



The Montessori OBSERVER

Teaching

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Society Training

A Practical Experience

Over 60 students are presently enrolled and actively participating in the Society's 22-lesson Independent Study Course to become certified Montessori teachers. Students are located in Saudi Arabia and Canada, as well as diversely throughout the United States. Most students are working with children at Montessori schools and some are already functioning with complete supervisory responsibility in their own environments.

The Society's unique course of "inner preparation" for Montessori teaching looks to the student's own every day practical experience with children to realize the course's full impact, value, and results. Accordingly, the students are generally engaged in some practical teaching responsibility with children, while they are completing their study in the course.

The Society's training offers the distinct advantage that all coursework is completed through mail correspondence and is therefore readily incorporated into one's own's unique particular circumstances. Society member

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Children working with Practical Life activities at the Under the Rainbow Montessori Learning Center (Tampa, Florida).

Under the Rainbow in Tampa, Florida

The Under the Rainbow Montessori Learning Center was organized in 1982 to serve children from age 6 months to 5 years in the Tampa, Florida area. An important facet of the school's program is to "help special-needs children be part of a Montessori school experience."

This Society member school is under the direction of Mrs. Glyssel Santiago. Her ultimate goal is to incorporate the Montessori method into a mainstreaming program for children in the Tampa area.

The school program offers full and half-day sessions on a daily basis. In addition to a focus

on special-needs children, the program includes Spanish for children ages 3 and up.

For further information, contact: Mrs. Glyssel Santiago, Under the Rainbow Montessori Learning Center, 7916 North Hymes Ave., Tampa, Florida 33614, Tel. (813) 932-0253.

Where There's Smoke, There's Fire

"Man's true nature lies hidden within himself. And this nature, which was given him at conception, must be recognized and allowed to grow."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 148

The creation of the "new education" arises in the world like the "fire" of man's burning true nature expressing itself amid the "smoke" of surrounding controversy, hostility, and considerable emotionality. To work on behalf of the emergence of the "normalized" child in the world necessarily implicates a range of secondary effects including the experience of tension, fear, and various practical considerations as to one's own physical well-being.

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Society's Lawsuit An Update

On August 15, 1985, Lee Havis appeared on behalf of the International Montessori Society before a three-judge panel of the Fourth Circuit Federal Court of Appeals (Baltimore, Maryland), Murraghan, J. presiding, with judges Chapman and Haynesworth. Such appearance was to argue on behalf of Montessori education in Maryland.

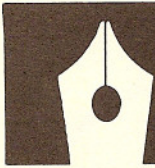
The August 15th oral argument presented the Society's continuing challenge to the constitutionality of certain actions taken by the Maryland State Board for Higher Education in prohibiting the Society's operation of Montessori teacher training in that state since 1981. The Maryland State education agencies involved in this case were represented by counsel from the Maryland Office of Attorney General. Pertinent argument in the case centered on academic content censorship by government and discriminatory enforcement of certain Board certification powers under Maryland

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A Fairy Tale

If . . . one day it is discovered that the child is a great worker, who can apply himself to his work even with concentration, who can learn by himself, teach himself and who possesses discipline within himself, this seems to be like a fairy tale . . . No attention is paid to this reality . . . It is simply impossible; it cannot exist . . ."

Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 66



Teaching

by Lee Havis

"We adults cannot teach children from 3 to 6 years of age. We can but observe them with intelligence and follow their development."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 242

The "teaching" of children; i.e., as a sort of struggle to impose values and curriculum according to the various prejudices and illusions of a particular adult, society or culture, invariably destroys, deters and otherwise opposes the young child's normal development. By contrast, Montessori "teaching" is a collaboration with the child's normal development, supporting the emergence of its true "normalized" nature. Such "collaboration" is most constructively viewed as one's expression of a complete commitment to three fundamental principles of nature: (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". Creating Dr. Montessori's "new education" therefore entails a fundamental challenge and opposition to that which emerges as the customary "teaching" of traditional education.

