



GUIDING PRINCIPLES OF HOW WE LEARN

Based Upon Scientific Field Research by Dr. Jean Lave and Dr. Maria Montessori

- Learning is a process of change through doing, practicing, and engaging in life with others. (Lave)
- The source and substance of learning is participating every day in all sorts of projects –work, play, family – and the ways we connect these actions across our lives is what changes who we are and what we do. (Lave)
- Learning is “going out” into the world. When learners engage in real activities in actual, lived places, it creates meaningful interactions and authentic experiences. These in turn drive curiosity, passion, and growth. (Lave, Montessori)
- Only learners can learn. (Lave) Learning needs to be a learner’s choice, learner led and learner centered, concentrating on the learner’s interest or passion at that time. (Lave, Montessori)
 - An individual’s “Sensitive Period” is the period of time when he or she is curious about and/or focused on a specific experience. (Montessori)
- Effective learning often happens when learners can observe and work with more-advanced and less-advanced peers, as in apprenticeship. (Lave)
- A learning environment is a community of learners engaged in mentoring and collaborative, shared experiences. It includes learners of varying degrees of skill and talent. Learners observe others, help others, are helped by others, and work together. (Montessori)
- A learning environment is caring, supportive, sharing, respectful, and allows choice. In this environment, learners are expected to take responsibility for their actions. (Montessori)
- In a designated learning environment, a knowledgeable person continuously guides, facilitates, evaluates, and reinforces learning through observation of the individual learner and the learner’s interactions with their physical and social environments.(Montessori)
- An optimally prepared designated learning environment is clean, organized, free of clutter and distractions, comfortable, aesthetically pleasing, physically and emotionally safe, and well maintained with freedom to move around. It is equipped with materials, furniture, equipment, and technology that are appropriate and facilitating. (Montessori)