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RUNNING HEAD: Emailing Parent Education

Nudging Parents Towards Parent Education Emails

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In fulfillment of final requirements for the Masters of Arts and Education degree

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Abstract

This research studied the effects three different styles of email content has on sustained parent interest. Emailing is a cost-effective way of offering parents a glimpse inside their child's classroom; but if parents do not engage with the emails or correspond with the teacher, the effort may be ineffective.. Over six weeks, 81 primary (3 to 6 years-old) parents at a small suburban Montessori school received one of three weekly emails containing photos or text intended to teach parents about Montessori education. The data suggests parents value photos rather than text. Teachers may see sustained engagement by sending regular photo-heavy emails of a number of children working followed by a brief caption. Text-heavy emails meant to describe the Montessori principles or materials should be created in advance, and be easily replicable and customized.

Keywords: email, parent education, Montessori, parents, communication

Montessori, the do-for-yourself method of supporting children's intrinsic motivation through interacting with the curated environment, is the antithesis of the traditional: teacher, student, test model used most commonly throughout the country. Like its traditional counterpart, the Montessori method is a developed model of education, but with roughly 4,500 schools in the United States, Montessori is often lumped in with alternative and unstructured methods such as homeschool. With traditional schools monopolizing the education market, many parents, when choosing a preschool, have misconceptions and a shallow understanding of the method even when enrolling their child in a Montessori program. **The school has a responsibility to help parents see the value of their choice without adding the burden of marketing to the teacher's saturated schedule.**

Trained Montessori teachers use a set of sophisticated materials to support a child's developmental needs; that is their principle responsibility. It can be difficult for those who have not trained nor spent time educating themselves about the materials' developmental purpose to understand the lessons without explanation. Teachers must make time to translate the child's work to his or her parents.

Short of training, those looking to understand the Montessori method turn to books, blogs, articles, or in-school events hosted by experts. With a trend towards two working parents, many families do not have an abundance of time to attend school functions nor the desire to spend time in meetings. Emailing parent education information could be an opportunity to reach more parents and is easily replicable from year-to-year with little additional effort after initially creating the content. However, adding parent education emails to other digital mailings from the school, including weekly newsletters, may not be perceived as intrusive. In that sense, careful consideration must be given to the way the email campaign is constructed.

Email has changed advertising. For years, businesses reached consumers primarily through print, radio, and television. With email, the retailer or advertiser has a direct link to their customer's inbox at no

cost. This delivery shift has allowed businesses to collect information on how the users receive and respond to advertising.

Fundamentally, advertisements announce a product, service, or event. We, consumers, want or need some amount of information on how these products, services, and events can help us solve problems in our lives. Companies that fail to educate their consumers often suffer.

While thinking about schools as businesses may be difficult, providing a satisfactory service will in turn yield growth. If schools want to sustain parent support, they need to serve the child and inform the parent of how their child is being served. William Craig of Forbes (2015) states, “Every company in the world needs to prove that their products are necessary, rather than demanding that customers believe it to be so” (p.2). Parents are a captive audience for schools, so perhaps parent education can be adapted into a form of advertising to current families that in turn could generate value for the school.

The purpose of this study was to determine whether the same principles used in email marketing can be both efficient for teachers and effective at reaching parents. The literature review to follow looks at lessons learned from marketing missteps, considerations when creating an email campaign, and the economic benefits derived from successful advertising campaigns.

The research took place in a suburban, private Montessori school serving 16 months through 8th grade. All the information was conveyed online through email. Parents from three classrooms were surveyed and given information about the Montessori method with different goals for each campaign.

Review of the Literature

Businesses have a responsibility to educate consumers on their products especially when markets are saturated or monopolized by larger players. Those who do not often face financial consequences. Kumar and Reinartz (2016) say, “The purpose of a sustainable business is, first, to create value for customers and, second, to extract some of that customer value in the form of profit, thereby creating value

for the firm.” If schools want to sustain parent support, they need to adequately serve the child and sufficiently inform the parent of how their child is being served.

Montessorians are not deaf to the idea of parent education. Angeline Lillard (2006) suggests a gap exists in consumer understanding of what Montessori education is and what Montessori schools do to set themselves apart from traditional model schools. Hiles (2015) confirms Lillard’s question in a parent survey from three Massachusetts Montessori schools and found that parents did not understand the role of the teacher, did not value mixed-aged environments, and were uncertain about the role of choice in their child’s education. Contrarily, mixed-age classrooms, teacher roles, and the freedom of choice are characteristics often thought of as unique to Montessori programs.

According to a 2018 study conducted by AMI (Association Montessori Internationale), parents valued moral, behavioral, and emotional development above all else regarding their child’s upbringing. The same group prioritized quality teachers over school leadership and educational approach. They also showed concern about academic preparation in math and science. Failing to educate families on the rigor and intentionality of Montessori could be one reason parents choose to leave Montessori schools beyond preschool years. To this, Data Quality Campaign (2016) adds that parents want to know what their child does during the day, how the school prepares the child for the future, and if the child is progressing.

