

# Philosophy montessori

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“ A child’s different inner sensibilities enable him to choose from his complex environment what is suitable and necessary for his growth. They make the child sensitive to some things, but leave him indifferent to others. When a particular sensitiveness is aroused in a child, it is like a light shines on some objects but not others, making of them his whole world. ” The Secret of Childhood, p. 42, Chap 7 . Define the terms of sensitive periods and explain how the teacher’s knowledge and understanding of these periods determines his/her preparation and custodianship of the prepared environment A child is a unique human being who possesses countless potentialities since his early age. He is endowed through abilities to develop both physical and psychic constructions by himself. The development and growth for physical or external area is visible. Yet, the inner mechanism is still imperfectly understood. There are two studies are contained in these inner mechanism.

The glands and secretion connected with physical growth, the other is an understanding of child’s mental growth which is called “ sensitive period”. It is a period of child where he can manifest his certain ability in perfectly manner. During these periods, a child has maximum sensitivity towards a particular knowledge or skill. This sensitivity lasts in certain period of child’s life and does not reoccur in other child’s age. Once the child concentrates with one aspect of skill, he will exclude others.

He does the repetition to practice his ability with passion, love and even his inner force, and it continues until he feels satisfied and serene. Since, this is the best moment when the child develops his inner mental growth, a teacher should notice the indication from his appearance then enhance his ability by

aiding him a right kind of stimuli through prepared environment and encourage him in special time of learning. Therefore, it can optimize the child's new ability. As one of internal aid for child's psychic development, the sensitive periods can achieve a child's personal construction with two conditions.

Firstly, the child needs a prepared environment, both things and the people surroundings, which is suitable and necessary for his growth. Secondly, the child requires freedom. Let the child chooses his own rhythm and law of development to explore and fulfill his need, this will put him into happiness, joyful and peace. If the teacher, as an adult cannot create these two conditions, he will not reach his potential and his personal development will be stunted. And his opportunity to master in those abilities as a human will be lost evermore.

The sensitive periods are categorized in six terms, the order with environment, the sensory impression, the ability to use language, the development of walking and movement, the interest of small objects, and the spirit to be involved with social life. " A very important and mysterious period is the one which makes a child extremely sensitive to order. This sensitiveness appears in a child's first year and continues on through the second. It may seem slightly fantastic that children should have a sensitive period with respect to external order, since it is a common opinion that children are disorderly by their very nature. (The Secret of Childhood, p. 49, Chap 8) Sensibility to order of child, it is truly shown since the first month of age. However, as an adult, parent often doesn't notice this sensitiveness manifestation. The judgment that a child doesn't have the ability to respect

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and react of external order become a common opinion. Montessori had observed for some situations which showed the enthusiasm of child to have blissful and tranquil moment, in seeing things in organized arrangement. The tantrums and uncomfortable feelings that occasionally experienced by the child, is perhaps that he finds the obstacles when he tries to fulfill his needs.

A story in Maria book: " In one such instance the principal character was a little girl about six months old. One day she saw a woman enter the room where she happened to be and placed her parasol upon the table. The child became agitated, not at the woman but at the umbrella, since after looking it for some times she became to cry. The woman thinking that she wanted the parasol picked it up and brought it to her with a pleasant smile. But the infant pushed it away and continues to scream. Efforts were made to calm the child, but to no avail.

She only became more agitated. What could be done to solve the tantrum? Suddenly the mother of the child through some psychological insight took the umbrella from the table and carried it into another room. The child immediately grew calm. The cause of her disturbance was the umbrella on the table. An object out of place had violently upset the little girl's pattern of memory as to how objects should be arranged. " (The Secret of Childhood, p. 50, Chap 8) A child has a twofold sense of order. First is his perception of relationship to the environment.

Second is his inner awareness of different parts of his body to have relationship with the objects. With those two senses, a child can experience the order based on precise and determined environment. So that, he can

categorize his perception and build conceptual work, then he can deal with his world. The second sensitivity will appear is sensory impression through five senses. They are visual/seeing, auditory/hearing, olfactory/smell, tactile/touch, and gustatory/taste. By those senses, a child who has highly curiosity of every new thing will be able to explore and experience the environment.

