

Database normalization and child essay



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Normalization is the process where a child becomes a well adjusted member of a group as he develops a positive self image, becomes independent, self-reliant and happy with the ability to concentrate and assimilate knowledge.

After many years of research, Maria Montessori discovered that children could be in complete harmony with their environment (Hainstock, E, 1997). It was through many observations she learnt the nature of the normalised child. " It was thus, through experience, that Montessori discovered - one might say stumbled upon - the characteristics of the normal child.

She was not looking for them: she was not expecting them: she was not even thinking about them. It was a genuine and unforeseen revelation" (Standing, E. M, 1984, pg 174). By applying her method of teaching, Maria Montessori discovered that children were able to shift behaviour. That is, the child may be lazy, restless, stubborn and on many occasions ' aggressive' to begin with, but once the child was able to concentrate the child's behaviour would also change. " This change, which creates almost a uniformity of type, does not occur gradually, but appears all of a sudden.

In any given child, it follows invariably upon a spell of deep concentration on some activity'(Montessori, M, 1988, Pg184). The environment plays a very big role in a child's normalization. In order for normalization to occur the environment needs to be prepared in the following manner:

- 1) Order of the whole classroom
- 2) Materials and the surroundings of the classroom need to be aesthetically pleasing
- 3) There needs to be control of error in the materials used
- 4) Teacher guided
- 5) Freedom with limitations
- 6) Teacher has an awareness of the work cycle(order)) The classroom provides

fulfilment of the sensitive periods - order, social, sensorial, movement, and language. 8) Role models of the teacher as well as older normalized children 9) Reality 10) Purposeful work that can be done with the hands. If a Montessori environment does not cater for the child's needs, the child will engage in deviant behaviour. When the child is not working and is being disruptive or is finding it difficult to find a job, we must first look at the prepared environment, because it is probably not fulfilling the needs of the child.

Normalised children are independent, confident, have a love of silence and are happy to obey. They still have fun playing, jumping and running. The only difference is that they have their own boundaries. One might ask what are the characteristics of a normalised child? Montessori found that it did not matter what sort of child it was, the characteristics of the normalised child were the same. E. M. Standing in Chapter 10 of his book lists them as follows:

- *love of order - children will respect their environment and their materials within the environment.

Children learn to pack up their activity and replace items once they have finished so that the activity is ready for the next child. In my classroom, for example we have colour coded most of the Practical Life activities, so that the children are better able to put everything back where it's supposed to be. I often see which child likes order and which child still struggles with order. The child that still struggles with inner order needs more practical Life exercises, that will help them with their inner peace and once that is achieved order will follow. love of work - when children are working well on activities we tend not to interrupt them.

This assists them in their development of their own personality. By intruding in their work, we can disrupt the child's attention. As Kathleen Futrell explained in the "normalised child" this might disrupt the powers of concentration which are so important for the child's development' (Futrell, K, 1998, pg14). Children in a Montessori environment are allowed to work on activities for as long as they are interested in it. I have a particular child in my class that does the binomial cube over and over again.

We allow the child to experience the need to keep working on this exercise.

*profound spontaneous concentration - concentration does not occur immediately. This is the reason why Practical Life activities are offered to children. We initially start with short exercises and build the child's concentration slowly. Practical Life activities have an indirect aim which is to help the child consolidate and develop coordination of movement as well as the integration of their own personality. *Attachment to reality - Children first need to form their own impressions about the world around them, before they hear stories of fable and fantasy.

Children must learn what isn't true so then they can judge for themselves when they are given fantasy stories. As a teacher, I often see many children dressing up pretending to be Spider-Man. Their behaviour during this time mimics the one they have seen (usually on T. V), and they do not understand what is real and what isn't. *love of silence and working alone - children in a Montessori class are able to discuss work with their peers if they wish to. If a particular child wishes to work on their own, it needs to be respected by all the other children. Children can invite other children to help them if they wish so.

This is vital, and often you see many children needing that time alone, that time to think things through, work at their own pace and so on. If children aren't given this opportunity they will struggle to continue to learn.

*obedience - there are three levels of obedience. The first is when the child can't obey orders, unless it corresponds with the child's particular urge, the second is when the child can obey, not only his own but that of others. The third level of obedience is when the child has become normalized. That is the child is eager to respond to the adult in authority (Montessori, m, 1988).

independence and initiative - once children are presented with the materials, they will be able to pick and choose activities as they please.

As all Montessori materials are self correcting, this means that the directress does not need to be involved with the child and his activity. Self exploration is encouraged. *spontaneous self discipline - giving children the responsibility and independence they will become self disciplined and confident in themselves. If we encourage children to do things for themselves (e. g. : getting dressed, brushing hair etc) we are providing the child with the foundations they will need to master independence.

If we do not give the children the freedom they need, to self regulate and self discipline they really struggle. I often remember when I was going to school, that as soon as the teacher left the room, there was always one child that would get out of their chair and ' run -muck' so to speak. Now looking back, I understand that the needs of this particular child weren't being met, they were suppressed in one way or another, that as soon as they were given the freedom, they did not know how to use it. They weren't normalised children.