



The Montessori OBSERVER

Movement

Published by the International Montessori Society • 912 Thayer Ave. • Silver Spring, Md. 20910 • Phone (301) 589-1127



Banquet held in conjunction with the Society's Montessori conference in Columbia, South Carolina on August 8-9, 1987. Seated at front table (left to right) are: Susan Dold (Memphis, Tennessee); Kathleen Kimball (Woodruff, Wisconsin) and Terry Patton (Spartenburg, South Carolina).

Montessori Conferences

Creating the New Education

The conference entitled "Creating the New Education" is sponsored by the International Montessori Society to extend awareness and practical application of Montessori principles with children. Conducted by Lee Havis, Society executive director, the two-day week-end conference includes an analysis of managing misbehavior according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child."

The essential conference communication is that of commitment to Montessori principles. Specific subject matter emerges from the general discussion of personal issues, needs and interests as they are presented by those in attendance. The conference sessions are 9-5 daily with a light lunch and refreshments included in the registration fee.

Pre-paid registration for the full two-day conference is \$150 per person (\$120 for Society members). The payment due date is four (4) weeks before the scheduled date of the conference. A late fee of \$50 applies for registrations submitted after the payment due date.

Send registration fee to: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Schedule

October 24-25, 1987 Rhinelander, Wisconsin
November 21-22, 1987 Ft. Lauderdale, Florida
February 6-7, 1988 Atlanta, Georgia

November 14-15, 1987. in Ft. Worth, Texas, a conference sponsored by the Harwood Private School. "Creating the New Education" conducted by Lee Havis. Pre-paid registration. For information, contact: Warren Gale, Harwood Private School, 2816 Spring Valley, Bedford, Texas 76021, Tel. (817) 283-7651.

Output Results in Montessori Accreditation

Measuring output results of Montessori teacher training is an important initial consideration in the process of forming the new "inclusive" Montessori accrediting agency. The importance of such "output results"—as opposed to mere quantity of "input"—was particularly emphasized at the May 18, 1987 accreditation hearings of the U.S. Department of Education held in Silver Spring, Maryland on May 18, 1987.

If the new agency is to achieve recognized status with the U.S. Department of Education, the quality of "output" will need special attention within the structure, criteria and operating procedures of the new agency. In proposing new rules for the recognition of accrediting agencies, Secretary of Education Bennett stated that accreditation must evaluate "not only the quantity of the inputs, but the quality of the results". (*Federal Register*, Vol. 52, No. 173, September 8, 1987)

Responding to the obvious need to effectively measure quality of "output results" of Montessori teacher training programs, the committees established at the May 18, 1987 meeting of Montessori representatives have undertaken several special projects directed to this

important issue. Jane Dutcher, chair of the "curriculum standards" committee, is presently compiling data to effectively measure the pertinent "results" of Montessori teacher training; i.e., the qualities of the "normalized" child; qualities of the "ideal Montessori teacher". The criteria will then be incorporated into a standard survey form which may be employed for program and graduate evaluation and measurement.

Lee Havis, chair of the "structural organization" committee, has initiated a special project to study how quality is controlled and verified in the issuance of teacher training program "certificates". Data is being compiled as to documentation and details of authentication and compliance with specified standards. Beccie Eaves, has assumed direct responsibility for the compilation and summary of this pertinent data from throughout the Montessori community.

In addition to the special projects to study "output results", the two indicated committees are also continuing their work to gather and summarize data as to "structure" and "curriculum standards" of all participating Montessori

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Early Learning College in South Carolina

The College of Early Learning (Columbia, South Carolina) was founded by the New Banner Institute in 1972 as a rational alternative to traditional education for children ages 2-14. Directed by Vega Atwell, this Society member Montessori school helped with the organization and operation of the recent South Carolina Montessori conference sponsored by the Society in Columbia, South Carolina on August 8-9, 1987.

The school's operation includes the parents, staff and children together in a dynamic philosophical inquiry and discovery. The College has as its essential feature an "Environment for Discovery" which maximizes a student's opportunities for self-paced exploration and discovery while minimizing the effects of authoritarian influences in society. The New Banner Institute offers adult classes in philosophic inquiry and cognitive science which are the backbone of study and research for the College's Environment for Discovery.

Ms. Atwell states that the school's "Environment for Discovery" provides "a continuing search for understanding mind and

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Ten year old student calculating the volume of a cone at the College of Early Learning (Columbia, South Carolina).



