

Maria montessori her life and work



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Montessori Education SA Montessori, Pre-Primary Philosophy 1 TABLE OF CONTENTS Covering Page1 Table Of Contents2 1Write a page about Maria Montessori's family, 4 where they lived, her father's profession, her mother and her siblings 2Where did Maria Montessori go to school, what did she study and why5 3Write about Maria Montessori's Medical training, why, where6 4Note where she first practised medicine, why, and what did she learn7 5What was the ' Children's House', where was it located, 9 what was Maria Montessori's role 6When did Maria Montessori first start writing and why11 Why do you think Maria Montessori never married, substantiate with research12 8Who was the father of Maria Montessori's son and why did they never marry 13 9Mario Montessori, write about his part in his mother's life14 10What happened to Maria Montessori in Italy before World War II15 11Where did Maria Montessori Spend World War II16 12What effect, if any, did Maria Montessori's 17 stay in India have on the spread of her method? 13How did the teaching colleges start and where18 14How did Maria Montessori spend her last few years of life, 19 where and when did she dieExtracts from Maria Montessori's Last Will and Testament20 15Try and find out what events and inventions took place in her life-time21 16Who were her contemporaries? 22 Important Dates In Maria Montessori's Life24

Question One: -Write a page about Maria Montessori's family, where they lived, the profession of her father, her mother and her siblings? Maria Montessori ? Maria Montessori's parents were married in the spring on 1866; both mother and father were devoted to the liberation and the unity of Italy this was the common ground on which Maria Montessori's parents met. They were devout Catholics. ? Alessandro Montessori was a descendant of a noble family from bologna, ? In his youth he was a soldier and then an accountant

in the civil service in his later years, he was well known for his courteous politeness. ?“ He was an old fashioned Gentleman, with a conservative temper and was of military habits”. (Rita Kramer, 1976, pg22). In the year 1865 Alessandro Montessori, aged 33 came to the town of Chiaravalle which was a provincial agricultural town and here he met the love of his life Renilde Stoppani then aged 25.

Renilde Stoppani Montessori was the niece of the great philosopher-scientist-priest Antonio Stoppani a monument of him was erected at the University of Milan on the event of his death. ? Renilde was a beautiful a well educated woman for her time she loved to read books, this was incredible because in Chiaravalle, persons who could read and write their own names were praised, she was a firm believer in discipline, but loved her daughter and supported her in all she did, Renilde was very patriotic and was devoted to the ideals of the liberation and union for Italy, she was a lady of singular piety and charm. Renilde Montessori passed away in 1912. ? Alessandro Montessori and Renilde Stoppani were married within a year of his placement as a government civil service accountant in the small town of Ancona. ? After two years in Venice the couple moved back to Chiaravalle and it was a year later 1870 there were two major events the one being Italy became a unified and free nation the second being Alessandro and Renilde were blessed with a beautiful buddle of joy on August 31 and they named her Maria.

? In 1873 the government transferred Alessandro to the city of Florence and then his last move was to Rome in 1875. It was in Rome that Maria grew up. Maria Montessori did not have any siblings. Question Two: -Where did she go

to school, what did she study and why? ? Maria was six when her parents enrolled her in first grade just 2 yrs before public education became mandatory.

The first few years Maria was uncompetitive, receiving awards for good conduct and her needle work, she wanted to become an actress like most young girls of the time. ? At the age of twelve the family moved to Rome here she could receive a better education. ? At fourteen a keen interest in mathematics developed and Maria really enjoyed it, this was an interest that she carried throughout her life. Her parents suggested that she follow a career in teaching as this was one of the only professions available to young woman in the male dominated society in which Maria Montessori lived.

She would not even consider it at this point. ? Due to her mathematical mind she decided she would like to follow a career in engineering which was seen as a very unusual career for a young lady. ? Maria Montessori attended a technical school for boys and graduated in 1886 and received very high marks in all her subjects her final score being 137 out of 150. After this she “ attended Regio Instituto Tecnico Leonardo da Vinci from 1886 to 1890 (Kramer 1976)”.

