Movement and focus and concentration in a toddler Montessori classroom?

An Action Research Report
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The purpose of this action research project was to determine whether or not the provision of movement activities, providing developmentally appropriate Montessori Practical Life lessons that incorporate intentional movements, and visiting a gross-motor room would contribute to the development of concentration and overall classroom normalization during the uninterrupted work cycle in a toddler classroom.
Background Information

• The implementation of my research took place over the course of a six-week period starting in September 2016 and ending in October.

• Scope and sequence of developmentally appropriate gross motor lessons and activities as well as Montessori Practical Life lessons were developed.

• A movement teacher for the gross motor room was hired. The gross-motor movement teacher learned over 200 movement activities and developed the skills to implement the curriculum and lesson plans for a toddler gross motor room.

• Twenty-five children age 21months to 3 years, from three toddler classrooms, participated in this study.
Movement
Movement
Data

1: Teacher-generated artifacts pre/post intervention to evaluate what effect movement interventions had on student concentration.

2: Inquiry Data - Pre and Post Feedback questionnaires for teachers to measure student attention.

3: Observational Data - Checklist to track focus/concentration and frequency. Tally sheet to track the number of times children were distracted throughout the day, number of works initiated and completed and to monitor changes in concentration. End of the day narratives to document observations and track if the student participated in the gross-motor room that day.

Source 4: Focus Group with teachers at the end of the study. What is the measure they are using.
Results

Toddler students in my classroom can independently complete a two-hour cycle of work without adult intervention.

Toddler students in my classroom stay on task and complete work independently chosen from shelves.

Toddler students in my classroom restore completed activities back to its original place and choose a new activity to work with independently.

Toddler students in my classroom are calm and independent.

Toddler students in my classroom generally focus and concentrate during the morning work-cycle.
Results

Mean, Median, and Mode of Times Focused

Correlation Between Gross Motor Room Visits, Times Focused and Completed Two Hour Work Cycle
The data suggests that the movement interventions led to an overall increase of focus and concentration in the classroom during the Montessori uninterrupted work cycle. Based on the data, there is a correlation between movement intervention activities and concentration levels. The focus and concentration levels were consistent when students had adjusted to the classroom environment, had ample Practical Life lessons to work with and had the opportunity to visit the gross motor classroom. The positive effects of the intervention were recorded by each teacher in the post-intervention survey and reflection.
Teacher Take-away

• Toddlers are in a sensitive period for movement. A contributing factor in non-focus during the Montessori work cycle is the need for more opportunities for movement to enhance the child’s overall work experience in the classroom.
Questions? Comments?