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11 CHAPTER

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND LEARNING TO LEARN COMPETENCE



Personal, social and learning to learn competence

Personal, social and learning to learn competence is the ability to reflect upon oneself, effectively manage time and information, work with others in a constructive way, remain resilient and manage one's own learning and career. It includes the ability to cope with uncertainty and complexity, learn to learn, support one's physical and emotional well-being, to maintain physical and mental health, and to be able to lead a health-conscious, future-oriented life, empathize and manage conflict in an inclusive and supportive context.

Knowledge

For successful interpersonal relations and social participation, it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and rules of communication generally accepted in different societies and environments. Personal, social and learning to learn competence requires also knowledge of the components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle. It involves knowing one's preferred learning strategies, knowing one's competence development needs and various ways to develop competences and search for the education, training and career opportunities and guidance or support available.

Skills

Skills include the ability to identify one's capacities, focus, deal with complexity, critically reflect and make decisions. This includes the ability to learn and work both collaboratively and autonomously and to organize and persevere with one's learning, evaluate and share it, seek support when appropriate and effectively manage one's career and social interactions. Individuals should be resilient and able to cope with uncertainty and stress. They should be able to communicate constructively in different environments, collaborate in teams and negotiate. This includes showing tolerance, expressing and understanding different viewpoints, as well as the ability to create confidence and feel empathy.

Attitudes

The competence is based on a positive attitude toward one's personal, social and physical well-being and learning throughout one's life. It is based on an attitude of collaboration, assertiveness and integrity. This includes respecting diversity of others and their needs and being prepared both to overcome prejudices and to compromise. Individuals should be able to identify and set goals, motivate themselves, and develop resilience and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning throughout their lives. A problem-solving attitude supports both the learning process and the individual's ability to handle obstacles and change. It includes the desire to apply prior learning and life experiences and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of life contexts.



Introduction: „Help me to do it by myself “

In Montessori philosophy, fostering personal and social competence and the ability to learn can be found under the famous motto, "Help me to do it by myself." The very foundation for this motto is a well-prepared environment. Only in such an environment can children truly take responsibility for themselves, their relationships, and their learning. Thanks to this preparation, provided by adults, children can act based on their inner motivation while also taking responsibility for their actions, for themselves, and for their interactions with others.

The first prerequisite for preparing a suitable environment is a deep understanding of a child's developmental needs. The second prerequisite for success is the awareness that the child itself has the best access to information about its own feelings and experiences. In other words, the child, indirectly but better than anyone else, "knows" the most about its unmet needs. It's crucial to teach children to stay in conscious contact with their inner experiences. Even young children in a Montessori environment can often name their feelings or needs. They frequently hear the question from a guide, "What would help you right now?" This also gives them the opportunity to perceive themselves and take responsibility for themselves in small steps.

From an adult's perspective, a child is an independent, unique being and a relevant partner for conversation. The adult purposefully observes children, perceives them, and listens to their opinion, helping them stay in contact with their own inner motivation. While observing, the guide utilizes his/her insight and knowledge of psychosocial development, which allows him to consider the child's needs and, if necessary, adapt the environment. In a prepared environment of acceptance and freedom, within clear boundaries and rules, even young children can act independently, responsibly, and even genuinely kindly and considerately. It's crucial to understand that every member of the community, just like myself, has their unique needs and the exact same desire to have them fulfilled.

The feeling of one's own strength and competence to meet one's needs independently naturally leads to empathy, respect, and responsible, loving relationships within a group. When children feel competent to fulfill their needs, they perceive their power to

influence their own lives – this is the best motivation for further growth and development. If they sense their own strength, they are eager to demonstrate their abilities and competence, face challenges, exert effort, and become active creators of their own lives. Thus, Maria Montessori's words: "The child is the maker of man," gain a deeper meaning, where the child genuinely becomes the creator of oneself – an active participant in building their own life.

