



# The Montessori OBSERVER

*Imagination*

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## Montessori Conferences Extend "New Education"

Since February, 1986, the Society's conference entitled "Creating the New Education" has significantly extended the "new education" widely throughout the United States: New York, New York (February, 1986); Corpus Christi, Texas (August, 1986); Roswell, Georgia (October, 1986); New York, New York (November, 1986); Dallas, Texas (March, 1987); Reading, Pennsylvania (March, 1987); Los Angeles, California (April, 1987); Detroit, Michigan (May, 1987); Rockwall, Texas (June, 1987); Columbia, South Carolina (August, 1987).

Conducted by Lee Havis, Society executive director, these expansive Montessori conferences have enabled participants to engage and resolve many practical teaching problems with children; e.g., managing misbehavior, dependency, fantasy and patience. The conference communication centers on one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles" to consider such issues as "managing misbehavior" according to the approach of "control the environment, not the children".

Montessori teachers and school administrators from Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and North Dakota participating in the Detroit, Michigan conference in May, 1987. Attendance at the Rockwall, Texas conference (June, 1987) was from throughout the states of Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi. Sponsored by the Country Day Montessori School (Rockwall, Texas), the June, 1987 Texas conference provided an important impetus for continuing similar Texas conferences on a regular basis in the future.

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## Montessori Conferences

September 26-27, 1987. In Odessa, Texas, a conference sponsored by Westover Academy of Montessori. "Creating the New Education" conducted by Lee Havis. Prepaid registration, \$70 per person (\$85, after September 13, 1987). Send registration fee to: Ann E. Grimes, Westover Academy of Montessori, 2119 N. Grandview, Odessa, Texas 79761, Tel. (915) 366-5992.

October 24-25, 1987, in Rhinelander, Wisconsin. International Montessori Society conference "Creating the New Education". Lee Havis, speaker and discussion leader on Montessori teaching. Specific content based on interest of those attending; includes analysis of misbehavior scenarios according to approach of "control the environment, not the child". Prepaid registration to Society: \$150 per person (\$120 for Society members).



Meeting to discuss formation of new "umbrella" Montessori accrediting agency, May 18, 1987 (Silver Spring, Maryland). Clockwise from left: Helen Wheatley (St. Nicholas Montessori College), Dr. Jerry Duvall (member, IMS accreditation committee), Lee Havis (IMS executive director), Mark Evans (London Montessori Centre), Jay Midgley (Montessori World Education Institute), Victoria Midgley (Montessori World Education Institute), Jane Dutcher (St. Nicholas Montessori College), Shirley Plath (Montessori Institute of America).

## Umbrella Agency for Montessori Teacher Training

On May 18, 1987, representatives of many diverse Montessori organizations met in Silver Spring, Maryland to formally set in motion the establishment of a new umbrella accrediting agency for Montessori teacher training programs. Following several months of preliminary planning and consideration throughout the Montessori community, this meeting included representation from many of the major Montessori organizations in the United States. Participating also were representatives of two organizations from Great Britain; the St. Nicholas Montessori College and the London Montessori Centre.

Two broad goals emerged from the May 18, 1987 meeting for initial consideration: (1) to develop uniform inclusive teacher training curriculum standards and; (2) to create an appropriate organizational structure for the new agency. Two respective committees were formed accordingly: (1) Curriculum Standards Committee (chairperson: Jane Dutcher, P.O. Box 143, Cordova, Tennessee 38018) and Structural Organization Committee (chairperson: Lee Havis, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland). Open to all interested persons, the committee work is beginning with an overall analysis of data and curriculum from participating entities.

Efforts to collaborate in the accreditation of Montessori teacher training since 1978 have revolved essentially around the issue of "recognition" of a specific accrediting agency

by the U.S. Department of Education. Such recognition is based on criteria which make it unlikely that more than one accrediting agency will be recognized in a single field, such as Montessori education.

In March, 1986, the Accreditation Council for Childhood Education Specialist Schools (ACCESS) submitted its petition for recognition as an accrediting agency by the U.S. Department of Education for accreditation of teacher training offered by any and all organizations. Established by the American Montessori Society (AMS), ACCESS has accredited 46 AMS teacher training programs with five pending. No non-AMS institution has applied to ACCESS for accreditation.

