

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MONTESSORI TEACHING METHOD IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' INTEREST AT GIFTED KIDS MONTESSORI SCHOOL IN PONTIANAK**Udur Delima Sibatuara**

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to investigate the Montessori teaching method to improve students' interest, and to create outstanding young children who are independent, discipline, responsible, and creative by providing a type of learning system called Montessori. It is the learning approach types that provides attractive set of educational as materials and books, creative teachers and supporting environment. The investigation used the qualitative and observational methods. The sample for the study comprised 20 kindergarten pupils from Gifted Kids Montessori School located in Pontianak. The instruments that the writer used for collecting data were questionnaires, interviews, and the observations. Based on the study the writer concluded that kids (under age six) have intern desire to learn and explore, with the help of parent, peers way and environment which supporting they can achieve quality of learning well. This study offers suggestion to future researchers on alternative learning methods, especially for the parents of very young children. The findings of this research could be used as a model for learning other subjects.

Keywords: Montessori, Learning, Teaching, Sensory

Introduction

As in fact that young children (kids) are in their most formative years. They learn rapidly from birth to age six, and realize the importance of early childhood education. Maria Montessori (2008: 28) stated that young children (under age six) are uninterrupted activity periods of one, two, or three hours. Students in a three-year age range frequently share a classroom, and they are encouraged to help each other to learn. According to Hanstock (1997: 40) Montessori programs are especially good for children who are self-directed, can work independently for extended lengths of time, and work well alone or in a small group. These programs are ideal for children easily astonished by noise, chaos, and disorder. The individual learning lets students to work at their own pace and provide a healthy environment for children with special needs. Montessori provides a responsive environment to those with special needs, and its adaption has long been found useful by teachers in all areas of special education. Classes are supplied with Montessori-specific play and learning materials planned to encourage self-directed learning while stimulating a child's senses and building motor skills. Hanstock (1997: 67) stated that work and play are often the same thing to the young child. Montessori observed at the Children's House showed great interest, enthusiasm, and actual pleasure in the work, and the work itself provided stimulus for a sense of achievement. The children were allowed to work at their own rate of speed, completing the "cycles of activity" so necessary to their growth and development.

Gifted Kids Montessori School is one of the learning institute for preschool students in Pontianak that use Montessori method and provide 5 major areas of learning such as culture and science, practical life, sensorial, language, and mathematic as the main lesson. The children also learn 3 languages such as English, Chinese, and Indonesian. The writers think that Montessori teaching method is good because that method use the real thing to teach the child, and we think that by learning with the real thing will improve student's interest to study. Therefore, the study investigates *The Significance of Montessori Teaching Method in Improving Students' Interest at Gifted Kids Montessori School in Pontianak*.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this research is concerned about the Significance of Montessori Teaching Method in Improving Students' Interest at Gifted Kids Montessori School in Pontianak. The writer focusses of studies related to the implementation of Montessori method at a primary school where students and teachers speak English at playground. Besides that, students are interested to the Montessori learning method because it will influence children's performance in studying inside and outside the classroom.

This research is to answer the following problems:

- 1) Do teachers implement to the Montessori teaching method?
- 2) Are the students interested to the Montessori learning method?
- 3) Do the students become more disciplined and responsible by using the Montessori method?

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this research is to investigate the Significance of Montessori Teaching Method in Improving Students' Interest at Gifted Kids Montessori School in Pontianak. The specific objectives of the study are to investigate if the teachers implement the Montessori teaching method, to investigate if students' interest to the Montessori learning method, and to investigate if the Montessori method helps the students become more responsible and disciplined.

Literature Review

A. Montessori Teaching Method

1. Teaching Method

A teaching method contains the principles and means used for instruction to be implemented to achieve the desired learning by students. These approaches are determined partly on subject matter to be taught and by the nature of the learners.

According to Mackey (1975:155), method may mean different things to the different people. In other words, it means a set of teaching procedures; for others, the avoidance of teaching procedures. It is the primary of a language skill for some, but for others, it is the type and amount of vocabulary and structure. Theoretically, a method is related to an approach, organized by the design, and practically realized in procedure (Richards and Rodgers, 2001: 45).

Teaching method used the instruction to implement by the teachers to achieve the desired learning by the students. The teaching method also focus on desired learning outcomes for students, in the form of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes.

2. Montessori Method

Montessori has a central belief that a child learns best in an environment that socially supports and respects the unique development of each individual. According to Montessori (1995: 18), "Montessori is an individualized approach to education for children from toddler through high school that helps each child reach full potential in all areas of life. Lillard (2005: 30) stated that "Montessori is characterized by multi-aged classrooms, a special set of educational materials, students chosen work in long time blocks, collaboration, the absence of grades and tests, and individual and small group instruction in both academic and social skill".