Smelling and gustatory sensibilities also can be learned from practical life activities, such as differentiate the herbs smell and sweet, salt, sour and bitter tastes. Afterward, in order to be able distinguish variation of sounds, a child is introduced with human voice, musical also the source of the sound has been made. The visual sense is interpreted by the eyes. The functional of these eyes can be exercised with identifying the size, shape, color of materials. While the visual sensitivity is being developed, the tactile ability is also developing.

Without touching the materials which are existed in his environment, a child will not stimuli his brain and practices his motor function. In order to develop his mind throughout these sensibilities, a child needs to hear, see, touch, smell and taste. He initially observes the object with the eyes, he understands the form, size, and color also by hands. Then, he perceives the name of the object when the adult teach him. By hearing the voice, he's not only imitating the sound, this young human will use his knowledge and memory, and thus he can speak the object name with his tongue.

All of this process definitely will develop his intelligence in nature way, molding his character, and directed his ego to organize his movement. The

more trials moments that a child experienced with his senses, the more skills he can apply to accomplish his works in confident and orderly. Introducing to language for child is as good as possible in the early age. During this sensitive period, a child can absorb and imitate the sound of human that he hears. Although the baby doesn't look like understand when an adult is talking with him, but his brain as absorbent mind is developing and radually achieves under his unconscious mind. In fact, he can distinguish some types of sounds, which are produced by animals, instrument or human.

He only imitate to the human words, not to the other sounds. If he can notice as many as words in his sensitivity period, he will enrich his vocabularies which useful in the future. Between the age of year and two, a child has the sensitivity to be more active. He starts to walk, run, climb, even jump in every type of environment, he surely move with his own purpose, unlike the adult. An infant, on the other hand, walks to perfect his own proper function, and consequently his goal is something creative within himself. " (The Secret of Childhood, p. 78, Chap 11) While doing the walking practicing, he still doesn't have any pattern, rhythm also reason for any movement he makes. He barely walks toward something that attracted him in one point of position. An adult can assist him to develop his ability, by keeping in mind to give up all adult's pace and goal. But, follow the child's need as long as he can finalize his one passage of walk.

It is important to know that an infant is only able to develop his ability to walk, when he passes all the processes of walking from the beginning. The first step that he makes, tries to figure out how to balance when changing one foot to another to stand, stands and walks with two feet perfectly.

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Alongside he develops his physical strength, his psychic life also improved. The growth of muscles which connect between cells and tissues will not be optimal if a child is not involved in such physical activities.

When his physical condition is in health condition, he also creates his spirit, courage and self-confidence. " From the beginning of its second year a child is no longer carried away by gaudy objects and brilliant colors with that transport of joy so characteristic of the sensitive periods, but becomes interested in tiny objects that escape our notice. " (The Secret of Childhood, p. 64, Chap 9) His concentration towards a specific thing in one object, somehow the adult have no attention or even invisible on it.

Yet, a child who likes to be an observer is be able to focus on these small things. He can spend a lot of minutes to only watch and look a painting that contain many details in pictures, color, and shapes. Or perhaps to pay attention on the shapes of stones, the forms of flies or plants. His sensibility in this period can increase his focus and concentration to higher level. The last part from child's sensitive period is his spirit to be engaged in social environment. He begins to recognize the rules of his environment, his rights and responsibilities.

How he serves the surroundings with a proper manner as well as himself. He learns to have a friendship and starts to be united in a group. If all the conditions can occur in a harmony, a peace community among the children can be established. To stimuli this child's sensitive periods thus can reveal his potentialities, Montessori has her method that can help a child's live successful and happily in this world. We have to fully understand

her philosophy and kept in mind that this method only can be perfectly done if it is considered in open minded, instead of fixed one.

There are two components which support the child's development with environment, including materials and exercises also the teacher who prepares the environment. This is because a prepared environment is the place to nourish the child. He needs it to enhance his self-construction, so he can reveal his own personality growth in such natural approach. On the other hand, the teacher should learn the theory, observes the child and try to recognize the obstacles that can hinder the child development, and remove them from his environment.

The first component of this method is prepared environment. As a teacher, she must know and understand what kind of environment that she can prepare to help the child's life development. The criteria which should be applied in Montessori classroom are concept of freedom, structure and order, reality and nature, beauty and atmosphere, Montessori materials and the development of community life. Through freedom a child can have the opportunity to reveal himself. To aid the child's psychic development, a teacher can secretly observe the child while he is doing the works.

