



The Montessori

OBSERVER

Concentration

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The Society . . . First Five Years

The International Montessori Society, founded by **Lee Havis** in 1979, has now completed its first five years of creating Dr. Montessori's vision of a "new education". This initial period of growth has seen the Society beginning as a mere idea to emerge as that which is now present in the world as a strong, visible support on behalf of the "normalized" child.

The Society finds its origin in October, 1979 when Lee Havis discovered the "completion" of "Montessori education". Havis experienced this unexpected discovery as a conscious awareness of the existence of all that is needed to fully realize the "normalized" child. Such "completion" was seen to be an inner reality of complete commitment to three fundamental underlying principles: (1) "observation"; (2) "individual liberty"; and (3) "preparation of the environment". Realizing his ability to effectively communicate such an amazing reality to oth-

Court Hearing Set for Society

On November 9, 1984, U.S. Federal Court Magistrate **Frederic Smalkin** is scheduled to hear the Society's claim for a court order to enable the operation of Montessori teacher training in Maryland. The November 9th hearing in Baltimore, Maryland, will consider the Society's claim for an injunction to prevent Maryland education agencies from further censorship and regulatory obstruction to the Society's efforts on behalf of Montessori education in that state.

Since its original complaint was filed in September, 1981, the Society has claimed that Maryland's statutory regulation and control of private education is an unconstitutional denial of fundamental freedom of expression and communication as protected by the U.S. constitution. The November 9th hearing intends to address the essential underlying questions in the case and whether or not injunctive relief against the Maryland state education boards is proper.

The court has thus far identified two basic questions for resolution: (1) whether

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ers, Havis resigned from his prior position as administrator of the National Center for Montessori Education and created the present entity known as the "International Montessori Society" under his own individual and complete responsibility.

Havis's discovery of "completion" in 1979 emerged while watching a student teacher struggle to control a child engaged in abuse of a physical object in a Montessori classroom. Havis states that "I suddenly realized that *Individual Liberty* and *Preparation of the Environment* were completely compatible with each other—that the environment could be effectively 'prepared' while at the same time respecting the child's complete 'individual liberty'. I saw that the abused physical object could be controlled directly rather than by restraining the child's hand in such circumstances." The idea of "control the environment, not the child" thus became an important aspect of the Society's work in the training of Montessori teachers.

Since 1979, the Society has gradually grown to include a wide ranging association of some 600 individual and school members throughout the world. Graduates of the Society's unique teacher training programs are now creating the "new education" in their own environments in various locations throughout the United States.

In 1984, the Society's independent study course was finally revised and expanded to enable its function as a complete "inner preparation" for Montessori teaching. Graduates of this 22-lesson course will now receive full certification upon its completion to acknowledge their mastery of Montessori education.

The Society continues its creative purpose now building on the considerable foundation laid during the first five years of its existence. The underlying commitment to the three "Montessori" principles continues to generate the Society's expansive challenge to all forms of adult tyranny and oppression over the child. The Society's essential work of freeing the child from such adult tyranny—i.e., creating the "new education"—is gradually emerging in the world as a genuine visible reality to complete and confirm Dr. Montessori's own original vision of the "normalized" child in Rome, Italy in 1907.



Children working on United States map puzzle at the AB Daycare and Montessori School (Burnsville, Minnesota).

Montessori in Minnesota

AB Day Care and Montessori, Inc., is a Montessori school member which began operation in 1979. Directed by **Dianna Ruona**, this Montessori school is open all year round from 6:30 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The school is located in a church in a large wooded area and has a large outdoor recreational area. Indoor space includes the use of two large rooms. Ms. Ruona states that "we are a small school and we feel we have a close relationship between child, teacher and parent."

The AB Day Care school program features music, art and exercise within a three hour session each day in the morning and afternoon. For further information, contact: Dianna Ruona, AB Day Care and Montessori, Inc., 13408 Upton Ave. So., Burnsville, Minnesota 55337 Tel. (612) 894-1040.

The Scientist

"The scientist is not the clever manipulator of instruments, he is the worshipper of nature . . . the thing we should cultivate in our teachers is more the spirit than the mechanical skill of the scientist . . . the direction of the preparation should be towards the spirit rather than towards the mechanisms."

Maria Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p. 8-9



Concentration

by Lee Havis

"The child who concentrates is extremely happy; he ignores his neighbors or the visitors circulating about him . . . he detaches himself from the world in order to attain the power to unite himself with it."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 272

"Concentration"—that mysterious experience of detachment from the ordinary flow of outer circumstances—is the origin and central focus of all creative activity. Such concentration is most notably central to that phenomenon which Dr. Montessori has termed "normalization"; i.e., the fundamental integration of the young child's personality from which the child's true nature spontaneously expresses itself in complete harmony with its environment.

