Clinical and Applied Sociology

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**Assignment # 2-Developmental Reading**

**Source One:** Denervaud, S., Knebel, J. F., Hagmann, P., & Gentaz, E. (2019). Beyond executive functions, creativity skills benefit academic outcomes: Insights from Montessori education. *PloS one*, *14*(11), e0225319.

**Comment 1:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:**  In terms of academic success, creative talents, and self-reported school well-being, Montessori students at the kindergarten level demonstrated superior performance compared to their counterparts in regular schools. Apart from working memory, there were no discernible disparities in overall executive functioning. In addition, a multiple mediation model was employed to ascertain the relevance of creative ability on academic results, specifically in relation to the impact of the school experience. The aforementioned data shed light on the potentially exaggerated significance of executive functions as the primary factor influencing the academic advancement of Montessori student`s, therefore warranting more research. This study proposes that the implementation of self-directed creative execution has a positive impact on the holistic development of children attending Montessori schools.

In a professional setting characterized by the anticipated superiority of artificial intelligence over humans in the execution of routine tasks, it is imperative to establish pedagogical strategies that foster a workforce capable of engaging in creative endeavors. This is essential in order to sustain its collaborative advantage and effectively harness the benefits arising from advancements in autonomy and freedom facilitated by technological progress. There is a perspective held by certain individuals that a distinguishing characteristic of humans is their capacity to independently generate and execute innovative concepts. The conventional and prevailing educational approach in Western nations places a primary emphasis on academic accomplishments, hence immediately strengthening executive capabilities. One potential limitation of performance- and execution-oriented measurements is their tendency to overshadow comprehensive evaluations of child development, so potentially neglecting important considerations for addressing future difficulties. In contrast, alternative educational systems diverge from the conventional emphasis on accomplishment and instead adopt a more comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach to school courses.

**Essential Element:** Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my knowledge that alternative education equipping students with opportunities to be creative will enhance their ability to thrive in the new world of AI. Pedagogical tactics that develop a creative workforce are essential in a professional context where artificial intelligence will outperform humans in regular jobs. This is necessary to maintain its collaborative edge and capitalize on technology advances in autonomy and freedom. Human ability to autonomously originate and implement creative ideas is a distinctive trait. Western education emphasizes intellectual achievement, which boosts executive function. Performance- and execution-oriented assessments may overwhelm holistic child development evaluations, ignoring key future issues. Alternative educational systems emphasize transdisciplinary learning rather than achievement.

**Contextualization:**  During my Montessori Administrators Credential training, I received instruction emphasizing the exclusion of technological devices in Primary classrooms. Instead, the focus was placed on providing children with tangible resources exclusively for educational purposes. Initially, I had uncertainty regarding my agreement with this viewpoint, since I perceived Maria Montessori to possess a visionary mindset that transcended her era. Speculatively, had she been alive in the present, it is likely that she would have directed her attention towards the forefront of technological advancements. As I delved deeper into my exploration of Montessori Methods throughout the early years, I gradually came to recognize the need of providing children with tangible materials to facilitate their comprehension and manipulation of developmental phases associated with concrete learning. This foundational understanding subsequently enables them to grasp abstract concepts more effectively. The thorough understanding of concepts may be hindered if students solely depend on artificial intelligence or technology. This phenomenon bears resemblance to the practice of teaching with a focus on test preparation. The practice of instructing students just to meet the requirements of standardized assessments hinders the ability to retain information over an extended period. The pedagogical approach of focusing instruction on exam preparation has been found to potentially enhance students' performance on assessments. However, this method often leads to a tendency for students to prioritize rote memorization over engaging in practical application or developing critical thinking skills.

**Source Two:** Shaw, L. F. (2017). *Exploration of Normalization: A Construct Foundational To Montessori Teacher Evaluation* (Doctoral dissertation, The Johns Hopkins University).