Movement

by Lee Havis

"To have a vision of the cosmic plan, in which every form of life depends on directed movements which have effects beyond their conscious aim, is to understand the child's work and be able to guide it better."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 147

Centered on a cosmic plan of creation which integrates the relative functioning of all being, Montessori education views the normal movement of children as far more than mere "play" to use up excess energy. In the Montessori environment committed to the fundamental principles of (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment", the child directs its own movement on behalf of a truly cosmic purpose to create an entirely new being in the world. The Montessori committed environment thereby engenders an expansive education in movement which incorporates itself within the child's larger purpose of creating a new human personality.

Education in Movement

"... our method has been to make the training of the muscles enter into the very life of the children so that it is connected with their daily activities. Education in movement is thus fully incorporated into the education of the child's personality."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 79

The education in movement of a Montessori environment is directed and guided not by the external demands of the classroom teacher, but rather according to a mysterious "teacher within" the child itself. By contrast, ordinary education tends to limit and control the child's movement according to adult-directed group instruction wherein the child is generally compelled to imitate the movement and behavior of others.

Imitation

"The commonest prejudice in ordinary education is that everything can be accomplished . . . by holding one's self up as a model to be imitated . . . The child is usually considered a receptive being instead of as an active being."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 254

Imitation through "peer pressure" and "role models" is the general form of movement in ordinary education. Standardized curriculum, group lessons and teacher-imposed classroom "rules" tend to formalize such imitation in children to deepen the separation of physical activity from their own individual self-directed plan of development. Such separation tends to perpetuate itself in adult behavior which likewise reflects similar patterns of imitative conformity in one's external activity.

Adult Movement

"... man confounds the means . . . with the end in many of his functions . . . nutrition is made a pretext for gluttony . . . he employs his creative activity of thought for its own sake."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 243

The ordinary tendency of adult movement is to function without connection to its underlying true purpose; i.e., unconscious "reactive" behavior centered on vague illusions and superficial external effects. With children, such deviated adult movement is commonly associated with what is known as "teaching" in traditional education.

Traditional Education

"It is not a good thing to cut life in two, using the limbs for games and the head for books. Life should be a single whole, especially in the early years, when the child is forming himself in accordance with the laws of this growth."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 164

The rigid schedules and fixed curriculum requirements of traditional education tend to either force children into the total immobility of teacher-directed group lessons or virtual abandonment during the outdoor activity period known as "free play" or "recess". Without supportive adult guidance or observation, the ordinary outdoor activity period effectively abandons children at such times to their own vague mental wanderings.

Abandonment

"Children, indeed, when left to themselves to take exercise, show impatience, and are prone to quarrel and cry; . . . The activity of children thus left to themselves has rarely a good result."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 149

Separated from any significant intellectual purpose, outdoor activity is generally dominated by escape into the realm of fanciful "play". By contrast, Montessori education supports goal-directed movement as much in the "outdoor" environment as it does in the customary indoor classroom situation. The child's physical movement is thereby always free to serve the intellect on behalf of its total unitary functioning.

Serving the Intellect

"... man ought to have some object in view when he moves. The muscles should always serve the intellect and thus preserve their functional unity with the human personality."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 81

Normal physical movement is consistently guided by an inner mental functioning on behalf of such fundamental purposes as acquiring independence, exploring the environment and establishing a basic order for effective social being with others. In outer form, such intelligent movement is recognized as a process of goal-directed activity.

Goal-Directed Activity

"Motor activity, therefore must have a goal and must be connected with mental activity. . . All the exercises that promote the coordination of movement are undertaken for a definite preconceived goal."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 306

Guided by interest, the normal child explores a variety of well-ordered physical objects and exercises which are prepared for this purpose in the Montessori environment. Through its goal-directed engagement with the most ordinary of practical activities for daily living, the child acquires an inner order and harmony which ultimately expresses itself outward in such qualities as intelligence, independence, poise, balance and self-confidence with others.

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Look for the November Observer featuring Completion

The Montessori Observer

ISSN 0889-5643

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

Lee Havis, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed six times each year to Society members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the months of January, March, May, September, October and November. The purpose of this publication is to provide news and information about the development of Montessori education to extend awareness of Montessori principles and to 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 Society's purpose 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 Placement ads are \$10 each and will be set and edited by the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline as to rates and other information about design advertising.

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LETTERS TO IMS

August 11, 1987

Dear Mr. Havis,

I just had to let you know how much I enjoyed the South Carolina conference . . . I felt a special closeness in talking to those who took the Independent Study Course. . . They, as I, have become more confident and know what we must do when we find ourselves in circumstances of doubt and confusion, we state the Montessori principles and apply them and this leads us in the right path.

