



What Louis Vuitton Can Teach You About Montessori

I know that you have seen them.

You know, those knock off handbags that you see someone selling on the street? They look so good at first glance. They have the same colors, the same pattern and overall design as the designer bag. And, for a fraction of the price!

It's tempting, isn't it?

You also know, however, that the purchasing the knock off comes with compromises. Looking closely, you can see that the leather is thin, the color is inconsistent and the stitching is of poor quality. Many of these bags fall apart soon after purchase and quickly become unusable.

The Lesson to Learn

The purpose of this article isn't to convince you to buy a designer handbag! Rather, it's an analogy to use as you learn about Montessori education. You see, just like Louis Vuitton bags, knock off Montessori schools are rampant in the United States. If you don't know the difference, you could easily enroll your child in a fake school. Unlike the bag, however, the consequences are much more serious - you could be gambling with your child's future.

Are All Montessori Schools the Same?

Maria Montessori, who was an Italian physician and scientist, developed her method of education in painstaking detail. Her success was phenomenal! People from all corners of the world began to hear about her work, and they were curious to come and see these schools for themselves. To say that Maria Montessori was an overnight sensation is an understatement.

Later in her career, Dr. Montessori realized people were altering and changing parts of her work. She went to court to obtain a copyright on her name and method; a judge denied her request, stating, "Your name and your work have been out in the public domain too long and used by too many for you to be able to make a copyright claim on it now."

It's a shame that Maria Montessori failed to protect her intellectual property as it resulted in some very regrettable outcomes:

1. It Tarnished Her Work The name "Montessori" has been tarnished, because there is no copyright to protect it, especially in the United States. Anyone can open a school and call it a Montessori school. People often hear good things about genuine Montessori schools and very different things about those who try to imitate it. You have to do your homework to get the real thing.

2. "Montessori" Training Quality Varies A lack of legal protection of the name means that anyone can open a Montessori teacher-training center. They can add to or downright change her original work and pass it off as it were the real thing. Teachers coming out of these programs are in no position to lead an authentic Montessori program.

3. Monte-Something Schools "Monte-Something" schools have sprouted up all over because anyone can attach the Montessori name to a school and ride the coattails. In the United States, there are more knock-offs than there are real Montessori schools.

Authentic Montessori programs are expensive and time consuming to operate. Our teachers must have a specific Montessori credential from an accredited training center. Our classroom materials are made in the Netherlands to Dr. Montessori's exact specifications. We routinely work with Montessori consultants from across the world to hone our craft. We invest the time and resources to do this because we have witnessed the amazing benefits that an authentic Montessori program will have for your child.

"Monte-Something" schools proliferate because they assume that parents won't take the time to understand the difference. Unfortunately, most parents don't realize this before it is too late - after they enroll their child in a sub-par program.

How to Find an Authentic Montessori Program

So, where does this leave you?

If you are specifically researching Montessori education for your child, you should look to find an authentic program in your area. You may want to read my article “A Common Sense Guide to Choosing a Montessori School” for some specific things to look for in your search.

And, you are always welcome to tour our school, even if you don't choose to enroll. Part of our mission, beyond serving the children in our program, is educating the general public about the amazing things that happen in an authentic Montessori classroom. You may schedule a personal visit here.