Traditional Teaching

"... The kind of education still in vogue condemns the teacher to be a dictator... Teachers of the older school hold firmly to irrational rules and have little to guide them but illusion and prejudice."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p. 256

Traditional teaching—hiding under the guise of the "common good" and the presumed collective "needs" of society—typically imposes a wide range of adult authority and control directly over the child. Such instruction tends to dominate the child's activity by imposing a detailed schedule of content, evaluation and purpose over all interaction with the environment. In essence, such traditional "teaching" is a complete tyranny over the child who is generally considered as a receptive being, object or possession to be variously manipulated or molded to fit certain pre-determined external forms of conventional behavior in society.

Tyranny

"Adults... have adopted the role of a creator and in their pride have maintained that they are responsible for everything that pertains to the child. They make him good, pious, and intelligent... They refuse to admit that they are exercising any tyranny."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood* p. 152

The remarkable hypocrisy and pride of adults as to their role in "teaching" children reflects a deeply rooted and long-standing unconscious tyranny in society. The child's rebellion against such adult tyranny is generally interpreted as misbehavior which invariably leads to yet further repression. The adult thus adds insult to injury. Rarely, if ever, is the child's misbehavior and disobedience taken as some error, prejudice, or misconception on the part of the adult. By contrast, Montessori

teaching abstains completely from such adult tyranny, freeing the child to creatively develop its own true nature in harmony with a fully supportive surrounding environment.

Goal of Education

"Our goal in education of a young child should be to help him develop, and not to furnish him with a kind of culture."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 170

Montessori teaching uniquely helps the child's normal development without creating dependency on the adult's direction and control so common in traditional education. The adult's role is to serve the child's creative inner spirit. Such a delicate role necessarily limits one's authority to that which arises only with respect to the child's environment.

Teacher's Authority

"The adult is master in one area, but the child is master in the other, and the two depend on each other. Both the child and the adult are kings, but they are rulers of different realms."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 195

Effective exercise of adult authority expresses a "preparation of the environment" which welcomes and supports the child's spontaneous exploration and free activity in its environment. Of course, such authority abstains completely from any control over the child, recognizing that development is solely a matter of the child's own inner creative being.

Development

"Anyone can dominate and repress the weak and subdued; but no one can cause another to develop. Development cannot be taught."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 206

The adult's effective application of "preparation of the environment" supportively responds to the child's own instincts and interests as they become evident in external activity and work with others and physical objects. The adult committed to Montessori principles therefore is a sort of "assistant" teacher serving the child's inner creative spirit.

The Assistant Teacher

"A prejudice has found its way into the adult—the notion that the life of the child can be changed or improved only through teaching. This prejudice impedes the understanding of the fact that the child constructs himself, that he has a teacher within himself... We adults by acknowledging this unknown teacher may enjoy the privilege and good fortune of becoming its assistants and faithful servants..."

Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 62-63

Montessori teaching is an assistance to nature in the child's intellectual development, as well as its physical and emotional well-being. Such assistance must occasionally function to introduce the child to exercise and work with

the physical objects which are prepared as an integral part of the Montessori environment. Montessori teaching therefore includes the giving of "lessons" in the use of physical objects.

Giving Lessons

"The instruction of the teacher consists in merely a hint, a touch—enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself"

Maria Montessori
from *Dr. Montessori's Own Handbook*, p. 58-59

Giving lessons in a Montessori environment generally involves a brief, simple and precise presentation to the child of some exercise or material. More accurately, such a "lesson" is any interaction between the adult and the child and may well involve nothing more than a brief eye contact from across the room. In any case, the Montessori "lesson" is certainly not that which is customarily considered as such in traditional education. The "lessons" of traditional education generally tend to center on the adult's personality wherein the physical objects are merely "props" to engender some type of adult-dominated instruction.

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Look for the
**October
Observer**
featuring

The Nature of Being

The Montessori Observer

published by
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
912 Thayer Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20910
(301) 589-1127
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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ADVERTISING

Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Marketplace ads are \$7/line. Position and Placements ads are \$10 each and will be set and edited by us to conform to space requirements. Write for our advertising outline for rates and other information about design advertising.

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LETTERS TO IMS

August 24, 1985

Dear Mr. Havis,

I am very pleased to be affiliated with IMS. I know my parents will very much enjoy the "Montessori News."

