

Maria montessori essay sample

Sociology



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“ Concentration is the key that opens up the child’s latent treasures within him. As the scattered elements of his personality come together, order begins to take the place of disorder, and the work of self-construction, which had been interrupted, is now taken up again, as nature has intended all along.” E. M Standing, *Maria Montessori: her life and work*, pg 174 Learning, by itself, cannot happen without concentration. Whether we are learning to tie our shoes, write our name, wash a car or solve complex algebraic equations, there is intense concentration specific to the task at hand. Dr. Maria Montessori understood the power of concentration, and her methodology is designed to nurture this power. Concentration in infants is a fragile thing. Concentration is broken by the adult trying to shift the focus of the child. Indeed, Montessori said “ no one acting from the outside can cause him to concentrate”. As the child grows and enters the Montessori environment (ages 3-6), concentration and attention span increase. In fact, that is an indirect aim of most Montessori activities. Practical Life activities are the cornerstone of the Montessori curriculum which serves the purpose of building independence, improving coordination, and following steps in a sequence. Our modern culture contains a multitude of distractions: video games, computers, television, and any number of sports- or arts-related extra activities.

Combined, these can create an overabundance of sensory stimulation. Maintaining calm, controlled, prepared Montessori environment and a clear approach to reducing distractions and sensory overload is an important task of the Montessori caregiver. This directed approach is designed to foster the power of concentration in children, so that they may grow to become happy,

independent, and fulfilled adults. Maria Montessori's first discovery at Casa dei Bambini was Mental Concentration; she observed a little girl of three, working with knobbed cylinders, this most interesting activity of taking the ten cylinders out, mixing them up and replacing them in the appropriate holes. Montessori watched in awe as the child repeated the entire operation forty-two times. Even when the rest of the class began to sing and to march around the classroom, the child remained fully engrossed in her work. Thus, it clearly stated that a child can concentrate best when he is provided with the right kind of material to work with. Dr. Maria Montessori calls the child during formative period, " a Spiritual Embryo".

During this stage, the child reincarnates due to his psychic and psychological growth; mysterious force that enables a child to grow, teaches him to self-construct. The human being is provided with two embryonic periods. One is pre-natal and another one post-natal. The Spiritual Embryonic period is provided with certain powers. These powers are called non-conscious powers because the child is not conscious of them. The non-conscious powers are Absorbent mind, Mneme, Horme and Sensitive Periods. The Absorbent mind is an unconscious, creative and non-selective process by which the brain takes in everything from the environment, just like a sponge. The child becomes an absorbent mind due to a vital memory called Mneme. It is present only till the age of six years and it incarnates whatever the Absorbent Mind has absorbed. The absorbent mind can be divided into Unconscious Mind from birth to three years, where the child randomly absorbs everything from his environment and creates an impression into his psychic life. A child is a Conscious Mind from three to six years, which is a

period of self -construction. However the child is conscious, has a memory and has developed a will.

“ A sensitive period for the development of ‘ sensory perception’ begins at birth and continues all the way through age five”. David Gettman, Montessori and her Theories, pg 7. Another Montessori’s contribution was the discovery of Sensitive periods. They are blocks of time in a child’s life when he is absorbed with one characteristic of his environment to the exclusion of all others. The sensitive periods are triggered due to an unconscious will power/force called Horme, which pushes the child to fulfill his divine urge. The sensitive periods are critical to the child’s self development. The child passes through six significant sensitive periods those for Sensitivity to order; learning through five senses; sensitivity to small objects; sensitivity to co-ordination of movement; language and social aspect of life. Dr. Maria Montessori believed that the child is born with pre-determined psychic pattern or The eight Law’s of Natural Development which are laid down before birth i. e. Law of work; when children were exposed to the material in the prepared environment become calm and peaceful and their destructive behaviors disappear. Thus, Montessori concluded that some great need of the child must have been met through this activity of concentration.