The Normalizing Phenomenon

"Normalization comes about through 'concentration' on a piece of work."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 241

"Concentration" on some physical object of work is the consistent outward signal of "normalization" within the young child. This pivotal experience of personality integration completely resolves the child's former pattern of distraction, inattention, disobedience and disorder. All that precedes such a profound experience of concentration thus amounts to an elaborate prologue to new life as a truly "normalized" child.

The First Essential

"The first essential of the child's development is concentration . . . He must find out how to concentrate, and for this he needs things to concentrate upon."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 222

Prior to "normalization," the Montessori teacher is primarily looking out to see "That one child or another will begin to concentrate. To this end she must devote her energies." (*Absorbent Mind*, p. 276). The type of deep concentration which signals the child's normalization is far more than a mere "occupation" or some "proper use" of apparatus. Rather, full concentration in the Montessori environment is completely uninterrupted by outer circumstances; an experience of working alone with some piece of work which may very well involve many repetitions of the same simple hand movements over a very long period of time.

Naturally, such a deep level of concentration does not immediately occur in the Montessori environment and the teacher must patiently prepare the right conditions; e.g., by providing an assortment of well-ordered physical objects aimed to attract and capture the child's spontaneous interest and attention.

Attention

" . . . internal activities act as cause: they do not react and exist as the effect of external factors. Our attention is not arrested on all things indifferently, but by those that are congenial to our tastes."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Activity in Educ.* p. 160

It is worth recognizing that external factors such as a "motivating" teacher with a pleasant personality or specific physical objects traditionally associated with Montessori education are not the true cause or origin of the child's interest or attention. On the contrary, the source of "attention" which leads to complete concentration lies entirely within the child itself as the mysterious urgings of its own inherent creative being. The teacher may only serve constructively in this regard to respond in harmony and sensitivity with those inner urgings within the child by providing purposeful objects and opportunities for their concentrated use. Such a modest adult role calls for one's own inner preparation which is similar to that preparation within the child which leads to "normalization."

Adult Concentration

"To exist and mix with our fellow men we must sometimes retire into solitude and acquire strength . . . Only then do we look with love on the creatures who are our fellows."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 273

Preparation for Montessori teaching begins essentially with a profound "detachment" from the outer circumstances of distraction and demands which typically surround oneself in the ordinary social setting. Without such preparation, the adult generally tends to "teach" and otherwise interrupt the child on behalf of the pre-served priorities of adult society.

Interruption

"When the child begins to show interest . . . the teacher must not interrupt . . . The great principle which brings success to the teacher is this: as soon as concentration has begun, act as if the child does not exist."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 279-280

Adults dominated by their own "teaching" priorities readily fail to recognize the child's own inner priority for long periods of concentration without adult interruption. To correct one's harmful impulse to interrupt the child at the critical moment of concentration, the adult must first experience concentration in a manner somewhat similar to that of the child.

Concentration—A Beginning

"One who would become a teacher according to our system must examine himself . . . this inner preparation will give the balance and poise he will need."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood* p. 153

To acquire the inner "balance and poise" so vital for effective Montessori teaching, it is first necessary to experience

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Court Hearing

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academic content censorship was practiced by state education agencies in denying approval to the Society's program for training Montessori teachers and (2) the propriety of exempting religious non-public schools while other non-public schools remain fully subject to state regulation and control.

Lee Havis, the Society's executive director, will appear to offer argument and testimony at the November 9th hearing. The court must ultimately consider the question of individual freedom versus state control in the operation of private education. The resolution of such a fundamental issue may well impact on Montessori programs in other states where excessive government control of private education is likewise threatening the progress and development of authentic Montessori education.

The public is welcome to attend the November 9th hearing at the U.S. Federal Courthouse, Baltimore, Maryland, Courtroom B-2 at 10:00 a.m.

Look for the

November Observer

featuring

Tyranny

The Montessori Observer

published by

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

912 Thayer Ave.

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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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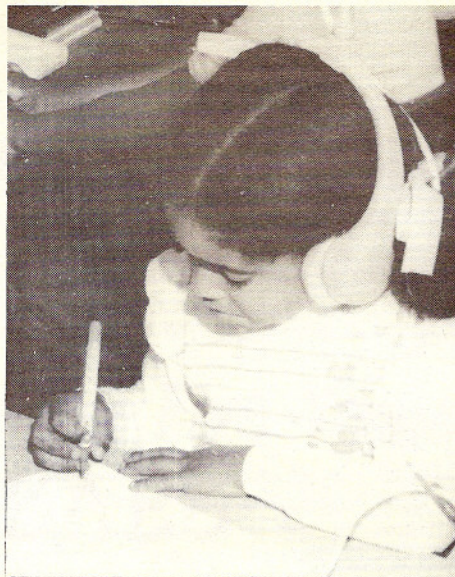
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Early Education in Houston, Texas

Miss Lucy's Early Childhood Education Center in Houston, Texas is a new Montessori school member of the Society. The center offers a variable full-day program of education and day-care for children from birth to age seven. **Berdine Randle**, the center's director, states that "we are very interested in the total Montessori program."