It was here that she studied modern languages and natural sciences her favourite of all her classes was math. Question Three: -Write about her medical training, why, where, etc? ? When she was ready to graduate she was very drawn to the study of biological sciences her family were shocked to say the least but her father was very disapproving of her desire to study medicine he stopped short of forbidding her to continue with this idea. Maria

first checked with the University of Rome and spoke to “ Dr Guido Bacelli the head of the board of education”. Dr Bacelli explained to her in no uncertain terms that her desire to study medicine was not going to be happening, with this Maria stood up, shook hands cordially, thanked the Dr politely and then quietly remarked “ I know I will be a Doctor of Medicine” she then bowed and left the room. ? Taking a new look at this problem Maria enrolled at the University to study physics, mathematics and natural sciences. In 1892 she passed her exams with an eight out of ten and received a “ Diploma di licenza” this made her eligible to study medicine.

? There was still the small matter of her being a woman that was standing in her way (there is not much recorded information on how she did it) but Maria persisted until she was accepted into the school. In the biography by Kramer it is mentioned that Pope Leo XIII helped her somehow. ? Montessori stood out not just because of her gender, but because she was actually intent on mastering the subject matter. She won a series of scholarships at medical school which, together with the money she earned through private tuition, enabled her to pay for most of her medical education. ? Her time at medical school was not easy. She faced prejudice from her male colleagues and had to work alone on dissections since these were not allowed to be done in mixed classes.

? She was a dedicated student and on July 10th 1896 Maria presented her thesis to a board of ten men, they were truly impressed with her and granted her the degree of doctor of medicine. ? This made her the first woman to graduate from Medical School in Italy. She graduated with a very impressive score of 105 considering anything over 100 was considered brilliant (Rita

Kramer 1976) ? Her first post was in the universities psychiatric clinic ? Research work in psychiatric medicine and continued her education in philosophy, physiology and education. ? In 1904 Maria Montessori was appointed professor of anthropology at the University of Rome Question Four: -a) Note where she first practised Medicine, why? b) What did she learn? ? On graduation Maria was immediately employed in the San Giovanni Hospital attached to the University.

It was later in that year she was asked to represent Italy at the International Congress for Women's Rights and in her speech to the Congress she developed a thesis for social reform, arguing that women should be entitled to equal wages with men. A reporter covering the event asked her how her patients responded to a female doctor. She replied "...they know intuitively when someone really cares about them... It is only the upper classes that have a prejudice against ? Women leading a useful existence. " 1 ? In November 1896 Montessori added the appointment as surgical assistant at Santo Spirito Hospital in Rome to her portfolio of tasks. Much of her work there was with the poor, and particularly with their children.

As a doctor she was noted for the way in which she 'tended' her patients, making sure they were warm and properly fed as well as diagnosing and treating their illnesses. ? In 1897 she volunteered to join a research programme at the psychiatric clinic of the University of Rome and it was here that she worked alongside Giuseppe Montesano As part of her work at the clinic she would visit Rome's asylums for the insane, seeking patients for treatment at the clinic. She relates how, on one such visit the caretaker of a children's asylum told her with disgust how the children grabbed crumbs off <https://assignbuster.com/maria-montessori-her-life-and-work/>

the floor after their meal. ? Montessori realised that in such a bare unfurnished room the children were desperate for ? Sensorial stimulation and activities for their hands, and that this deprivation was contributing to their condition. ? She began to read all she could on the subject of mentally retarded children and in particular she studied the groundbreaking work of two early 19th century Frenchmen, Jean-Marc Itard, who made his name working with the ' wild boy of Aveyron' and Edouard Seguin, his student. She was so keen to understand their work properly that she translated it herself from French into Italian.

Itard developed a technique of education through the senses which Seguin later tried to adapt to mainstream education. Highly critical of the regimented schooling of the time, Seguin emphasised respect and understanding for each individual child. He created practical apparatus and equipment to help develop the child's sensory perceptions and motor skills, which Montessori was to later develop in new ways. During the 1897-98 University terms she sought to expand her knowledge of education by attending courses in pedagogy, studying the works of Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel. Some sixty years earlier, Froebel had established a school for very young children which placed an emphasis on play in early learning. In these ' Kindergartens' Froebel devised a series of toys or apparatus which he called ' gifts'.