It is essential to see every child as an independent being with unique needs and the unique ability to take responsibility for identifying and fulfilling them. Children receive precisely the amount of support they need – no less, no more. That's why the Montessori approach is based on an optimally prepared environment. Adults guide them and create a safe environment, but they don't take over the responsibility for children perceiving their own feelings or finding ways to meet their needs. In Montessori, we call this: "Helping children stay in contact with their inner motivation." It's important to foster in children the ability to perceive their needs and the conviction that they have the power to fulfill them.

Focusing on inner motivation in education and upbringing is key to children developing a sense of competence. This allows them to perceive their experiences, feelings, and needs, to articulate them, and to find ways to fulfill them. From an early age, children are thus guided toward self-reliance, independence, and taking responsibility for themselves, their behavior, and their actions. They are guided toward responsibility for themselves, responsibility toward others, and responsibility toward the environment. Such an attitude toward oneself and others is, in essence, personal and social competence, and its consequence is also the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning. If a person is self-aware and knows they can meet their needs, they don't feel threatened by others – they believe in themselves and care about themselves just as much as they care about others. If they trust themselves, they also trust that others can take care of their needs. This is why this competence – true self-awareness – is built upon what is the deep foundation of Montessori pedagogy.

Knowing Myself, Knowing the World: Foundations of Personal and Social Awareness

In Montessori Elementary, we often say that by the age of six we have “given the child the whole world.” What does this mean? It means that a child enters the second plane of development with a mind ready to imagine, reason, and connect ideas. Our task is to offer them the *big picture*—the story of the universe, life, humanity, and the development of knowledge—so that they can begin to understand not only how the world works, but also where *they* belong in it.

This might sound ambitious. Yet this is precisely the Montessori vision for ages 6–12. And, of course, it is not achieved in a single lesson or one inspiring sentence. We begin from the very beginning—the origin of the universe—and we keep revealing connections. Layer by layer, story by story, key concept by key concept, the child builds a map of knowledge. They start to see patterns, interdependencies, and meaning.

And while they learn about the world, we help them learn about *themselves*. When a child is consistently invited to observe their feelings, choices, progress, and responsibilities, they slowly come to a deeply personal question:

“Who am I, and what is my place within the whole?”

Supporting the child in this inner work—gently, respectfully, and without pressure—is one of the central aims of the Montessori prepared environment.

In Montessori education, the child’s personality is not built through direct instruction, but through carefully prepared environments and indirect guidance. We select materials, design routines, and cultivate a community atmosphere that invites reflection, independence, collaboration, and self-awareness. Knowledge is always presented together with an attitude—our curiosity, our wonder, our respect for truth. Children feel this. They copy it. They make it their own.

In this way, the adult becomes not just a presenter of information but a model of how to approach learning and life: with care, humility, and joy. When we adults see the world

as an interconnected order, where every person has a meaningful role, this worldview is quietly passed on to the child—lesson by lesson, conversation by conversation, moment by moment.

For children ages 6–12, education is never just about *what* they know. It is equally about *how* they relate to that knowledge—how they see themselves, their peers, their community, and the larger world. The Montessori approach supports them in developing:

- **personal competence** (self-knowledge, emotional awareness, independence),
- **social competence** (collaboration, empathy, responsibility to the group), and
- **learning-to-learn competence** (metacognition, curiosity, and the ability to plan, reflect, and refine their own learning).

Montessori is uniquely suited to building these EU key competencies because knowledge is always offered in context and always tied to a lived attitude. The result is a learning experience where the child not only acquires information but also develops the inner tools—personal, social, and cognitive—to navigate life with confidence, awareness, and a strong sense of belonging to the world.