The Montessori community outside of the AMS organization was generally informed of the ACCESS petition in February, 1987. A public hearing on the ACCESS petition was held on May 18, 1987 in Silver Spring, Maryland before a sub-committee of the National Advisory Council on Accreditation and Institutional Eligibility, U.S. Department of Education.

At the hearing, an opening statement was presented by Joy Turner, ACCESS president, asserting compliance with the criteria to merit recognition of the ACCESS agency. Third party opposition to such recognition of ACCESS was expressed in oral testimony by

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# Imagination

by Lee Havis

*"... an intending Montessori teacher... must keep her imagination alive... the Montessori teacher is constantly looking for a child who is not yet there... In her imagination she sees that single normalized type."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.276

Effective Montessori teaching employs the power of "imagination" to envision the "normalized" child beyond the customary bounds of one's immediate perception of the child as it is ordinarily known; i.e., generally idle, weak, insignificant, dependent, lazy, whimsical, disorderly, disobedient, etc. Beginning with conscious awareness of this ordinary "un-normalized" child, the Montessori teacher creatively imagines the emergence of an entirely new "normalized" child; i.e., loving order, self-disciplined, independent and otherwise being in complete harmony with its environment.

## The Normalized Child

*"The child is a great worker... who can learn by himself, teach himself and who possesses discipline within himself... No attention is paid to this reality... It is simply impossible; it cannot exist..."*

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

The reality of the "normalized" child—considered as generally "impossible" in conventional thinking—emerges from one's creative imagination of the unique Montessori "normalizing" environment around the child; i.e., being as a complete commitment to three fundamental and absolute principles of nature; i.e., (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". Imagining these three fundamental "Montessori" principles as an inner "control of error", the Montessori teacher engages in a process of creative thought to ultimately engender the emergence of the new "normalized" child.

## Creative Thought

*"... when imagination starts from contact with reality, thought begins to construct works by means of which the external world becomes transformed; almost as if the thought of man had assumed a marvelous power: the power to create."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.241

Montessori teaching reflects a continual process of creative thought wherein the three phrases—(1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment"—guide one's expansive being with children. As these thoughts expand in their implicated direction of being, the Montessori "normalizing" environment is thereby creatively realized.

Without a continual thinking about the three Montessori principles, random thoughts and feelings tend to otherwise spontaneously emerge as a condition of stabilized "default" being; i.e. "personality". Expressing itself in ordinary being with others, one's "personality" reflects an emotional drama of underlying repressed feelings of pain and suffering from one's own early childhood experience. Such "personality" stabilizes one's identity in relationship with others in the form and nature of a deeply hidden adult fantasy.

## Adult Fantasy

*"To be contented with the imaginary, and to live as if what we imagine actually exists; to run after illusion and 'not to recognize' reality, is a thing so common that scarcely is it apprehended..."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.265

Built upon shared prejudices and polite conventions, ordinary adult society camouflages an underlying drama of self-deceptive fantasy. Such adult fantasy serves to repress awareness of one's true feelings, providing an escape from the conscious awareness of pain and suffering which would otherwise tend to emerge in present moment reality. Unconsciously, this pattern of escape from reality continues its original similar function when it first arose as creative illusion during one's formative period of early childhood.

## Creative Illusion

*"... a child creates an illusion... but this is not a proof of imagination, it is a proof of an unsatisfied desire;... it is a manifestation of conscious, sensitive poverty."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.257

Creative illusion in the young child; i.e., "fantasy", "make-believe", "play", etc., provides a natural protection from otherwise intolerable pain and suffering associated with a hostile environment. The child is thus able to deflect the various forms of hostility thoughtlessly imposed by parents and teachers; e.g., embarrassment, insult, emotional attachment, repression, abandonment, humiliation, blame, punishment, impatience, etc. Ordinarily, such hostile impositions arise under the guise of "teaching", "discipline" and "love".

