



MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

Montessori Vocabulary and Abstract Montessori Pedagogy

Absorbent Mind

"There is in the child a special kind of sensitivity which leads him to absorb everything about him, and it is this work of observing and absorbing that alone enables him to adapt himself to life. He does it in virtue of an unconscious power that only exists in childhood."

Dr. María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 62.

The absorbing mind is a period of growth that begins at birth until six years of age, in which all children in any culture are naturally gifted by a capacity and sensitivity to grasp and retain in their mind through their senses all those aspects of their environment, both positive and negative. This ability to absorb allows them to adapt to the environment in which they are placed in their customs or language for example and form their own personality. From zero to three the absorbent mind is unconscious and from three to six absorbs in a conscious way.

When the environment in which the child is placed does not allow him to adequately absorb the characteristics of his environment, it is when deviations or maladjustment arise in social life.

Adaptation

"This adaptation to the world about one occurs in the first six years."

Dr. María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 210.

Thanks to his freedom of spirit, the child, when he is born, develops a vital task of growth during his early childhood to integrate himself in the physical, social and temporal environment in which he is integrated; This process, called adaptation, offers a sense of security and happiness.





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

It is one of the human tendencies common to all human beings, which has allowed them to develop as individuals and integrate as a human group.

Cosmic Education

“This is a period of the acquisition of culture...There is an unusual demand on the part of the child to know the reasons of things...The seed of everything can be sown...At six years of age all items of culture are received enthusiastically...As many as possible;...We see no limit to what must be offered to the child...The maximum number of seeds of interest.”

Dr. María Montessori, *To Educate the Human Potential*, p.1.

Cosmic Education is the answer to the characteristics of the Second Plane of Development. It offers the child a complete vision of the Universe, going entirely to the parts and parts to the whole. It is not limited by a Syllabus, it covers everything the child needs. It allows to plant the seeds of interest, imagination and curiosity; developing your intelligence in an orderly manner, your creative energy and understanding your task and place in the Universe.

Discipline

“Remember that inner discipline is something to come, and not something already present.

Discipline is born when the child concentrates his attention on some object that attracts him and which provides him not only with a useful exercise but with a control of error. Thanks to these exercise, becomes indifferent to prizes or material rewards.”

María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, 263





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

We speak of internal discipline when the child follows by its own means the moral norms and precepts of the society in which it is situated, so that it does not need positive or negative reinforcements, rewards or punishments, to relate to society. The discipline is acquired based on the internal satisfaction of the work carried out autonomously.

Erdkinder

“Dr. Montessori envisioned the Erdkinder prepared environment for adolescents as a place which provides space for developing their bodies as well as their sense of social order and their expanding intellect.”

David Kahn, Eight Pictures at an Exhibition: A Montessori Retrospective on the Discovery of the Adolescent. Communications 2011/1-2 p 32

Erdkinder is the name that Maria Montessori adopts from the German language to define adolescents of the third Plane of development. Literally means children of the earth. In its broadest conception, Erdkinder is the prepared environment where the vital needs of adolescence are met, in their physical and psychological planes. It is a prepared environment where, through a community of social life, adolescents prepare themselves for entry into adult life, and through a series of occupations and self-expression activities are prepared for the dynamics of adult life, based on production and exchange.





Freedom/ Responsibility

“The environment must make the free choice of occupation easy, and therefore eliminate the waste of time and energy in following vague and uncertain preferences. From all this the result will be not only self-discipline but a proof that self-discipline is an aspect of individual liberty and the chief factor of success in life.”

Dr. Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescents*, p. 66-67

Freedom is the capacity of a person to act for himself and to be able to take responsibility for his own actions without external pressures, both positively and negatively. The Montessori environment allows real freedom for children in the choice of their work, as it is prepared for their needs. True freedom also implies responsibility towards oneself and towards the society that welcomes it.

Hand/Head

“Being active with one’s own hands, having a determined practical aim to reach, is what really gives inner discipline. When the hands perfects itself in a work chosen spontaneously and the will to succeed is born together with the will to overcome difficulties or obstacles; it is then that something, which differs from intellectual learning, arises. The realization of one’s own value is born in the consciousness.”

María Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p. 83

The hands are the instrument of the brain. Through the work with the hands the human being develops his intelligence. We are born without a specific function for hands and through activities and manual work, they specialize and intelligence develops self-discipline, the expression of human thought and the formation of personality. In the pedagogy Montessori is not understood in work that does not involve the use of the hands and the brain at the same time.





Imagination

“The world is acquired psychologically by means of the imagination. Reality is studied in detail, and then the whole is imagined. The detail is able to grow in the imaginations, and so total knowledge is attained.

The child (6-12) must have constant recourse to this imagination. Imagination is the great power of this age. Since we are unable to present everything, it is up to the child to use his imagination. The instruction of children from seven to twelve years of age must appeal to the imagination. The imagination is then able to reconstruct the whole when it knows the real detail.

Imagination was not given man for the simple pleasure of fantasizing any more than were the four characteristics common to man given to let him live on contemplation. Imagination does not become great until man, given the courage and strength, uses it to create. If this does not occur, the imagination addresses itself only to a spirit wandering in emptiness.

He who does not possess the world of the imagination is poor. But the child with too much fantasy is a disturbed child.

The child's imagination is vague, imprecise, without limits. But from the moment he finds himself in contact with the external world he requires precision.

The mind bases itself on the imagination, which brings things to a higher level, that of abstraction. But the imagination has need of support. It needs to be built, organized. Only then may man attain a new level. He is penetrating the infinite.”

María Montessori, *From childhood to adolescence*, p 17-21





Imagination is that quality of the mind that allows us to create new images from other images, to reconstruct the whole from the parts, acquired by the senses. The imagination is infinite and requires precision to classify, organize and process information. Through imagination the human being creates, invents and develops objects or elements with which to contribute to their culture.

Independence

“That man achieves his independence by making efforts. To be able to do a thing without any help from others; this is independence. If it exists, the child can progress rapidly; if it does not, his progress will be slow.”

María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p 155

Independence is the sense of being able to act in a self-sufficient way, of being able to perform important actions, solve problems and achieve goals without the help of others. Independence is only acquired through one's own efforts; for this, the adult will prepare the environment so that the child or adolescent can acquire independence by their own means.

Mathematical Mind

“Children display a universal love of mathematics, which is par excellence the science of precision, order and intelligence.

Montessori asserts quite roundly that her experience has convinced her of the truth of Blaise Pascal dictum that the “human mind is by its nature mathematical” But, having said this, she goes on at once to add (with Pascal) that it is only one form of our intelligence; and that “life is full of mysteries, and the sphere of these mysteries is not suited to the mathematical mind”

E. M. Standing, *Maria Montessori Her life and work*, p. 344





That instrument of thought that allows us to organize and order the mind accurately, which classifies the sensations and that from it we can create new things efficiently and accurately. The mathematical mind is inherent to Man and Man tends to a mathematical conception of things, in a way that allows him to classify, organize, specify, order and create new things (music, instruments, poetry, machinery ...)

Maximum Effort

“We find the law of maximum effort: the child, says Montessori, “wastes an immense amount of energy over an insubstantial end... and in the exact execution of every detail”.

Grazzini, Camillo and Baiba Krumins G. *A Montessori Community for Adolescents*. Hunstburg: Compiled resources/readings, 2018.

Children, unlike adults, put maximum effort into the work they do. Its purpose is to carry out the work in itself with the greatest accuracy and detail, to do so, they will use the maximum possible energy, unlike adults who seek the minimum amount of energy to perform a job, since our goal is not work in itself, but the product.

Mixed-age group

“Montessori will have none of that horizontal grading of children according to age and attainment, or intelligence, which is so common today. She insists on having, if possible, several age groups together- for this very reason, that mutual helpfulness can have full play.”

Standing, E.M. *Maria Montessori, her life and work*. 177 The Montessori environments are developed according to the planes and sub-planes of development established in the pedagogy itself, and not by a horizontal division by ages.





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

Personality/Character

“When we took the personality of the child into account in and of itself and offered it full scope to develop in our schools he revealed to us a personality entirely different from the one we had previously taken into consideration.”

