Stage 2 Italian (Continuers)

Assessment Type 2: In-depth Study

Reflective Response in English

Write a reflection about your experience in undertaking the In-depth Study.

In your response you may consider the following:

* How your research has increased your understanding of your topic
* How the research experience was similar to or different from your preconceptions
* How cultures, values and beliefs are represented in texts studied
* How your learning may have changed your thinking
* How you may use this experience in the future.

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| Theme | The Italian-Speaking Communities |
| Topic | Historical Perspectives |
| Aspect/Focus | Maria Montessori |
| Audience | Teacher |
| Text Type | Report |

Assessment Conditions

Task length: maximum 600 words in English

Task duration: 3 weeks

Task completion: homework, some class time will be allocated

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| Learning Requirements | Assessment Design Criteria |
| * analyse texts that are in Italian to interpret meaning * examine relationships between language, culture, and identity, and reflect on the ways in which culture influences communication | Expression  E2 Coherence in structure and sequence   * organisation of information and ideas * use of the conventions of text types.   Interpretation and Reflection  IR3 Reflection   * reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts * reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented or expressed in the texts studied * reflection on own learning. |

For my in-Depth Study, I chose to research the physician and educator, Maria Montessori. As a student at an all-girls school that promotes the equality and success of women, I was particularly interested in the impact that influential women from history have had on the world today. After constantly hearing about the Montessori schools and even walking past one every day on my way home from school, I was intrigued to research more about the woman behind the creation of the many pre-schools and unique method of learning famous around the world today.

Interpretation and Reflection

Reflection on own learning.

Having no previous knowledge of Maria Montessori, I chose to research her life and the main underlying principles of her method of education. I discovered an extremely useful documentary that had been published about the life of Montessori for the 150th Anniversary of the Unification of Italy in 2011. As it was published in Italian, I was not only able to learn about Montessori's life but discover many terms relevant to the main principles of her method. This documentary provided the basis for further research and a solid foundation on which to build my two tasks. The official Montessori website provided specific information on the way in which the Montessori Method was developed to be applied in pre-schools.

I was surprised to discover that Montessori was the first woman to graduate from the University of Rome with a degree in medicine. This allowed me to reflect on the many challenges she would have faced as one of the first women to break through the male-dominated society of her time. Maria's story resonated with me as I learnt about the challenges she had to overcome. Although at times she had to make personal sacrifices, her humble approach to any obstacle was faced with utmost conviction. Her apparent influence on Mussolini and Hitler at the time is also indicative of her awe-inspiring effect on the world. I was also amazed to discover that Italy has led way with various teaching approaches. Educational philosophies such as the Montessori method along with others such as the Reggio Emilia approach have originated in Italy, and provide innovative and well-respected methods of educating.

Interpretation and Reflection

Critical reflection on how beliefs, practices and ideas are represented in texts.

Montessori's many years of scientific observations and extensive study into childhood learning has led me to believe that her method of pre-schooling, La Casa del Bambini, provides an environment in which any child can learn and truly reach his/her full potential. Her love and passion for education is evident in her application and creation of the Montessori Method. A phone interview with a director of an Adelaide situated Montessori school confirmed my previous research about the aims of the Montessori pre-schools. The independent nature of the environment in which Montessori schools are based upon, allow children to build their own self-confidence, sense of self-worth, positive social behaviour and inner discipline; all qualities that promote the positive progression of a child from infancy to adulthood. I believe these merits are extremely important in today's society, where the concept of respect, of children and adults, is crucial to a healthy well-being, providing that her concepts and methodologies are timeless.

**Interpretation and Reflection**

Sophisticated reflection on own ideas and connections made with those explored in texts.

I feel immense respect for women like Montessori, with the drive and desire to challenge society’s norms. It is women like her who have paved the way to gender equality and specifically in the field of education, inspired a community of creative and passionate educators. Undertaking this In-Depth Study has allowed me to develop my own ideas about the woman I would like to be, and has empowered me to strive to achieve my passions and goals just as Maria Montessori did. It has confirmed passion to become a speech pathologist who works particularly with children. I am inspired to strive to have an immense impact in my field of work through helping people in innovative ways, just as Maria Montessori did.

Interpretation and Reflection

Critical reflection on own learning.

Additional Comments

This response is illustrative of an A grade and was used in clarifying forums in 2012.

Expression

* Information and ideas are organised logically and coherently.
* Writing style is appropriate to report format.

Interpretation and Reflection

* Critical reflection on representation of ideas in texts:
* thoughtful comments on major sources of information on topic (documentary, website and telephone conversation)
* significance of Montessori as the first female medical graduate of the University of Rome, and of her influence on male figureheads (Mussolini and Hitler) discussed
* information on importance of Italian initiatives in education and pedagogy obtained
* articulation of the benefits of the Montessori method to early childhood development discussed.
* Sophisticated reflection on own ideas:
* connection made of Montessori with other influential women, especially in the field of education
* evidence of strong response ("awe-inspiring") to the challenges faced by Montessori in the male-dominated society of the time and her humble approach to overcoming obstacles
* the benefits of the Montessori method across the generations discussed.
* Critical reflection on own learning:
* lack of any previous knowledge of this topic acknowledged
* development of the student's understanding of the power of women in contemporary society described
* inspiration to pursue goals and replicate Montessori's impact in the student's chosen field (speech pathology) discussed.