It appears this confusion among parents may amount to a public relations problem. Possibly, parents recognize their values in the Montessori environments, but without sustained reinforcement in seeing those values play out, their confidence in the method wanes over time. The AMI study (2018) also points out that parents appreciated Montessori education when their child was enrolled, but their fondness faded upon leaving the school.

Looking outside education may offer compelling reasons to market to parents regardless of their willingness and ability to share their time. Letting parents, or customers, know how or why a product works can be challenging. In his 2015 Forbes article, Craig uses the example of Apple’s launch of a new

MacBook to point out how assuming customers will find differences between two similar products leaves them finding other reasons to purchase; namely price. The difference between Apple's new laptop and others on the market or previous generations was a more androgynous magnetic cord that, when pulled, disconnected before yanking the computer off the table. However, because the company failed to educate their customers about the problem this adjustment solved, customers opted for less expensive, more familiar offerings from competitors. He concludes with the overarching point that, "the more informed and empowered customers are, the more satisfied and confident they are with their choices."

Mark Quinn (2013) also cites examples of companies that failed because they did not educate consumers about the purpose and use of their product. Especially when entering a heavily saturated market space or one with well-established frontrunners, companies who stayed quiet and hoped the product would speak for itself often lost customers to the more substantial players. Quinn describes Google's launch of its social media platform, Google Plus. Consumers were confused about the problem Google Plus solved as its capabilities appeared to be identical to those of Facebook. The product based on the number of members could not articulate a reason users ought to switch platforms, and so they stayed with the more familiar company. While some schools may not offer much in the way of parent education due to lack of interest, low attendance, or not enough time, finding ways of tailoring these programs to meet parent needs or preferences may show stronger returns in engagement and commitment.

Changing Behavior

Yale professor and psychologist, Richard Thaler famously writes about the practice of nudging people towards behaving in their own best interest. Nudge theory, as its known, is a way of affecting the environment or the conditions under which choices are made to increase the chances of producing a positive, default behavior (2008). If learning about Montessori happens online, is it possible to nudge parents towards seeing the benefits of Montessori and building a strong connection to the method through curated emails?

Thaler also describes what it means to be a “choice architect,” a person who sets up the conditions under which choices are made. For choice architects, every detail can influence a choice and should be considered (2008). The application in this study researched how parent behavior and responses create conditions for an optimal contact model or the best way to reach parents.

Ayala, Taylor, Grantham, McNeil (2011) suggest striving for optimal contact models may have an impact on the value the parent brings to the school. In other words, finding the right time window to reach parents, prioritizing important content, making content easy to understand, and desirable to parents may increase satisfaction with the school. Tending to the relationship with parents may boost their willingness to share with others. Likewise, Merisavo and Raulas (2004) found email marketing had a positive impact on brand loyalty, and that recipients’ recommended the brand to their friends.

Sharing information

Kornegay (2017) introduces two ideas central to the success of educating consumers. Providing valuable information to people who need it often produces value by word of mouth and providing something consumers can share solidifies sharing. If the information available is of interest and relevant, short, easy to read, and quickly shareable, it was likely to produce an uptick in sharing.

Sharing information can be intensely personal. Chen and Berger (2016) explicitly looked at digital content, how people identify with content they find on the internet, and their likelihood of sharing content that expresses an aspect of their identity. People often feel a sense of ownership over internet content they posted or shared, even when the article was written by someone else. People more willingly share interesting articles than boring ones they have received. But they are far more likely to share when they feel they have found the article. In other words, content must be compelling, but does not have to be refined if it speaks to the finder’s identity.

Permission

Among the first considerations when sending an email campaign is the consumer's perception of the email. Chang, Rizal, Amin (2013) found that consumers viewed unsolicited emails as intrusive. While the informative value, the financial reward value, and entertainment value were all reasons people opened emails, no one factor quelled the consumer's irritation with, and therefore avoidance of, unwanted emails.

Based on study that email openers demonstrates a goal-driven approach to their inboxes, Chang, Rizal, Amin (2013) also found that unwanted or unsolicited advertisements interfere with the consumers' goals and draw a negative brand association.

Consumer relationships form over time, according to Zhang, Kumar, Cosguner (2017). While the study found a positive correlation in email activity and purchase rates, patterns in data also suggest that email open rates ought not to be the only metric by which a successful campaign is measured. A customer's online responsiveness is not necessarily indicative of their intent to purchase and vice versa; inactive online customers were also loyal shoppers.

Recency

One of most concerning aspect of using email has to do with parents' oversaturation. Ayala et al. (2011) also found a method of calculating the likelihood a customer would make a purchase based on the recency of their previous purchase. They argue that finding the optimal time to contact a customer in their buying process can lead to longer lifetime value from the customer. They determined how likely a customer was to make a purchase based on their recency state. For example, if it is determined that customers purchase new phones every two years and it has been more than two years since a purchase, it is likely the consumer bought from another retailer. Therefore, finding a sweet spot for each customer based on a likely time frame for purchase and marketing at the right point within the window could increase the likeliness of the customer purchasing again.

