

# Montessori Teacher Training in Mainland China

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**Abstract:** This paper compares three Montessori teacher-training organizations in mainland China, the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI), the American Montessori Society (AMS), and the Chinese Montessori Society (CMS). It also analyzes whether CMS trained teachers express evidence of inner preparation as described in Dr. Montessori's writings as an essential component of Montessori teacher training. Dr. Montessori writes teachers must undergo a training that involves a "theoretical [and] technical" preparation (Montessori, 2013) as well as a "spiritual" preparation (Montessori, 1967/1995) in order to become a competent Montessori teacher. The analysis discovered that the CMS teacher-training program has reduced academic hours and does not impose observation or teaching practicum requirements. It also does not have a requirement for supervised practice with the Montessori materials. These findings call into question whether theoretical and technical preparation for CMS teachers is sufficient. Simultaneously, when surveyed, CMS teachers' responses implicate dispositional qualities reflective of spiritual preparation, showing that CMS trained teachers are prepared spiritually to work with children.

**Key Words:** Montessori teacher training; Chinese Montessori Society; dispositions; teacher preparation.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

Early childhood education (ECE) is of continual interest to both parents and educators as research continuously confirms the impact of the first six years of development on human life (Eliot, 1999; Families and Work Institute, 1996; Healy, 2004; Siegel, 2012). As the caregivers and educators responsible for delivering ECE, preschool teachers' professional ability and dispositional qualities are a topic of concern as research shows their direct work with children influences this early development stage (Benjamin, 2015; Harris and Sass, 2008). Ensuring children receive the best possible care and developmental opportunities is therefore inherently dependent on early childhood educators.

China has made aggressive efforts to modernize its preschool system by focusing on up-to-date research trends in ECE and increasing pre-service and in-service teacher education and training opportunities (Li, Yang and Chen, 2016; MOE, 2011; MOE, 2018a). Acknowledging that the majority of ECE teachers in China hold an associate's degree or lower (MOE, 2019) and that research has shown teachers' educational attainment influences students' outcomes (Barnett, 2003; Benjamin, 2015), public, as well as private institutions have been encouraged to provide training and professional support for ECE teachers (Li, Yang, Chen, 2016; Zhou, 2011; Zhu, 2015).

One such training opportunity for Chinese ECE teachers is Montessori teacher training. Montessori teacher training provides both pre-service and in-service teachers the opportunity to further their understanding of child development while learning the Montessori education method for preschool-aged children. While Montessori training has been in China since the late 1990s (Yu, 1998), little is known about Montessori teacher training in mainland China.

This paper uses a comparative research approach to compare Montessori teacher training in China, specifically looking at three organizations: the Chinese Montessori Society (CMS), the American Montessori Society (AMS), and the Association Montessori Internationale (AMI) to discover "differences and the explanation of similarities" (Azarian, 2011) between them, and to answer the following questions:

- 1) Is localized CMS teacher training comparable to the AMI and AMS teacher training programs?
- 2) What fundamental elements are different between the CMS and the AMI and AMS teacher training programs?
- 3) Do CMS-trained teachers express evidence of inner preparation as described in Dr. Montessori's writings as an essential element of Montessori teacher training (Montessori, 1967/1995, 2013)?

Answering these questions will shed light on the quality and construction of Montessori training in mainland China and address issues surrounding the comparability of CMS teacher training to the more extensive, more internationally recognized training of the AMI and AMS.

## 2. BACKGROUND:

### 2.1 Montessori education and teacher training

Dr. Maria Montessori founded Montessori education in Italy in 1907 originally for use with preschool aged children. A few of the critical components of Montessori education are the use of mixed-aged classrooms, the particular emphasis placed on the preparation of the classroom environment, and the use of a specific set of teaching materials. Montessori teacher training is also a key component of Montessori education (Cossentino, 2009) and is seen as the medium by which Montessori education has spread to the masses (Montessori, 2004).

Not long after the first classroom opened, in 1913 Dr. Montessori held the first teacher-training course as the means of diffusing her education method to the general public (Cossentino, 2009; Montessori, 2004). To protect her philosophy, she founded the AMI in 1929 to carry on her legacy and provide a standard for Montessori education throughout the world (Montessori, 2004). In 1960, American Montessorian Nancy Rumbusch founded the AMS to serve as the mechanism for spreading an American version of Montessori education throughout the United States. These two organizations have grown in popularity and are seen as the two leading authorities on Montessori education throughout the world (Povell, 2004; Whitescaver and Cossentino, 2008).