Story from the classroom

Exploring Cultures

*In the Montessori Elementary classroom, children begin their exploration of humanity with a simple yet powerful image: the **Basic Human Needs chart**. Sitting together around this drawing, they quickly discover something profound—that every person who has ever lived, no matter where or when, has shared the same essential needs for food, shelter, protection, belonging, and meaning. This realization becomes their doorway into cultural understanding.*



*As the year unfolds, the children are introduced to the **History Question Charts**, and their curiosity deepens. They begin to wonder: How did people in ancient times build their homes? What tools did they invent? How did they live together? What did they believe? Each chart opens up another layer of inquiry, guiding the child to compare how different societies met the same universal needs in wonderfully diverse ways.*

*From the very first days in the Elementary community, children show a natural fascination with human stories—those close to them and those from distant times and places. Again and again, they return to the same foundation: that **all humans share the same needs**, and that cultures are simply the many creative strategies people have developed to meet them.*

Through these lessons, children observe both successful and unsuccessful attempts at meeting human needs. They study inventions that changed how people lived, and they explore the social structures that helped communities thrive—or sometimes struggle.

We present all of this with a deliberate attitude: we show human beings as imaginative and capable, as problem-solvers who shape their world with intelligence, effort, and cooperation. We also show humanity as deeply relational—capable of kindness, beauty, and love.

In this way, the child begins to understand culture not as something distant or abstract, but as a reflection of human choices, creativity, and values. And quietly, almost invisibly, this work builds something essential in the child:

a sense of personal agency and confidence in their own ability to contribute to the world.

Story from the classroom

Presenting the Human Being

*In the Montessori Elementary classroom, children are invited early on to meet the human being—not only as a figure from history, but as a being gifted with **intelligence (mind)**, **skill (hand)**, and **the capacity to love (heart)**. These three gifts become the foundation for all further historical exploration. As the children move through timelines, stories, and research, they begin to see history as the unfolding story of how humans have used these gifts to shape their world.*

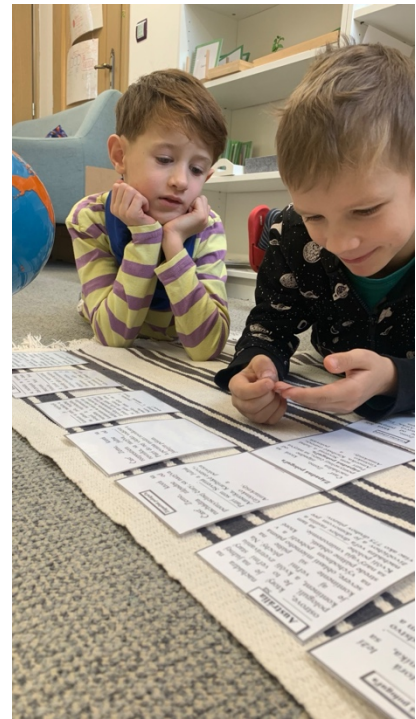
This perspective subtly weaves together personal and social development with the process of learning itself. When children observe how past generations solved problems, created tools, built communities, and cared for one another, they start to understand that these same capacities live within themselves. Personal competence, social awareness, and the ability to learn become inseparable from their understanding of what it means to be human.

The adult's role is patient and respectful. We do not tell the child what to think or who to be. Instead, we wait for the quiet moment when the child begins to recognize that this grand story—this story of human potential—is also their story. Such awareness cannot be forced or imposed. It must arise naturally from within the child's own experience.

The confidence to trust oneself, to believe in others, and to act cooperatively grows out of daily life in the Montessori community. Through meaningful work, collaboration, and shared responsibility, children gradually build an inner conviction:

I, too, possess these human gifts. I, too, am capable of shaping my life and contributing to the world.

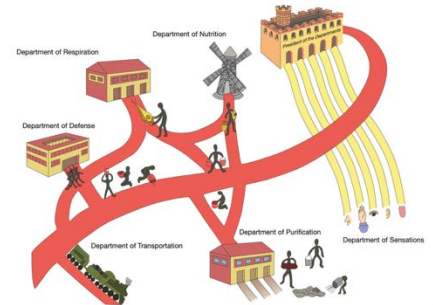
This is the essence of presenting the human being in Montessori education—a lesson that nourishes not only the mind, but the child's emerging identity and sense of purpose.



