

## Work

Transforming the environment is the work of humans.

“Man is not a vegetative body which only lives on material nourishment, nor is he destined to sensorial emotions alone. Man is that superior being who is endowed with intelligence and is destined to do a great task on earth. He must transform it, conquer it, utilize it, and construct a new world full of marvels which surpasses and overrules the wonders of nature. It is man who created civilization. The work is unlimited, and it is the aim of his physical limbs. From his first appearance on earth, man has been a worker.” (Maria Montessori, *The Formation of Man*, Clio, 69)

Montessori talks about work of the adult and work of the child and that “the battle between adult and child” (*The Secret of Childhood*) is about different kinds of WORK.

Adult work is focused on efficiency and finding faster and more effective ways of meeting needs. This impacts the environment in outcome-oriented ways; adult work is driven by external factors/forces; is dependent on the resources available; involves networking to make more productive and efficient; and adults form a collective discipline to do this work.

The child’s work, in contrast, is self-construction and development; it is not outcome/product focused and therefore, the child’s work does not have the same manifestation as the adult’s work. Work of the child must be interaction with their environment that allows them to develop their own characteristics and respond to their own needs (innate and wired in us). Every child is primed internally to interact and adapt with their environment.

“The child’s work belongs to another order and has a wholly different force from the work of the adult. Indeed, one might say that one is opposed to the other. The child’s work is done unconsciously, in abandonment to a mysterious spiritual energy, actively engaged in creation.” (Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, 169)

The adult often sees the child’s work as a waste of time due to perceived inefficiencies.

“He must be banished to living in a place apart, which, if it is not the prison assigned to extra-social adults, it is something corresponding, be its name nursery, playroom or school. Here are places to where the child is banished till he can live in the adult world without disturbing it. Then he may be admitted to society.” (Maria Montessori, *The Secret of Childhood*, 166)

Application of the Planes of Development in the Third Plane:

Work of the adolescent is “the role he will play in society”. It is not a specific role but rather it means that he has a role or makes a contribution at all times. The work of the adolescent is STILL self-construction, even if its purpose begins to take on the purposes of adult work in the world. It is always a risk in assuming adolescents are doing adult work (adolescent is between child and adult) – they are still developing neurologically, physically, socially. Integration is still taking place and is in parallel to toddlers (first and third plane similarity). The developmental mechanism for the work of adolescents is SOCIAL ORGANIZATION. We should pursue experiences that lay the pathways of productive engagement in socially organised activities of the group.

“Education should therefore include the two forms of work, manual and intellectual, for the same person, and thus make it understood by practical experience that these two kinds complete each other and are equally essential to a civilized existence.” (Maria Montessori, *From Childhood to Adolescence*, 61)