Montessori teacher training is essential in order to successfully and completely implemented high quality Montessori education. Dr. Montessori felt that teachers needed to undergo special preparation in order to work with young children and used the term *prepared teacher* (see Montessori, 1966, 1967/1972, 1967/1995, 2012) to describe the teacher in her education method that had undergone “theoretical [and] technical” preparation (Montessori, 2013) as well as “spiritual” preparation (Montessori, 1966, 1967/1995, 2012, 2013).

The theoretical preparation of teacher training includes learning Dr. Montessori's theories on human development, including her philosophies on developmental planes, sensitive periods, and children's developmental and psychological characteristics (Alderman 2015). It also includes theoretical discussion on observation and provides opportunities for practicing observation in established Montessori classrooms (Montessori 2013).

The technical aspects of Montessori teacher training includes learning the Montessori teaching apparatus and understanding its use. Montessori education depends on a set of learning materials, some of which were designed by Dr. Montessori herself that the child manipulates to gain mastery of specific concepts and skills. During teacher training, adult learners first observe demonstrations of the teaching materials, and time is then given to practice their use in a model classroom (Cossentino, 2009; Montessori 1948, 2013). Current international Montessori trainings, such as the AMI and AMS also require completion of a teaching practicum, although Dr. Montessori never mentions a teaching practicum as part of training in her writings. Teaching practicums are seen in the literature as an essential component of teacher-training programs in general, as it has been shown to positively influence pre-service teachers' teaching strategies, as well as student outcomes (Guyton and McIntyre, 1990; Haigh, Pinder and McDonald, 2006; Rambush, 1962; Sokal, Woloshyn and Funk-Unrau, 2013), making it a beneficial addition to Montessori teacher training.

The Montessori teacher's spiritual preparation can be likened to what mainstream educators describe as the acquisition of *dispositions*, which are the attitudes, values, and points of view teachers possess (NCATE, 2006; Whitescarver and Cossentino, 2007). Teachers' dispositions are sometimes seen as controversial due to their vague constructs, yet research suggests their importance, as dispositions significantly impact students' learning and motivation (NCATE, 2006). While dispositions tend to be a topic of controversy between educators and policymakers in the west, "the cultivation of teachers' attitudes and values" (Whitescarver and Cossentino, 2007) has been at the center of Montessori teacher training since its conception (Montessori, 1966, 2013), and interestingly, is also a central element of teacher training within mainland China (MOE, 2011; MOE, 2018b).

In an attempt to define dispositional traits a Montessori teacher should possess, Whitescarver and Cossentino (2007) discovered from their review of Dr. Montessori's writings three dispositional qualities a Montessori teacher should possess: flexibility, restraint, and love. Flexibility refers to how teachers "follow the child," a familiar statement amongst Montessori educators that describes how the teacher interacts with each child individually based on each child's needs. It also refers to how the teacher prepares and adapts the environment to meet the child's developmental needs and how she is skilled in giving presentations with the Montessori materials. Restraint is the practice of self-control by the Montessori teacher in refraining from imposing her own opinion or understanding on the child and giving the child the opportunity to make discoveries and form his own opinions through his classroom experiences (Montessori, 1967/1995). Lastly, as Dr. Montessori describes, the disposition of love relates to the attitude of humility and service toward the child. She writes the teacher must serve the child as the valet serves his master, never commanding or demanding the child, but serving the child in his development (Montessori, 1967/1995).

## 2.2 Montessori education in China and teacher training

Interest in Montessori education in China came as early as 1913 but was short-lived mainly due to concerns over suitability and implementation feasibility (Shi 2012, 2015; Wang, 2012; Yang 2002, 2004). A second wave of interest in Montessori education came in the late 1980s when Beijing Normal University (BNU) professor Lu Le Shan rediscovered the method and began researching it for use within mainland China (Pi, 2003). Following its rebirth,

Montessori education grew in acceptance in ECE circles throughout China (Zhu, 2015), which naturally increased the demand for Montessori teacher training.

