FEATURES OF M. MONTESSORI'S PEDAGOGICAL THEORY AND PRACTICE

Titova Evgenia Vyacheslavovna

Student, Belgorod State National Research University, Russia, Belgorod

Buzina Evgenia Igorevna

научный руководитель, Scientific adviser, Belgorod State National Research University, Russia, Belgorod

ОСОБЕННОСТИ ПЕДАГОГИЧЕСКОЙ ТЕОРИИ И ПРАКТИКИ М. МОНТЕССОРИ

Титова Евгения Вячеславовна

студент, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет, РФ, г. Белгород

Бузина Евгения Игоревна

научный руководитель, Белгородский государственный национальный исследовательский университет, РФ, г. Белгород

The central place in the Montessori teaching method is occupied by a dynamic triad: the child, the teacher and the environment. One of the roles of the teacher is to guide the child through what Montessori called a "prepared environment", that is, a classroom and a way of learning that are designed to support the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the child through active research, choice and independent learning.

One way to understand the Montessori method is to consider its two important aspects: educational materials and how the teacher and the environment contribute to the independent interaction of children with them. In terms of educational materials, Montessori has developed a set of managed objects designed to support children's learning of sensory concepts such as size, color, shape and texture, as well as academic concepts of mathematics, literacy, natural sciences, geography and history.

As for engagement, children learn by working with materials, most often individually, but also in pairs or small groups during a 3-hour "work cycle" in which the teacher helps them choose their own classes. They are given the freedom to choose what they are working on, where they are working, with whom they are working and how long they have been working on this or that type of activity, and all this is within the rules of the class. There is no competition between children, there is no system of external rewards or punishments. These two aspects are the training materials themselves,

It should be noted that for Montessori, the goal of education is to enable the optimal development of the child (intellectual, physical, emotional and social). This is a very different goal than most of today's education systems, where the focus is on academic subjects such as literacy and mathematics.

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The principle of Montessori pedagogy is that the child creates himself, in his own activity. The child's consciousness absorbs everything around it like a sponge. The child's education takes place in accordance with his biological rhythm, individual pace.

Many Montessori schools complement the environment surrounding the child with areas such as music, art and dance, woodwork, foreign language, contributing to the further enrichment of the overall development of the child. Motor exercises develop the child physically and help him feel his body and realize his capabilities. Thanks to all this, as well as a subtle psychological approach, taking into account the individual characteristics and capabilities of each child, relying on the natural features of human perception, "Montessori children" master writing and counting earlier (by the age of 5) and better than their peers, they develop an inclination to study, develop will.

As noted earlier, two important aspects of the Montessori educational method are educational materials and the independent nature of children's interaction with these materials. Some key elements of each of these aspects will be considered in more detail.

Let's focus on the characteristics and features of educational materials. The first educational materials that a child may encounter in a Montessori classroom are those materials that make up the practical curriculum. These are actions that include the use of various materials, the use of accessories such as scissors, forceps and tweezers, cleaning and polishing, preparing snacks, setting the table and washing dishes, arranging flowers, gardening, unbuttoning and unbuttoning the fasteners of clothes and so on. Their goals, in addition to developing the child's independent living skills, are to develop the child's large and small motor skills and eye-hand coordination in order to introduce them to the cycle of activity, as well as to familiarize them with the rules of functioning in the social environment in the classroom.

As the child gets used to the work cycle and demonstrates the ability to focus on self-selected actions, the teacher introduces sensory materials. The key feature of sensory materials is that each of them highlights only one concept that the child should focus on. The pink tower, for example, consists of ten cubes that differ only in their sizes, the smallest is 1 cm, the largest is 10 cm. During the construction of the tower, the child's attention is focused exclusively on the regular reduction of the volume of the cubes following each other. There are no additional hints - for example, different colors or numbers written on the faces of the cube - that could help the child to place the cubes correctly. Another example of sensory material, sound boxes, contains six pairs of closed cylinders, the sound of which changes from quiet to loud when shaken, and the child's task is to find suitable pairs. Again, there is only one signal that a child can use to complete this task: sound. The purpose of sensory materials is not to provoke the child's feelings with stimuli; on the contrary, they are tools designed to give the child the opportunity to classify and name the stimuli that he will encounter every day.