? Research work in psychiatric medicine and continued her education in philosophy, physiology and education. ? In 1904 Maria was appointed professor of anthropology at the University of Rome. Question Five: -a) What was the ' Children's house' and where was it Located? b) What was Maria

Montessori's role? ? Maria was given a " menial" task: to try to educate the " idiots" and the " uneducable" in Rome ? On 6 January 1907 Maria Montessori opened her first school " Casa dei Bambini" (Children's House), in probably one of the poorest areas in Rome the notorious " Quartered di San Lorenzo. " ? Within six months of opening the Casa dei Bambini, people from all walks of life, from every continent came to see Maria Montessori's miracle children. In observing all these developments in the children, Montessori felt she had identified significant and up till then unknown facts about children's behaviour.

She also knew that, in order to consider these developments as representing universal truths, she must study them under different conditions and be able to reproduce them. ? In this spirit, a second school was opened in San Lorenzo that same year. ? A third in Milan and a fourth in Rome in 1908, the school in Rome was for children of well-to-do parents. By the autumn of 1908 there were five Casa dei Bambini operating, four in Rome and one in Milan. Children in a Casa dei Bambini made extraordinary progress and soon five year olds were writing and reading. News of Montessori's new approach spread rapidly and visitors arrived to see for themselves how she was achieving such results.

Within a year the Italian speaking part of Switzerland began switching its kindergartens to the Montessori approach and the spread of the new educational approach began. The school was for children between the ages of three and six, each of these children came from extremely poor families, and most of the parents were illiterate. ? The children themselves were " rough and shy in manner" they were very tearful and frightened, their faces

expressionless and their bewilderment in their eyes was as though they had never seen anything in their lives. ? These children were referred to as “idiots” and uneducable ? Maria Montessori was quoted in saying: - “ It was January 6th (1907), when the first school was opened for small, normal children of between three and six years of age. I cannot say on my methods, for these did not yet exist. But in the school that was opened my method was shortly to come into being.

On that day there was nothing to be seen but about fifty wretchedly poor children, rough and shy in manner, many of them crying, almost all the children of illiterate parents, who had been entrusted to my care”... “ They were tearful, frightened children, so shy that it was impossible to get them to speak; their faces were expressionless, with bewildered eyes as though they had never seen anything in their lives.

“... It would be interesting to know the original circumstances that enabled these children to undergo such an extraordinary transformation, or rather, that brought about the appearance of new children, whose souls revealed themselves with such radiance as to spread a light through the whole world. ” ? By 1909, all of Italian Switzerland began using Montessori’s methods in their orphan asylums and children’s homes.

Question Six: -When did Maria Montessori first start writing and why? ? Maria Montessori’s book “ The Montessori Method” was published in 1909. The book was originally titled “ The Method of Scientific Pedagogy as Applied to Infant Education and the Children’s House” and it was later re-titled to “ The Discovery of the Child”. ? Maria Montessori began writing to document her

findings and to share her knowledge with all people. ? Word of Montessori's work spread rapidly. ? Visitors from all over the world arrived at the Montessori schools to verify with their own eyes the reports of these “remarkable children”.

? Montessori began a life of world travel- -establishing schools and teacher training centres, lecturing and writing. The first comprehensive account of her work, *The Montessori Method*. Question Seven: -Why do you think Maria Montessori did not marry – substantiate with research. ? It was very difficult for Maria Montessori to become a doctor as this was a male dominated profession, it was unheard of that a woman do medicine, all of the other student doctors were men.

They men made fun of her and threatened her. The only way she could do what she wanted to was to block them out completely and I think this was one of the reasons Maria never married. I think it was also due to Dr Montesano's dishonesty (as discussed in Question 8) that destroyed her faith in men; Dr Maria Montessori was a woman with great integrity and high moral standing. ? I also believe that she was totally emerged in her work and perhaps did not want the distraction, she was totally devoted to her work, and this is clearly evident in her writings. Question Eight: -Who was the father of Maria Montessori's son and why did they not marry? (You may have to research this one). ? When Maria Montessori was at the Orthophrenic School, she worked with Dr.

Giuseppe Montesano. One thing led to another, and they had an affair. Maria Montessori's mother was devastated and knew that a scandal could destroy

her daughter's career. It was not the done thing in the day to have a child out of wedlock and therefore everything was kept quiet. ? She gave birth to a son, Mario Montessori.