**Comment 2:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** The Montessori National Curriculum for the Second Plane aims to build self-confidence, self-direction, self-responsibility, self-discipline, and concentration. The objective is for students to be able to take responsibility for their own learning and collaborate effectively with peers without the need for constant instructor help. Montessori considers children with these tendencies "typical" or within the anticipated range of development. Montessori's careful study of children from various cultures shows that choosing and engaging in intentional, experiencing activities transforms children. The development of a strong work ethic, the capacity to focus for extended periods, self-control, and good social skills has occurred. Change is called "normalization," which the author considers the most important consequence of their effort.

**Essential Element:** Applications for Sociological Research

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my understanding of the importance of learning responsibility and uninterrupted work cycles that lead to creativity engagement and focus that bring about executive function skills necessary for change.

**Contextualization:** This reminds me of a time whenI once observed a four-year-old student in a Montessori Primary classroom distributing bead chains as far as he could reach around the room. The child then took small number markers and counted the beads off by nines and then as he ran out of nine bead chains skipped to using eights. I was captivated as he completed the task after an hour or more of intense concentration. At the age of four, he had inadvertently multiplied a number in the seven thousands using bead chains. The child's concentration and uninterrupted work supported his executive function skills and inspired him to continue with enthusiasm.

**Comment 3:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** Self-regulated learners undergo three process phases: planning, performance, and self-reflection, learned through modeling or explicit teaching. During forethought, students define personal objectives and devise tactics to accomplish them. During the performance phase, students employ the strategies discovered in the planning phase and self-observe, experiment, and record their learning time. In the third step, students participate in self-reflection, including self-judgment and self-reaction. Two types of self-judgment exist self-evaluation (comparing performance to standards) and causal attribution. Self-reaction can lead to self-satisfaction, good emotions, defensiveness, or adaptability, which can lead to increased learning. In the last step of self-regulated learning, self-reflections shape later forethought, feeding back into the cycle.

**Essential Element:** Applications for Sociological Research

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my prior knowledge enhancing my understanding of how self-regulated learners plan, perform, and reflect. Examples of explicit instruction can teach these steps. Students design their goals and strategies. The performance phase uses the concepts students learned during planning. They also self-observe, experiment, and measure their learning time. The final phase is for students to evaluate and respond to themselves.

**Contextualization:** This makes me remember when I owned my Child Care Center I used the HighScope Curriculum. The core of the HighScope daily routine is the plan-do-review sequence, in which children make decisions about what they will do, carry out their ideas, and reflect with adults and peers on their activities. These portions of the day are known as planning time, work time, and recall time. The High/Scope approach focuses on the provision of a developmentally appropriate curriculum, consistent and authentic relationships with adults, and the opportunity for children to engage in active learning experiences and develop initiative, decision-making, and problem-solving skills.

This is referred to similarly by Montessori as introduce, practice, and mastery, or in the three-period lesson as introduce, association/recognition, and recall.

**Source Three:** McCatharn, J. (2021). *Interventions Targeting the Executive Function Skills of Young Children* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Maryland, College Park).

**Comment 4:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** Enhancing EF abilities in early years can be critical and hopeful, as they equip students with tools to regulate impulsivity and make choices that support goal achievement. Students without good EF abilities may start school at a disadvantage, which may grow over time. Studying EF abilities and treatments can improve educational practices and student experience by including mindfulness and social skill programs alongside academic skills. Strong EF skills (cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control, and working memory) are crucial for successful learning and relationships in school and beyond this is accomplished by examining the impact of specific intervention approaches on young children's EF skills. EF development occurs rapidly from 3 to 6 years old, and theoretically, EF is likely most accurately measured as a unitary construct at this age because the three domains (cognitive flexibility, inhibitory control, working memory) work so closely together it is hard to distinguish them. As mentioned, while a 5-year-old and an 8-year-old are “close” in age, their EF skill development and measurement may be very different. Therefore, it is important to group interventions and approaches by age to better understand what works best with different age groups and student populations.