María Montessori, *Education and Peace*, p 15

The development of the personality is the cornerstone of the Montessori pedagogy, it refers to the totality of physical and mental potentialities, it is indivisible. The child builds his own personality, we can not develop it for him, and it only develops through freedom. The child builds his own personality from his own birth in two ways, by an internal development, through personal work, and in an external development, in his interaction with the environment that surrounds him.

Planes of Development/Planes of Education

“Psychology now accepts that there are different types of mentality in the successive phases of growth. These phases are quite distinct one from another, and it is interesting to find that they correspond with the phases of physical growth. ... There comes a time when one psychic personality ends, and another begins. The first of these periods goes from birth to six years of age. During this time the kind of mentality remains the same, though it differs very much from those of later periods. There are two sub-phases, from birth to three and three to six....The next period goes from six to twelve. It is a period of growth unaccompanied by other change. The child is calm and happy... The third period goes from twelve to eighteen, and it is a period of so much change as to remind one of the first. It can again be divided into two sub-phases: one from twelve to fifteen, and the other from fifteen to eighteen. There are physical changes also during this period, the body reaching its full maturity. Man, after eighteen, is fully developed and no further marked changes occur in him. He grows only in ages ”





Dr. María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 18-19

The development plans is a framework that María Montessori establishes to explain her point of view of human development and combines physical and psychological development. It establishes four levels of development and this understanding of human development allows to establish the needs and characteristics for each stage in the child and the role of the adult and the environment in them.

Preparation of the adult

“The first step an intending Montessori teacher must take is to prepare herself.

The Montessori teacher is constantly looking for a child who is not yet there.

The teacher, must have a kind of faith that the child will reveal himself thought work.

The teacher becomes the keeper and custodian of the environment.

The teacher also must be attractive, pleasing in appearance, tidy and clean, calm and dignified.

The teacher should study her own movements.

The teacher must be seductive, she must entice the children.

Every action of the teacher's can become a call and an invitation to the children.

When the child begins to show interest in one of these, the teacher must not interrupt.

The teacher must be most careful. Not interfere in any way.





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

The great principle which brings success to the teacher is this: as soon as concentration has begun, act as if the child does not exist.

What is the greatest sign of success for a teacher thus transformed? It is able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist"

María Montessori, *The Absorbent mind*, chapter 27.

The main preparation of the adult in the Montessori environment is an internal preparation; it must be observed attentively, to know the feelings that it has to work towards a spiritual virtue with which to be able to observe the child and let it emerge in its true essence.

Prepared Environment

"Since adults are also a part of a child's environment, they should adapt themselves to his needs. They should not be an obstacle to a child's independent activities, nor should they carry out for him those activities by means of which a child reaches maturity."

Dr. Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, p. 110.

The Prepared Environment is one of the essential points of the Montessori pedagogy. It is called Prepared Environment to that physical and / or psychological environment that allows to develop the Human Tendencies in each level of development. It is an environment prepared for the natural development of the child at each stage of its growth.





Sensitive Periods/Sensitivities

“The child makes a number of acquisitions during the sensitive periods, which place him in relation to the outer world in an exceptionally intense manner.

It thus becomes clear to us that psychic development does not come about by hazard or does not originate in stimuli from the outer world; it is guided by transient sensibilities, temporary instincts connected with the acquisition of certain characteristics. Though this development takes place by means of the outer world, the latter has no constructive significance. It merely provides the necessary means of psychic life...

The inner sensibilities we have mentioned determine the selection of necessary things from a many-faceted environment, and of circumstances favorable to development. This guidance is exercised by making the child sensitive only towards certain things, leaving him indifferent towards others...The child has a special, unique capacity for profiting by these in order to grow, for it is during the sensitive periods that he acquires certain psychological faculties...

In these sensitive relations between the child and his environment lies the key to the mysterious recess in which the spiritual embryo achieves the miracles of growth.”

Dr. María Montessori, *The secret of childhood*, p. 30-31

Periods in which the child produces a certain sensitivity to elements of the environment, psychic or physical, that allow him to meet specific development needs. They are transient and concrete towards the acquisition of a certain characteristic or ability and disappear when this ability has developed, by repetition, or because the acquisition stage has passed. In each stage of development they are different.