Mrs. Randle's early education center features art, music, dance and Spanish as a foreign language for the children. In addition, special attention is given to the use of computers to enhance awareness in the area of science and math.

For further information, contact: Berdine Randle, Miss Lucy's Early Childhood Education Center, 10620 Homestead Road, Houston, Texas 77016, Tel. (713) 631-1514.



Child working at Miss Lucy's Early Childhood Education Center (Houston, Texas)

LETTERS TO IMS

Sept. 16, 1984

Dear Lee Havis,

I cannot agree more heartily that it is the ATTITUDE of the teacher that is of utmost importance, while the materials being worked with of lesser importance in assisting the child. So many aides come in with sparkling eyes to get their hands on the materials, often not even looking to see if the child's attention is directed toward her presentation. Because they do not really understand the underlying principles, they quickly lose interest.

Sincerely,

Elmira Johnson
Morgan Hill, California

Ed. Note: Contrary to popular trends and beliefs in education today, true Montessori teaching does not advocate the typical "hands on" approach to learning where the adult is concerned. Indeed, effective Montessori teaching is decidedly a "hands off" approach to the child. It is the child's own work and activity with the materials which is foremost in Montessori education, not that of the adult.

Sept. 17, 1984

Dear Lee:

May I specially commend you on your article "Spirit" in September issue of the Montessori Observer. I was specially impressed by "The adult's effective inner preparation for Montessori teaching is to examine one's own personality . . ." . . . I am in agreement with your comment about "distortions of Dr. Montessori's work which essentially view 'Montessori education' as something outside of oneself . . . affiliation with a certain presumed 'official' organization . . ."

Sincerely,

Leo E. Lane, Jr.
Wynnewood, Pennsylvania

Dear Mr. Havis,

We especially like the newspaper that comes to us 3 or 4 times a year in sufficient quantity for all our parents. Content of this newspaper is excellent.

Marion Aland
Norcross, Georgia

Ed. Note: The "Newspaper" referred to here is the "Montessori News" which is sent in quantity free of charge to all Montessori school members of the Society. This free bulk shipment of the "Montessori News" is only one of the benefits which Montessori school members enjoy for an annual dues of only \$45.00 (U.S.). Write the Society for application and membership criteria.

Sept. 15, 1984

To IMS:

I received your information about the International Montessori Society and your letter through the Department of Education, Beijing Normal University . . . I am quite interested in your work and will be very happy to continue the communication and to receive publications on a regular basis, since I have read a few books written by Dr. Montessori . . . and will be very glad to know more about her principles . . .

Sincerely yours,

Lu Le-Shan, M.A.
Associate Professor
Beijing Normal University
Beijing, China

The "Pygmalion Effect"

The "Pygmalion Effect"—that subconscious, intangible influence of the teacher's "beliefs" and "faith" concerning the student—has appeared in recent educational research to significantly determine performance on tests and other objectively measurable behavior in children. The teacher's mental outlook, attitude and expectations concerning the child seem to considerably influence the student to achieve either a superior or inferior performance.

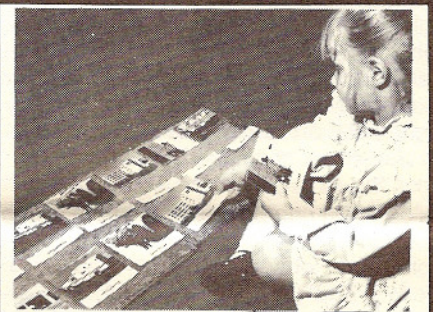
Gertrude S. Lane, administrator of the Lane Montessori School in Wynnewood, Pennsylvania, sees this "Pygmalion Effect" as a fundamental confirmation of the basic premise in Montessori education to abstain from prejudicial assumptions and preconceived notions about the child to view the child instead as an "unknown entity." Ms. Lane states that "while we look to the child, or method, or techniques, for improvement, it is not the nature of the child which should change, but ourselves—our own vision, belief, in presumed limitations of the young child." She sees this "Pygmalion Effect" as the "basic 'key' to revolutionary advances in the educational field . . . The mental environmental influence . . . may have a reality and impact greater than you realize. The least important environment are the material things, furnishings, decorations . . . Foremost, however, is belief and faith in the potential of the pupil by the Teacher or Aide."