Contrarily, if consumers receive too many offers from the retailer in one sales period, the consumer may be less likely to act; this is called saturation. If the consumer receives an offer in period 1 but does not act until period 2, this is called carryover. Saturation refers to a negative impact on sales where carryover is often positive. Therefore, determining purchase likelihood plays a role in catching the consumer close to purchase time. To use the example of the phone, the retailer might begin marketing to the customer one period before the two-year mark to remind the customer to return to the retailer (Ayala et al., 2011).

According to Drèze and Bonfrer (2008), scheduling affects customer retention as well as the customer's tendency to open and click on an email message (p. 322). Without realizing it, schools can be guilty of saturation and likely do not have much awareness or consideration for recency. If within a single week a parent receives the weekly newsletter, a personal note from the teacher, a permission slip request, and is planning to attend a school function at the end of the week, that parent may begin to feel overwhelmed with their involvement from the school. If the following week the parent receives a request to volunteer at a school function, the parent may likely say "no" due to saturation. Temporary saturation can impact the lifetime value of the customer Ayala et al. (2011).

Email Construction

Chittenden and Rettie (2003) identified the factors affecting the response rate in email messages. The result showed a significant correlation between response rate and subject line, email length, incentive, and the number of images. Marinova, Murphy, and Massey (2002) concluded that personalization in email messages is an ineffective method to generate desired customer responses.

Visual interest is also an important consideration. Zviran, Te'eni and Gross (2006) showed that using color in emails affects how the user viewed its content, furthermore, when used correctly, color can prompt the recipient to respond as the sender intended.

Metrics for success

Two email marketing companies, Constant Contact and MailChimp, report aggregates of email open rates across different fields. Both groups report similar open rates among schools from 2017 between 22% and 24%. This number gives a baseline expectation for what a campaign might yield. It also indicates that, in general, parents are unlikely to open the emails.

Conversion rates are the rates at which recipients follow through on the desired action posed by the email (MailChimp, 2017). The conversion rates amount to value for the company.

Digital content allows for tracking click and open rates. Tracking shows whether recipients opened the email and clicked on a link. Based on Chen and Berger's (2016) research, tracking shares could also indicate interest in the content.

In summary, Montessori parents expressed concern that Montessori education lacks rigor particularly in math and science (AMI, 2017). Emailing carefully curated information that addresses how the "problem" is solved in Montessori classrooms could increase parents' loyalty to the model. Parents' overall satisfaction in their child's education may lead to their organic sharing (either digital or otherwise), which could produce value for the school.

Research Process

The intervention took place over six weeks bookended by a pre and post-intervention survey. Within the six weeks, three groups of parents received their respective campaign emails. The campaigns were sent Monday through Friday between 9:15 and 10:15 am or 2:15 and 4:15 pm. All emails came from the sender, Action Research. The header or branding was consistent throughout all emails as well. Each email contained a brief survey (see Appendix A) asking parents to evaluate the content on a scale from "irrelevant" (1) to "I'd like to know more" (5). The survey also included space to comment.

Setup

Before data collection began, I set up a MailChimp account and compiled the email addresses. I recorded both parent's email addresses, their child's name, and classroom.

The project title, “Understanding Montessori” appeared as a heading across the campaigns and on all surveys. I set up a template for each group that included a standard layout, a link to the end surveys, and an option to unsubscribe.

Consent was obtained through a digital opt-out form (see Appendix B) sent on Monday of week 1. Parents had a two-day opt-out window. The pre-intervention survey (see Appendix C) was sent two days later.

Group 1 participants received one weekly email (see Appendix D) that included the caption “Here is a look at what went on this week.” These emails contained 4 to 12 pictures of individual children or small groups working within the environment. Not only were the children engaged in work, but they were also eating snack together and participating in Spanish lessons. Each week the subject line read, “Group 1 Photos”. In addition to photos, the last email featured a short video of the children walking on the line.

Group 2 participants received three emails (see Appendix E) each week. Every child in the group was featured in one photo consisting of that child engaging with a material. Along with the photo, parents received a 1-3 paragraph material description followed by its direct and indirect aims. The materials varied between the four areas (Sensorial, Practical Life, Mathematics, Language) of the room. For the first two weeks, the subject lines corresponded to the material discussed. Following a suggestion, week 3 and subsequent weeks fell under the subject line Group 2: (material named).

Group 3 participants received one weekly email (see Appendix F) describing a Montessori principle: movement and cognition, order, the role of the adult, motivation and interest, choice, and concentration. The emails contained photos of materials, shelves, brief videos, or no images at all. This group did not receive any photos of their children working.