Story from the classroom

The Story of the Great River

In biology, one of the most meaningful stories we share with children is the tale of a great river. At first, the child does not realize that this story is about their own body. This is intentional—Montessori education often takes an indirect path, inviting attitudes and insights to grow naturally from within.



The story begins in a vibrant land where a mighty river flows. Along its banks live countless inhabitants, each one working tirelessly for the good of the whole community. Their needs are always met because the river brings everything required for life. In return, every inhabitant contributes by doing exactly what they were created to do—nothing more, nothing less. Each performs their own unique task with dedication, and because of this perfect cooperation, the entire land thrives.

Only later does the narrative reveal that the “command center” is the brain, the “ministries” are the body systems, and the countless diligent inhabitants are the cells that make life possible. As the connection becomes clear, children begin to develop a deep appreciation for this remarkable harmony inside themselves. They see how every cell works with purpose, and how the health of the whole depends on the contribution of each part.

By the end of the story, a gentle inner question is planted:

“How can I help?”

Children come to understand that their choices—how they move, breathe, eat, rest, and relate to others—either support or hinder this beautiful internal cooperation. They begin to see themselves not as passive passengers but as responsible caretakers of their own well-being.

Through this narrative, children discover a powerful truth:

They are capable of influencing their own lives.

Their actions matter, their choices shape their health, and they possess the competence to care for the remarkable “land” within them.

This story becomes a foundation for personal responsibility, self-awareness, and respect for the wonder of the human body—a quiet but profound step in their journey of learning to learn and becoming stewards of themselves.

Tools for Life: Developing Skills to Navigate Self and Society

In a Montessori Elementary classroom, children learn far more than academic knowledge—they learn how to navigate themselves, their relationships, and the world around them. The environment itself becomes a living community in which personal growth, social responsibility, and independent learning develop naturally each day.

A hallmark of the 6–12 environment is its mixed-age structure: a vibrant group of children who differ in age, personality, interests, and stages of development. This diversity is intentional. It creates a dynamic social ecosystem where everyone has a place and a purpose. Younger children observe the possibilities that lie ahead, while older students practice leadership, mentorship, and kindness. Together, they learn that a community thrives when everyone contributes in their own way.

The prepared environment supports this balance. Materials are always available on open shelves, allowing children to access knowledge independently instead of waiting for an adult to deliver it. Because of this, the teacher’s role shifts from “keeper of information” to guide, observer, and supporter. Freed from the need to lead the entire group through the same lesson at the same time, the adult can focus on what truly matters: connecting each child with meaningful work, adjusting the environment when needed, and offering support at just the right moment.

In such a community, children grow into roles that reflect both their strengths and their developing skills. They learn to help one another spontaneously—not because they are told to, but because it is the natural rhythm of the classroom. They collaborate on projects, teach and learn from one another, negotiate responsibilities, and practice empathy during everyday interactions. A child who needs extra support finds it not only in the adult, but also in peers. A child with advanced skills discovers how meaningful it is to share knowledge generously.

This structure gives children real responsibility for their learning. They make choices, plan their work, reflect on their progress, and adjust when needed. The adult does not take this responsibility away but instead trusts the child's inner motivation and

competence. In this trust, personal and social skills grow organically: self-awareness, self-regulation, teamwork, problem-solving, perseverance, and the confidence to take initiative.

Ultimately, the classroom becomes a community where learning is not something done *to* the child, but something lived *with* others. Through freedom, responsibility, and thoughtful adult guidance, children acquire the essential tools to understand themselves, contribute to their community, and navigate the wider world with confidence and compassion.