In response to the growing demand to advance Montessori education in mainland China, the two leading authorities on Montessori education globally, the AMS and the AMI, began conducting diploma accreditation courses in China in the early 2000s. The AMS held its first diploma course in Beijing in 2002 (personal correspondence, Martha Monahan, June 30, 2019), and the AMI held its first training course in Hangzhou, Zhejiang, in 2007 (AMI, 2020). While these two organizations have undoubtedly contributed to providing a conducive system for studying Montessori education in mainland China, there remains a concern over the need for a Chinese based authority on Montessori education in order to guide and develop the localization of Montessori education within mainland China, understanding the aims and objectives of Chinese ECE (Deng et al., 2016; Huo, 2001; Liu, 2010; Liu and Lin, 2003).

One organization promoting localized Montessori education in China is the Chinese Montessori Society (CMS). Unlike the AMI and the AMS, the CMS is the first all-Chinese Montessori organization committed to providing localized Montessori teacher-training in mainland China. Since 2005, the CMS has trained over 100,000 Montessori teachers through their organization and an additional 1,400 Montessori teacher trainers. CMS teacher training is held all over China through their 32 affiliated training centers and through cooperation with local teacher colleges offering associates and bachelor degree programs in conjunction with a CMS teacher diploma (CMS, 2020; personal correspondence, Xiaojin Zhang, November 26, 2020). The CMS has contributed to the spread of localized Montessori education in mainland China, yet little is known about its teacher-training program and how it compares to internationally recognized training programs such as the AMI and AMS.

Analyzing localized Montessori teacher training is a necessary topic as, not only in China but also worldwide, localized Montessori organizations are conducting teacher training and it remains unknown whether their quality is comparable to international training organizations. It is essential to analyze these localized organizations and discover whether localized teacher training remains on par with international teacher training standards and whether or not they adhere to critical elements of Montessori teacher training as described in Dr. Montessori's writings (i.e., 1994, 1994/2007, 2004, 2013). It is also vital to analyze whether teachers have undergone spiritual preparation as inner preparation according to Montessori philosophy is of equal importance as knowledge preparation (Montessori, 2004, 2013).

The following section describes the AMI, AMS, and CMS training programs, concentrating on academic hours, observation hours, teaching practicum hours, and required practice hours with the Montessori materials under a teacher trainer (Table 1). Following these descriptions, a comparison of program similarities and differences is provided. Finally, whether CMS-trained teachers express evidence of inner preparation as described in Dr. Montessori's writings as an essential element of Montessori teacher training is discussed (Montessori, 1967/1995, 2013).

### 3. METHOD:

#### 3.1 Comparison of Montessori teacher-training programs in China

**Association Montessori Internationale (AMI).** To obtain an AMI teaching diploma at the primary level (ages three to six years old), trainees must complete a minimum of 400 academic hours with 90% attendance, 170 hours of observation and teaching practice in an established Montessori classroom, and 140 hours of supervised practice with the Montessori materials. Academic hours consist of both Montessori theory and demonstration using the Montessori apparatus. Theoretical content centers on Montessori philosophy, psychology, and child development theory. Technical training includes demonstration in using the Montessori apparatus in the areas of practical life, sensorial, language and literacy, and mathematics (AMI, 2014). AMI training also requires teachers to complete a set of handbooks, referred to as albums, complete Montessori material making, a written examination, and an oral examination (AMI, 2014).

AMI ensures its program's quality through the rigorous teacher trainer course, *Training of Trainers* (AMI, 2019). The Training of Trainers is a four-part training program that involves auditing training lectures, completing a trainer's album, giving lectures to adult learners and material demonstration, and ultimately overseeing and running a Montessori training course under the supervision of a teacher trainer (AMI, 2020). Only teacher trainers who have completed the AMI Training of Trainers course can conduct AMI teacher training. All training centers and trainers hold to the same standards for teacher training course requirements as outlined by the AMI, which allows for consistency of AMI teacher training worldwide (AMI, 2019).

**American Montessori Society (AMS).** Requirements to obtain an early childhood diploma (ages 2.5 to 6 years old) through the AMS consist of a minimum of 300 academic hours with 90% attendance, including 20 hours of observation outside the teaching practicum. The teaching practicum under the AMS has a requirement of 540 hours (AMS, 2018). Theoretical and technical training content includes *core*, *foundational*, and *other* categories. Core components include technical training in the use of the Montessori materials consisting of "practical life, sensorial, language, mathematics, physical and life science, social studies, [and] classroom leadership" (AMS, 2018, p. 81). Foundational components consist of theoretical training in Montessori philosophy and observation theory. The

remaining *other* component of training consists of exploration in child development theories and the areas of “art, music, movement, [and] parent involvement [and] education” (AMS, 2018, p. 81). The AMS teacher-training program also requires a yearlong research project, which can take on various forms but requires “independent research and development by the adult learner” (AMS, 2018, p. 83).

