



The Montessori OBSERVER

Normalization

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The "Montessori" Certificate

Montessori teacher training courses, such as the 1982-83 IMS/Santa Rosa course now completing in northern California, normally issue a "Montessori" certificate to graduates to acknowledge their completion of such course and to indicate preparation for Montessori teaching. Notably, IMS issues its certificate to acknowledge successful completion of extensive academic and practical course work directed to the effective application of Montessori principles with young children.

The "Montessori" certificate is generally perceived by the general public as a statement of one's skill and ability to effectively create and supervise a Montessori environment. Such a public view reflects the common notion in society that "certification" in a field is the consumer's assurance of complete competency and qualification. However, in Montessori education, such a public view of the "Montessori" certificate is unwarranted on several grounds.

First, one's character and commitment — not words on a "certificate" — establish one's fundamental claim and qualification as an effective, genuine Montessori teacher; ". . . not words, but virtues, are her main qualifications." (M. Montessori *from Discovery of the Child, p. 150*). Ultimately, emergence of the "normalized" child reveals one's "qualifications" as an effective Montessori teacher.

Second, a "Montessori" certificate in the United States has no uniform meaning or basis since such certification reflects no common accreditation procedure. In short, certificates can be issued by individuals, schools or organizations for completion of course work ranging from a brief seminar to a lengthy multi-phase course over the space of several years.

Third, the value of a "Montessori" certificate — as a public guarantee of one's qualifications and competency — essentially reflects only the nature and purpose of the issuing entity. Since the name "Montessori" is unregistered by the

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Children engaged in a weaving project at the Harborlight Montessori School (Beverly, MA).

Montessori in Massachusetts - *A Harborlight on the Ocean*

The Harborlight Montessori School (Beverly, Massachusetts) is located on the ocean (the historic "North Shore") about ½ hour north of Boston, Massachusetts. This IMS member school is situated on four beautifully wooded acres of land and is close to beaches, a wildlife sanctuary, museums and colleges.

The school, founded in 1973 as a non-profit corporation, began with an enrollment of 36 children in one morning class. Presently, 130 children are served in a program which includes four pre-school classes, one elementary class, extended day, day care and a summer camp. Special program features include music, creative movement, dance, swimming, gymnastics, parent education and after school creative discovery classes.

The Harborlight school has hosted summer staff training workshops and activities sponsored by the Montessori Association of New England (M.A.N.E.). Notably, the school will be having its first of a series of Montessori workshops for teachers and administrators the week of August 29, 1983. Housing will be available nearby for out-of-town participants.

For further information about the school or workshop activities, contact: Susan E. McDonough, Administrator, Harborlight Montessori School, 243 Essex St., Beverly, MA 01915, (617) 922-1008.

Learning Spanish in Spring Valley, CA

The Helix Montessori School, (Spring Valley, California) includes Spanish as a foreign language at the school. This IMS member school also offers art and dance as special features of its school program.

Sarala K. Shah is the owner and director of this school which provides both full-day and half-day sessions for children aged 2-9. A summer Montessori program and day care are also offered.

For further information, contact: Sarala K. Shah, Helix Montessori School, 3941 Conrad Dr., Spring Valley, CA 92077, (619) 460-4121.



Child working in classroom at the Helix Montessori School (Spring Valley, CA).

Revolution

Society has built up walls, barriers. These the new education must cast down revealing the free horizon. The new education is a revolution, but without violence. It is the nonviolent revolution.

M. Montessori
from Absorbent Mind, p. 215

Normalization

"(Normalization) . . . is the most important single result of our whole work."

M. Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 204

The entire purpose of Montessori education covers on the psychological event which Dr. Montessori terms "normalization" — the shift of the child's condition of relative chaos and mental disorder to a state of harmony, peace and integration expressing its spontaneous, unfolding "true nature".

"Normalization," possible only with the young child, reveals the path of normal human development which can create a transformed, peaceful world for all humanity. Dr. Montessori clearly observed in the "normalized" child those human qualities needed for such a new world.

"Only 'normalized' children, aided by their environment, show in their subsequent development those wonderful powers that we describe: spontaneous discipline, continuous and happy work, social sentiments of help and sympathy for others." (Id., p. 207)

Present adult society — relying on prisons, police, soldiers and guns — reflects an impressive opposition to the reality of the "normalized" child.