I photographed the children during their morning work cycle and in the afternoon inserted the photos into their respective campaigns and composed text, where needed. Material descriptions came

from Catherine McTamaney's website "Montessori Doshi" or were original compositions. Direct and Indirect Aims were taken from the material descriptions given out by the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota. Information on Montessori concepts was taken from Catherine McTamaney, Angeline Stoll Lillard's book "The Science Behind the Genius," or were original compositions. I also documented an estimate of the time spent organizing each email.

Data Collection

All surveys were composed through Google Forms, which collects and compiles responses on spreadsheets and builds charts or graphs to illustrate responses. The Pre-intervention Survey and Opt-out Forms were sent to 83 participants. Of the 49 recipients who opened the introduction and opt-out, none opted-out. Of the 42 participants who opened the survey 22 submitted responses.

Over the course of the eight weeks, two parents from Group 2 and one from Group 3 unsubscribed. None of the unsubscribers opened the initial introduction nor the Pre-intervention Survey. I opted to receive emails from Groups 1 and 2, and responded only to the Pre-intervention Survey and opened every email.

Each of the three campaigns had a separate survey attached to collect information on how parents viewed that email. The form compiled each group's responses in separate spreadsheets. The surveys gauged content interest, solicited feedback, and tracked engagement. Because the surveys were always the same, parents were not incentivized to return to the survey. Subsequently, the surveys did not offer much evidence of engagement and did not show whether parents read the emails.

One of the main drivers for studying parent participation via email was finding a balance between giving parents a palatable amount of information on Montessori's method without gobbling up the teachers' limited time for tertiary projects. If the emails had taken a significant chunk of the teachers' [researcher's] time to construct and participation was inconsistent it would certainly not be an efficient use of time. However, knowing that parent participation changes over time and finding the balance

between consistency and variety within the email content means email may be worthwhile even in reaching >50% of the population.

Open Rates

The campaign success was measured by open rates. The open rate refers to the number of subscribers who opened the email. This number indicates the subject line resonated with the audience and that viewers found the information relevant.

While it did not impact open rates, one change made in week two was adding the class name to the subject line of the email for all campaigns, for example, "Group 2: Trinomial Cube". With around 50% of parents opening the introductory emails from a vague or unfamiliar sender, adding the class name helped parents recognize the emails related directly to their child's classroom.

Feedback

I also looked at the campaigns' respective click rates or the number of subscribers who clicked on the survey at the end of the email. In a standard advertising campaign, this number would indicate how many customers clicked-through to the company's website and took the next step towards making a purchase. While the surveys were a way to engage in a two-way discussion on the content, leaving feedback does not necessarily translate into loyalty.

In this study, leaving feedback acted as an indicator of what parents found interesting about the campaigns and what they might like to see changed. Anyone who left input scored the content as satisfactory (3) or positive (4 or 5). While it was always an option to express dislike or disinterest, rather than leave a negative response, parents opted not to offer feedback (see Figure 1).

The surveys also left space for comments. Overall, the comments were positive or offered suggestions for improvement. There was always a question of whether to respond to comments or to remain consistent. In the first week, multiple parents from Group 1 commented that they would like more pictures. For each subsequent campaign, I added more pictures to see if more pictures correlated with

interest. This change suggests that more pictures related to parent's interest or willingness to open the emails, especially since Groups 2 and 3 included one and no pictures of children working and both had consistently lower open rates.

However, in weeks 3 and 4 parents in the same group also requested the photos be labeled. After careful evaluation, I decided to include a brief caption under the photos in weeks 5 and 6. The reason is that the objective was to satisfy parents desire to know what their child does at school and also to bridge the gap of understanding Montessori. Reading a caption is hardly parent education. If parents showed substantially more interest in a photo and caption than in material descriptions and Montessori principles, perhaps in the future adding more photos to the other campaigns could still deliver some information while offering photos as an incentive to read the text.

Data Analysis

Pre-Intervention

Starting late January, 83 parents of primary children received an email introduction to the study. Of those, 48 parents opened the email and (presumably) read the text. Of the 48, 42 clicked the link to the Pre-intervention Survey, and 26 took the survey. These 83 parents represented 45 children.

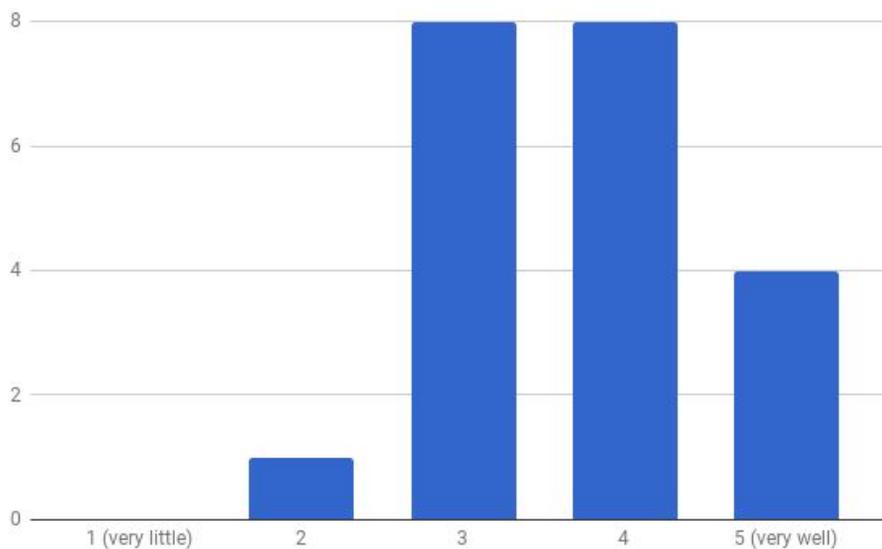


Figure 1. Parent self-reported understanding of Montessori.