AMS coursework requirements and examination requirements are left up to individual training centers, as AMS training centers are independently organized and managed. AMS training centers ensure quality and consistency of teacher education programs (TEPs) through requirements and standards met according to the Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education (MACTE), an accrediting agency under the United States Department of Education (USDE), which ensures a basic level of quality and ensures minimum requirements and standards for Montessori TEPs (AMS, 2018; MACTE, 2018). All AMS training centers possess MACTE accreditation (AMS, 2018), ensuring a standard training quality. While discussion of MACTE is beyond the scope of this paper, it is sufficient to say AMS training centers, while they may necessitate different course completion requirements (such as written coursework and examination requirements), they all, at a minimum, follow the same guidelines and regulations for a quality TEP as outlined by MACTE as well as the standards discussed here as outlined by the AMS (AMS, 2018).

**Chinese Montessori Society (CMS).** The requirements listed here are those in place to obtain the CMS advanced Montessori teaching diploma for ages 2.5-6 years old. The CMS requires a minimum of 180 academic hours (CMS, 2020), with 90% attendance as the most important graduation requirement (personal correspondence, Xiaojin Zhang, November 26, 2020). Theoretical content centers on the Montessori theory of human development, including introducing Dr. Montessori, normalization, sensitive periods, and other important Montessori theories. Technical content centers on demonstrating the Montessori materials, including practical life, sensorial, math, language, and culture and science areas. There is no classroom observation requirement or policy requiring supervised practice with the Montessori materials; however, according to the CMS, trainees often practice of their choice on days off, during daily lunch breaks, and after class. There is no teaching practice requirement for the CMS diploma, and exams are at the trainer's discretion. Trainees are required to complete albums as a graduation requirement, but this has been a recent addition and is not specified in the written requirements for conducting Montessori teacher training (CMS, 2020; personal correspondence, Xiaojin Zhang, November 26, 2020).

The CMS has a *Training of Trainers* program that is held once a year and open to CMS trained teachers. The only requirement to join the CMS Training of Trainers program is a Montessori teaching diploma. While it is suggested that those pursuing the Training of Trainers program possess an associate's degree or higher, there is no policy enforcing the adult learner's educational attainment (personal correspondence, Xiaojin Zhang, November 26, 2020).

### 3.2 Dispositions

Looking on to the dispositions of flexibility, restraint, and love, information from a survey assessing CMS teachers' Montessori theory comprehension and implementation practices was accessed and analyzed for whether from responses dispositional qualities could be assessed. One question was found on the survey to be a valid assessment of dispositional traits. The survey received a total of 210 valid responses. One hundred and forty-seven reported to be teachers in a Montessori classroom, and 63 reported to be school administrators or principals. All respondents had received Montessori training through the CMS.

One question specifically on the survey asked teachers to write about what they felt was their most important responsibility as a Montessori teacher. Of the 210 responses, 206 responses were deemed valid (three were left blank, and one only answered “a lot”). Answers were analyzed and color-coded according to dispositions of flexibility, restraint, and love. Responses that did not fit into one of these dispositional categories were coded *as other*. Other responses were then analyzed for similarities and categorized.

Responses reflecting the disposition of flexibility constituted 20% of the total responses. Statements included “help children in self-construction,” “create an environment suitable for children,” “observe and discover children's needs and help them become independent individuals,” and “follow the child.” All these responses and those like them reflect an attitude of responsibility toward meeting each child's needs individually and understanding that the teacher's role is one of flexibility in their interactions with different children.

Restraint composed 19% of responses and included phrases such as “observe the child, do not interrupt the child's development,” “observe the child and guide correctly from observation,” and “observe, reflect, guide.” An authentic Montessori teacher knows the importance of observation. The practice of observation requires restraint on the part of the teacher as they watch, contemplate and consider the child's needs without interjecting themselves or their expectations onto the child.

Responses reflecting the importance of the Montessori teacher to possess love constituted 28% of responses. These responses included phrases such as “helping the child through my actions and words,” “help children help themselves,” and “respect children; let children follow their developmental path.” These phrases exhibit an attitude of service to the child as Dr. Montessori explained love is not just a feeling but also an action of service to the child.

