“Pedagogy not designed to measure the sensation, but educate the senses” p. 167

The teacher makes “a pedagogical experiment (presents a lesson) with a didactic object (material) and awaits the spontaneous reaction of the child.” The teacher (or directress) indeed guides the child into connection with materials. The teacher does not wait for “spontaneous choice”, but rather the natural or “spontaneous reaction” of the child to the material.

Montessori noted the different reactions of “deficient” children and “normal” children:

First: For deficient children the material makes education possible; for the normal child the materials provoke auto-education.

From this observation Montessori concluded that the context of the normal child’s exploration of the material must be liberty; and the role of the teacher of normal children was to observe this exploration of the material.

For the normal child repeats the use of the material with growing interest, and with growing energy. The aim of energy is to develop the energies, and through repetition (spontaneous activity) the child’s energies are increased.

Errors in the child’s manipulation of the materials indicate that the materials are fulfilling their task of educating the senses. “Indeed, it is precisely in these errors that the educational importance of the didactic materials lies, and when the child with evident security places each piece in its proper place, he has outgrown the exercise, and this piece of material becomes useless to him.” p. 171

“the teacher teaches little, and observes much”

Second: The aim of sensory education is the refinement of our perceptions (senses) through repetition.

Through repetition the senses are refined. Auto-education allows for this refinement of the senses. Nothing the teacher teaches can account for the development of the senses, only the child’s auto-education. The child must “act for himself”, and to “persist”.

The teacher intervenes only at the opportune moment and in the appropriate manner as to bring “a ray of light”, and in thus is the “personal art of the teacher.” p. 176

Third: The Seguin Three Period Lesson

“For normal children there exists a period preceding the Three Periods of Seguin a period which contains the real sense education. This is the acquisition of a fineness of differential perception, which can be obtained only through auto-education.” p. 178

Finally the isolation of the sense allows for the focus to be directed to the lesson at hand. p. 179