Law of Independence, wherein the child uses his independence to listen to his own inner guide for actions that can be useful for him. We must keep children independent by providing them enough opportunities to work with materials. Power of attention, to further enhance and cultivate the power of attention we engage the child into various Montessori activities thereby developing the ability to concentrate and building personality. After internal <https://assignbuster.com/maria-montessori-essay-sample/>

coordination is established through the child's ability for prolonged attention and concentration, the Development of Will takes place, where in his will is revealed. Montessori observed the three stages of will development: first, when the child has a vital inner urge that directs him towards purposeful activities not directed by his will. The unknown attracts the child, then the known attracts and then he finally masters it through repetition. The second stage in the development of will is self - discipline as a way of life followed by third stage of the power to obey. Every child is born with power of intelligence, initially he is intelligent through his senses and later it depends upon how much we are able to exploit his potential. Montessori believed that the Development of child's imagination and creativity are inborn powers that develop his mental capacities through interaction with the environment.

The environment should be based on reality, beauty, harmony, freedom and imagination should be based on concrete. Development of emotional and spiritual life; a young child has an inner ability to respond to emotional and spiritual experiences from his birth. Montessori believed that these need should be met by providing a warm loving environment and freedom to socially interact in the class. Lastly, the child will go through different stages of growth beginning from childhood to adulthood and we need to provide the right environment and opportunities for the child to develop. Now, we understand that the child is born with a pre-determined psychic pattern which is present during the pre- natal stage. After the birth, the pattern for psychological development takes place with the help of two creative sensibilities, the absorbent mind and sensitive periods. Thus, it clearly states that the child is born with the power to concentrate, and we are can only

help him master it through an aware adult working in a prepared environment.

“ When we speak of environment we include the whole assemblage of things from which the child is free to choose for using just as he pleases, in conformity with his inclination and his need for action.” Maria Montessori, *The Discovery of the Child*, pg 87. The Montessori prepared environment should be a loving area, a nourishing place to meet the child’s need for self-construction. Here, they experience a combination of freedom and self-discipline, as guided by the environment. She regarded the environment secondary, because the two creative sensibilities of the child are termed as primary which are nourished through the environment. The basic elements within the prepared environment are Freedom; the concept of freedom in a classroom is achieved when children move usefully, intelligently and voluntarily without committing any rough or rude acts. Freedom enables the child to develop good working habits and sustained concentration. The child enjoys the freedom of movement at will. He has the freedom of choice; enjoys the freedom of speech. Children have the freedom to grow and construct him through Montessori environment.

Children also have the right to love and be loved unconditionally, unvarying and unquestionably. A Montessori classroom is free from competition, rewards or punishments. A hug is a reward and inactivity is a punishment for a child. A child is allowed to grow at his own rate and development; there is no need to match up with others. Therefore, the environment is free from pressure imposed on the child to outdo others. Along with freedom, there are few limitations exercised on a child within a Montessori environment like a <https://assignbuster.com/maria-montessori-essay-sample/>

child should have respect for himself, respect for others, respect for material and respect for the environment (includes teachers, support staff and any person around). The other elements of a Montessori prepared environment of Structure and Order i. e., the material should be arranged according to the interest of the child and the difficult level. No part of the material should be missing. Through order, children are able to find the material of their choice thereby building trust in the environment. Reality and Nature; the child should be exposed to nature through the care of plants and animals. Also, the environment should focus on real and concrete things rather than fantasy or illusions. The atmosphere should be simple, warm, and invite participation.

The aesthetic sense should be brought in children. “ The first essential for the child’s development is concentration.... he must find out how to concentrate, and this needs things to concentrate upon.” Maria Montessori, MMI Course Manual101, pg 73 The Montessori materials have an inner purpose, to assist the child in his own self-construction and in his physical, psychological, intellectual and social development. The materials provide the stimulus which captures the child’s imagination and helps him to initiate and expand the process of concentration. This means that, if the materials are to be effective, they must be properly presented to the child at the right moment in his development. Each material should be meaningful to the child. The error that the child should discover must be isolated in a single piece of material. The material should progress from easy to complex usage; from concrete to abstract representations. The materials are didactic in nature i. e. the control of errors lies in the materials rather than the teacher.