Story from the classroom

Recording daily activities and managing one's own work

In a Montessori Elementary classroom, each child keeps a journal—a personal record of their daily learning, discoveries, and reflections. These journals are not meant for the adult to check or evaluate, but for the child themselves. They are tools of self-awareness, helping children observe their own choices, reflect on their decisions, and see how their actions lead to results.



From the very first day, children begin building their own portfolios—collections of notes, drawings, research findings, and observations. Each portfolio becomes a personal map of understanding: a place where the child captures what they have learned, what questions they still have, and how they are developing their skills. In this process, children gradually gain insight into their own capabilities and the consequences of their decisions.

The beauty of this approach lies in responsibility. Children set their own goals, plan their work, and decide how to record it. The adult never takes this responsibility from them, but instead ensures the environment is rich with materials, guidance, and opportunities for exploration. The adult's role is to support, observe, and present knowledge—but always with respect for the child's autonomy.

Through journaling, children learn that knowledge is theirs to acquire for themselves. They practice turning decisions into actions and develop the confidence to manage their own learning. When they reflect on successes and challenges, they begin to understand that their progress depends on their effort and choices.

In this way, Montessori children do not simply follow instructions—they become architects of their own learning. They discover the art of self-organization, the satisfaction of achieving goals, and the independence of knowing that their growth is in their own hands. Journals and portfolios are not just records—they are mirrors of the child's journey, capturing both the knowledge they build and the habits of mind they are cultivating for life.

Story from the classroom

Teacher – child conferences

In the Montessori classroom, meaningful conversations between the child and the guiding adult are woven naturally into the rhythm of daily life. These exchanges happen on multiple levels. During the work itself, the adult offers gentle, immediate feedback—subtle guidance that helps the child refine a skill, clarify understanding, or explore a new approach.

Beyond these day-to-day moments, periodic reflective conversations provide deeper support. Once every few weeks, the child and adult may sit together to review progress, discuss challenges, and consider next steps. These conversations are not evaluations in the traditional sense; they are opportunities for reflection, self-discovery, and guidance.

At longer intervals—perhaps at the end of a semester or school year—an overall conversation helps the child see the arc of their own growth, the skills they have developed, and the insights they have gained. Yet at every stage, the child never reports to the adult as though they are accountable to them. Responsibility for learning remains firmly in the child's hands.

The adult's role is that of a coach, a mirror, and a guide. Through careful observation, encouragement, and thoughtful dialogue, the adult models respect for learning and confidence in the child's ability to grow. Their belief in the child's competence is contagious, quietly shaping the child's own confidence and self-direction.

In these conversations, the child learns to reflect, to set goals, and to make choices with intention. They discover that learning is not about performing for someone else—it is a personal journey. The guidance of the adult helps them navigate this journey, supporting their development of independence, self-management, and lifelong learning skills.



Story from the classroom

Working with error

In the Montessori classroom, a mistake is never a failure—it is simply part of learning. Every material, every activity, carries within it a built-in way for the child to discover their own errors. Sometimes it is a control chart, sometimes the design of the material itself reveals the outcome when something is out of place, sometimes it is their critical thinking.

The teacher trusts the child to use these tools. There is no rush to correct them, no fear of them consulting the “answer key.” Instead, the child is invited to explore, test, and reflect. This freedom teaches an essential attitude: mistakes are natural, expected, and even joyful.

Children learn to approach challenges with curiosity rather than fear. They test their knowledge, adjust their actions, and see the immediate results of their decisions. Over time, this builds resilience, confidence, and independence.

In this environment, the error becomes a teacher. The child learns to observe, correct, and improve. They discover that mastery is a process, not an instant achievement, and that learning itself is the reward.

Mistakes are not obstacles—they are invitations to grow. And with each one, the child’s confidence and love of learning quietly flourish.



Becoming a Learner of Life: Fostering Respect, Responsibility, and Self-Confidence

If we had to choose one guiding principle for all the knowledge, skills, and attitudes we cultivate in Montessori Elementary classrooms, it would be helping a child develop a positive attitude toward themselves—the foundation of self-respect, responsibility, and confidence. When a child learns to value their own personal, social, and emotional well-being, it naturally sparks motivation to explore, create, and learn. From this inner spark grows not only competence in navigating life, but also genuine personal, emotional, and cognitive growth.