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

Social development

“We must help him to discover what part he is to play in society, for anyone who realizes his own mission must respond to the environment.”

“Dr. Montessori’s Third Lecture Given at the Montessori Congress in Oxford, England, 1936” The NAMTA Journal 26.3 (2001, Summer): 175-188

Social development is a process in which the child and adolescent discover what’s his role in the society and what is his mission in the mankind. In adolescence there is a *rebirth*, in which the adolescent is a new member of society as someone able to contribute actively through their work or in the regularization of their organization. For this the Montessori pedagogy develops a prepared environment suited to the social needs of the Third Plane, where the community of adolescents can develop the skills and social needs that allow them to join the adult society.

Society by Cohesion

“This sense of solidarity, not instilled by any instruction, completely extraneous to any form of emulation, competition or personal advantage, was a gift of nature.”

Dr. María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind*, p. 233

When a group of children is in an environment of love and respect, they develop a feeling of belonging and solidarity towards the group to which they contribute their skills. It is the first step of the social structure, the cohesion is produced by the feeling of belonging to the group in which the individuality of each one is respected and to which everyone contributes, without having developed organizations or norms.





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

Three Period Lesson

“The famous “three period presentation lesson” of Séguin is a model of efficiency in this respect; and Montessori recommends its use with small children, especially in the “naming” lessons. This is the manner of it (using the prisms):

Period 1- (Naming) “this is thick; this is thin”

Period 2 - (Recognition) “Give me the thick one; give me the thin one” Period 3 - (Pronunciation of the word) “What is this?”

Standing, E.M. *Maria Montessori, her life and work*, p 307

The lesson of the three periods has its origin in the pedagogue Seguin, and Maria Montessori introduces it in all the Planes of her pedagogy. It is a way to show concepts, vocabulary or materials to the student. It is developed in three parts, in the first one it introduces, explains or verbalizes what one wants to teach: “this is red, this is how a sum is made or the history of the USA”. In the second period the child can explore, repeat the activity, deepen the concept and apprehend it; in our examples, we will move the materials of different colors, we will practice additions or we will investigate in books or documents. It is the longest and most active period. The third period serves to confirm or not that the information has arrived correctly. In that period the teacher asks, what is this? can you explain it to me? the child shows the color red, the teacher observes that the sums are correct and listens attentively to an explanation about the history of the USA. If not, he will repeat the first period. It is the basic way to introduce concepts in the Montessori pedagogy.





Valorization

“This would result in a “valorization” of his personality, in making him feel himself capable of succeeding in life by his own efforts and on his own merits, and at the same time it would put him in direct contact with the supreme reality of social life.”

María Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p 61

Valorization of our personality is a process that happens in Montessori education in which through independence, experiences and social relationships that are established in the environment we develop a self-knowledge of our strengths and weaknesses for which we feel capable to develop fully in our lives through our efforts and our own merits. The human being develops an appreciation of the personality that allows him to face the challenges of life with positivity and self-confidence. It has its culmination in the adolescent stage, but it has been developed in the previous Planes as well.

Work

“The child has proved to possess a surprising fundamental instinct - he wants to work.

We do not use the term work in the ordinary sense of the word. The child teaches us that work is nota a virtue, not an effort that man is forced to make; it is not the need to earn a livelihood. Work is man’s fundamental instinct... Work is the means of remedying all his shortcomings; ... Man is born to work. The instinct to work is his most outstanding trait. ... What is le8 is the new man, who has none of our defects - the man who works diligently, the man who is healed of all his ills. “

María Montessori, *Education and Peace*, p 83-84 Work is a human tendency in which, through physical, manual and / or intellectual





MONTESSORI SCHOOL ALMERIA
Growing place

activity, the human being develops himself and the environment that surrounds him.

Human Tendencies

"Yet, there exists in this inert being a global power, a "human creative essence," which drives him to form a man of his time, a man of his civilization. And, in this faculty for absorption that he possesses, he follows laws of growth that are universal for the whole of mankind."

María Montessori, *The Absorbent Mind* p.51

Human tendencies are the universal executive behaviors and aspects common to all human beings that we possess in potentialities from birth; we develop them individually according to each culture and time, and allow us to adapt and develop as individuals in the society in which we are included.