Lastly, responses that did not embody the above dispositions were assessed for other responsibilities Montessori teachers felt were important and analyzed for statements reflecting dispositions. “Other” responses encompassed 32% of all responses, of which 61% embraced the theme of continued inner preparation by the teacher. Phrases included “be a lifelong learner,” “improve myself and my practice,” “self-preparation,” and “work on myself.” These responses show that CMS Montessori teachers understand that “reshaping the adult’s attitudes toward learning and human relationships” (Whitescarver and Cossentino, 2007) is a lifelong process and that one must be committed to this endeavor in order to be a dedicated Montessori teacher.

The remaining responses (39%) included topics connected to the importance of bridging home and school and offering parents support and training in applying Montessori theory and ideology in the home. These responses show that teachers believe Montessori education is not a philosophy to be left in the classroom but should also connect to families and the home environment to ensure the best conditions for child development.

#### 4. DISCUSSION:

Comparing the course requirements of the AMI, AMS, and CMS training programs uncovered important discoveries of variations in theoretical and technical content and graduation requirements between training centers. Interestingly, while there were variations in these critical elements of teacher training, teachers’ answers to a question concerning their greatest responsibility as a Montessori teacher showed teachers to be internally prepared for work with children.

All training organizations incorporate Montessori theory and demonstration of the Montessori apparatus at the core of the training, although hourly requirements vary by organization, with the CMS having the lowest academic hour requirement. Specifically, the CMS has less than half the AMI’s academic hour requirement and 100 hours less than the AMS. Looking at this information, it becomes pertinent to ask whether CMS teacher training offers sufficient theoretical preparation for teachers. Theoretical preparation is at the heart of spiritual preparation, as through learning the Montessori philosophy, adult learners can develop and cultivate the right attitudes and perceptions about children (Montessori, 2013). Theoretical preparation provides the *how* in approaching the child and the *why* behind all the specific tasks and responsibilities of the Montessori teacher. While it cannot be assumed that a teacher has *arrived* by the end of training (Lillard and McHugh, 2019b), the question becomes how much time is necessary to ensure that teachers are sufficiently prepared.

Observation and teaching practicum are both critical components of teacher training that varied according to the organization. For both the AMI and AMS, these components were combined as one category, with the AMS constituting a much higher requirement at 540 hours. The CMS has no requirement for observation or teaching practicum for graduation.

Practicum became an essential component of Montessori training for the AMS when Dr. Nancy Rumbusch, founder of the AMS, established Montessori training within the United States university system, referring to the teaching practicum as “the fifth year” (Rumbusch, 1962, p. 137). While Dr. Montessori never spoke explicitly about a teaching practicum in her writings, research confirms teaching practice for pre-service teachers as highly beneficial (Guyton and McIntyre, 1990; Haigh, Pinder and McDonald, 2006; Sokal, Woloshyn and Funk-Unrau, 2013) and as such, should be a necessary component of Montessori teacher training.

Observation is unquestionably a necessary skill Montessori teachers must develop and, according to Dr. Montessori, a necessary component of teacher training. Dr. Montessori stressed that only through non-intrusive observation of children in the school environment could scientific pedagogy take place, and would teachers then be capable of grasping each child’s developmental needs. Likewise, Dr. Montessori stated the difference between her method and others was that of scientific observation her philosophy necessitated. She writes, “The eyes of the teacher must be trained” to spot concentration in children and that “a soundly objective method is based on observations, the observations of facts, which is why the Montessori method is entirely different from all the other methods.” (Montessori, 2012, pg. 7).

Unfortunately, both components of a required teaching practicum and required observation hours are left out of CMS teacher training altogether. When asked why the CMS training did not require a teaching practicum or observation, it was stated that while some training centers do provide opportunities for observation, it is not a stated requirement for graduation as in some areas of China, specifically central and western China, finding a Montessori school to practice teach in or observe in would be too difficult a task (personal correspondence, Xiaojin Zhang, November 26, 2020). Considering that ECE, in general, is more sparse in central and western China (Li, Yang, and Chen, 2016), it can be assumed that it would be challenging to find Montessori preschools to fulfill these requirements.

Supervised practice with Montessori materials in a model classroom is also an essential component of Montessori training left out of CMS training but included in AMI training. In the AMS training program, practice with the Montessori materials is combined with the teaching practicum requirement of 540 hours.