I am certainly enjoying the back issues of the "Observer." I found the issues on individual liberty, normalization, and preparing the environment particularly helpful and insightful. I plan to read an issue thoroughly each week or so as part of my personal preparation for the classroom and encourage those who work with me to do the same . . .

Sincerely,

Susan Hockery Fields
Bountiful, Utah

August 8, 1985

Dear Mr. Havis,

I am very happy to say that the school staff and I continue to enjoy reading the "Observer" and the "Montessori News." Thank you for sending them to the school. I enjoy, in particular, your articles. Each one of them is worth saving. Do continue writing them . . .

I received the school Membership Directory. It is very encouraging to note its growth. Congratulations . . .

It is very gratifying to note that the general public has become more aware of Montessori schools and is desirous of choosing a Montessori school in preference to others.

Sincerely,

Francis Dos Remedios
Academy Montessori International
Fremont, California

June 10, 1985

Dear Lee,

I read your "Observer" and I cannot believe all the good news there is in it.

We benefit more with one year with IMS than 20 years with AMS which costs a lot of money per year. I would like if you mailed me 40 "Observers" every month and billed me.

Thank you and God bless your good work.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Madre Superior Sr. Rosalba Masi
Villa Fusco Montessori
Schenectady, New York

July 2, 1985

To IMS:

Through reading your comments and the work of Maria Montessori, I have taken a closer look at myself.

I have become confident and know what I must do when I find myself in circumstances of doubt or confusion. I state the three Montessori principles and put them to practice and it has been working . . .

Sylvia Starkie, Student
Independent Study Course
Miramar, Florida

June 15, 1985

Dear Lee,

. . . The readings for this lesson and your excellent commentary both in the lesson and in the latest issue of the "Observer" gave me some very good insight . . .

Your advice to simply repeat the three principles to myself has been fabulous. At first, I must admit it seemed too simple to work, but I can't believe the clarity of thought it brings me. I also feel I'm beginning to understand them on a deeper level.

(Michele Blumberg), Student
Independent Study Course
Gaylord, Michigan

REMINDER

To make sure that you keep receiving your Montessori Observer newsletter, please renew your membership subscription promptly. The expiration date of your membership should be clearly visible on the mailing label.

Teaching

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

The Materials

"Our materials are not a new means to be placed in the hands of an 'active' teacher to help her with her teaching."

Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 149

Materials in the Montessori environment can be readily employed to perpetuate conventional adult teaching. Such materials may well be imbued with a sort of "magical" power where-in the "presenting of materials" becomes a new way to dominate children and deny their own sourceful creative development. Teaching through the materials fundamentally fails to recognize that all learning and intellectual development depends essentially on character which cannot be taught, but rather must arise uniquely of itself from within the child.

Teaching Character

"... No one can 'teach' the qualities of which character is composed. The only thing we can do is put education on a scientific footing so that children can work effectively without being disturbed or impeded."

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 208

The "teacher within" the child guides development of character according to insuperable laws of nature which are well beyond the wisdom of man. Adult functioning to assure the effective development of such character must therefore involve more an "observing" than any kind of "teaching."

Observing

"... A new type of mistress has been evolved; . . . Instead of teaching, she has to observe . . ."

Maria Montessori

from *Spontaneous Activity in Education*, p. 128

The "new teacher", committed to the three Montessori principles, employs "observation" as a primary operating principle with children. Observing children serves to discover detrimental influences in the environment to thereby enable their removal as such. Notably, the adult "personality" is to become "nonexistent".

Personality

"What is the greatest sign of success for a teacher? . . . It is to be able to say 'the children are now working as if I did not exist.'"

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 283

To remove one's "personality" as a tangible presence and dependent obstacle in the child's environment is an integral aspect of one's expression of commitment to the three Montessori principles. Such restraint of adult "personality" with children necessarily entails one's own "preparation of the spirit" wherein the adult's "virtues" are seen as the true "qualifications" for Montessori teaching.

Virtues

"The teacher . . . not words, but virtues, are her main qualifications."

Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 150

Humility, patience, and courage are among those inner "virtues" of the spirit which distinguish the true Montessori teacher. In the face of

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3



Book Review

Resource Guide
for Home Education—1985

Pub. by: Home School Headquarters Press
(Fremont, Nebraska)

Edited by: Don Hubbs

With a growing number of parents in the United States and elsewhere choosing to educate their children at home, the Home School Headquarters has now emerged to consolidate many pertinent resources in their *Resource Guide for Home Education*. This attractive and useful publication provides a comprehensive listing of materials and services available to home educators.