? Mario was sent to a wet nurse and then lived with family in the country near Rome. ? There are many different takes on this part of Maria Montessori's life one group said that Dr Maria Montessori and Dr Giuseppe Montesano agreed not to marry, they would also keep their relationship a secret and by doing so they would not reveal that he was Mario Montessori's Father. They agreed that neither of them would ever marry another person, it was not long after this that Dr Montesano fell in love and married someone else, Montessori and Montesano still worked together on a daily basis in constant contact and it was this betrayal of trust that prompted her to leave the Orthophrenic School ? Biographer Kramer speculated that Maria Montessori's pregnancy as well as the break up with Dr. Montesano must have occurred in 1901 as this is when Maria Montessori suddenly resigned from the Orthophrenic School, and for about a year M.

M was out of the public eye, she also abandoned her successful work with "defective" children at this time. Question Nine: -Mario Montessori - Write about his part in his mother's life. ? On 20th December 1912 Maria Montessori's her mother died at the age of seventy-two. ? Maria was deeply affected by this event and in the year following her mother's death she brought her fourteen year-old son Mario to Rome to live with her.

? His dedication to her was of his own free will and it can not be said that it was because of a mother/son attachment. ? Mario Montessori had many

loves in his life but none compared to the love he had for his mother and her work. His love for her was encompassing and it dominated his entire existence. He lived for her, with her but definitely not through her. ? Mario Montessori had no real scholastic or academic background but his total understanding of his mother's work. His intuitive intelligence and openness of spirit allowed him to keep abreast with her quantum leaps from the first to the nth dimension – even sometimes arriving just ahead, thus enabling her to soar even further.

There was nothing his mother deducted, developed or stated that ever surprised him. It was said that thanks to Mario Montessori his mother never suffered the isolation that is common to genius, he was not just a sounding board for her ideas; he helped her to clarify them and give them shape, by doing this she was able to continue developing her unique mind to the end. Mario Montessori also presented his mother with fresh, new ideas. ? He began taking more of the workload from his mother as she grew older He would do the organizing of courses, examining students, lecturing on materials, practical life etc.

He coped with any unexpected complications during the training courses. By doing this he enabled Maria Montessori to concentrate fully on her creative work. As the years progressed, their complicity became total. Without him she would have grown frustrated by the lack of understanding of those around her, she would have retreated spiritual isolation, unable to cope and fight alone to preserve the purity of her work. ? It was because of his understanding, his enthusiasm and belief in her vision for the development of mankind; he became a pillar of her work.

? Even after she died, Mario Montessori continued the fight for the child - the child, father of man. Here is an extract from the Last Will and Testament of Maria Montessori, and perhaps we can understand from this the importance of her son in her life. Question Ten: -What happened to Maria Montessori in Italy before World War II? ? The Spanish government invited Maria to set up a research institute which she did in 1917. She began conducting a series of teacher-training courses in London in the year 1919.

? In 1922, Benito Mussolini took over the government of Italy. Mussolini being a politician wanted Maria on his side. So, initially he encouraged and fully supported the Montessori movement in Italy. The government of Italy funded the Montessori schools and also helped Maria establish a training centre for teachers.

? Mussolini was nurturing colonial ambitions and in 1934 he was planning an attack on the African state of Abyssinia. ? To carry out his designs he needed the people of Italy, especially the youth, to be war-minded. To achieve this he set up a Fascist youth organisation whose members wore uniform at all times and gave the Fascist salute. ? Mussolini insisted that all children should enrol into this organisation. This meant even children from the Montessori schools should join. Maria disagreed with this and would not compromise her principles and her beliefs to comply with his wishes.

? With this Mussolini ordered the immediate closure of all Montessori schools, and with this Maria was exiled from Italy. ? She moved to Spain and lived there until 1936. This again was a mistake. A civil war broke out in Spain. General Franco another fascist took over the government of Spain.

She was rescued by a British cruiser. Maria opted to stay in the Netherlands for sometime. In 1938, she opened the Montessori Training Centre in Laren in the Netherlands. She continued with her work in the country till 1939.

Question Eleven: - Where did Maria Montessori spend World War II? ? Maria Montessori Spent World War II in India. ? It was here that she developed her “ Education for Peace”, and developed many of the ideas taught in her training courses today. ? The outbreak of the World War II made Maria extend her stay in India. ? In 1940, when India entered the war, she and her son were interned as enemy aliens, but Maria was allowed to conduct training courses. ? She continued to stay in India till 1946 well after the war.