In the 1948 training course, specified time was given to practicing with the Montessori materials, stating that supervised practice was to assist trainees in the "correct use of the teaching apparatus" (Montessori, 1948). Practice with the Montessori materials is a critical component of AMI teacher training, and while not mentioned explicitly in AMS training requirements, it is clear that AMS teachers have sufficient time with the Montessori materials as the teaching practicum is an approximate nine month commitment (540 hours). To summarize, in the AMI and AMS teacher training, time is allotted to pre-service teachers to practice with the Montessori materials pre-graduation. The CMS training, on the other hand, does not have a stated requirement for practice using the Montessori materials.

Observation and supervised practice with the Montessori materials are two crucial components of teacher training expressed by Dr. Montessori herself (Montessori, 2012). It would benefit the CMS to enrich their teacher-training program further and ensure trainees sufficient preparation by including both of these elements into their program. Observation allows trainees the opportunity to connect Montessori theory with real-life experiences and further solidifies understanding of Montessori education. Supervised practice with the Montessori materials also ensures trainees grasp the Montessori material's demonstrations and masters their scripted movements before working in a classroom (Cossentino, 2009). The CMS should consider adding these critical elements into teacher training to ensure the proper preparation of teachers.

Teaching practicum is also of importance as research confirms its importance in pre-service teacher preparation. In some locations, finding a Montessori school to observe at could be problematic, considering their marginal status. However, CMS training centers should consider how to solve this problem instead of eliminating the requirement altogether.

Some CMS training centers have developed creative ways for teachers in training to observe and practice teach in a classroom pre-graduation. One example is the Hubei Vocational College of Arts (HVCA). HVCA offers a two-year ECE degree program in Montessori education that gives the opportunity to students to graduate with not only an associate's degree in Montessori education but a CMS teaching diploma as well. Seeing that the city of Wuhan lacks qualified and sufficient Montessori schools for observation and teaching practicum, the director of the program, Wei Duan, established a weekend children's class for two to five year olds that allows college students the opportunity to practice working with children as well as develop the skills necessary for scientific observation. The weekend class takes place in the model Montessori classroom within the college, and students are given the opportunity to observe and practice teach. Ms. Duan states that she has seen great improvement in students' understanding of Montessori theory through these weekend preschool classes, as students are able to experience Montessori education firsthand (personal correspondence, Wei Duan, February 2, 2021).

Lastly, and of particular interest in this paper, is discovering dispositional traits CMS teachers possess after having completed Montessori teacher training. While it is apparent that essential components of Montessori teacher training are missing from CMS teacher training, from answers produced on a questionnaire survey, it appears teachers possess the necessary dispositions of a Montessori teacher. Teachers expressed awareness of flexibility in helping the child, the importance of refraining from over-involvement, their role of love as service to the child, and understanding their personal refinement and preparation as a continual process that requires consistent dedication.

A possible reason for the appearance of positive dispositional qualities amongst teachers surveyed is that the nurturing of dispositions has been a part of Chinese teacher education in general since 1985 when importance was placed on cultivating positive moral standards, a healthy personality, and well-balanced physical and mental health in teachers (Central Committee of the Communist Party of China, 1985). The development of dispositions was seen as directly linked to strengthening China as a nation not only academically but also morally, ethically, and psychologically (MOE, 2011). While in the west, dispositions are debated as to their construct, the Chinese nation has given priority to their cultivation, and it could very well be why CMS teachers display such mature cultivation.

## 5. CONCLUSION:

Montessori teacher training traditionally combines theoretical, technical, and spiritual preparation to ensure that teachers are sufficiently knowledgeable and capable of working with preschool-aged children. In this comparative analysis, it was found that the teacher training program of the CMS lacks critical elements of teacher training that question whether teachers trained through the CMS are sufficiently prepared. The teacher training of the CMS should consider incorporating classroom observation and practice opportunities with the Montessori materials to enrich their program. In light of the research showing the benefits of a teaching practicum for pre-service teachers, the CMS should also incorporate a teaching practicum requirement for graduation. While it may be difficult in some regions of China to find adequate Montessori schools to fulfill these requirements, the CMS should be creative in solving this problem to ensure teachers competent to work in actual classrooms. While it is evident that CMS-trained teachers exhibit dispositional qualities essential of Montessori teachers, it is inconclusive whether these characteristics result from CMS training as the cultivation of dispositions has been a significant component of teacher training in China for quite some time.

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