The conference also gave me an opportunity to encourage those starting out in the course, to not be afraid to take a closer look at themselves and to continue forward, and that little by little they would see a change in themselves and the children if they have the courage to repeat the three Montessori principles when they are in confusion or doubt.

Sincerely,

Sylvia Starkie
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida

Ed. Note: Sylvia Starkie is a recent graduate of the Society's Montessori teacher training program known as the "Independent Study Course." Her comments also reference the South Carolina Montessori conference which she attended on August 8-9, 1987.

August 25, 1987

Dear Lee,

My friends and associates at New Banner Institute and the College of Early Learning received your recent Columbia conference most enthusiastically. Meeting with you and other Montessori teachers to discuss Montessori principles was a great renewal. The role and influence of the teacher in the classroom has received far less attention than it deserves and I am glad to know that IMS is making a concerted attempt to understand the dynamics of interaction within the Montessori environment.

Sincerely,

Vega Atwell
Columbia, South Carolina

Ed. Note: Vega Atwell, director of the College of Early Learning, refers to her experience in the Society's South Carolina Montessori conference held in Columbia, South Carolina on August 8-9, 1987.

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...In the Field

By Alethea Shiplett

Terry Patton (IMS student) is awaiting "final approval" for space in a church to establish her new Montessori school north of Spartanburg, South Carolina. She has tentative approval for rent-free space from the church until her school is functioning and stabilized. The school will serve children in the 2-5 age range and is scheduled to open its doors in January, 1988. . . Elizabeth Crow (IMS, '87) is setting up a school above a doctor's office in Spartanburg, South Carolina. Her rent is donated, so that she uses the space at no cost. . . Cathy Haik (IMS student) has been hired at a Montessori school in Vicksburg, Mississippi where she will be in charge of her own classroom. Cathy holds the record of attending the most IMS conferences. She has been a vital presence in four conferences: Corpus Christi, Texas (August, 1986); Roswell, Georgia (October, 1986); Rockwall, Texas (June, 1987); and Odessa, Texas (September 26-27, 1987).

Movement

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Practical Activities

" . . . practical activities are simply an external incentive to the educational process, they provide a motive and urge the child on to organize his movements."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 85

Simple practical activities provide an essential means by which intelligent movement may effectively proceed in the young child's development. Outdoor activity equipment, such as climbing devices, offer many tangible "goals" towards which the child may physically exert itself in the process of their attainment. It is more the process of effort itself, rather than reaching the external "goal," which reflects the child's real purpose in such activity.

Purpose of Child's Work

"When a child works, he does not do so to attain some further goal. His objective in working is the work itself . . . independent of external factors. . ."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 196

While normal adult functioning is generally directed to attaining some external goal by a process of "minimum effort", the child's purpose in movement is more directed to the process itself. The child may work with a "maximum effort" to accomplish no apparent "purpose" from the adult's ordinary point of view. Often, the young child may even repeat the same simple task over and over again.

Repetition

" . . . the child, when captivated by a piece of work, repeats the same series of movements time after time."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 180

Through a process of repetition, the young child perfects an inner order which establishes a stabilized basis for a life-time of orderly mental and physical functioning. Accompanied by profound concentration, such "repetition" may signal the psychological phenomenon known as "normalization" wherein the child's being comes into complete harmony with its entire environment. "Normalization" is thereby realized through the child's spontaneous activity known as "work".

Normalization through Work

In the surroundings that we provide . . . excited fantasies and restless movements disappear and they calmly face reality and begin to perfect themselves through their work."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 156

The central event of "normalization" in a child's life sets in motion a continuous form of physical activity directed to its own self-perfecting development. In the Montessori environment, the "normalized" child is guided from within itself to engage in a constant perfection of its being through the independent use of well-ordered materials and exercises.

Process of Perfection

"In our schools we look upon the medium of 'good' as that which an individual spontaneously attains in his work. . ."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 307

Perfection in the child's work is measured not by comparison with some fixed standard of external behavior or "ideal", but rather more according to the nature of progress and process itself. Likewise, perfection as a Montessori teacher lies not in one's superficial conformity to certain external behavioral patterns, but rather according to the process of expansive being as a complete "commitment to Montessori principles".

Good Montessori Teaching

" 'the good' are those who 'move towards the good' . . ."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 307

Good Montessori teaching is a continual process of realizing and correcting errors in the course of one's moment to moment being with children. Such a process of expansive being employs the three Montessori principles as an essential inner "control of error" to guide one's effective functioning in each new moment of time. Calm and patient, the effective Montessori teacher gradually diminishes her tangible presence as "personality" as the children become themselves more independent in their goal-directed activity in the environment. In outer form, the teacher's relative "inactivity" as to physical movement measures the extent of one's successful Montessori teaching with children.