? She returned to Europe for a brief period. In 1947, she founded the Montessori Centre in London. ? In 1949 Maria Montessori travelled to Pakistan and also toured Europe in the same year. ? In 1951 Maria toured Austria.

Question Twelve: -What effect, if any, did Maria Montessori’s stay in India have on the spread of her method? ? In 1939, the Theosophical Society of India extended an invitation to Maria Montessori who was 69 years of age. She accepted the invitation and reached India the same year. The journey from Holland in those days was very tedious. But this did not seem to trouble Maria. She was full of energy and keen to start work in India.

She made Adayar, Chennai her home and lived there along with her son, Mario. Here, Dr. Maria came in close contact with Rukmini Devi, a Bharat Natyam dancer and the founder of the world famous centre for music, dance, and other fine arts - Kalakshetra and her husband George Sidney Arundale,

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who was the president of the Theosophical Society of India. ? Between 1939 and 1949, Maria Montessori, with the help of her son Mario, conducted sixteen Indian Montessori Training Courses, thus laying a very sound foundation for the Montessori movement in India.

Question Thirteen: How did the teaching Colleges start and where? In 1909 she gave her first Montessori course, expecting to have as students only Italian teachers. ? There were about 100 students that attended ? To her amazement people attended from many different countries. Probably that was the origin of what would become a serious handicap in the evolution of Montessori pedagogy. “ Since the beginning Montessori pedagogy has been appropriated, interpreted, misinterpreted, exploited, propagated, torn to shreds and the shreds magnified into systems, reconstituted, used, abused and disabused, gone into oblivion and undergone multiple renaissances. There are various reasons why this should be so.

Perhaps the most important is that although Montessori pedagogy is known as the Montessori Method, it is not a method of education, in other words, it is not a programme for teachers to apply. Maria Montessori was not a teacher. ? In the summer of 1909 Dr Montessori gave her first training course in her approach to around 100 students. ? Her notes from this period developed into The Montessori Method, which was published in the United States in 1912, reaching second place in the US non-fiction best sellers. Soon afterwards it was translated in to twenty different languages.

It has become a major influence in the field of education. Question Fourteen: How did Maria Montessori spend her last years of life? When and where did

she die? ? Maria Montessori was nominated for the Nobel Peace for three consecutive years, 1949, 1950, 1951. But sadly the Nobel Prize eluded her on all three occasions. ? In 1951, Maria Montessori went to Holland from India. She made Noordwijk aan Zee, which is a coastal town, her home.

The last few days of Montessori's life were characterized by the same activity and zeal she had shown throughout her career. ? Her long and self-sacrificing labours on behalf of the child came to a sudden end on the 6th of May, 1952. Maria was 82 years when she passed away. ? Her work lives on till today through the thousands of proud Montessorians all over the world who are continuing with her good work. Extracts From Maria Montessori's Last Will and Testament “..

. I declare that it is my wish that Mario Montessori be the general executor of this my Will. ... ith regard to my property, I declare that this belongs both materially and spiritually, to my son: that is, to him belong by right not only the material goods of every kind or sort that I may eventually possess at any time of my life until the end; but to him belongs by right also, everything that may accrue from my social and intellectual works, either because they were inspired by him or because, from the time that he was able to act in the world, they were undertaken with his actual and constant collaboration, since he totally dedicated his life to helping me and my work.

Therefore he is the sole heir to my work, and the only one qualified to be entrusted with the safekeeping and preservation of my work; and thus the legitimate and rightful successor to the work that I have embarked upon and that I hope he may continue and successfully complete, for the benefit of

that humanity that together we have loved, finding in our shared ideals and actions the highest solace of our lives. So be it: and may his children bring him consolation; and may the world render him justice, according to his merits, which I know to be great and sublime. Revoking all preceding Wills, I declare this to be my last and only valid Will. I sign with my name. And so may friends and all those who benefit from my work, feel their debt toward my son! ” Question Fifteen: - Try and find out what events and inventions took place in her life-time? The telephone and patent issues ? Bell filed an application to patent his speaking telephone in the United States on February 14, 1876, ? On June 3, 1880, Alexander Graham Bell transmitted the first wireless telephone message on his newly invented photo phone. ? Bell believed the photo phone was his most important invention.