In a true "normalizing" environment, illusions and fantasy in children becomes unnecessary as the children pursue their own work of constructive self-creation. During the critical formative period prior to about six years of age, the child creates its own stabilized being as a "reality" upon which is based its later development of true creative "imagination".

## Contact with Reality

*"... to develop the imagination it is necessary for every one first of all to put himself in contact with reality."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.254

The young child's contact with reality is achieved primarily through an intimate sensorial exploration of its physical environment. Guided by its own inner creative instincts and interests, the child engages in a process of mental ordering through concentrated goal-directed activity (i.e., "work") with real objects. Such purposeful sensory experience prepares the child's mind for its later development and expression of true imagination.

## Preparing the Imagination

*"... it is necessary to prepare children to perceive the things in their environment exactly, in order to secure for them the material required by the imagination."*

**Maria Montessori**  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.254

The child under six years of age gradually prepares for its later exercise of imagination by creating within itself a mental order of stabilized being as reality. Thereafter, the child develops a special "sensitivity" to imagination

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Look for the  
**October Observer**  
featuring  
**Movement**

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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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## SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to this *Observer* publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership which is open to all individuals for a \$15 annual fee. Society members also receive a subscription to the *Montessori News*. Send request for membership benefits.

## 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.

## LETTERS TO IMS

July, 1987

Dear Lee,

I enjoyed the two-day conference (Detroit, May 16-17, 1987) very much. Meeting and talking to you has helped me understand your responses to my lessons. Our discussions and the conference has expanded my awareness of the practical application of the three Montessori principles. I left Detroit with a new, exciting feeling of commitment to use this information to create a more effective environment in our classroom. . . .

I feel more aware of how my 'personality' effects the children. I am trying to consistently remember that how I react, my 'being,' is very critical to the success in solving everyday problems that arise. I must remember to 'control the environment' not the child. . . .

Sincerely,

Kathy Tomkowski  
Solon, Ohio

*Ed. Note: Kathy Tomkowski is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program and is reflecting on her experiences at the Society's Montessori conference entitled "Creating the New Education" which she attended in Detroit on May 16-17, 1987.*

June 9, 1987

Dear Lee,

. . . I wish to thank you personally as well as Educational Director for MIA for all your efforts involved with opposing the ACCESS movement and founding an inclusive Montessori umbrella organization. We do have a lot of work ahead of us . . . there are people to assist. I'm sure, it's a matter of identifying them and knowing how they can assist . . . just ask us, many of us stand ready! . . .

Sincerely,

Sheryl M. Sweet  
M.I.A. Educational Director  
Lugoff, South Carolina

June 6, 1987

Dear Lee,

I really enjoyed the opportunity the ACCESS petition hearing provided for all of us to get together on such a positive note. I do hope we may continue to keep in contact and in doing so to keep the true spirit of Montessori alive. . . . Your hard work was much appreciated by all.

Kindest regards,

Helen Wheatley, Principal  
St. Nicholas Montessori  
London, England

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2

## Westover Conference in Odessa, Texas

On September 26-27, 1987, the Westover Academy of Montessori (Odessa, Texas) will sponsor the next Texas Montessori conference entitled "Creating the New Education". Conducted by Lee Havis, Society executive director, this conference will continue the creative work of such previous similar conferences which have been held elsewhere throughout the United States since February, 1986.

Located in Western Texas, the Westover Academy of Montessori was established in 1980 by Ann E. Grimes. Before becoming its owner and director, Ms. Grimes was active for several years as a public school teacher. The school provides a half-day Montessori session for an enrollment of about 80 children from birth to age six. Special features of this school include a movement/exercise program, music, dance and Spanish as a foreign language.

Ms. Grimes is offering the September conference in Odessa as a result of her experience of personal participation in the Rockwall, Texas Montessori conference (June, 1987). The Odessa conference will be held at the

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## Imagination

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which represents a distinctive characteristic of normal mental functioning during the 6-12 year age range.