Teacher Activity

" . . . the teacher . . . removes the obstacle that is created by his own activity."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 111

"Observing" rather than "teaching", the Montessori teacher directs her attention more towards the work of "being" rather than "doing". Such work is essentially a matter of conscious thinking about the three Montessori

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Output Results

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organizations. A specific written statement of support and participation is being sought from all interested persons to assure essential agreement in principle as to the new agency's "inclusive" nature and purpose. Mr. Havis emphasizes the importance of open participation for all interested persons in the process of forming the new agency. He stated that "assuring complete communication and 'inclusivity' in actual practice is very important—particularly during this critical initial period of the agency's essential formation."

For further information about the new inclusive accrediting agency for Montessori teacher training programs, contact: Lee Havis, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910 Tel. (301) 589-1127.

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Letters to IMS

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September, 1987

Dear Lee,

I read your "Imagination" newsletter today. (*Montessori Observer*, September, 1987 issue) I love the stories the students tell. It's so interesting to see how things are unfolding for people. . . . I should submit my own stories of the Lab school to you.

God's Love,

Alethea Shiplett
College Park, Maryland

Ed. Note: Alethea Shiplett is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program and refers to her recent experiences as teacher and administrator of a "Lab School" in Washington, D.C.

August 1, 1987

Dear Mr. Havis,

Taking this Study Course has enlightened me so much, I've gained a lot of confidence in myself. I've learned patience with children at school as well as with my own. I seem to be handling problems much better. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Florence Swaminathan
Houston, Texas

Ed. Note: Florence refers to her experience in the Society's "Independent Study Course" to prepare for Montessori teaching.

July 24, 1987

Dear Lee,

. . . I thought I would take this opportunity to let you know how much I appreciate all I have learned from you and your independent study course. I did not truly realize how much I have learned until I attended a Montessori workshop in Houston. . . . Thanks to your course I was able to accept some of the things in the workshop and disagree with some of what they taught keeping the high standards you have taught me. . . .

Sincerely,

Carolyn Smith
Baytown, Texas

Ed. Note: Carolyn Smith is presently completing the Society's Montessori teacher training program entitled "Independent Study Course."



Lee Havis conducting Montessori conference in Rockwall, Texas (June 13-14, 1987).

Early Learning

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science and the proper conditions for man's intellectual/psychological growth and development, in theory and practice. The relationships which develop among parents and directors within the New Banner Institute help support the child within a richer, more consistent learning environment at home and at school."

The College's commitment to thoughtful inquiry and discovery was most recently demonstrated by its considerable contribution to the Society's South Carolina Montessori conference. Held in Columbia, South Carolina on August 8-9, 1987, the conference was attended by parents, teachers and school owners from the states of South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, New York, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin. A substantial portion of the entire College school staff and parents were also in attendance. In addition, the College of Early Learning served an important coordinating function in the process of the conference preparation, operation and registration of participants.

For further information, contact: Vega Atwell, College of Early Learning, P.O. Box 711, Columbia, South Carolina 29202, Tel. (803)772-3317.

Movement

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principles wherein what one "does" arises as a spontaneous reflection of one's "being". Spiritual qualities such as "patience" reflect the introspective nature of one's work as a true Montessori teacher.

Patience

" . . . impatient persons are like those busy bodies that always make off when there is really work to be done."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act.* in *Ed.*, p. 133

Montessori teaching requires a considerable patience to "wait while observing" as children actively struggle in their own expressive efforts with each other and the physical objects. Impatient adult activity with children under the guise of "helping" or "teaching" tends to distract attention away from the real work of creative being which lies entirely within oneself. Montessori education therefore recognizes a fundamental spiritual purpose to movement which serves a function vital to the evolution of all creation.

Purpose of Movement

" . . . man's life is purposeful . . . Spiritual powers are a form of wealth. They must go into circulation so that others can enjoy them; they must be expressed, utilized, to complete the cycle of human relations."

Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 140

Beyond mere physical existence, movement functions to express a larger purpose of expanding love, joy and harmony in the world. Spiritual powers such as "patience", "humility" and "courage" vitally serve this purpose which is unfolding a cosmic plan for the creative evolution of a new humanity. Expressing such spiritual powers in one's being with children is the directed movement of Montessori teaching which frees the "normalized" child to emerge as a true tangible reality.