



Child Development Lesson 3

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Child Development Part 3 Lesson Objectives: To understand Maria Montessori's observation of child development To know how this view point underpins to the Montessori Method of Education

Maria Montessori's 4 Planes of Development

Maria Montessori believed that the mission of a child was "...the construction of the man in the fullness of his strength and in the fullness of his life" . The Absorbent Mind - Maria Montessori

She observed that there were 4 planes of development in the life of man and she believed from what she scientifically observed that the four planes are nature's blueprint to this construction. The 4 stages of development ranged from 0 to 24, each stage has a span of approximately 6 years. From 0-6, 6- 12, 12 – 18 and 18-24, the first and third planes are very active and growth is intense and the second and last plan are much more steadied growth periods. In general the beginning period of each page is very intense and then it tappers out at the end until it picks up again at the beginning of the next plane. It is important to note that Montessori was quick to point out that these age limits were not cast in stone as each child develops differently so there will be exceptions to the classification and that there were gender differences as well. This classification was therefore a generalization to help educators understand children and not a scientific classification that is always true for all. Let's look briefly at the characteristics of the four planes. 1) Age 0 – 6 - The Early Childhood stage – Infancy - The Individual Creation Of The Person

This is the period when the child uses two important gifts to help begin the process of creating the person who will later become the adult. Namely these are: the absorbent mind and the sensitive periods. The child at this point is on the fast lane of development, this is a very active time of absorbing information about the environment and adapting to it as the child grows and develops. This all kicks into place from the time of birth, the spiritual embrayo has psychic qualities. During the early years 1and a half to two plus the child is not interested in sharing, waiting their turn etc., the world revolves around them. The child may even be known to turn their backs while others are playing, some just want to be alone □ Characterized by the

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At age 0-3 this is unconscious absorbing – the child is creating himself unconsciously □ At age 3-6 this is conscious absorbing- the child is consciously working to create himself □ Characterized by "Sensitive Periods" which include the intense need for: □ Order □ Language □ Refinement of the senses □ Movement □ Characterized by concrete thinking □ Construction of the physical person □ Fundamental formation of the character □ Physical independence – This is the period of "I can do it myself!" □ The child wants to be free to work independently within a structured environment doing real activities with an intelligent purpose.

So the child is influenced by the environment, by mum the primary care giver, he learns warmth, emotional security and can then concentrate on developing the mind from all the information he has absorbed.

By the time a child is 3-6 years he is ready for work. He wants to create himself via lots and lots of activity. Movement informs the mind, develops cognitive skills. The hand becomes an extension of the brain and is therefore so important in the Montessori Method. This child is more a social being, ready to interact better with others, it is during this time that they learn to share wait their turn although a lot of individual work is carried out by the child at this point in the Montessori environment because she is working on build herself.

The child wants to work, so Montessori put all the information together to encourage the teacher to provide a conducive prepared environment for the child so that the child can work, develop and grow appropriately. The child can and does use his senses to understand the environment, so the Montessori Method utilizes all the senses as we create activities of the children to do. Only give each child what he needs not what we think they need. The child with his innate characteristics, the prepared environment, got ready by the observing teacher. Here the tree areas of the Montessori triangle work together for the greater good of the child.

These concepts are what feed the Montessori Methods: Practical life activities, sensorial education and Language development activities to enable the child absorb as much information from the environment, use their hands and bodies to explore and become more adept as well as help the brain to develop, picking up new words, expanding vocabulary and use of language so that the child can learn to read and write using all the God given gifts at this time of life as a solid foundation that will enable the child to reach their fullest potential. Cultural Studies and Mathematics help feed into the need for order and a further understanding of the environment, giving the child a lot of practice with classification of all things around them

Second Plane – Age 6 – 12 – Childhood (Construction of The Intelligence) □ This period is characterized by reasoning with imagination and logic. Before this stage in life children find it difficult to actually differentiate reality from fantasy, so we do not encourage fantasy before the age of 6. □ Intense thirst for knowledge which is so great that if allowed to blossom, the child will seek exposure to many things at a level that has been left to high school and college students interests in the past. □ "Cosmic Education" – the child wants to know about the whole world and his place within it. At this point the child can appreciate the interconnectedness of all things and people. □ The "bridge" to abstraction – or the transition from concrete to abstract thinking □ Interested in learning about the universe – they now want to know what is outside of the prepared environment. □ Intellectual independence – This is the period of "I can "think it" myself".

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Third Plane – Ages 12 – 18 Adolescence (Construction Of Social Self) □ Characterized by self-concern and self-assessment. □ Critical thinking and re-evaluation.

Transition period both physically and mentally. □ Beginning to try to find place in this world. □ Characterized by construction of social and moral values. □ “Erd Kinder” or “Children of the Land” This is the name of the Montessori Secondary schools envisioned by Maria Montessori – Dr. Montessori’s idea was that of the child practicing for life in society by working together in a sort of hostel. □ Cultural development which has been on-going is solidified in this plane. □ Emotional Independence –This is the period of “I can stand on my own”.

Fourth Plane – Ages 18 – 24 And Beyond – Adulthood (Construction Of Self Understanding) □ Characterized by construction of the spiritual. □ Conscious discernment of right and wrong. □ Seeking to know one's own place within the world. Who am I? Why am I here? These are the questions that will arise. □ Financial Independence –This is the period of “I can get it myself”.

Download Maria Montessori's Lecture included with this Lesson and study. There is no Activity Sheet for this week Advice: Do all the work and file them, as they will provide a rich source of reference in the years to come.