Figure 1.2 shows parent's self-reported understanding of Montessori education. The responses give an idea of how well parents feel they know and how much room they have to grow. However, their willingness and available time both play essential roles in shaping a parent's view of their child's education.

Most parents, 28% shared their information came from internet sources. The source's quality is unknown. 20% of parents reported reading books or talking with others to learn about Montessori.

While there is room for growth in parents knowing what the Montessori method is and how it works, most parents, (72%) feel their understanding is strong enough to practice the concepts in their homes. Only 4.5% reported using the concepts monthly or never at home. This overwhelming majority suggests parents recognize the values they try to instill in their children in what they know of Montessori education.

Intervention Results

The campaigns were evaluated both on efficiency, the time taken and cost to create the emails, and efficacy, delivering information that cultivated parent engagement. Group 1 emails were the most efficient and effective regarding time spent and response from parents; however, they provided the least information on the Montessori method. A side-by-side comparison of all groups open rates can be found in the Appendix. On average, 70% of parents in Group 1 opened the emails on a weekly basis, remarkably, the lowest open rate for the entire campaign was 65% (highest rate for Group 2: 51%, Group 3: 55%). This group was also the most responsive with an average of 4 clicks per email, and a total of 21 responses over the six-week campaign. The weekly survey results for Group 1, almost unanimously 5 (I'd like to know more), showed parents were satisfied with the email content. Additionally, at least one parent from each family opened more than 50% of the emails.

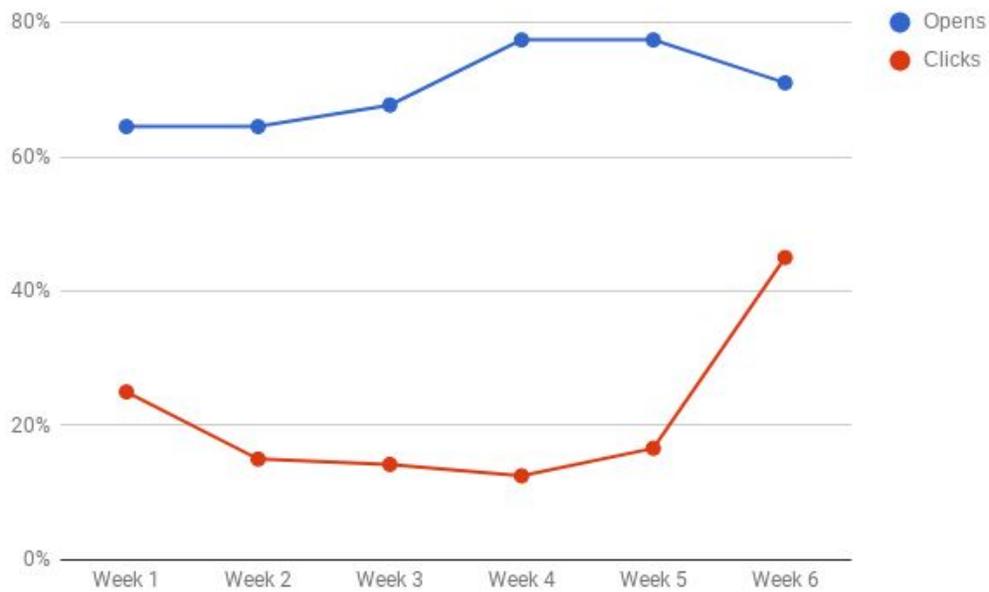


Figure 2. Comparison of Group 1 click and open rates.

Figure 2 shows that open rates were relatively steady with a slight influx and then recession. The rise likely indicates that parents missed the introductory email and later discovered the photos were relevant and consistent. The severe uptick in clicks in week 6 shows that about half of those who opened the email that week watched the video.

The video was the last image in the email, reinforcing that opening emails does not necessarily mean subscribers read or engage with the content. In this case, only ten subscribers clicked on the video link, which does not mean all ten clickers watched the video. This suggests users appreciate a content hierarchy. The most important information and necessary links should appear at the top of the email. It is also possible that parents were interested in looking through photos, but were unwilling to invest time to watch a video.

Each week 2-3 more images (than the previous week) were added to the email. Figure 2 indicates that more photos do not correlate to increased participation via responses or opens.