The Montessori prepared environment allow the children to take responsibility for their own education, giving them the opportunity to become human beings able to function independently (through focused concentration) and interdependently on each other. Another important aspect which influences the development of the child is an Aware adult or a Montessori teacher.

She is a guide and facilitator who creates a well-prepared Montessori environment and shows the way. Not words but virtues are her qualification. A Montessori teacher is a preparer and a communicator of the environment. She is an exemplar for the children and must strive for warmth and love for life. She is also a link between the environment and the child. When children are allowed freedom in an environment suited to their needs, they blossom. After a period of intense concentration, working with materials that fully engage their interest, children appear to be refreshed and contented. Through continued concentrated work of their own choice, children grow in inner discipline and peace. This process is called Normalization and cited it as the most important single result of our whole work. When a child is in complete harmony with his entire environment, is said to be a normalized child. " Normalization comes about through concentration on a piece of work." Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, pg215. Normalized children help to create the quiet and tranquil learning environment in which both they and their classmates are able to concentrate fully upon their chosen tasks.

The characteristics of a normalized child are love of order, love of work, profound spontaneous concentration, attachment to reality, love of silence, spontaneous self discipline, sublimation of the possessive instinct,

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obedience, independence and evidence of joy. When the children move away or distracted from the natural path of development is called deviation.

Montessori pointed out that's because the first essential of the child's development is not really play at all. Instead, the first essential of the child's development is concentration because it lays the basis for the development of an individual's character and subsequent social behavior. Concentration is always solitary, even in the midst of a crowd, and there is no real achievement without it. Emotional factors, such as the child's close relationship with the adults who care for him or her, help form the child's personality. By age three, if children are not rejected, they respond with gratitude, trust and respect for those who are willing to help them orient themselves in their world. When children are able to concentrate, doubt and timidity disappear. The children become calmer, more intelligent and more expansive. When children work to assimilate the environment, their personalities are unified. " If nature is the basis the construction will be superior, but without this basis there can only be an artificial construction which breaks down easily." Maria Montessori, Internet.

This is the age (the child before the age of six) in which social or antisocial qualities are going to be evolved according to the nature of the child's surroundings. This is their point of origin. The actual social outcome depends upon the nature of the child's surroundings; the conditions in the child's environment; the experiences the child has in that environment and the opportunities the child finds in that environment. Therefore, when we provide the right prepared environment to the child which stimulates his inner psychic pattern, revealed through the two creative sensibilities,

understood by an aware adult leads to a Society of Cohesion. The behaviors which characterize the Social Cohesion can be identified as controlled and purposeful interactions, characterized by mutual respect and personal dignity, Compassion, Sympathy, Empathy, Concern for Others, Willingness to help those in need, Spontaneous Reciprocity and Altruism; Solidarity, Unity, and Harmonious Social Life; Awareness of the Consequences of One's Actions and a non-competitive attitude.

The cohesive social order is a natural fact and must build itself spontaneously under the creative stimuli of nature. No one can replace God, and anyone who tries to do so become a devil, just as when the overbearing adult oppresses the creative energies of the infantile personality. The child's characteristics, during his life as "the spiritual embryo", are not discoveries of the intellect, nor made by human work, but are mental qualities, that we find in the cohesive part of society. Not sermons but creative instincts are important because they are realities. Goodness must come out of reciprocal helpfulness, from the unity derived from spiritual cohesion. What nature has given them develops with constructive work. Montessori education, therefore, of little ones is important because this is the embryonic period for the formation of character as well as society. "What the child achieves between the ages of three to six does not depend on doctrines but on a divine directive which guides his spirit to construction." Maria Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, pg 252.