

Observation Outline

Submitted to:

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Montessori Observation Outline

- I. Observation – to watch, see, analyze, pay attention to.
 - A. Based on revelations.
 1. Discoveries – discovered principles of method.
 2. Inventions – something new.
 3. Discovery – realization of what is already in existence.
 - B. How an observation is made.
 1. Use as a tool in observational sciences.
 2. Use as a method in observational sciences.

- II. Nature and Significance of Observation
 - A. At birth – all potentials and human characteristics are there but have to be realized and actualized.
 - B. Montessori made observations of the child and made discoveries through them.
 1. Montessori had these; we need them:
 - a. Open mind and unprejudiced.
 - b. Intuition and inspiration.
 - c. Desire to learn the truth.
 2. Discoveries were made through observation.
 3. The child gave birth to the method.
 - a. Dr. Montessori acted as the midwife – gave it form.
 - b. She laid down the principles.
 4. Observation was the means, the tool, the CORNERSTONE.
 - a. Origin of method depended on it.
 - i. It was the first step.
 - ii. Also the heartbeat of the method (first development of the child)
 - iii. Depended on preservation
 - b. The other parts of the method are build upon it.
 - C. Use special environment that is prepared for the child

- III. Characteristics of Observation.
 - A. Be passionate.
 1. Study plant cultivation.
 2. Observe not only the child, but the environment as well
 - B. Without trying to control them.
 - C. Complicated because we think we know.
 - D. Limitations, objectivity.
 - E. Unobtrusiveness – hide ourselves, not project ourselves.
 - F. Immobility and alertness, interest, modesty and humility, patience, exactness, continuous and repetitive.
 - G. Unprejudiced – noisy, running around, can't pay attention.
 - H. We must know the effect of us on the children before we observe.
 - I. Observe physical and psychological phenomena.
 - J. The child will be affected by our prejudices.
 1. Keep an open mind.

2. Don't make assumptions.

K. Patience.

1. Understanding – child, characteristics.
 - a. Moving around, working.
 - b. Provide what's needed.
2. Lack of patience means lack of understanding.
3. Faith/Confidence in child.
 - a. Child will show their true nature.
 - b. Child will acquire the needs for development.

L. Modesty/Humility – not the same as humiliation.

1. We have it – humble or unassuming character.
2. Ability to know our own limitations.
3. Recognize child has certain powers we don't.
 - a. Constant language.
 - b. Child can do in 3 years what an adult does in 60 years.
4. Respect for the child.
 - a. For what they can do.
 - b. For the sensitive periods.

M. Observe how children handle the material.

1. 1st – learn how to handle material.
2. 2nd – show activity.
3. Care for work.
 - a. We must practice as we preach.
 - b. The way we handle materials is part of our life too.
4. Order in environment.
 - a. Free to choose work.
 - b. Replace work where it was found.
5. Five Guidelines for Children and Us.
 - a. Put away as it was found.
 - b. Don't take materials that haven't been shown/presented to you.
 - c. Free to ask for presentation.
 - d. Walk in the environment.
 - e. Talk quietly (don't whisper).

N. Recognize the presence of activity.

1. Observing others, thinking about work.
2. Sometimes don't want to do anything until after 3-4 weeks.

O. Need knowledge about child to observe.

1. Lack of knowledge hinders children more than lack of love.
2. Need both:
 - a. Judge objectively.
 - b. Capacity to empathize but avoid over-sentimentality.

IV. Children's House – prepared for the child's needs.

A. Provides children with activities that are purposeful.

1. Child sized furniture.
2. Freedom to move within the environment.

B. Our responsibility.

1. Teach name lessons.
2. Grace and Courtesy lessons.
3. Present all else and then leave the child on own and observe.
4. Help/present/arouse interest in child.
 - a. Leads to repetition/concentration.
 - b. Responsibility is to create conditions that arouse the child's interest and provide a favorable environment for the child's needs.
 - i. Child's deep interest.
 - ii. Spirit will respond to stimulus.

V. Points to Notice as an Aid to Observation.

- A. Child's items.
- B. Details with which we show activity.
- C. The care we take captures their attention.
- D. Up to us to arouse their interest.
- E. If we do it perfectly the child wants to do it.
- F. Will (conscious power) is constructed by the child himself.
- G. Helps us know what needs of the child are.
 1. Be alert to see subtle phenomena.
 2. Encourage the parents to observe.
 - a. Give guidelines.
 - b. Discuss the benefits

References

Grant-Miller, J. (2005). *Montessori-Observation*. MediaSite Recording. St. Paul, MN: The College of St. Catherine.