The device allowed for the transmission of sound on a beam of light. ? Of the eighteen patents granted in Bell’s name alone, and the twelve he shared with his collaborators, four were for the photo phone. Colour Photography ? Was explored throughout the 1800s. Initial experiments in colour could not fix the photograph and prevent the colour from fading. ? The first permanent colour photo was taken in 1861 by the physicist James Clerk Maxwell. ? The first colour film, Auto chrome, did not reach the market until 1907 and was based on dyed dots of potato starch.

Other systems of colour photography included that invented by Sergei Mikhailovich Prokudin-Gorskii, which involved three separate monochrome exposures of a still scene through red, green, and blue filters. ? The first modern colour film, Kodachrome, was introduced in 1935 based on three colour emulsions. ? Most modern colour films, except Kodachrome, are based

on technology developed for Agfa colour (as ' Agfacolor Neue') in 1936. ?

Instant colour film was introduced by Polaroid in 1963. Question Sixteen: -

Who were her contemporaries? A few of Maria Montessori's contemporaries were Helen Keller (1880 - 1968) It was with a great deal of willpower and determination that Helen Keller became a world-famous speaker, author, lecturer and activist.

? She was an extraordinary lady because when she was 19 months old was struck by a fever that left her blind and deaf for the rest of her natural life. ? At the age of 7 she had invented over sixty different signs that she could use to communicate with her family. ? Graduated from Radcliffe, ? Gave many speeches on behalf of the physically handicapped and wrote several books ? Helen Keller made it her life's mission to fight for the sensorially handicapped in the world Aletta Jacobs (1854 - 1929) Aletta Jacobs was the first woman in Dutch history to be officially admitted to university. ? This took place in 1871.

As a schoolgirl she had written a letter to Prime Minister Thorbecke requesting permission to be allowed to attend " academic classes". ? Aletta Jacobs' dream was to become a doctor. ? Thorbecke answered within a week, but did not write to Aletta herself. Instead, he wrote to her father that permission had been granted.

? So, thanks to a seventeen-year-old girl, in 1871 universities in the Netherlands were opened to women. Prior to this time, universities and most schools as well, were only open to young men. It was with the exception that Anna Maria van Schurman, an educated woman (she had a command of no

less than ten languages) who lived in the seventeenth century, had ever been allowed to attend any lectures (in Utrecht). However, she had had to sit behind a curtain so as not to cause a distraction for the young men. ?

Throughout her life, she fought for the rights of women. ? As a doctor, for example, she opened a practice that assisted women with contraception so that they did not have to be pregnant every year.

? She also fought against the abuses of the retail trade. Aletta Jacobs also fought for the right to vote for women. ? It was only in 1919 that the right to vote for women was established. In 1922, Dutch women voted for the first time. Aletta Jacobs was 68 years old at the time.

Anna Eleanor Roosevelt (1884 - 1962) ? Was an American human rights activist, a diplomat and of course she was Franklin D. Roosevelt's wife who was president from 1933-1945 making her, the longest serving First Lady of The United States Of America. ? Eleanor Roosevelt was active in the formations of numerous institutions most notably the United Nations, United Nations Association and Freedom House. She chaired the committee that drafted and approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

? President Harry S. Truman called her ' The First Lady of the world" in honour of her extensive travels to promote human rights. ? She travelled for President Roosevelt during World War II visiting troops at the frontline. ? She was a first-wave feminist and an active supporter of the American Civil Rights movement. Amelia Earhart (1897 - 1937?) ? A famous American aviator, known for breaking new ground for female pilots. She is

remembered for her mysterious disappearance during a flight over the Pacific Ocean? While trying to fly around the world.

? She was the first American woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean alone.

Alexander Graham Bell (3 March 1847 – 2 August 1922) ? He was a scientist, inventor and the founder of the Bell Telephone Company as the “ Father of the telephone. ? In to his work in telecommunications technology, he was responsible for important advances in aviation and hydrofoil technology.

Researched by Alana Jane Polyblank Information from Wikipedia and other sites on Maria Montessori