

Practical life analysis essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

“ No one can be free unless he is independent. Therefore, the first active manifestations of the child’s individual liberty must be so guided that through this activity he may arrive at independence. ” (The Montessori Method, Chapter 5, Pg. 118) Montessori learning environments are prepared to allow children to be socially and intellectually independent. Montessori learning materials are designed to capture children’s interest and attention and to encourage independent use. When children work with the Montessori materials, they refine their perception and their movements, especially manual dexterity, all by themselves.

They are also preparing themselves for learning educational knowledge. “ The ‘ Practical Life’ helps the child to develop himself by teaching him to perform independent daily tasks that develop his thought, will, and action. ” (<http://www.renaissancemontessorischool.org/academics/practicallife.cfm>) Montessori emphasised the exercises of Practical Life as the first lessons that the young child is introduced to in a Montessori environment. This is because they can immediately begin to satisfy the young child’s inner and hitherto frustrated desire for skills and self-sufficiency. All children want to be independent.

As adults, we become used to of doing everything for them. It is hard to let go of control. But, we need to feed that desire for independence. Children learn important life skills as they manipulate materials in Practical Life. Even more important is the confidence that the child gains when he achieves a new goal. “ Help me to do it by myself. ” (Montessori and Early Childhood: A Guide for Students, Chapter 1, Pg, 15) The practical life activities are often

the first area of interest for the new-comer to a Montessori classroom because of their familiarity, relative simplicity and self-contained nature.

However, as children become more competent, the skills acquired in this area will be used daily in supporting the organisation and maintenance of the classroom. The activities take on social importance and give children opportunities to contribute to the well-being of the group, and in the process boost their self-esteem and reflect their responsibilities within the group.

The practical life activities often act as the ‘secure-base’ for children, who may be worried or anxious; their simplicity will offer security and predictability as well as opportunities to be successful at achieving the chosen tasks. Adults work to finish a task, but the child works in order to grow and work to create the adult, the person that is to be. ” (The Montessori Way, Chapter 2, Pg. 61) Practical life exercises are those simple activities performed daily by adults in their environments to restore and maintain proper conditions. The adults’ purpose for doing those daily tasks is purely conservative and utilitarian. The child carries out these same exercises because the child is attracted to them and they are constructive and developmental for the young child.

When the child carries out these exercises, he is wholly immersed in the exercises and his mind is totally engaged. These practical life activities are easily understood from start to finish. They have a simple, clear, and concrete purpose. They have visible movements. Even at an early age; the child is capable of performing them. They give direction to the child’s

movements. The young child can intelligently understand the activity. The exercises are an attractive invitation to the child's will.

He is able to carry out the movements necessary to perform the activity according to his understanding of the "will purpose" of the exercise.

Because these movements are "willed" by the child, it helps the child toward greater skill and perfection. This leads to a self-accepted discipline.

These exercises create a unity between the thought, the will, and the action of the child. The practical life exercises are usually divided into four categories: Care of the environment, Development of motor skills, Care of self, social grace and courtesy.

The main exercises in the care of environment are pouring, transferring, cleaning and polishing. Pouring activities are common in almost all classrooms. These activities can range from very simple pouring activities such as pouring of beans, to pouring of smaller things like corn or rice, to water pouring, to complex pouring into more than one container, and then pouring a liquid into a bottle with funnel. These simple exercises prepare the child indirectly for mathematical concepts such as volume and capacity.

Transferring includes a sequence of pouring activities, first of dry materials and then of liquids, with increasing levels of difficulty. Exercises with tweezers or tongs, turkey basters, sponges, eyedroppers, and even chopsticks would all be a part of sequence of transferring activities. Cleaning and polishing activities make use of many of the sub-skills developed in these two earlier sequences. It includes arranging tables and chairs, dusting and sweeping initially. Cleaning can range from polishing exercises, in which

small objects of wood or metal are polished, to work with large objects such as desks, tables, windows, and even floors.

As he gains greater control of his gross motor movements, he will gradually be given more complex tasks such as washing dishes, clothes, cleaning stairs and scrubbing pots and pans. In development of motor skills, a number of other works in Practical Life are fasteners, with exercises such as fitting jars and lids together, lock and key exercises, nuts and bolts, cutting with scissors, screwing and unscrewing of nuts and bolts; pasting, weaving, plaiting and so on. The pouring activities can be extended quite naturally into measuring and then into cooking.

