**StarterHacks**

**Coffee ‘n Code**

**ARChemy**

**Montessori – Coming Soon (Summary)**

Role

User Researcher (May 2019 – Present)  
  
Duration

From May to present.   
   
Overview

Definition was taken from: <https://www.ccma.ca/what-is-montessori/>

Montessori is an individualized approach to education for children from toddler through high school. It is a student-centered approach that encourages creativity and curiosity and leads children to ask questions, explore, investigate and think for themselves as they acquire skills.

A Montessori environment focusses more on a student’s learning than on a teacher’s teaching. Specially trained Montessori teachers guide, coach and facilitate each child’s learning through continuous observation and assessment.

However, Montessori schools are expensive to enroll into; spending about 10K a year per child enrollment, lessons are also hard to access as they are specifically developed and only available for Montessori schools. The main purpose of this approach to education is for children to become independent and adaptable in their always-changing environment, especially in real-life situations and scenarios which begs the question:

How can we make Montessori learning recognized, affordable, and easily accessible?

Solution

We want to bring Montessori learning and teaching into the environment where they continuously grow and constantly learn – in their own homes.

2019 Outcomes

This venture has been an ongoing research project with my colleague, from the University of Waterloo Arpeleum Team, to further expand the knowledge, learning opportunities for both teachers and students also the presence of Montessori Schools and its method of practical learning.

The outcomes of this ongoing project are:

* Determining the pain point with Montessori Schools and learning
* Determining the specific target market
* Creating a User Persona to further understand our target market
* Understanding the custom-made lessons for each Montessori Subject (which subjects, lessons and classroom activity teaches the child the most useful practical lessons? How does it work?)

My Tasks as:

* User Researcher (May 2019 – Present)
* So far, numerous Montessori subjects were visited and studied to understand what makes such practical teaching methods useful, effective and expensive to practice for future Montessori School teachers and for parents to enroll their children in a Montessori School:

**Practical Life** – Development of coordination, concentration, independence

**Sensorial** – Development of Visual Discrimination, Classification of Objects, Acquisition of Scientific Language including Comparatives and Superlatives, Aids in memory.

**Language** – Development of Vocabulary Acquisition, Phonetic Sounds, Phonograms (sound blends), Letter Recognition, Sandpaper Letters (tracing to practice forming letters), Pencil Grip/Writing on Chalk Board/Paper, Reading, Puzzle Words (words we cannot sound out), Rhyming Words, Grammar

**Arithmetic (Mathematics)** – Visual Discrimination/Counting of Numbers 1-10, Teens and Tens, Decimal System, The Operations. Students will also learn skip counting, the meaning of zero and fractions if and when they are ready.

**Geography and Culture** – Geography and culture are an integral part of the Montessori classroom environment. Understanding world geography and learning about culture play an important role in the development of children’s worldly knowledge and acceptance of others. Through all that we learn at school within these areas, it is also a wonderful way to learn about the world outside of the classroom.

**Gross Motor Skills** – Jumping Skills, Standing on One Foot, Catching a Ball, Kicking a Ball, Runs without Falling, Climbing, Walks and Runs without Falling

We identified our target market and who specifically we want our product to help:

**Parents** – low to mid income, open to home-schooling, interested in Montessori school for their children however too expensive to enroll or unavailable in their area

**Aspiring Montessori Teachers** – individuals who would like Montessori teaching to be their profession

Creations as a:

* User Researcher (May 2019 – Present)
* I’ve created a user persona to further understand our target market, specifically the parents
* We hope to create an app and a website, to slowly transfer Montessori learning online and available to all

Takeaways

Understanding the users key to creating the product –understanding the lessons of which the product will be based on is as important. How people take in information is also key to the design system of the lesson.

Future Projects / Next Steps

* Continuing with the user research
* I’ve created a user persona to further understand our target market, specifically the parents. We hope to further solidify our idea and soon create prototype for people to test.
* Phase A – B
* I am to create a lo-fi lesson plan to see which systematic design works best for the users to easily follow, take in the information and teach their children the lessons
* The lessons, in a form of a pdf, video, infographic or any other form, should be easy for anyone to follow, understand and share –the design is very crucial to executing the product

* User Testing in the future
* Future Launch