Performance Standards for Stage 2 Locally Assessed Languages at Continuers Level

|  | Ideas | Expression | | Interpretation and Reflection |
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| A | *Relevance*  Responses are consistently relevant to context, purpose, audience, and topic.  Responses consistently convey the appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions.  Responses successfully create the desired impact and interest, and engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Depth and breadth in the treatment of the topic and content is very detailed and varied.  Ideas are elaborated, opinions and arguments are supported and justified, and complex ideas are communicated effectively, with originality and creativity.  Comprehensive evidence of planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Use of an extensive range of complex linguistic structures and features with a high degree of accuracy to achieve interest, flow, and cohesion.  A few errors may be evident when attempting to use more complex language, but errors do not impede meaning.  Effective use of a range of sophisticated cohesive devices to connect ideas.  Expression consistently appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Very effective communication with a high degree of fluency. Pronunciation is accurate, and there is little hesitation in the choice of linguistic resources. Intonation and stress are used effectively to enhance meaning.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Information and ideas are organised logically and coherently.  Conventions of the text type are observed. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation and Discussion*  Interaction is initiated, sustained, and spontaneous across a wide range of topics. Comments or opinions are adjusted or elaborated on in response to reactions and comments. Interest and enthusiasm for the topic of discussion are conveyed.  A variety of communication strategies are used with effect during interaction (e.g. using new vocabulary encountered during interaction, seeking clarification, using appropriate pause fillers).  Responses are quick, confident, and fluent. Topic shifts and unpredictable elements are handled well. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Detailed and appropriate use of evidence from texts to support arguments/conclusions. Interpretations are enhanced by making connections within and/or between texts (e.g. comparing and contrasting information, ideas, and opinions).  Conclusions are drawn about the purpose, audience, and message (argument) of the text, and justified with evidence from the text.  Concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text are identified and explained with clarity and insight.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  The functions of particular linguistic and cultural features in the text are explained with clarity and insight.  Detailed explanation of how stylistic features are used for effect in the text (e.g. register, tone, textual features/organisation).  *Reflection*  Critical reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts.  Sophisticated recognition and explanation of connections between own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas, and those explored in texts.  Critical reflection on own learning. |
| B | *Relevance*  Responses are mostly relevant to context, purpose, audience, and topic.  Responses mostly convey the appropriate detail, ideas, information, and opinions.  Responses generally create the desired impact and interest, and engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Breadth and some depth in the treatment of the topic.  Ideas are elaborated by offering additional details, and opinions are supported with examples. When dealing with unfamiliar topics, ideas are presented as a series of statements rather than as an argued position.  Sound planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Use of a range of linguistic structures and features, with good control, to convey meaning.  Mostly accurate use of high-frequency vocabulary and sentence structures. Attempts are made to use some complex language, and errors sometimes impede meaning.  A range of cohesive devices is used to connect ideas.  Expression is mostly appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Effective communication, with some degree of fluency. Reasonably accurate pronunciation and intonation.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Mostly coherent organisation of information and ideas.  Most conventions of the text type are observed. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation and Discussion*  Interaction is maintained on a range of familiar topics. Some clarification or repetition is required to comprehend topic shifts into unfamiliar areas or when complex sentence constructions are used. Interest in the topic is conveyed effectively.  A number of communication strategies are used to maintain interaction (e.g. self-correcting, responding to correction by the interlocutor, seeking support and clarification).  Occasional pauses to process questions and to search for linguistic resources. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Key ideas represented in texts are identified and explained. Interpretations of meaning are supported with some appropriate examples.  Some conclusions are drawn about the purpose, audience, and message (argument) of the text and supported with some relevant examples from the text.  Concepts, perspectives, and ideas represented in the text are generally identified and explained with some clarity.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  The functions of particular linguistic and cultural features in the text are described.  Some detail in explaining stylistic features in the text (e.g. register, tone, textual features/organisation).  *Reflection*  Some depth in reflection on how cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas are represented or expressed in texts.  Some depth in reflection on own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented in texts.  Thoughtful reflection on own learning. |