Opposition to Normalization

Adult society, dominated by deviations of personality inbred from a long history of detrimental environmental conditions, fundamentally opposes the emergence of the "normalized" child. Within the Montessori community, these conditions tend to compel distortion and unconscious opposition to the genuine realization of "normalization" as envisioned by Dr. Montessori. Faced by such powerful social conditions, inexperienced teachers readily lose faith in the "new child" as a practical reality.

Courage to Confront

"The great majority of teachers, in the absence of sufficient training and experience, end by thinking that the 'new child' so eagerly expected and of whom so much has been said is nothing but a myth or an ideal." (Id., p. 270)

Montessori teachers seeking to realize the "normalized" child need considerable courage and determination to successfully confront the powerful forces allied against one's effective functioning in the child's environment. For example, one's creation of an effective Montessori environment inevitably confronts such forces as: impatient parents, tyrannical licensing agencies,

inappropriate school policies and scheduling, and the general conditions of insufficiency in society with regard to time and money. In the face of such powerful opposing forces, the search for the "normalized" child in the classroom can readily be postponed, diverted or completely abandoned.

Inner Preparation

"The first thing required of a teacher is that he be rightly disposed for his task."

M. Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 149

The first essential for normalization in the child is the teacher's *inner preparation* — to realize the inherent effectiveness of one's commitment to the application of the three fundamental Montessori principles: (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment." This commitment — independent of all forces outside the individual — is the total and complete inner basis for one's ability to realize normalization.

Point of Departure

Effective "inner preparation" comes about through communication and participation with one's commitment to Montessori principles. Such communication, an inherent basis of IMS Montessori teacher training, is provided through a series of academic and practical experiences which confront and resolve one's inner barriers opposing the realization of commitment to Montessori principles. Such effective preparation is a point of departure on the path towards ultimate realization of "normalization" in the classroom with children.

The Right Conditions

One's commitment to Montessori principles is the right precise psychic condition within which normalization is compelled to eventually emerge in the child. However, the actual emergence of such normalization in any given child unfolds as a process over time; i.e., a series of distinct stages, functions and behavior arriving ultimately at the "normalized" child.

Initial Function — Confrontation

"The little hell that has begun to break loose in the children will drag to itself everything within reach . . . do not fear to destroy evil."

M. Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 268

Once the teacher has prepared an orderly, beautiful physical environment, her initial function is to confront the unnormalized behavior in children. The teacher's lively friendly manner is her most potent means of drawing the children to her to redirect them to any number of useful tasks or games: e.g., clean-up a portion of the room; move furniture; come together for group music, active games or some enjoyable exercise.

Break the Flow

Essentially, the teacher's initial function aims to "break the flow of disturbing activity" by "distracting demonstrations of affection" and showing a "special and affectionate interest in the troublesome child" (Id., p. 279). Eye contact, initiated by the child, is a very effective indication of the appropriate moment for such distraction.

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Look for the September Observer featuring **Patience**

The Montessori Observer

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The Montessori Observer is mailed eight times each year to IMS members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the following months: Jan., Feb., March, April, May, Sept., Oct., and Nov. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and promote harmony within the Montessori community.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, U.S.A. The purpose of IMS is to support the effective application of Montessori principles throughout the world.

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Legal Briefs

Decision for "Liberty" in Michigan Court

Sheridan Rd. Baptist Church, et al v.
State of Michigan, et al, No. 80-26205-AZ
Decided: Dec. 29, 1982

On December 29, 1982, State Court Judge Ray Hotchkiss granted an injunction to prevent the state of Michigan from enforcing certain of its laws aiming to control private education in the state. Judge Hotchkiss held essentially that the challenged state laws were unconstitutional, in violation of the "due process" clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

The issue of state control of teacher qualifications in private schools was a critical issue in the case. The state argued that its certification requirements were a legitimate and reasonable effort "to provide some minimum standards to address things a teacher ought to know in order to avoid harm or detriment to children" (Court Decision, p. 5). Judge Hotchkiss disagreed stating that:

"The overwhelming weight of evidence presented, however, shows that teacher certification does not insure teacher competency and may even inhibit teacher competency." (Id., p. 6)

The Court also found unconstitutional the state's requirement that private school courses of study must conform to the "same standard" as public schools. Specifically, the Court stated that:

"... such a scheme does not even assure a minimum degree of quality in education; it merely requires that non-public schools be as good as, or bad as, the public schools in the district." (Id., p. 8)

The IMS federal court case now pending against the state of Maryland raises similar issues as those decided in the Sheridan case here. The decision in this Michigan state court case shows the way for other successful legal confrontation with government efforts to suppress "individual liberty" needed for the operation of effective Montessori schools.