According to Lillard (1972: 50), The Montessori Method encourages students to be comfortable in their own environment. There are three primary principals of Montessori education as mention: observation, individual liberty, and the environment's preparation. Montessori education embodies the concept that respect for the child will teach the child to be respectful in the greater world. Dr. Montessori (2008; 60) believed that observation was the only scientific method suitable for studying children. She stated about the Montessori Method that she wrote, "The pedagogical method of observation has for its base the liberty of the child; and liberty is activity". The methodology of Montessori is designed to help children to become intrinsically motivated.

According to Paula Polk, There are six basic components to the Montessori classroom environment. They are the concepts of freedom, structure and order, reality and nature, beauty and atmosphere, the Montessori materials, and the development of community life. (Lillard, 1972: 53) Montessori described a classroom that had achieved her concept of free operation as "a room in which all the children move about usefully, intelligently, and voluntarily, without committing any rough or rude act."

B. Improving Student Interest

Dr. Montessori felt that it was important to the child to distinguish between fantasy and reality and to know the relative importance of each. She found that young children are more interested in imitating realistic things in their environment. While the Montessori classroom does not have a dress-up corner, children are involved with acting out stories and dramas. (Hainstock, 1997: 34)

According to Hainstock (1997: 91), didactic material renders auto-education possible, permits a methodical education of the senses. They are not upon the ability of the teacher did such education rest, but upon the didactic way. It represents the object that entices the spontaneous reaction of the children.

Methodology

The writer applies a qualitative research method in the process to fulfil the research problem, to analyze the significant of Montessori teaching. In this research, qualitative and

observation methods of data collection were used. The Montessori method of instruction was used as an independent variable in this research and the dependent variables were 20 students of Gifted Kids Montessori School. the writer observes how's interest the children with the Montessori learning method.

Result of Findings

A. Montessori Teaching Method

Delivering the material without knowing the method can be difficult if we don't know how to deliver it well. However, delivering the Montessori materials using the method can be a fun thing to do if you do the three-period lesson.

In delivering this Montessori Method, the writer observed and asked the students to do by themselves.



Figure 1.
Student Shows How to Work with Sound Cylinders in Sensory Area

In Figure 1, the students have been taught about sound cylinders. Then, the writers asked the students to match the cylinders with the same sound. Children were happy and enthusiastic by doing this sound cylinders, because they can differentiate from each sound and train their auditory senses.



Figure 2.
Student Shows Spindles Box in Mathematic Area

In Figure 2, the students have been taught about spindle box. The spindles explain the idea that the symbols signify a certain number of separate objects. The students also got the concept of zero and reinforce the natural sequence of the numerals.



Figure 3.
Students Listen to The Instruction about The Game in Language Area

In Figure 3, the writers hide the sandpaper letters inside the class randomly, and then the writers asked a pair of students to take the proper sandpaper letter.



Figure 4.
Student Shows Dressing Frame in Practical Life Area

In Figure 4, the students learn about dressing frame to improving their hand strength and task-persistence. Children concentrate with the dressing frame because it can prepare them become more independence.



Figure 5.
The Students Listen to The Explanation about Volcanoes.

In Figure 5, the student present “The Volcanoes” that has been taught by the teacher. The students very excited because they can work and understand how the vinegar and the baking soda make a carbon dioxide (a gas) it’s same like a lava that happen in volcanoes.

During delivering process, the writer can conclude that Montessori teaching method is a good method to teach the child. The child easier to understand with the explanation by seeing what have been the teacher shows to them. The child only need repetition to master one material. With the concept of three period lessons can make them more understand. The teacher taught the students individually so it can make them more concentrate in learning. The children naturally interested to the learning method. Not only with the method but also the materials that Dr. Montessori create. It is unique materials that can improve their ability to master the materials. In this research, the writers use five main majors of categories in Montessori Method such as language, arithmetic, culture and science, sensory, and practical life.

B. Students Interest

Based on the observation that the writer did, it can conclude that students’ interest during learning process:

- 1) The writers do observation to the students using Montessori teaching method, and the writers may see that the students’ interest with the material that have been show to them. They like to work with the materials because they think it is unique and it is real things.
- 2) The writers also observe that most of students enjoy freedom within limits, students are active participants in deciding what their focus of learning will be.
- 3) While the observation also, the writers may see that the students are able to act like mature, they learn to look critically at their work, and become adept at recognizing, correcting, and learning from their error.

C. Effect of Montessori Learning on Learners’ Sense of Responsibility and Discipline in the Class

One of the aims of the Montessori teaching is to raise competency and a sense of responsibility. Everybody has to play a certain role in the Montessori classroom. The teacher is devoted to making clear instructions and to prepare students for the learning environment. Students do not need expert teachers to accomplish successful learning.