The *Resource Guide* includes an extensive director, and well-organized index to locate a wide variety of useful information for parents seeking to educate their children at home. Accordingly, such "Home schooling" parents have ready access to a vast array of curriculum, testing services, support groups and other such beneficial and vital resources to help them provide an effective home educational program for their children. Notably, this useful publication lists the International Montessori Society as a resource for information and services concerning Montessori education.

The Headquarter's *Resource Guide* for home educators is also useful for private schools and others interested in the education of children. Such guide is intended to be updated yearly, and promises to serve as a standard reference for the expanding community of home schools in the United States and elsewhere.

Prepaid \$10.00 ea., Order from:

Home School Headquarters
P.O. Box 366
Fremont, Nebraska 68025

Society's Lawsuit

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

state education laws. The Society seeks an injunction and declaratory judgement to enable its free operation of Montessori teacher training in the state.

A written decision from the court is expected within the next few months. Such decision promises to fundamentally address the critical issue of educational freedom in the United States which may well affect all government regulation of private Montessori education throughout the United States. Future issues of the "Observer" will report progress of the Society's lawsuit and resolution of the underlying matter of freedom for Montessori education.

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OBSERVER
The Montessori



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Montessori teachers: toddler, 2-6, will train, provide housing. Experience with children preferred. Contact: Villa Fusco Montessori School, 955 Balltown Rd., Schenectady, NY 12309, Tel. (518) 372-5700.

Where There's Smoke . . .

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

In the face of such a considerable "smoke" of emotionality and secondary effects, one tends to withdraw from the field of challenge and controversy altogether. Such a withdrawal from conflict reflects an undue regard for the superficial effects arising from one's inner creative activity. The underlying creative "fire" of one's true nature is simply not recognized or allowed to expand amid the surrounding emotional "smoke".

When emotional smoke arises in one's particular circumstances with children, it is well to recognize that such "smoke" may be the only tangible evidence of the underlying "fire" which is bringing forth the "normalized" child in the world. Have courage and remember the old adage that: "Where there's smoke, there's fire."

Society Training

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

schools are particularly invited to have their staff enroll into the Independent Study Course to support and expand their school's commitment to Montessori principles on behalf of the emergence of the "normalized" child.

For further information and application, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Avenue, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.



Child working with sensorial material at Montessori Children's World (Placentia, California)

Children's World in Placentia, California

The Montessori Children's World was established by Lorraine P. Erwin, and started its classes on June 19, 1967. This Society member school is located in Placentia, county of Orange, California, and enrolls children aged 2½ through 6 years.

This unique Children's World school includes an outdoor recreational area with a real "tree house" built in a 1907 Avocado tree. The floor of this "tree house" is approximately 8 feet by 11 feet with a long metal slide. A huge, old 1906 Coast Oak tree also shades the school grounds.

In summer, 1984, the Montessori Children's World held its own "Olympics". Children ran races, jumped hurdles, and hopped on one leg around the running circle which is really an oval of about 80 to 100 feet.

For further information, contact: Lorraine P. Erwin, Montessori Children's World, 431 East Palm Drive, Placentia, California 92670, Tel. (714) 524-2262.

Teaching

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

inner tendencies to impatiently repress misbehavior and proudly maintain a semblance of outward order and calm, one's character is fully challenged in the process of applying Montessori principles. Montessori teaching therefore emerges essentially as the art of serving the child's spirit.

Serving the Spirit

"We do not serve the child's body . . . he should not be served in this sense . . . we have to help the child to act, will, and think for himself. This is the art of serving the spirit . . ."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 281

Teaching as an expression of commitment to the three Montessori principles is that which necessarily serves and follows the unseen inner spirit of the child; i.e. that which appears in outer form only as an "unknown entity". With faith and imagination centered on this unknown and unseen inner spirit, adult "teaching" invariably proceeds along the path of spiritual conquest to assure the emergence of the child's true "normalized" nature in the world.

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