INTELLIGENCE

"Our care of the child should be governed not by the desire 'to make him learn things,' but by the endeavor always to keep bright within him that light which is called the intelligence."

M. Montessori
from Spontaneous Activity
in Education, p. 240

Normalization

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Transition Phase - Calmness

"Now the class is calm. The children come into contact with reality; their occupations have a definite aim... Many of the (Montessori) schools get no further than this..." (Id., p. 269)

The teacher's initial firm, friendly guidance generally brings the classroom to a state of calm which to the untrained eye may appear as "normalized." However, lack of deep concentration reveals the fundamental absence of genuine "normalization";

"One, and only one, factor betrays the insecurity of this apparent order... it is that the children keep going from one thing to another." (Id., p. 269)

Concentration

Deep concentration is the critical moment towards which the effective Montessori teacher has consistently aimed throughout the "Transition Phase." Such critical moments of deep concentration are most unlikely to occur in classrooms which inhibit long individual work periods by such requirements as: lengthy collective lessons, frequent interruptions, group projects and group scheduling impositions.

Patience

"... it is not so easy... to stand still and watch." (Id., p. 272)

Prior to the critical moment of deep concentration, the teacher must exercise great patience to allow for the natural emergence of "normalization." During the difficult "Transition Phase," inexperienced teachers must resist the tendency to yield to feelings of urgency about the child's academic progress; e.g., giving lessons in the use of advanced Montessori sensorial and cultural materials.

Normalization

"The transition from one state to the other always follows a piece of work done by the hands on real things, work accompanied by mental concentration. This psychological event... we have called by the technical term 'Normalization.'" (Id., p. 204)

The state of peace and harmony which emerges spontaneously out of the child's deep concentration begins the child's new path of "normalized" activity and interest. Such a "normalized" child becomes significantly drawn to develop its intelligence and acquire a vast quantity of exact academic knowledge. The Montessori environment supports this unfolding "new child" by offering a full progression of materials and exercises consistent with the child's normal intellectual interest and needs.

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Positions & Placements

PLACEMENTS:

Montessori Teacher: for September 1983. Full Day Program. 12 year old school in Sunny Savannah, GA. Salary negotiable depending on experience. Send resume to: Gloria R. Ludwig, Ryan Hall Montessori School, 17 W. Park Ave., Savannah, GA 31401.

Director/ess: wanted mid-August for 3-6 class (possibly extended day). Our school is well established (20 yrs.) and is expanding. Send resume and reference to Staff Search Committee, Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, 1112 Broadmoor, Champaign, IL 61821.

Montessori Elementary Teachers: Needed for Santa Clara and Campbell locations. Salary open to negotiation depending on training and experience. Please call or write: Marina Moustakas, Rainbow Montessori, 2105 Los Padres, Santa Clara, CA 95050, (408) 241-8662.

Montessori Teachers: (3-6) Two needed for 3-6 classes. One position requires assistant administrating. Salary negotiable. Send resume to: Julie Quintana, 7416 Northlea Way Citrus Heights, CA 95610, (916) 966-3666.

Montessori Elementary Teachers: one for 6-9 class, and one for 12-14 class. Join current experienced staff in elementary-junior high program expanding to 80-85 students in fall of '83. Current school staff of 2 (6-9), 1 (9-11), and 1 (11-13) classes in 13 year old program. Located in beautiful facility 15 miles west of Boston. Easy access to Boston cultural benefits. Competitive salary based on experience. Send resume to: Betsy Kluchman, Administrator, Eliot Montessori School, 189 Eliot St., S. Natick, MA 01760, (617) 655-7333.