### Sensitivity to Imagination

*"Touching for the young child is what imagining is for the older one. On the former age level we would have worked on the sensorial plane as, for the latter, we work on the level of the imagination."*

Maria Montessori  
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p.38

A special "sensitivity" to imagination enables the older child to learn and develop itself interiorly through a process of expansive mental abstraction. Immediate sensory experience is therefore readily projected far beyond the bounds of present moment reality. Effective instruction with the older child necessarily appeals to the imagination to respond to the child's expansive interest in the larger universe.

### Appeal to Imagination

*"The instruction of children from seven to twelve years of age must appeal to the imagination. A configuration of reality must spring from the imagination . . . The imagination is then able to reconstruct the whole when it knows the real detail."*

Maria Montessori  
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p.38

Imagination enables the older child to "touch" that which is not immediately present so that an expansive exploration of the entire universe becomes possible. Beginning first with awareness of some specific detail of immediate interest, Montessori elementary teaching appeals to the child's imagination by connecting such detail to the larger cosmic reality of total interrelated functioning of the entire universe.

### Cosmic Education

*"The universe is an imposing reality, and an answer to all questions . . . all things are part of the universe, and are connected with each other to form one whole unity."*

Maria Montessori  
from *To Educate the Human Potential*, p.8

Montessori teaching with the 6-12 year old child is a "cosmic education" to connect all knowledge to the larger reality of a universal whole. From such a total cosmic reality, the child imagines details of related phenomena beyond its immediate sensory experience. A very great quality of knowledge is thereby acquired through the power of imagination.

### Acquiring Knowledge

*"The world is acquired psychologically by means of the imagination. Reality is studied in detail, then the whole is imagined. The detail is able to grow in the imagination, and so total knowledge is attained."*

Maria Montessori  
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p.34  
Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

## Reflections . . .

### Proper Manners

By Kathleen Kimball (Woodruff, Wisconsin)

*Kathleen Kimball is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program. Her comments here reflect a scenario of events she observed in her Montessori environment for children aged 2-6.*

Tad was walking to the water source with a ½ full bucket of water. Kali was walking without looking where she was going and bumped into him. Water splashed out. Kali stopped looking at the spill, sucked her thumb and did nothing.

(In the past, I would have intervened. Kali should clean it up. It was her fault. She was a new 2½ year old in the classroom. How will she ever learn proper manners if I don't make her correct this wrong?)

I did nothing. Tad got a brown floor cloth and calmly cleaned it up. Kali watched the entire process and then went to get another cloth and finish the job herself. Tad hung his cloth up to dry. So did Kali. Tad said to her, 'Next time watch where you are going. I don't like to spill the water'. Kali answered, 'OK' and off they went to choose another task. Kali learned more than 'proper manners' in that lesson.

### No More "Time Outs"

By Kathy Tomkowski (Solon, Ohio)

*Kathy Tomkowski is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training program and is reflecting here on her experiences in eliminating "time out"—to isolate a misbehaving child from the group.*

. . . we resolved to do away with time out because it wasn't working effectively. Time out was a solution for the moment to stop a misbehavior; and to avoid escalation of hostile behavior; but it didn't solve the problems that created the misbehaviors. After a while, we could see the detrimental effects of "time out" on the children. Some children thought: it was fun to be excused; some children were really humiliated; others could spend their day in and out of time out, because it had no apparent effect on them.

Instead, we are working on our reactions to the various classroom problems by establishing eye contact, remembering the three Montessori principles and determining what the detrimental influences in the environment are.

It was fascinating to see the children's reactions: some realized with just our eye contact that what they were doing was inappropriate, and then, they immediately went about their work; others, of course, needed to be questioned about their action. But, the key is for us not to reprimand and lecture the children. We are trying to use just clear, concise questions and directions.

IT WORKED! The environment became calmer. The children realized that there were no more "Time Outs" and they were very happy about that.

Address correction requested

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## OBSERVER

The Montessori



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### Umbrella Agency

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representatives of London Montessori Centre, Montessori Institute of America (MIA), Montessori World Education Institute, National Center for Montessori Education (NCME), International Montessori Society (IMS) and St. Nicholas Montessori College. Such opposition generally centered on the exclusionary nature of ACCESS curriculum standards which favored the AMS form, specific content and manner of delivery of Montessori teacher training.