**Essential Element:** Clinical Sociology

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** In order to enhance comprehension of the most effective strategies for diverse age groups and student demographics, it is imperative to classify interventions and methodologies based on age. This enhances my understanding of the various factors that influence the grouping of children, including age, intellectual abilities, and interests. The concept of a "sensitive period" in Montessori education pertains to a certain timeframe during which a child's attention and focus are directed towards the acquisition of a particular skill or area of knowledge.

**Contextualization:** This makes me think of our gifted students who skipped a grade. By providing them with academic options, we frequently create new problems in which they are unable to communicate with peers and have social concerns. Students are frustrated by the fact that they may require not only the intellectual aptitude grouping but also the social development and interest grouping. This is why differentiated learning is so important and why traditional education systems are not always conducive to the success of all students.

**Source Four:**

 Nanis. (2019, April 29). Executive Function Curriculum. Published by ProQuest LLC Pro Quest:13897927, Article Pro Quest:13897927.

**Comment 5:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** **­** Organization is the capacity to design and manage systems for tracking information and things. As 6th graders transition from elementary to middle school, organization is crucial for success and life skills. Middle schools typically have five content area teachers and up to seven special area teachers. An organized individual may maintain efficient organizing systems, appear on time to class, and fulfill deadlines.

Planning and prioritizing involves creating steps to achieve goals and making judgments regarding emphasis. Early exploration of goal planning and managing various duties is crucial for middle schoolers, as these are frequently new issues. Planning and prioritizing assignments is a significant adjustment from elementary to middle school owing to higher expectations and managing several teachers. These abilities are essential for completing classwork, homework, and long-term tasks, as well as studying for exams and quizzes. Effective planning and prioritization are crucial for students balancing activities with friends, family, and extracurriculars.

**Essential Element:** Sociological Interventions

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my understanding that there is a need to incorporate formative activities involving inspiration, repetition, and focus on specifics while taking into account the natural impulses and needs that occur during the various stages of childhood in order to support a student's ability to succeed academically.

**Contextualization:** This prompts me to contemplate my daughter. In the previous academic year, she transitioned to a different school. Prior to this, she had always been enrolled in a small Montessori school. She was required to acquire the skills necessary for utilizing the bus, adapt to changes in classrooms and instructors, test-taking and note-taking, familiarize herself with the concept of homework, and the process of ordering meals. The process involved significant changes and necessitated careful navigation and preparation, accompanied by substantial support. The prompt assistance in developing effective planning and prioritization skills was vital for her to ensure a prosperous start to the academic year.

**Comment 6:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Task initiation refers to the cognitive capacity to identify the appropriate moment to begin a task and proceed with it promptly, without succumbing to the tendency of delaying or postponing its execution. The capacity of a student to begin an assignment with little delay encompasses several dimensions. The ability to concentrate on a task, as well as maintain and transition attention, are fundamental components of task beginning. In the context of sixth-grade students diagnosed with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or learning difficulties, the ability to concentrate and transition attention might be a significant obstacle when initiating a given task. The challenges associated with shifting attention become apparent in the context of a classroom environment, particularly at instances when the instructor transitions between different tasks.

**Essential Element:** Applications for Sociological Research

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is a variant of my prior knowledge or belief. While each child processes and funnels at their own speed and method of organization, a student's ability to start an assignment quickly has several traits. The traits being, the capacity to focus, sustain, and transfer attention is crucial to task initiation.

**Contextualization:** This comment presents a challenge for me as I believe that granting students greater instructional freedom and autonomy would mitigate the need for frequent shifts in focus. Consequently, students would be afforded continuous work cycles, enabling them to accomplish tasks in alignment with their self-determined objectives.

**Comment 7:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** Working Memory is the capacity to retain and use information to complete a task. During the transition from elementary to middle school, students with weak working memories will have difficulty. The students have a greater number of instructors with diverse routines and expectations. Students in elementary school memorize math concepts and spelling norms. Middle school students are expected to have perfected these skills and to employ them when completing more complex assignments, such as solving multi­step word problems and composing essays. When a student's memory is focused on how to spell a particular word, they frequently lose their train of thought while composing, which makes the task more difficult.