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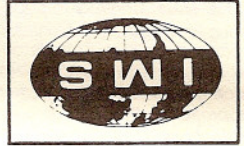


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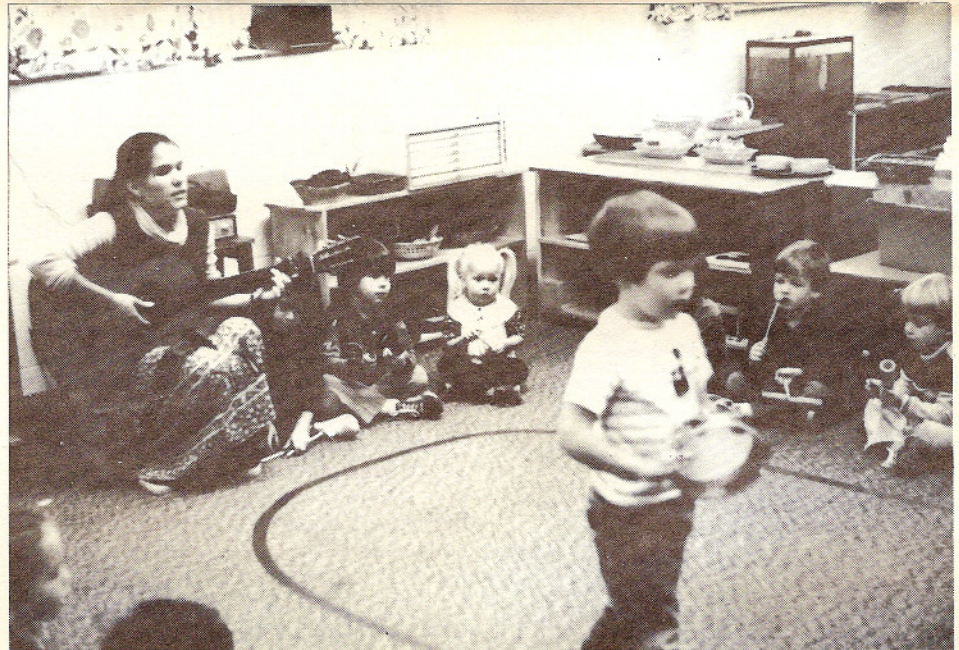
Junior Directress/or: for a new class to be opened Sept. 1985. School is well established, 20 years old, with three excellent primary classes and is expanding into the elementary grades. Salary negotiable. Health benefits available. Send resume to: Massasoit Montessori School, 455 Island Pond Rd., Springfield, Mass. 01118.

Concentration

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 2

concentration as a response to one's own inner urgings on behalf of the "normalized" child. Like the child, the adult experiences concentration as a critical beginning to all that is to follow. In Montessori education, such concentration most constructively begins with one's own attention and interest devoted to that inner reality which enables the emergence of the "normalized" child; i.e., a complete commitment to the three fundamental "Montessori" principles: (1) "observation;" (2) "individual liberty;" and (3) "preparation of the environment."

Deep concentration on this profound inner reality is thus a critical beginning to one's effective Montessori teaching which eventually reveals the truly "normalized" child.



Lynn Hartle Olszewski with children for music activity at the Montessori Children's House of Cookeville, Inc. (Cookeville, Tennessee)

Children's House in Cookeville, Tennessee

The Montessori Children's House in Cookeville, Tennessee is under the co-direction of **David and Lynn Olszewski** who also serve as instructors. This Montessori school member of the Society was opened in 1980 and provides both full-day and half-day sessions for children ages 2-6. The daily schedule extends from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. daily.

David Olszewski is also owner of the Southeast Educational Materials Exchange which makes a considerable assortment of wooden didactic apparatus. Indeed, much of the wooden, cloth and paper materials in the school environment has been made by David and Lynn Olszewski.

Special program features of the Cookeville school include art, music and

Montessori program during the summer months. Esperanto as a foreign language was begun at the school starting in Fall, 1984.

For further information, contact: David and Lynn Olszewski, Montessori Children's House of Cookeville, Inc., 122 E. 12th, Cookeville, Tennessee 38501 Tel. (615) 528-5639.

IMS Membership Directory

Listing IMS school and individual members.

Spring, 1984 Issue

Price - \$5.00 - Prepaid to IMS

REMINDER

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