Post-intervention

The key findings according to the Post-intervention Survey indicate parents found text and photos helpful in understanding what their child does during the day. They found the length of emails satisfactory. They expressed interest in seeing more emails like the ones they received. They also expressed interest in reading about Montessori concepts, materials and their use, and in seeing photos of the whole class (rather than just their child). Additionally, 75% of parents reported talking about the text or images with their child; that same percentage reported reading (rather than skimming) text. Overall, the results were inconclusive about how frequently to send future emails.

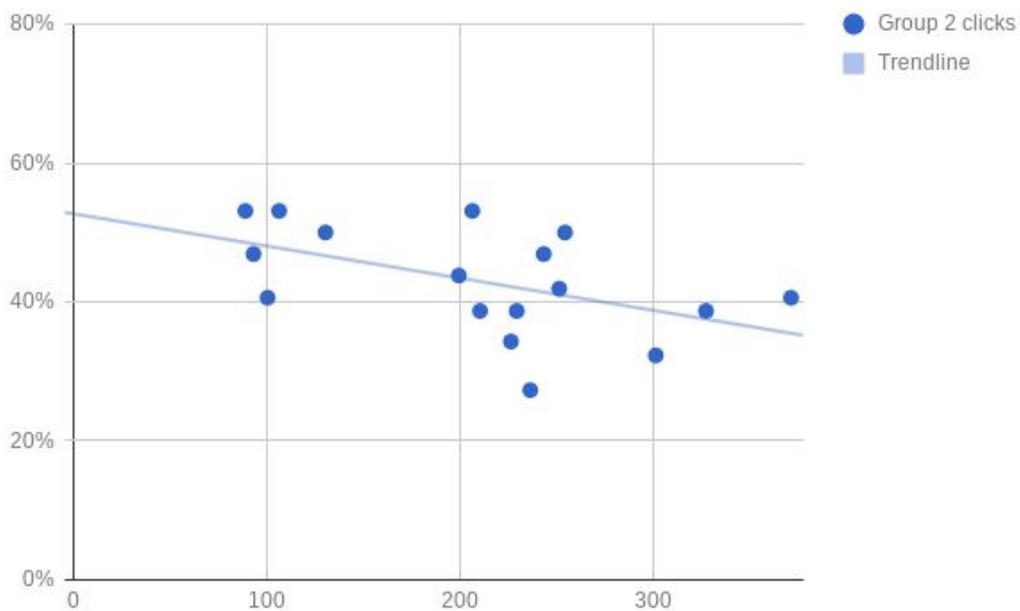


Figure 3. Group 2 clicks per image.

The majority of parents, 64%, reported using a phone to access the emails, likewise, the data show the most mobile-friendly emails also had highest click rates. All six of the Group 1 emails showed the highest open rates out of all campaigns (see Appendix H for figure comparing open rates across all campaigns). Figure 3 shows the words per image in all Group 2 emails. The graph illustrates how more words and fewer pictures trend towards below average open rates. The arithmetic mean was 210 words per image.

Accommodating parents' preferences of using phones over computers by limiting text could explain higher click rates.

Conclusions

Chance is an incentive. In the two campaigns featuring children from that room, each child was not featured each week; therefore, the chance of seeing their child pictured acted as a possible incentive for parents to at least open the email. Likewise, parents who opened the Group 3 emails looking for a photo of their child may have felt disincentivized to open subsequent emails.

Participation waines as time goes on. This is most evident in pre- and post-intervention survey participation. Twice as many parents took the pre-intervention survey as the post. Open rates for Groups 1 and 3 peaked and then declined.

Responses differed from behavior, according to the post-intervention questions. All parents reported interest in receiving content sent to other groups. However when comparing open rates from all three groups (see Appendix H, Figure 4) the most active users, those in Group 1, were asked to invest the least amounts of time in the content. They also reported the greatest satisfaction with the emails. While parents from all groups reported interest in reading more about Montessori materials and concepts, the data show behavior indicates the most interest in photos.

The results were inconclusive whether time of day played a role in the campaign's success. Further research could be done to determine a time when parents are sitting in front of a computer and would likely invest time into reading copious amounts of text.

Action Plan

This study suggests parents show interest in seeing inside their child's classroom. Photos show parents their child is working, progressing, and receiving the education that aligns with their values. Offering to explain of how the work benefits the child invites parents into Montessori's considered

pedagogy. However, tension exists between what parents know about the Montessori method and how much time they are willing to invest in learning more about it.

It is still unknown whether providing these explanations does, over time, convince a large enough number of parents to stay with a Montessori program. Continuing to tweak the information and respond to parents' interests would likely drive up engagement.

Moving forward, the three campaigns could be used together. The Group 1 campaign was most successful and took minimal effort; perhaps this sort of photo-heavy email could be used weekly or bi-weekly give a general outlook of what the children are all doing. Using text-heavy emails like those for Groups 2 and 3 sparingly throughout the year, may be of more interest to families, especially in preparing for conferences when parents enter the classroom and talk specifically about materials.