| C | *Relevance*  Responses are generally relevant to topic and purpose, with some relevance to context and audience.  Responses generally convey simple ideas and opinions, with generally appropriate information.  Responses generally create some interest, and partly engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Some variety in the treatment of information and simple ideas or opinions on mostly familiar topics.  Simple sentences usually containing one idea are used with some effectiveness to convey meaning and support an opinion.  Competent planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Use of a range of linguistic structures and features to convey meaning. Reliance on rehearsed patterns.  Accuracy tends to be variable, with some basic errors. Generally accurate when using formulaic expressions and rehearsed patterns.  Cohesive devices are simple and repetitive. Reliance on a limited range of cohesive devices to connect ideas at sentence, paragraph, and whole text level.  Expression is generally appropriate to the cultural and social context.  Some hesitancy in responding. Pronunciation and intonation are understandable.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Generally coherent organisation of information and ideas.  Responses generally conform to the conventions of the text type. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation and Discussion*  Use of well-rehearsed language to maintain an interaction by responding to questions on familiar topics. Some reliance on the interlocutor to take the lead. Some interest in the topic is conveyed.  Use of prepared phrases to indicate lack of comprehension and ask for support. Often relies on the interlocutor’s sentence patterns to respond.  Occasional silences because of lack of comprehension and time required to process more complex language and to search for words. Responses may be repetitive. Some hesitation in communication when dealing with unfamiliar contexts. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Identifies and explains some relevant information from texts on familiar topics containing predictable and familiar language structures.  Competent understanding of context, purpose, and audience, supported with isolated examples from the text.  Main concepts, ideas, and one or more perspectives in the text are identified, with some explanation.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  Particular linguistic and cultural features of the text are identified.  Identification of stylistic features in the text (e.g. idioms, rhetoric, expressions).  *Reflection*  Some reflection on cultures, values, beliefs, practices, and ideas represented or expressed in texts.  Some reflection on, with mostly description of, own values, beliefs, practices, and ideas in relation to those represented in texts.  Some reflection on own learning. |
| D | *Relevance*  Responses partially relevant to the topic and purpose.  Responses convey some basic information that may be appropriate.  Responses include one or more elements of interest that may engage the audience.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Some basic treatment of information or ideas relating to simple aspects of familiar topics.  Simple sentences are used with partial effectiveness to convey an idea or opinion. Sentences may be short or incomplete.  Some planning and preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Use of simple vocabulary, short sentences, formulaic expressions, and rehearsed patterns to convey meaning. When attempts are made to elaborate, the structure is often based on word order derived from English.  Frequent errors and incorrect selection of words from the dictionary impede meaning.  A cohesive device may be used, with some effectiveness.  Expression occasionally appropriate to cultural and social context.  Frequent hesitancy in responding. Pronunciation may impede meaning.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Some basic organisation of information and/or ideas.  Some use of very basic conventions of the text type. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation and Discussion*  Routine courtesy phrases and basic structures are used to respond to simple questions on familiar topics. Reliance on the interlocutor to take the lead and maintain interaction. Some interest in the topic may be conveyed.  Reliance on repetition and rephrasing of questions. Partial understanding of questions may lead to a response that is not relevant.  Frequent silences may occur because of lack of comprehension and time required to search for words and construct answers. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Keywords and some supporting detail are identified in texts dealing with familiar situations.  Some basic understanding of context, purpose, and/or audience.  Identification of one or more concepts or ideas, with specific information in texts transcribed rather than interpreted.  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  One or more basic linguistic and/or cultural features of the text are identified.  One or more stylistic features are identified.  *Reflection*  One or more familiar aspects of cultures, values, beliefs, practices, or ideas represented or expressed in texts are identified.  One or more of own values, beliefs, practices, or ideas in relation to those represented in texts are described.  Learning experiences are recounted. |
| E | *Relevance*  Responses have limited relevance to the topic and purpose.  Responses attempt to convey some basic information, with limited appropriateness.  Responses attempt to include an element of interest.  *Depth of Treatment of Ideas, Information, or Opinions*  Attempted treatment of simple information relating to one or more aspects of familiar topics.  Responses are brief and often rely on a keyword to convey basic meaning.  Attempted planning or preparation. | *Capacity to Convey Information Accurately and Appropriately*  Relies heavily on the dictionary. Use of a very limited range of vocabulary and sentence structures, with single words and set formulaic expressions to convey basic information. Reliance on anglicisms to convey meaning.  Frequent errors impede meaning.  Limited appropriateness of expression.  Attempted use of a cohesive device, with limited effectiveness.  Always or mostly hesitant in responding. Pronunciation impedes meaning.  *Coherence in Structure and Sequence*  Limited organisation of information or ideas.  Limited evidence of conventions of text type. | *Capacity to Interact and Maintain a Conversation and Discussion*  Reliance on interlocutor to assist with communication breakdowns to complete sentences or to interpret intended meanings.  Repetition, rephrasing of questions, and a slowed rate of speech are required for comprehension. Utterances rarely consist of more than two or three words. Frequent misunderstandings of simple questions.  Frequent long pauses to process questions and to search for words. May resort to using English to convey meaning. | *Interpretation of Meaning in Texts*  Isolated items of information are identified in texts on familiar topics containing simple language.  Identification of a context, purpose, or audience.  Understanding of information is limited to occasional isolated words (e.g. borrowed words, high-frequency social conventions).  *Analysis of the Language in Texts*  Attempted identification of a basic linguistic feature of the text.  Attempted identification of a stylistic feature.  *Reflection*  One or more formulaic cultural expressions are identified.  One or more of own values, beliefs, practices, or ideas are identified.  Learning experiences are listed. |