

Normalisation: pedagogy and child



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In this essay we will be discussing normalisation and linking it with the concept of deviations. Outline the importance of the favourable environment in supporting normalisation. We going to explain the maturational nature of normalisation linked to the child's growing socialisation. Also describing the teacher's initial approach with new children. Explaining the change in the teacher's role as each child begins to concentrate and focus on activities, and the impact this has on the child's growing normalisation. Showing an understanding of why the child might regress.

A child's conversion is a physic cure, like returning to being normal. The ' normal child' would be one that is precociously intelligent, who has learned to be in peace and overcome him/herself, and who also prefers a difficult task in order to futile idleness. If we look closely we will see that the child has a different need to that of an adult, where the adult has reached the norm of the species but the child is in a constant state of metamorphosis. The integration that the child achieves is through work. This is when the normalisation of the child begins. All destructive behaviour is ceased and the process of physic integration starts.

This means that the child spontaneously reverts to their normal character if the correct conditions prevail. “ This is the single most important result of our work. The transition from one stage to another always follows a piece of work done by the hands with real things, work accompanied by mental concentration”. (Montessori, 2007a, pp. 186).

In order for this transformation to take place the child must be so engrossed in the activity that they are concentrating fully, their hand must be involved

and the components of the activity must be grounded in reality. Also, he/she must be able to complete it without interruption, the activity must be freely chosen by the child and the aforementioned must recur enough times to allow the child to develop new habits of behaviour. “ The process of normalisation is always the same... it does not matter what deviation a child may start... But as each child- individually and in his own time and place- achieves this experience of spontaneous concentration, until it has become a habit, each and all will arrive at the same place. (Standing, 1998, pp. 173).

The characteristics of the normalised child is as follows; A Love for Order, Love for Work, Profound Spontaneous Concentration, Attachment to Reality, Love of silence and working alone, Sublimation of the possessive instinct, Power to act from real choices and not from curiosity, Obedience, Independence and initiate, Mutual aid take the place of competition, Spontaneous Self-Discipline and the Joy of learning. (MCSA 2012). From this we can see that the special circumstances surrounding the children were a suitable environment, a humble teacher, and material objects adapted to their needs. ” (Montessori, 1966, pp. 137). If we look at the favourable environment, it consists of six basic components; Freedom, Structure and Order, Reality and Nature, Beauty and Atmosphere, The Montessori materials, the Development of Community life.

Each of these characteristics plays an important part in a child’s normalisation development. Through the joy of learning independents. These characteristics support the child with developing bonds of unity, makes it easier for a child to learn from another rather than the teacher, the child learns to relate to other children of all ages, especially if there are no

siblings, slow learning children will not feel isolated and/or left behind, the child learns to accept the differences everyone in the classroom has, the child learns to communicate and socialized at all levels. (MCSA 2012).

If a child is an in inappropriate environment, the development of that child will suffer to such an extent that he will not be able to experience the favourable environment and benefit from it. The child will have no sense of discipline and will not know to socialise and respect those around him in his environment. Having a teacher in the environment allows the children to learn independently and at their own pace, while she maintains the environment. (MCSA 2012).

When the child is ready to embrace the social aspect their life, gradually becoming aware of the social conventions of their cultures and of the needs and feelings of others. (MSCA 2012). This is what happens at the beginning of the third embryonic stage. The needs of a developing child is the need for Movement. The child has a need to explore, move and take advantage of their environment around them.

The need for Language Development; the child needs to have the opportunity to speak and to be listened to and to hear good spoken language. The need for Independence; never do for a child that of what he can do himself. The need for Love and Security; constant reassurance of love and good quality time spent with the child is essential. The need for Discipline; ground rules should be enforced by setting limits and consistently making sure that these limits are maintained, the child needs to be taught respect and small children should have less rules but these should constantly

maintained too. The need for Order; help the child by having order in the environment, the child comes to internal order through external order, internal order is a prerequisite for intellectual expansion.

The process of normalisation unfolds when a child is placed in the correct favourable environment and is given the correct activities to choose from, in order to develop them and become independent. If we look at the child in this sort of environment we will surely see the difference and notice the normalisation taking place. In order for the child to develop they need to be able to have physical activity, components of the activity must be grounded to reality, the child must be so engrossed in the activity that they become fully concentrated on it, the activity must be freely chosen by the child, the child must be able to complete the activity without any interruptions, this must be allowed enough times in order for the child to develop new habits of behaviour. (MCSA 2012).