The research could be expanded upon in three ways: larger sample sets, reaching out to toddler and elementary levels, and in conjunction with enrollment data over time. If other Montessori schools would use this method of collecting data and responses from parents, perhaps they could send reflections and photos that are relevant to their parents' interests. Those interests may also vary between school communities.

Expanding information sharing into toddler and elementary shows parents how the method builds upon itself. In talking with elementary colleagues, parents become concerned with their child's progress and how it relates to the growth of peers in other settings; parents wonder or doubt whether their child is keeping up with peers. Knowing what parents want and curating emails that preemptively address the need to see progress could, again, validate the parent's choice. Material explanations become more relevant as parents see familiar concepts revisited. They need more reassurance of what the child is doing and what the child gained in working with the material.

Finally, comparing email activity to enrollment trends could show whether or not parents are persuaded to stay with Montessori when they know more. Reframing the research question by asking if

misunderstanding Montessori causes parents to doubt their choice. The literature suggests children perform better when a parent is involved in their school. Since Montessori schools do not numerically measure performance, perhaps a similar comparison can be drawn. Digital activity, like email open or response rates, posts to the schools' Facebook page or social media sites, attendance at board meetings or annual surveys all point to a thriving and engaged parent community. It is one way parents communicate their overall satisfaction with the school. This could give schools insight into how to give parents more of what they need to feel secure in their school choice. For example, if attendance at conferences is chronically low it could be that the times need revision or more parents would attend if childcare were provided. In a digital age, these conversations can begin over email. Asking a broader question of would using technology, namely email, to cater to their families needs breed customer satisfaction?

It all goes back to the triangular relationship formed between parents, children and school. Teachers maintain strong relationships with children on a daily basis by meeting their needs and responding to inquiries, however, parents ought not just be fed news about the school nor should they demand their voice be heard. Schools need to proactively make two-way connections with parents that are respectful of parents' time and that respond to what they need to understand how the school serves their child.

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Response to today's content

How interested were you in today's content?

1 2 3 4 5

Irrelevant I'd like to know even more

Other Comments

Your answer _____

SUBMIT

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.

Appendix B

Opt-out

Opt-out

I DO NOT wish to participate in the study

SUBMIT

Appendix C

Part 1

Choose the degree to which you identify with the following statements.

Movement _____ thinking and learning.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Enhances	<input type="radio"/>	Distracts from				

Children should _____ every day.

	1	2	3	4	5	
choose their work	<input type="radio"/>	do the work the teacher has planned				

Children learn best when _____.

	1	2	3	4	5	
the teacher makes the lessons interesting	<input type="radio"/>	they are interested in the work they are doing				

Extrinsic rewards, like stickers and treats, _____ prolonged focus and concentration.

	1	2	3	4	5	
encourage	<input type="radio"/>	negatively impact				

_____ children learn and understand concepts.

	1	2	3	4	5	
More adult interaction helps	<input type="radio"/>	Adult interaction can easily interfere as				

Learning in _____ is often more meaningful and deeper.

	1	2	3	4	5	
abstraction	<input type="radio"/>	context				

Part 2

Choose the degree to which you identify with the following statements.

I understand Montessori education. . .

	1	2	3	4	5	
very little	<input type="radio"/>	very well				

My understanding of Montessori comes from . . .

- reading a book(s) about Montessori
- watching a video(s) on the internet
- readings from internet sources
- training
- word of mouth
- Other...

I practice Montessori concepts in my home . . .

- daily
- weekly
- monthly
- I don't know

Appendix D



Here is what went on in Casa 1 this week.



work pictured: phonetic objects



work pictured: Nut Driver Practice Board

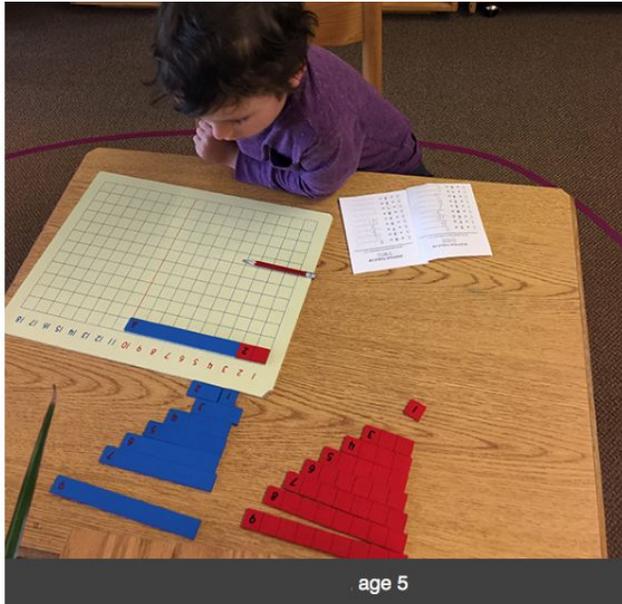


work pictured: Addition Snake Game



work pictured: Constructive Triangles

Appendix E



Addition Strip Board

Math Material

Description: The Addition Strip Board gives the child practice with addition facts, increasing his speed and understanding. The child chooses an equation and records it first on paper. Then, by combining the wooden strips to indicate the two addends, the child can see the sum before checking his work against the the control board. Recording his equations and answers helps to increase the recall and speed for these math facts. Like all Montessori materials, even these more abstract experiences are didactic and self-correcting... and a great opportunity for the child to master the skills he will need to explore our world independently.