Building this positive attitude is both the greatest opportunity and the greatest challenge for an educator. It cannot be handed to a child through words or praise alone—it must emerge from their own experience. The secret lies in leaving responsibility where it belongs: in the hands of the child. Our role is to prepare the environment, offer guidance, and provide opportunities, while allowing children to take ownership of their learning and actions.

The first risk we face as adults is taking over responsibility for the child's happiness or success. When we intervene too much, we unintentionally send the message: "You are not strong enough to handle this." This can create a sense of helplessness, frustration, and dependency. Montessori education invites us instead to offer challenges that are real, meaningful, and manageable, allowing children to test their strength, overcome obstacles, and experience success for themselves. In doing so, they build a deep awareness of their own competence and power over their life.

The second risk is relying on empty praise. Telling a child they are special or talented does little if it is not grounded in lived experience. A true sense of self-worth grows

from action, discovery, and mastery. In a Montessori classroom, we nurture this through careful preparation of the environment and thoughtful guidance. Children fall in love with their own abilities first, then with the world around them—the order of nature, the connections between things, the roles humans play in society. Over time, these experiences create a deep, internal sense of value and competence. By the time a child consciously asks, “Who am I? What is my role in the world?” they already carry a foundation built through years of indirect guidance, exploration, and reflection.

Ultimately, the child’s development depends on the attitudes of the adults around them. Respect, curiosity, and confidence that we model in our own lives are absorbed by children in the subtle rhythms of daily life. When we show them how to value themselves, respect others, and approach the world with care and responsibility, children naturally grow into learners of life—capable, self-aware, and ready to contribute meaningfully to their communities and beyond.



Story from the classroom

Freedom of Choice in Work, Place, Group, or Partner

In the Montessori classroom, freedom is not about doing whatever a child wants—it is about giving them the chance to make meaningful choices and learn to manage the consequences. Each day, children can choose their own work, decide where they want to work, select a partner or group, and even decide how long to spend on a task. Every decision carries responsibility, and it is through these choices that children begin to understand themselves, their needs, and their capacities.

Sometimes a child is ready for full freedom: they move independently from one activity to another, select their own materials, and work with peers who share similar goals. Other times, a child needs guidance. Perhaps they are offered only two options for a task, or the adult helps them structure their time so that the work becomes manageable. In every case, the child is given only the freedom they are capable of handling, always balancing choice with responsibility.

As children grow in self-organization, they learn to observe their own abilities and limits. They notice which tasks hold their attention, how long they can focus, and how collaboration affects their work. The adult's role is not to control but to support—providing guidance when needed, stepping back when the child is ready, and helping them reflect on the outcomes of their decisions.

Over time, this careful balance of freedom and responsibility nurtures independence, self-discipline, and confidence. Children discover that their choices matter, that they are capable of managing themselves, and that they can contribute meaningfully to the life of the classroom. In this way, freedom becomes not just a privilege, but a tool for growing self-awareness, responsibility, and the ability to organize one's own learning and life.



Story from the classroom

Uninterrupted Working Cycle

In a Montessori classroom, one of the most powerful gifts we give children is time—the freedom to immerse themselves in work without interruption, without a strict timetable telling them when to stop or move on. This is what we call “uninterrupted working cycle” and it is the foundation for deep concentration, self-motivation, and genuine personal growth.

When a child chooses a task that resonates with their curiosity or interest, they enter a state of focused engagement. Even young children, when trusted to follow their inner drive, can sustain attention for remarkable periods of time. They carefully manipulate materials, observe outcomes, refine their approach, and return again and again to perfect a skill or explore an idea. This sustained effort is not imposed; it comes naturally from the child’s own desire to understand, create, or achieve.