Children's growing socialisation contributes to the cohesion in the social unit in such way that once they become used to their favourable environment and is comfortable with the circumstances around them; they begin to recognise the people around them and soon would do everything they can to contribute to the community (group). They each they their part without hope of reward and co-operate for the honour of their community. It's a sense of solidarity that's not installed by any instruction; it's a point where children have reached by their own efforts. (Montessori 2007a). The young child acquires strength, language and intelligence, but at the same time they adapt the being they are constructing to the conditions of the world around

them. The teacher is the one who manages and over sees the classroom in order for the children to learn spontaneously.

They are the child guide to help them access the classroom's resources. At this stage the teacher must be judgemental towards any of the children. The teacher will be very much in evidence in the room, moving about from one child to the other, telling stories and giving group lessons. Very few materials will be used and more time spent creating a routine for the day. Inevitably the teacher may interfere in the child's activity in order to establish acceptable forms of behaviour and to demonstrate use of the various exercises.

(MCSA 2012). Once the child begins to settle down in the nursery, automatically their needs and activity will change, at first the child will get used to having a routine every day and then slowly start to learn how to use the Montessori materials. Once they are fluent their attitude changes too, because then they start to discover a whole new environment or look their current environment differently. The teacher will be there in the beginning to show and help the child and once the child is comfortable they will then start to become independent as they learn about new materials.

Making friends at this stage is also very important, because children learn better from one another than from the adult in the environment. As these changes happen in the environment with the child, the teacher will have to maintain what is happening in a way that the child does not feel he/she is doing something wrong by becoming independent. Instead, the teacher should encourage this change and that will give the child more confidence. The teacher's goal at this point should to show the child new things but at

the same time allow them to explore with the environment around them. As the child grows in the nursery, they will start to develop different habits, once they start to realise they can concentrate on an activity they tend to want to spend a lot of time on it repeating it until they achieve the completion of the activity. Once this starts to happen the teacher should not interfere when the child is concentrating because this could break their concentration and whole experience of learning will be ruined.

This is the road to normalisation. Once the teacher starts to see the normalisation take place she then knows that she may now pay attention to the new children, as the child is working as if she does not exist. Therefore her influence on the child here will reduce. As new children come into the environment they will learn from the ones who were already there and therefore pick up habits or motivation much faster. As I've mentioned before, children learn faster from one another, than from the adult in the environment.

Once they enter the nursery they immediately become a part of a community but they do not know this at this point in time, as they mature and begin to normalise they come to stage called the social embryo. This is when they are ready to now embrace the social aspects of their life, gradually becoming aware of the social conventions of their cultures and of the needs and feelings of others. (MCSA 2012). The need for movement; the child has the need to move, explore, manipulate and store up impressions they will classify. The need for language development; the child needs to hear good language spoken, needs the opportunity to speak and to be listened to. The need for independence; never do for a child that which the

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child has learned to do for himself, a deviated child suffers from attachment, a lack of vital energy and indolence, in most cases this is a result of an adult who has stunted the child's psychic growth.

The need for love and security; constant reassurance of love is required, this is measured in the quantity and quality of time spent with the child. The need for discipline; the child needs to be taught respect for the rights of others just as their rights need to be respected, smaller children should have few rules but consistently adhered to. The need for order; help the child by having order in the environment. These are all the needs of the developing child. (MCSA 2012). If the adult does not recognise or provide for the child's changing needs, the result of this would be that the child has no direction as to how they are developing and maturing; when the child grows up they will be experiencing many difficulties both mentally and physically.

This brings us to the end of our topic on how the role of the teacher changes in the process of the child's growing normalisation. Bibliography:- Montessori Centre International (2010) Philosophy Module 1 London: MCI Montessori, M. (1966) The Secret of Childhood New York: Ballantine Montessori, M. (2007a) The Absorbent Mind Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company Montessori, M. (2007b) The Discovery of the Child Amsterdam: Montessori-Pierson Publishing Company Standing, E.

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