Direct Aims:

- To help the child concentrate on and memorize the basic additions of numbers 1 to 9. The red line has the same purpose as the notched card in the snake game, to show how many are needed to make ten and how many extra there are. The red line teaches the child how numbers split into two sections, one for completing a 10 and the other bringing us closer to completing a second 10; this is the mechanism of addition that must be learned.
- The child is helped to see the entire structure of addition and to memorize the combinations.
- To present the commutative property: $9 + 1 = 1 + 9$.

What did you think of todays content?

Appendix F

Motivation and Interest

Intrinsic Motivation

Children are born motivated to learn. Think about how much a newborn changes and learns in their first year of life. No one grades them on how quickly they learn to roll over. They don't get gold stars for learning how to pull themselves upright, or use early language, or make eye contact with the people they love. Indeed, even if you wanted to (and why would you want to?) you can't stop an infant from learning. Their motivation comes naturally, without grades or rewards. That intrinsic enthusiasm persists for most children, and the design of the Montessori classroom makes use of it in our expectation that children will thrive without grades, work plans or teacher-prescribed lists of "have-tos."

But, as much as we want to take advantage of the intrinsic motivation that supports children's engagement and curiosity, we know that, the older children grow, the more complicated that motivation becomes. For some children, they are "taught out" of motivation. For children in environments that "reward" their good work with teacher praise or public acclaim, with bonuses and gold stars, that natural curiosity can be replaced with a focus on the external reward. Over time, the child becomes increasingly dependent on the rewards to motivate their work, and requires increasingly ambitious rewards as they acclimate to each new level of praise.



Interest

Motivation and interest go hand-in-hand. We can often motivate ourselves to do things we don't really want to do by making them more interesting. Exercise becomes more enjoyable when we listen to good music or when we walk around a beautiful lake. Many of us chose our profession out of a genuine interest in the work.

Appendix G

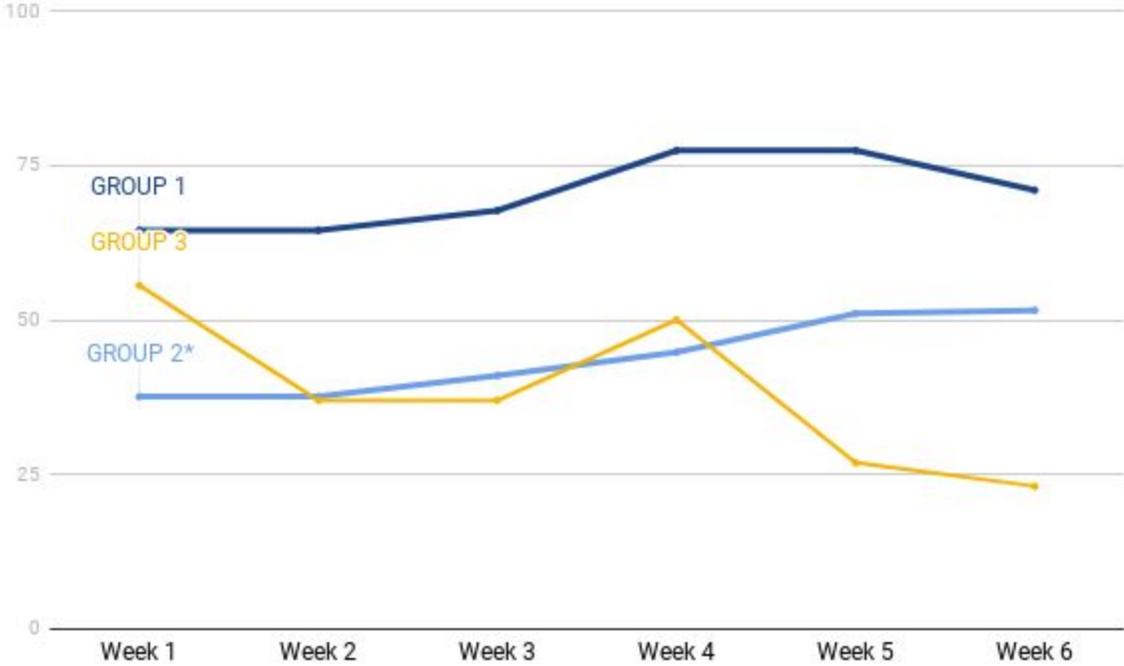


Figure 4. Comparison of open rates across 3 campaigns