observation, Planning and Implementation)

		E	D	A
Observation				
1.	The adult regularly makes focused observations of individuals and groups as well as the environment to understand about specific needs regarding movement, social behavior or use of materials			
2.	The adult regularly observes the demeanor and interactions of the adults as they are an integral part of the prepared environment			
3.	The adult regularly uses Work Curves to plot the progress towards normalization for individual children and the group			
Reflection				
4.	The adult understands that observed behaviors are a window to inner needs. Analyzes observed behavior in the developmental and environmental context to identify needs of individuals and the group			
5.	Reflects on plans after implementation and makes changes as necessary on the basis of new observations. The adult uses critical reflection to understand what is working and why; and what is not working and why. Has integrated the cycle of Observation-Analysis-Planning-Implementation-Reflection-Adjustment into daily practice			
6.	The adult takes time to reflect on the analysis of the data to understand his/her own needs and challenges and how that is affecting practice in the classroom			
7.	The adult regularly writes a journal of self-reflection to help critical thinking about his/her practice and identifies specific skills that s/he would like to develop to enhance practice			
Planning to Enhance the Children's Activities				
8.	Plans facilitate more integrated activities where the children can use the skills learned in art, music and language to explore and learn about people, places, plants, animals, rocks, water, forests, seas, artists, composers, writers, etc.			
9.	Plans integrate larger work cycles in the classroom: For example, Weekly cycles may include arranging flowers, refreshing the arrangements during the week, cleaning out the flowers at the end of the week and washing and drying all the vases; Other cycles may follow the seasons: planting herbs, growing herbs, harvesting herbs for cooking; harvesting herbs for drying; making and serving herb tea.			
10.	Plans expand stewardship of the environment to include for example, backyard birds by setting up a bird-feeder, bird bath, etc. that the children maintain as part of their daily work			
Implementation				
11.	Based on reflection on observations, the adult works on developing specific skills to enhance his/her own practice			
12.	Works with colleagues and mentor to reflect on observations to continuously improve presentations and life in the community			
13.	The environment is prepared and set up for the new activities planned. The adult provides a variety of supplies for the children's use to make their own collage, paintings, needlework projects and sculptures as well as a variety of materials to stimulate beautiful writing and presentation of work.			
14.	The adult presents to individual children different ways of communicating their learning, taking into account individual skills and interests of the children.			
15.	The adult entices children to expanded work cycles by helping to add layers to a foundational work: For example, an interest in camels may lead to learning about their habitats, locating the geographical regions that they may be found, a study of their habits, their external features, learning a poem about camels, etc.			
Working with Children with Special Needs				
16.	The adult adapts environment and lessons to the needs of the child and plans for other support to be provided as needed			
17.	The adult works closely with service providers (OT, PT, Speech, Language, etc.) to integrate their work into the Montessori approach to education			
18.	The adult tirelessly follows up with struggling children to ensure that every help that is needed is being provided to help all children reach optimal potential			
Reflection:				
<i>What areas are going reasonably well?</i>				
<i>What areas are still developing?</i>				
<i>What areas need immediate focus?</i>				

C. Working with Families

		E	D	A
Supporting Families				
1.	The guide approaches each family with a spirit of empathetic enquiry, with the acceptance that parents want the best for their child, so that parents develop the sense of security and share their challenges, which opens the door to finding the support needed to ensure the right conditions for the development of the child			
2.	The guide is knowledgeable about community resources (social services, psychological services, family support services, crises centers, after school programs, counseling services) that can be accessed on behalf of children and families			
Educating Families				
3.	The guide initiates and participates in parenting workshops that provide parents with tools for parenting the Montessori way			
4.	The guide plans and participates in regular workshops and conversations that help families partner with the school in supporting the development of their child			
5.	The guide initiates, plans and participates in parent education workshops that focus on furthering the understanding of the Montessori method and the Dr. Montessori's insights on children and education			
Reflection:				
<i>What areas are going reasonably well?</i>				
<i>What areas are still developing?</i>				
<i>What areas need immediate focus?</i>				

D. Personal and Professional Development

		E	D	A
Professional practice				
1.	Practice shows understanding of the Montessori approach to education as "help to life" and the central role of the prepared environment in providing this help			
2.	Practice shows a belief in the innate laws that guide development in the child and an acceptance of the role of the adult as facilitator			
3.	Reaches out to peers or mentor to observe in the environment in order to get another perspective on practice			
4.	Works with colleagues at least bi-weekly to discuss children and presentations; share ideas; and to offer and receive help with honesty and respect			
5.	Keeps up with research in the fields of child development, neuroscience, psychology and education. Is able to interpret Montessori pedagogy in the context of new research			
Personal Development				
6.	Has a solid basis of general knowledge about music, art, literature, biology, geography, history, the peoples and the world around			
7.	Is developing the habit of observing self in the spirit of inquiry. Uses observations to learn more about self to evolve to a higher level of practice			
8.	Sees the daily work of the classroom in the context of the larger school community and the society at large			
Reflection:				
<i>What areas are going reasonably well?</i>				
<i>What areas are still developing?</i>				
<i>What areas need immediate focus?</i>				

Summary Page

Guide's Name _____

Date _____

School _____

Mentor _____

Domain	Strengths	Areas to Focus

Summary comments by Guide:

Summary comments by Mentor:

Action Plan: Date _____

Follow up meeting on _____

Focus Area	Skills needed	Steps to development	Comments