Exercises such as peeling, cutting, and serving carrots are very popular. Other cutting exercises, nut shelling or even making peanut butter, and other simple food preparation exercises are available, as well as those connected with snack and lunch. As with all Montessori exercises, each Practical Life activity includes cleaning up after oneself, and return of the materials to the shelf ready for the next worker. Many of the craft projects that are shelved in Practical Life could also be considered as art works.

Typically, sorting exercises of many types, bead stringing, and a sewing sequence are all important sources of the materials on the shelf. Montessori classroom are designed to help the child improve his fine motor skills, eye-hand coordination and concentration. Care of self is another major category in practical life; it includes exercises that teach the child some of the skills needed for his own independence. This category includes the dressing frames. These are wooden frames with cloth pieces attached to the sides.

The pieces are joined in the middle by a variety of fasteners, such as zippers, buttons, Velcro, buckles, bows, shoe lace and so on. Other activities in this category are related to grooming and cleanliness, such as hand and face washing, brushing of teeth and hair, blowing the nose, and others. The main focus of the exercise in this category is to help the child towards independence. In wanting to do so we need to provide children with purposeful work. Children also need to establish will and discipline in order to gain independence.

Maria Montessori considers the social grace and courtesy activities as the most important exercises in the practical life curriculum. She felt that when children are first brought into Montessori classroom, emphasis must be placed on social grace exercises. Children must be taught how to greet; ‘hello’, ‘how do you do?’ shaking hands, asking for something saying ‘please’, apologising and excusing one self. Once children have gained confidence of these exercises, other exercises might include setting a table, table manners, showing respect and care for others’ work and possessions.

Advanced movement exercises are walking on the line and the silence game. Walking on the line should be performed daily. At first the children walk normally. Then, they are taught to keep a measurable distance from each other. Next, they walk tandem style, heel to toe, and later with an object in one hand and then with an object in each hand. The last exercise of walking in the line is carrying an object in each hand and then one on the head. This leads to a great degree of control for the child. The silence game should also be performed daily, once introduced to the child.

This is not an exercise for the beginning of the school year. It should be gradually introduced as the children gain greater control of themselves and their bodies. For the children to function in practical life three things are necessary: the teacher must believe in what she is doing and her movements must manifest precision and care; the environment should reflect the laws of nature, meaning everything is purposeful and should offer sufficient scope for the activities, the child should be used as the guide; the selection of practical life exercises must follow a logical progression of degree of difficulty.

If the teacher follows these points, then we begin, through the practical life exercises, to do the following: aid the developmental growth of the child, help the child fulfil his biological needs, and aid in the harmonious development of mind and body. To teach a child a very fine skill, we need to analyze the details of the action. To do this, we must first isolate the difficulties. The analysis of movement is closely connected to the economy of movement. This is the highest degree of perfection. There is an age when movement poses a fascinating interest.

The age of infancy and childhood is when the muscles and nervous apparatus respond to exercise. Dr. Montessori believes that because the practical life exercises are the very foundation of the class. The teachers construct these practical life exercises as part of the prepared environment. After the presentation of the exercise, the adult should give the child the necessary freedom of choice and repetition of exercises. It is the repetition of the work that leads to greater concentration and helps in building the character.

To make repetition possible, the exercises have to be very attractive. They should call the child to work. The practical life exercises need to be rotated several times during the school year to encourage the children to repeat their work. Change the colour of a tray or the items for pouring re-engage the child in the work. The children use the skills they have learned in the practical life area around the classroom. Plants are watered, doorknobs polished, etc. Practical life activities are not separate from the classroom. They are incorporated into the life of the child.

Practical life exercises can also be incorporated into the home. At home, parents can understand that the child is trying to acquire the skills to become independent. Children should be given the chance to help. The adult should slow down to the tempo of the child. When the child has done the job, if it is done to the best of her ability, do not criticize her. Instead, catch her when she begins this activity again and reintroduce it to her using this as an opportunity to teach your child what your expectations are and how you want the job done. Childhood constructs with what it finds, if the material is poor the construction is also poor. In order to build himself, the child has taken by chance whatever he finds in the environment. ” (<http://www.sunrisemontessori.com/Pdf-Files/Montessori%20and%20Practical%20Life.pdf>) The importance of practical life exercises is that the child grows to love these activities and loves the adult who provides them because they offer, for the child, relaxation, repetition, concentration, and perfection.

The child experiences a social revolution where he develops a positive attitude because of his love for the activities. Practical life exercises provide practical consequences to the child in being able to care for one self and the

<https://assignbuster.com/practical-life-analysis-essay/>

environment and in social relations. In addition, the child develops responsibility. The child experiences physical development because the practical life experiences involve a lot of movement.