In addition, sensory materials are intended for preparation for academic subjects. Long rods, which consist of ten red rods, the length of which varies only in increments from 10 cm to 1 m, have an equivalent in mathematical materials: numerical rods, where the rods are divided into alternating 10-centimeter sections of red and blue colors so that they take numerical values 1-10. The touch panels, which consist of alternating strips of sandpaper and smooth paper so that the child can feel them, are a preparation for the globe in geography - a globe on which the land is made of coarse sandpaper, but the oceans and seas are smooth. Touch boards also serve as a preparation for writing letters and numbers, which the child learns to trace with his index and middle fingers.

Key elements of the literacy curriculum include introducing writing before reading, breaking down the components of writing skills (pencil control, letter formation, spelling) before the child actually writes words on paper, and using phonetics to teach sound. Grammar - parts of speech, morphology, sentence structure - is systematically taught with the help of teachers and materials made by children.

In the math curriculum, the numbers 0-10 and their symbols are introduced separately before combining, and shortly after that, large numbers and symbols (tens, hundreds and thousands) and fractions are introduced, all through specific materials. The operations (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, square root calculation) are again introduced using specific materials that the child may decide to stop using when he can succeed without this specific support.

The principles used in the development of these educational materials are that the child learns through movement and receives a concrete basis in order to prepare him for the study of more abstract concepts. Another principle of development is that each educational material has "error control", which warns the child about any mistakes, thereby exercising self-control with minimal support from the teacher.

Despite the importance of teaching materials, they do not constitute a Montessori method by themselves, because they need to be used in a certain way. Montessori noticed that a small child is able to concentrate for a long time on activities that arouse his spontaneous interest. There are two features of how children interact with educational materials that, according to Montessori, contributed to this concentration. Firstly, there is an activity cycle associated with the use of each part of the material (the so-called "internal work cycle). For example, if a child wants to use a pink tower, he will need to find a large enough space on the floor to unfold a rug that will designate his work area, carry ten cubes of the pink tower individually to the rug from where they are stored, then build a tower. After he builds the tower, he can repeat this action as many times as he wants. Other children can come and watch, and if he wishes, they can join him, but he can continue on his own if he wishes, and for as long as he wants. When he is satisfied, he will break the pink tower and reassemble it in its original place so that another child can use it.

The second feature aimed at increasing concentration is that these activity cycles occur over a 3-hour period of time (called the "external duty cycle"l). During these 3 hours, children can mostly choose classes independently and together with others, as well as find their own rhythm of activity, freely moving around the classroom at the same time. One may wonder what the role of the teacher is during this period. Although children have a lot of freedom in what they do, their freedom is not unlimited. The role of the teacher is to guide children who find it difficult to choose materials or who bother others, introduce new materials to children who are ready for new challenges, and conduct lessons in small groups. Decisions about what to teach are made based on careful observations of children and depend on their needs.

Thus, there are two aspects of Montessori classrooms that are very different from regular classrooms: the teaching materials themselves and the individual, independent nature of teaching under the expert guidance of the teacher. The key elements of the pedagogical system of M. Montessori are the features of the training materials themselves (for example, each element of the material defines only one concept, each contains a means of error control that allows self-correction, learning moves from concrete to abstract concepts) and a controlled way of interacting with these materials (for example, independent choice, multiple and active participation, subsequent cleaning, freedom from interruption, lack of ratings and external incentives). This can potentially benefit development and learning compared to teaching in a regular classroom.

So, analyzing the theoretical foundations of M. Montessori's pedagogical system, we can summarize the following results.

The principles of Montessori classes involve the interaction of the child with the objects surrounding him daily in everyday life. Musical greetings are used as physical minutes. But the presence of an adult and his participation in cognition is given a secondary role. The first is the interest of the child. One of the leading principles is the reliance on sensitivity, that is, the child's susceptibility to certain stimuli at different age stages.

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