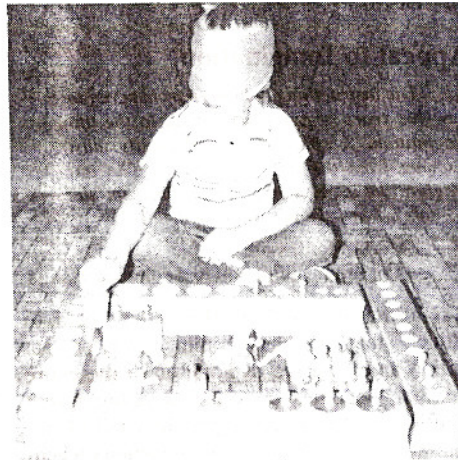
Upon conclusion of the hearing, the Council finally recommended denial of the ACCESS petition due to its failure to meet the applicable recognition criteria with respect to responsibility and reliability in the field of Montessori teacher training. The Council sub-committee chairperson suggested that all Montessori organizations operating teacher training programs cooperate in the formation of a new accrediting agency. Following the hearing, the various Montessori organizations met to initiate plans for the formation of the new umbrella agency.

Following the direction of the May 18, 1987 meeting, Lee Havis mailed out a formal invitation to join in the process of forming the new umbrella agency. On July 2, 1987, this invitation was sent to all known organizations and institutions involved in Montessori teacher training - requesting various data for analysis and confirmation of intention to support and participate in the formative process. Persons or organizations interested in receiving further information or details about the new umbrella accrediting agency may contact the Society.

### Montessori Conferences

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Future conferences will be scheduled according to need and interest in the particular area. For more details about future conferences or to help plan a "Creating the New Education" conference in one's own area, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel.



Blindfolded child working with knobbed cylinders at the Westover Academy of Montessori (Odessa, Texas)

### Letters to IMS

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

Dear Mr. Havis:

... The Association Montessori Internationale—USA is interested in the planning of an accrediting agency dealing with Montessori teacher training. AMI-USA will be pleased to provide a representative for attendance and participation in this planning effort. . .

Sincerely yours,

Jon R. Osterkom, Ph.D.  
Executive Director, AMI-USA  
San Francisco, California

July 7, 1987

Dear Lee:

I take this opportunity to restate the interest of the American Montessori Society in the accreditation of Montessori teacher training . . .

We should like to volunteer to work with you on your Organization Committee. If you believe we can be of service, please get in touch with me so that I may put aside time in my schedule.

Very truly yours,

Bretta Weiss,  
National Director, AMS  
New York, New York

Ed. Note: See article on page 1 of this issue entitled "Umbrella Agency for Montessori."

### Imagination

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

The older child employs imagination to acquire a vast field of diverse knowledge beyond its immediate sensory awareness. Connecting one detail of the universe with another, an orderly knowledge is gradually built up as an interrelated "web" within the child's mind. This great web of knowledge enables the child to store even more knowledge and abstractions useful in the process of its further exploration and discovery beyond the ordinary bounds of time and space. Ultimately, imagination extends knowledge itself to enable the creation of entirely new realities in the world.

### Creating Reality

"Imaginative vision is quite different from mere perception of an object, for it has no limits. Not only can imagination travel through infinite space, but through infinite time: . . ."

Maria Montessori

from *To Educate the Human Potential*,  
p.14-15

Through imagination, the power of creative thought extends reality beyond the limits of one's ordinary being in the present moment of time and space. Creating the "new education"—the larger work of Montessori teaching—expresses the power of one's creative imagination to engender the expansive reality of the new "normalized" child in the world.

### Westover Conference

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

Odessa Hilton Hotel, located 20 minutes from the Midland Regional Airport. Transportation is provided to and from the airport by the Hilton Hotel. Accommodations at the hotel are arranged directly with the hotel.

To register for the Odessa, Texas conference, send \$70 registration fee (\$85, after September 13, 1987) to: Ann Grimes, Director, Westover Academy of Montessori, 2119 N. Grandview, Odessa, Texas 79761, Tel. (915) 366-5992. Make check payable to Westover Academy of Montessori.