**Essential Element:** Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice, Applications for Sociological Research

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This information supports the understanding that middle school children frequently encounter challenges throughout their transition to a phase where they assume greater responsibility for their own study and engage with more intricate academic tasks.

**Contextualization:** Observing a child's struggle to keep pace with their peers in the classroom, particularly when hindered by an educational deficit or a lack of retained knowledge, can be a source of frustration. This impediment prevents them from effectively progressing to subsequent tasks or lessons. The presence of basic knowledge and skills is crucial for individuals to effectively engage with complex tasks, as simple queries might serve as distractions when such foundational grounds are lacking. If students are not provided with early support to develop autonomy and given the appropriate opportunity to enhance and refine their skills, they may rapidly lag behind and experience discouragement.

**Source Five:** Childers, A. S. (2020). *Embedding Executive Function Skills into the General Curriculum as a Way to Prepare Students for the 21st Century: A Case Study in Building Capacity in Educators* (Doctoral dissertation, Gardner-Webb University).

**Comment 8:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** Students with autism spectrum disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, bipolar illness, Tourette's syndrome, traumatic brain traumas, and learning difficulties may also have impaired executive function processes. As more children with diagnoses affecting executive functions enter general education classrooms, instructors must be aware of research-based ways to assist these students. Executive function interventions in the classroom should incorporate direct instruction of curriculum-related metacognitive strategies in an organized systematic way. Strategy training involves scaffolding, modeling, and plenty of practice. To promote successful strategy usage, instructors should involve students in the process. Children and adolescents should understand their cognitive strengths and limitations and contribute to addressing shortcomings. By recognizing their learning styles, children may better comprehend what is easy and difficult for them and identify circumstances that require strategies.

**Essential Element:** Clinical Sociology

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my understanding of how involving students in their learning process will help teachers encourage effective method use. Students should be aware of their cognitive abilities, both strengths and weaknesses , and be encouraged to help correct problems. Children can better understand what is easy and challenging for them and recognize situations that call for tactics by understanding their learning styles.

**Contextualization:** In my personal life, I am confronted with the presence of depression as I witness my husband struggling with this condition. My husband deals with a diagnosis of Tourette's-Syndrome, anxiety disorder, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).He is consistently facing challenges due to a lack of adequate support for executive functioning. The sole factor that aids me in assisting him in navigating through this situation is maintaining a consistent emphasis on purpose and spirituality. He often reflect on his negative academic experiences and how he felt lost and unsupported as a student and disliked school.

**Source Six:** Baker-Hewey, S. G. (2022). *How School Counselors Promote Growth Mindset in Their Practice: Five Views of Agency in the Motivation of Elementary Students*. The University of Maine.

**Comment 9:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** As educators strive to help students achieve their goals, the concept of a growth mindset has gained significance. According to this paradigm, motivation, persistent effort, and grit can lead to improved performance, skill development, and ability. Positive mindsets foster resilience and flexibility in the face of challenges, which enables students to keep progressing academically and personally. This dynamic approach is in contrast to a static view of individual capabilities. Encouraging resilience and progress through growth mindset strategies can be a useful tool for supportive educators to incorporate into their job description and the context of their position.

**Essential Element:** Sociological Interventions

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my prior understanding of how positive attitudes encourage resilience and adaptability, helping children succeed academically and psychologically. Growth mindset methods can help supportive educators promote resilience and progress in their job description and context.

**Contextualization:** I have had the privilege of conducting observations on students within both conventional educational environments and Montessori educational settings. The inherent value of Montessori education lies in the observation of children as they develop an appreciation for the concentration and iterative problem-solving involved in acquiring knowledge, so fostering a profound connection between the child and the subject matter until a state of mastery is achieved. The experience of achieving a goal can serve as a driving force for the student, fostering the determination and focused effort necessary to attain mastery.