According to the directress of Gifted Kids Montessori School, Miss B. said that Montessori classroom mixed the age in one class, and the students’ interest with the Montessori material which is use the real things such as wood, glass, basket. By using the Montessori materials can improve their creativity, imagination, their mind, and so on. Miss B said that Montessori teaching method is helpful because the children are interested with the materials and they can play it but also get the knowledge.

Here is the interview with Miss B:

Interviewer : *What do you think about Montessori teaching method?*

Miss B : *The Montessori method is a natural, extensive system of education designed to afford the child freedom to move and act in a planned environment encouraging self-development.*

- Interviewer* : *Is it work to apply Montessori Method?*
Miss B : *Yes, it is.*
- Interviewer* : *What is a prepared environment?*
Miss B : *Dr. Maria Montessori stated that two factors must be present for the child to develop. The first factor is a planned environment that cares for the child's physical health as well as the spiritual life. The second factor is the child's ability to move without restrictions in his/her environment where there are constructive activities for the child's development.*
- Interviewer* : *What are the principles of a prepared environment?*
Miss B : *There are four principles of a prepared environment such as freedom (to explore and movement), structure and order (class should reflect the same order as we have in the universe), beauty (uncluttered and well maintained), nature (object should be red and child-size), social environment (allows freedom to interact through work and play, develop empathy), Intellectual Environment (the culmination of the principles).*
- Interviewer* : *What are the important elements of the prepared environment?*
Miss B : *We prepare the Montessori things with the child size child and accessible, the flooring of the school is carpeted, use white or natural colors for the shelves and the walls.*
- Interviewer* : *Why do Montessori classes group different age levels together?*
Miss B : *The classes are organized to accommodate a two-or three-year age span, which lets younger students the inspiration of older children, who in turn benefit from serving as role models.*
- Interviewer* : *Why is Montessori classroom called children's house?*
Miss B : *The Montessori classroom is not the domain of the adults in charge, it is instead carefully prepared environment designed to facilitate the development of the children, independence and sense of personal empowerment. This is a children's community. The children move freely in it, choosing work that captures their interest. Even small children are responsible for the upkeep of their own environment. They prepare their own meal and drinks when they are hungry. Also, they go to the bathroom with no assistance.*
- Interviewer* : *What is the role of Montessori teachers?*
Miss B : *The Montessori teacher creates a well-prepared Montessori environment and an atmosphere of learning and inquisitiveness designed to move students from one activity and level to the next. While the children are working, the teachers allow them to learn from their own discoveries and draw their own conclusions. The Montessori teacher asks them how they would solve the problem without giving them the direct answers and actively engages children in the learning process and enhances critical thinking skills. In other words, children learn straight from their environment and other children, rather than from their teacher.*
- Interviewer* : *How to improve students' interest?*
Miss B : *We prepare the class materials completely. The students like the real things that likes our Montessori Materials.*
- Interviewer* : *What if the students do the work no in proper?*
Miss B : *The teachers will direct the students.*

Discussion of Findings

The aim of this study's is to investigate about how the teachers implement the Montessori teaching method, to investigate about the interest of the students to the Montessori learning method, and also to investigate whether the Montessori method helps the learners become more responsible and disciplined.

Based on the study, the Montessori method focuses on respecting and encouraging each child's individual differences, providing a nurturing environment to teach social interaction and emotional skills. This Montessori method apply the focus on early child development. The teachers of Montessori offer guidance, while the children are responsible for their own individual learning. The education of Montessori is aimed to stimulate interest in children. It taps into the interest of the students through the lessons given by the teachers. The children in Montessori schools learnt because they are interested in what they are learning about, and not merely memorizing information for achieveing grades or pass tests. Gifted Kids Montessori School is a school that provides an atmosphere to create personal interest in topics, and to capitalize on the interests of the children, thereby enhancing learning.

Conclusion

Based on the findings above, the students have positive perceptions towards the Significance of Montessori Teaching Method to Improving Students Interest at Gifted Kids Montessori School in Pontianak. This kindergartens that used Montessori system have continued to enjoy considerable popularity worldwide for long. The approach that used by Montessori is simply where the children learn in a unique way, distinct from the way of adults in way of learning. Instructors should not ignore the absorbent minds of these unique individuals of young children. The most importance thing is placed on sensory learning as an effective and efficient means of educating children. All teachera cannot ignore Montessori's spontaneity in the classroom. However, the creative concept of learning of Montessori has not offered yet a harmonious learning environment for the students. Hence, there is still room for improvement. Using Montessori teaching method can be an interesting way to teach the children and can improve students' interest. For the example, when the children come into the class they not see the book but the real thing that can encourage them to study and get the knowledge from the materials that they learn.

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