POSITIONS WANTED:

Montessori Teacher: Desires position in U.S.A.. Holds diploma in Montessori Method of Training. College background includes business (London, England) and general education (Sri Lanka). Trained in school for mentally handicapped. Teaching experience in Great Britain. Contact: Mrs. L. H. Mutukisna, 260/1 Kotte Rd., Nugegoda, Sri Lanka.

Montessori Teacher: Desires position in U.S.A. Received Montessori diploma in 1979 from Good Shepard Maria Montessori Training Centre (Columbo 7, Sri Lanka). Three years Montessori teaching experience at Montessori House of Children, St. Lawrence Convent (Columbo 6, Sri Lanka). References from Rev. Mother Joan Bosco (Good Shepard Training Centre). Contact: Subajothy Rajakumar, Montessori House of Children, St. Lawrence Convent, Columbo 6, Sri Lanka.

Montessori Elementary Teacher: Holds AMS (3-6) Montessori certificate (1964), AMI (6-12) Montessori certificate (1975). M.A., Spanish, French, Orff. Teaching experience in U.S.A., Europe, Africa. Rewarding salary expected for career commitment in U.S.A. or abroad. Contact: E. De Croix, Eastwind, Vessup Bay, St. Thomas, V.I. 00802, (809) 775-1380.

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OBSERVER

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LETTERS TO IMS

April 6, 1983

Good Morning:

We enjoy receiving the Montessori Observer. Our staff has found the articles to be very interesting and helpful.

Sincerely,

Sherry Wolfe Rewey
Lisle, IL

April 10, 1983

Dear Mr. Havis,

... Thank you for your valued support. I have mentioned that you would welcome regular communication from individuals and schools in my article for our next Local Montessori Newsletter, which is sent to the Montessori Schools of New Zealand.

We have received newsletters from several Montessori Schools in the U.S.A., and we have been encouraged and inspired.

Thank you again,

Jill Chivers

National Co-ordinator
New Plymouth Montessori Assoc.
New Plymouth, New Zealand

The Collective Lesson

... at the outset the teacher cannot give collective lessons. Such lessons, indeed, will always be very rare since the children being free are not obligated to remain in their places quiet and ready to listen to the teacher, or to watch what she is doing. The collective lessons, in fact, are of very secondary importance, and have been almost abolished by us.

M. Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p. 107-108

"Montessori" Certificate Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, its use is available for whatever purpose desired, limited only by whatever local government control there may be over private education. In short, there is no guarantee that a "Montessori" certificate is not issued by an entity whose connection with the application of Montessori principles is limited only to use of the name itself.

Fourth, where government regulation does intervene in the issuance of teacher certification, such intervention generally tends to force the "Montessori" certificate to comply with the bias and dominant views of traditional education. For example, the state of Maryland requires Montessori teachers to have an "approved" certification, the issuance of which is controlled by regulation of Montessori teacher training institutes in the state. However, IMS is unable to operate its teacher training institute to issue its "Montessori" certificate due to a highly subjective curriculum review procedure to which is has been adversely subjected. (IMS is presently in federal court challenging the imposition of this censorship system as unconstitutional.)

In sum, the "Montessori" certificate itself may be the least significant element of an authentic Montessori teacher training program. Ultimately, the worth and effectiveness of an individual "Montessori" teacher lies not in the certification received but rather in one's practical performance and results realized in the classroom with children.

A piece of paper called a "Montessori" certificate can never itself create an effective Montessori environment — only, an individual committed to the effective application of Montessori principles.

Normalization

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Supporting Normalization

"The great task of education must be to secure and preserve a normality which, of its own nature, gravitates towards the center of perfection." (Id., p. 239)

The teacher must now allow normalization to continue in the child as a natural, spontaneous expression of its unfolding "true nature." This expression leads always along the path of increasing independence until the teacher ultimately finds herself unnecessary in the environment.

"What is the greatest sign of success for a teacher? . . . It is to be able to say 'The children are working as if I did not exist.'" (Id., p. 283)

Catalyst for Transformation

Ultimately, the psychological event termed "normalization" is the primary catalyst for transformation of society. Such event provides the conscious motive and visible, tangible evidence that the "new education" is a present, genuine reality in the world. The "normalized" child reveals the "new education" as a growing reality whose ultimate source is the creative power of one's own commitment to the effective application of Montessori principles.

Reminder

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