

Presenting Research

In last week's lesson, we discussed how to guide a child through a simple research project. Today we're going to talk about what to do once they've found answers to their questions. In Montessori, we use the three-period lesson to teach concepts in any subject. The three-period lesson in its most simplistic form consists of:

- Period 1: Giving the name of the concept you want to teach.
- Period 2: Letting the child practice the concept.
- Period 3: Asking the child to recall the concept.

We can also adopt a more macro view of the three-period lesson when it comes to creating reports. The first period of the three-period lesson in this case is the research, where the child is receiving information. The second period is when the child is organizing all their research results into some form of presentation. And the third period is when the child presents their findings to others, thereby recalling the concepts they've learned.

So, let's assume your child has worked through the KWLH outline and has all their information. They then need to decide how they're going to present their findings, and to whom. While writing a report is certainly a valid way of sharing information, it's not the only way. We want to encourage creativity and offer alternatives to suit all learning styles. Here are a few ideas that you can propose to your child. Remember that if you don't have children who are close in age, or a friend with whom your child can work, you will likely become the "older child" and be actively engaged in some parts of the project. Consider this a wonderful opportunity to model organization skills, work through challenges, and take a supportive role as your child gains confidence. Allow the project to be their vision, and play the role of the assistant.

Here are some ideas for projects:

- A timeline
- A poster
- A model, replica, or miniature
- A book
- A re-enactment, monologue, or skit
- A fundamental human needs chart with corresponding cards
- A song or poem

Guide their work by asking them what they envision their project will look like and what materials they need. Break down the project into steps, and consider setting loose deadlines to help the project stay on track. Keep in mind that each step offers lots of opportunities for learning, and remember the developmental nature of these kinds of projects. It's not about having a picture-perfect product, but about the skills that your child will learn along the way.

As you plan and work together, it's also important to discuss with whom you'll be sharing this knowledge. The three-period learning cycle is only complete if the child has the opportunity to

verbalize their knowledge, and while it's ok for you to be their audience, there's something quite exciting and satisfying about sharing discoveries with others who weren't present for the entire process. Parents and siblings are valid audience members, but so are members of the child's extended family, neighbors, co-op members, or even an online community. Part of the child's learning experience can include setting a date for their presentation and inviting their audience.

You can show your child how to condense their notes into note cards, how to practice their lines, and how to ask for questions and comments at the end of their presentation. And don't forget to celebrate this great accomplishment together!

As you can imagine, this type of project will take several weeks to put together. In school, the children did no more than two large presentations a year, plus smaller, more spontaneous presentations as they got older and became more confident. Set a goal for one presentation this school year, maybe as a concluding project, but consider using KWHL outlines throughout the school year to encourage research and organization skills.

I look forward to hearing about all the different ways you help your child put the KWHL outline to good use!