During these moments of concentrated work, children experience satisfaction and pride—not because someone praised them, but because they see their own growth. They recognize the results of their effort, the mastery of a new skill, or the solution to a problem they have solved independently. This self-recognition fuels their inner motivation, reinforces their confidence, and nurtures both personal and social competence. They learn patience, persistence, and the joy of accomplishing something through their own initiative.

In contrast, a rigid schedule that interrupts their flow can disrupt this delicate process. When children are constantly told to stop, shift, or hurry, they are prevented from fully engaging with their own learning. Pressure replaces curiosity, and frustration can arise from the inability to work at a pace that suits their individual rhythm. True learning, however, grows from freedom—



the freedom to follow one's own interest, to linger, to explore, and to make mistakes along the way.

Free work also cultivates a deeper understanding of time and responsibility. Children learn to estimate how long a task might take, how to manage materials, and how to balance different activities across the day. They develop self-discipline organically, not through external enforcement, but through the natural consequences of managing their own work.

By allowing this freedom, the classroom becomes a place where children can experience the joy of mastery, the satisfaction of achievement, and the confidence of knowing they can direct their own learning. Concentration becomes not only a skill but a doorway to self-discovery, independence, and the pleasure of building one's own competence. In the Montessori elementary environment, free work is not just an activity—it is a vital pathway to cultivating capable, thoughtful, and motivated learners who carry their inner drive and confidence into every part of life.

Story from the classroom

Presentations go Hand in Hand with Attitudes Skill-Building

In a Montessori classroom, the way a material is introduced is far more than a simple demonstration—it is a subtle, powerful way to cultivate knowledge, skills, and attitudes simultaneously. Each prepared material is designed for independent exploration, allowing the teacher to step aside from traditional “lecturing” and instead focus on guiding the child's connection to the work.

The true strength of the presentation lies in the teacher's ability to convey their own attitude toward the material. Enthusiasm, curiosity, and respect for the subject are quietly communicated as the teacher demonstrates, planting the seeds of appreciation and interest in the child. Once the child begins hands-on work, they don't just absorb information—they develop practical skills, apply their understanding, and internalize attitudes toward learning, all at once. This holistic approach naturally builds personal and social competence, as well as the ability to learn independently.

In a 6-12 classroom, presentations typically happen in small groups of two to five children, with three being optimal. The teacher begins by connecting to what the child already knows, a

gentle reminder of the familiar before introducing the new. From there, the teacher offers a concise, clear demonstration, highlighting the essence of the material and how it can be used. This step is always grounded in context, showing the child not only how the material works, but why it matters.

The conclusion of the presentation is just as important as the demonstration itself. Together, teacher and child explore the material's relevance: What can this help the child understand? How might they use it creatively or practically? What further questions arise, and what paths of exploration might follow? The child is invited to make decisions, experiment, and take ownership of their work, building confidence alongside competence.

Through this careful balance of guidance and freedom, each material becomes a doorway—not only to knowledge, but to the development of skills and attitudes that empower the child to navigate learning, life, and relationships with curiosity, responsibility, and joy.