Also, through freedom, a child can possess himself with his own pattern of development, by using his inner guidance to improve his growth. Besides freedom, the environment should have the structure and order. The aim of this structure and order is due to a child needs to build his own perception and intelligence, from predetermine and precise environment. From that condition, the child will deal towards his life will incarnate.



Since a child love to something in order, in this creative moment, as teacher orderly has to take care the materials in the classroom.

They should be arranged in sequence and classified as per difficulty level of materials. Then, if the child accomplish one activity, he knows that he has to return back the apparatus in the right place as same as he has taken before. " The child must have the opportunity to internalize the limits of nature and reality if he is to be freed from his fantasies and illusions, both physical and psychological. " (A Modern Approach, p. 57, Chap 3) The child must deal with nature and reality. We live in this world where the natural things exist. For example a tree, a child can practice his sensibility of five senses.

From nature, a teacher can inform the child that the nature is the thing that serves us during our lifetime, so that as human beings we can still alive and survive. In this world, also he will face the reality condition. By understanding from his every action he made, he will have the consequences. In Montessori, the child will learn how to do the housework with the real utensils. A child will use a real knife to cut the vegetables or pouring the water from a real glass jug. A child also learns if there is a condition that doesn't happen as he expects, he has to accept it gracefully, instead of being upset or angry. The child comes to see that he must respect the work of others, not because someone has said he must, but because this is a reality that he meets in his daily experience. " (The Absorbent Mind, p. 223, Chap 22) The fourth part of prepared environment is beauty and atmosphere. Montessori felt that the environment should be simple, bright color, cheerful and harmoniously arranged. It makes the environment feel so

relaxing, warm and conducive for the children activities. The other important element is Montessori materials itself.

They should have a purpose for the child's development. The difficulty or error of each material that could be figured out by the child must be isolated in a single piece of material. The designs of materials must be gradually composed from simple to complex. Also they are able to use for future learning. The last thing of prepared environment is development of community life. It has three key elements that contains of sense of ownership and responsibility, responsibility the children begin to feel for each other and the inclusion of children of different ages in class.

A person, who intends to be a Montessori teacher, must prepare herself. She has to think that a teacher is not the person, who has to teach or control all over the activities in class and to be followed by the students. But, she has to understand the children that they have their own manner to accomplish their works in the class. A teacher must refrain herself to interfere the child when he is in the processing his physic and psychic area through the materials, otherwise one of trait which being developed at that moment will be vanished or done improperly.

As a teacher, must look in each child as one unique individual, that one to another might have different type of characteristics. So that, she has to devote her energy to help the child step by step, thus he can attain his aim in order to deal with his environment independently. She usually does by obtaining three aspects. Firstly, her responsibility to custodian and keep the

environment to be the component that can attract the child's attention, thus he can fulfill his needs in freedom and without any distraction from others.

When the teacher can design a harmony situation where the child takes place during his working times, so the aim of this method will be achieved in proper way. It includes the previous explanation regarding the prepared environment. Secondly, once the environment has prepared properly the other thing that must be considered is the teacher's action during the class. Before the child manifests his first period, she can show when she is taking care the child with hearten, lovely and warmth manner. Once the child feel comfortable, he will trust the teacher, and it is easy for the teacher, if she need to interfere the child when it is necessary.

The last, when a child begins to attract by something, usually the teacher can introduce the practical life area as an initial exercised. Because, the child will meet those activities in his home every day, so that it will easier to be taught. When the child is interest to one material, the teacher explains to him, and he starts to work with it, the teacher must not interrupt him in any ways and anytime until he can finish it by his own laws. The steps will start from slow into exam, and the teacher must understand this pattern of development. These sensitive creative moments, will happen only once in child's life time.

Not only the child who has to observe and practice to be able reveal his hidden potentialities, but the teacher also has to observe and thinking every moment when the child manifests his interest of some new things or show some disorder behavior that might be caused by the environment or his

inner problems. If this process goes in natural and proper way, the child can have concentration, build his confident and will feel satisfied when the can conquer one conquest. Then, a success human being with good personalities will be created, because he has the opportunities to explore and manifests his potentialities during his sensitive period.