**Comment 10:**

**Quote/Paraphrase** School counseling is unique and complex. Although school counselors shared a focus on student potential, goal-setting, and positive outcomes, there was significant variation in how students advanced growth mindset strategies. Participants shared instances of how they detect challenges, offer creative solutions, and spend time and energy to assist students in achieving their goals. There are numerous approaches to promoting a growth mindset in schools. Venues, including support services, classrooms, and other educational facilities. To maximize student accomplishment, educators cooperate. This study found that school counselors are essential to the response system. Developing their own learning techniques, they evolve in pursuit of wide intellectual and personal advancement. Thus, their efforts determine the educational system's success.

**Essential Element:** Applications for Sociological Research, Applied Sociology and Sociological Practice

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my knowledge that in order to optimize student success, educators collaborate with support services and other educational facilities. School systems need school counselors who help to develop learning methods to support student progress intellectually and personally.

**Contextualization:** I could not have hoped for a more level-headed and straightforward person to interact with our students than the Intervention Specialist we have at our school. She has devised a variety of strategies for students that consider their ages and developmental stages. Excellent academic achievement can be attributed to the student's awareness of individual differences and requirements among children.

**Source Seven:** Cohene, K. L. (2019). *Executive functions as predictors of math and adaptive skills among students with ASD and ADHD at the elementary and secondary levels*. McGill University (Canada).

**Comment 11:**

**Quote/Paraphrase:** Impaired executive function skills sometimes hinder the integration of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) in conventional classrooms. Researchers have debated the specific EF profiles of persons with ASD or ADHD, leading to efforts to scientifically separate these two groups.

**Essential Element:** Applications for Sociological Research

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This is additive to my current understanding that students with ADHD and ASD have executive function skill deficits.

**Contextualization:**  In terms of executive functioning skill deficiencies, students with ADHD and ASD share numerous similarities and differences. Supporting these students and providing them with improvement tools is crucial to their academic success and should be incorporated into their daily curriculum.

**Comment 12:**

**Quote/Paraphrase**

Inhibition, shifting/cognitive flexibility, and planning/working memory are frequently cited as the three most essential EF processes among the many others. Shifting is the cognitive process of switching between different activities, actions, processes, or mental states. ASD is typically associated with cognitive flexibility issues, which may contribute to the rigidity and repetitive behaviors that are key to the diagnosis of the illness (EF deficiency). Poor cognitive flexibility is characterized by preserving or stereotypical behaviors and self-control issues, indicating difficulty adapting to changing contexts. Cognitive inflexibility hinders daily life adaptation, including adapting to changes in plans, routines, and unexpected demands. It has been suggested that working memory includes monitoring and coding incoming inputs and replacing unnecessary information with more relevant and helpful information. Effective planning and working memory are essential for setting goals, prioritizing tasks, and initiating responses. While no diagnostic criteria for ASD or ADHD, there is consensus that individuals with both conditions experience limitations in planning and working memory.

**Essential Element:** Clinical Sociology

**Additive/Variant Analysis:** This adds to my understanding that cognitive inflexibility makes it difficult to adjust to changes in plans, routines, and unanticipated demands in everyday life. Working memory is thought to comprise monitoring and coding incoming data, as well as replacing superfluous information with more relevant and beneficial information. Setting objectives, prioritizing activities, and starting reactions all need effective planning and working memory.

**Contextualization:** This reminds me of a hyper-literal student at our school, whose extreme literalness necessitates extensive day-to-day planning by our staff and his family in order to accommodate any potential changes. If he has a schedule and something disrupts it, he struggles and becomes combative to the point of stubbornness, which could be detrimental during fire drills, field excursions, or when substitute teachers are needed. We have to help navigate through this as we remind him of times that we were able to get through adjustments prior and everything worked out.

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