How Personal, social and learning to learn competence is visible in Montessori Elementary classroom?	
Essential knowledge	
The components of a healthy mind, body and lifestyle	Children learn about their bodies through stories like <i>The Story of the Great River</i> , exploring nutrition, exercise, and habits that support well-being. Daily routines and self-care tasks help them develop awareness of their physical, emotional, and mental health.
Codes of conduct and rules of communication for social participation	Through Grace and Courtesy lessons, group projects, peer collaboration, and teacher-child conferences, children learn respectful communication, turn-taking, and constructive interaction.
Inclusion and equality	Multi-age classrooms and heterogeneous group work foster understanding that each child has unique strengths and responsibilities. All children are encouraged to participate and contribute according to their abilities.
The learning process and learning strategies	Children maintain journals, portfolios, and project records, reflecting on their own learning, strategies, and progress, building meta-cognition and self-directed learning.
Their own competence development needs and various ways to develop competences	Freedom of choice in work, materials, and groups allows children to recognize their interests, strengths, and areas for growth. Teachers guide children to select work that develops skills and attitudes.
How to search for the education, training and career opportunities and guidance or support available	Teachers model research and exploration strategies during Going Out experiences, cultural studies, and Big Work projects, showing how to identify resources, gather information, and seek mentorship.
Management of time and information	Uninterrupted work periods and self-organized projects teach children to plan, pace, and prioritize their own work. Journals and portfolios help track progress.
Motivation, confidence and self-discipline	Children experience natural consequences for their choices, receive regular supportive feedback during conferences, and learn to persevere through challenges, building intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.
Core skills	

Identify their own capacities, focus and set goals	Children set personal goals for projects, journal reflections, and Big Work tasks, evaluating their own progress and adjusting strategies.
Motivate themselves	Freedom to select work aligned with interests encourages intrinsic motivation; successful completion of tasks builds internal drive.
Deal with complexity	Multi-step projects, research on human history, and integrated Cosmic Education activities challenge children to analyze, synthesize, and problem-solve.
Critically reflect and make decisions	Journals, portfolios, and teacher-child conferences provide opportunities for self-reflection and conscious decision-making about learning.
Learn and work autonomously and collaboratively	Individual projects, peer mentoring, and small group work encourage independence while teaching cooperation and teamwork.
Organise and persevere with their own learning, and evaluate and share it	Portfolios, Big Work presentations, and project planning help children develop persistence, organization, and reflection skills.
Self-assess	Regular reflection in journals and teacher conferences enables children to evaluate their progress honestly.
Develop resilience and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning throughout their lives	Working with errors, problem-solving tasks, and long-term projects teach children that mistakes are part of learning and that persistence leads to mastery.
Seek support when appropriate and effectively manage their learning, their career and their social interactions	Children are guided to ask for help when needed, consult peers, and seek guidance from teachers without losing ownership of their learning.
Cope with uncertainty and stress	Work period, extended focus periods, and collaborative problem-solving support children in handling uncertainty, ambiguity, and complex tasks.
Communicate constructively and collaborate in teams	Classroom projects, presentations, and collaborative research cultivate teamwork, discussion skills, and constructive dialogue.
Negotiate effectively and express and understand different viewpoints	Multi-age groups and cooperative projects provide natural situations for negotiating roles, respecting others' ideas, and finding compromise.
Empathise with others, show tolerance and create confidence	Daily community interactions, cooperative work, and exposure to diverse cultures through Cosmic Education foster empathy, understanding, and social awareness.

Attitudes (students value)	
Looking after their personal, social and physical well-being	Daily routines, self-care tasks, reflection exercises, and project work reinforce responsibility for their own well-being.
Learning and working collaboratively	Multi-age group projects, cooperative research, and peer mentoring promote collaboration and shared responsibility.
Problem solving	Integrated projects, Big Work, and independent research require children to identify challenges, plan strategies, and test solutions.
Being assertive	Freedom of choice, self-directed work, and reflective conferences encourage children to express their needs and opinions confidently.
Integrity	Students learn to take responsibility for their choices, complete tasks honestly, and respect community rules.
Intercultural awareness and communication	Cultural studies, history projects, music, art, and Cosmic Education teach children to appreciate diversity and communicate respectfully across cultures
Diversity	Exposure to multiple cultures, histories, and perspectives reinforces acceptance and celebration of difference.
Showing respect to others, overcoming prejudice and compromising	Group projects, discussions, and Grace and Courtesy lessons teach children to value others' contributions and practice compromise.
Seeking opportunities to learn and develop in a variety of life contexts	Work Cycle, Going Out experiences, and project-based learning encourage curiosity, initiative, and self-directed exploration beyond the classroom.