



The Montessori

# OBSERVER

Truth

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Lee Havis conducting "Creating the New Education" conference held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida  
(November 21-22, 1987)

## New Education Conferences in Wisconsin, Texas and Florida

The "new education" was the central focus of recent Society conferences held in the states of Wisconsin, Texas and Florida. Entitled "Creating the New Education," these conferences considered a wide range of individual interests and needs, including the very practical issue of managing misbehavior according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child." In addition, the larger question of "What is 'Montessori'?" was addressed with respect to some of its popular interpretations and appearances in society today.

On October 24-25, 1987, Montessori teachers and parents from the states of Wisconsin and Michigan met in Rhinelander, Wisconsin for the Society's first conference in that state. Kathleen Kimball (IMS '87) organized the Rhinelander conference in her area of rural northern Wisconsin through extensive telephone and mail communication throughout the region. Such conference preparation included a presentation of Montessori education to religious workers at a major regional conference and to early childhood educators at an area college.

On November 14-15, 1987, the Southlake Private School (Southlake, Texas) sponsored a Ft. Worth, Texas Montessori conference for its entire school staff. Conducted by Lee Havis, this fifth such Texas Montessori conference also included participation of the entire staff of the nearby affiliated Harwood Private School (Bedford, Texas). In attendance at this conference were also Montessori teachers and parents from elsewhere in the states of Texas and Alabama.

On November 21-22, 1987, Lee Havis conducted the Society's first Florida Montessori conference for Montessori teachers, parents and administrators from the states of Florida, New Jersey and New York. Sylvia Starkie (IMS '87), Montessori teacher at the Hilltop Montessori School (Hollywood, Florida), was the primary local coordinator to assist in organizing and registration for the conference which was held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

Future Society conferences are scheduled for Atlanta, Georgia (February 6-7, 1988) and Reading, Pennsylvania (April 23-24, 1988). Other such "Creating the New Education" conferences will be planned where sufficient interest is evident in the local Montessori community.

## Montessori Organizations Meet for Accreditation of Teacher Training

On January 29-30, 1988, representatives from various Montessori organizations are scheduled to meet in Washington, D.C. to further the development of an "umbrella" agency for the accreditation of teacher training programs conducted throughout the entire Montessori community. The January meeting will consider the first stage work of compiling data which was recently completed by two committees: *Essential Curriculum* (Jane Dutcher, chair); and *Organizational Structure* (Lee Havis, chair).

## Reflections . . .

### Simply Watch

by Cheryl Abbott  
(Roswell, Georgia)

Before I even started teaching . . . I went to a workshop on Managing Misbehavior (Roswell, Georgia, October/1986). The first job I was assigned at the school was with the after school class. These children are from 6-11 years old. They are picked up from the public schools . . . and deposited for a few hours for a 'little Montessori experience' . . . I decided to try putting the three Montessori principles to the test with these kids. When they were on the playground, I would stand near them and simply watch. When someone was about to hit, he would look at me. I could see it work. The other teachers all said 'what a difference'. I really believe that observation without judgment is the key to being with the child correctly.

### Miracles

by Sara Sweinhart  
(Fleetwood, Pennsylvania)

I am presently working with Anita Bresler . . . Watching her in progress is such a learned experience . . . She had a child that was biting, scratching, pulling out Anita's hair and literally was "deconstructing" what teachers call the "controlled" classroom environment. She called me after a (Society) seminar and told me the next time we are in this class, if the student begins any of the above . . . we both focus on this child and in a matter of moments this child stopped and is now stopping other people from hurting the teachers and the equipment. If I hadn't seen it myself I wouldn't believe—but it really works. It's great. The miracles she has shown me in the past four months is fantastic.

Since May 18, 1987, these two committees have been gathering data from Montessori organizations throughout the world to clarify general program operation to provide a basis for effective collaboration within the operational structural and process of the new "inclusive" agency. Twelve different Montessori organizations from the United States, Great Britain, Canada and India have thus far been included in data summaries of their respective structure and curriculum. These summaries are

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# Truth

by Lee Havis

*"... man ... soars aloft in search of truth."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 242

Man's search for truth—the essence of true education—emerges in one's daily experience as a process of inner growth and discovery which extends far beyond the bounds of immediate knowledge and conscious awareness. Answering the question, "what is . . . ?," truth is before both child and teacher in education as a constant learning in each new moment of time. Ultimately, "truth" arises as one's transcendent experience of the imposing reality of the entire universe.

## Imposing Reality

*"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 Hum. Potential*, p. 8

Beyond the time and space of one's own limited perspective of reality in the world lies the totality of the universe as an absolute and constant truth of infinite and eternal perfection. By contrast, ordinary "truth" is limited and defined by transitory thoughts and feelings as they randomly emerge to color all human experience. Distorted by expectation, assumption and prejudice, such human experience tends to reflect an awful truth of hidden error and illusion throughout one's entire life.

## The Awful Truth

*"The truth is that we make mistake after mistake, and do not correct ourselves. We fail to realize our faults; we live in a state of illusion shut off from reality."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 246

Constant error and illusion is the inherent legacy of a complex process of adaptation to life which was intimately formed within oneself as "personality" during the years of early childhood. Such "personality" expresses a fundamental pattern of defensive thought to repress the experience of pain associated with the various ordinary adult impositions of early childhood; e.g., punishment, blame, indifference, impatience, etc. In time, this repression of feeling becomes the established "truth" of one's ordinary life and being with others—solidified further in adult society through the pervasive power of suggestion.

## Power of Suggestion

*"The solidarity of adult society . . . assumes the power of suggestion and the appearance of an absolute truth on which all agree."*

Maria Montessori  
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 69

Built on agreement and suggestion, the truth of adult society tends to reflect an unconscious repression of natural self-expression—reinforced and sustained by many diverse means of communication and association with others. Individual or minority dissent to widely-held beliefs, prejudices and distinctive cultural "truth" is readily repressed by the well-established institutional order of organized society. At bottom, the truth of one's own feelings are fundamentally denied and disregarded in the ordinary course of events. Such is the terrible lie of repressed human experience which remains deeply hidden and well camouflaged amid the impatient rush of one's routine daily life with others.

## The Terrible Lie

*"Conventions which camouflage a man's true feelings are a spiritual lie which help him adapt to the organized deviations of society . . . This is the terrible lie lurking in the deepest recesses of the subconscious."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 176

Under the guise of such common conventions as politeness, necessity, and the 'common good', true feelings are generally suppressed as an automatic defense against the pain associated with social isolation and disharmony. With children, these repressive social conventions are communicated and solidified through means of traditional education. By contrast, the "new education" envisioned by Dr. Montessori proposes to allow the child's full self-expression as intended by nature—to reveal the absolute truth of human experience in harmony with the totality of the universe. Such an expansive "new education" is realized by following the path of complete commitment to infinite and eternal principles of nature, such as "observation."

## Observation

*"... the teacher . . . should put herself into immediate relation with the truth, by means of rigorous observation . . ."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 136

Being committed with children to the principles of (1) Observation; (2) Individual Liberty; and (3) Preparation of the Environment, the Montessori teacher extends the idea of "observation" far beyond the level of one's initial perception and conventional knowledge of the child. True "observation" is seen as a humble and patient process of inquiry and expansive awareness directed to the child as an "unknown entity." From such committed observation, the truth of the child reveals itself spontaneously in the present moment.

## Revealing the Unknown

*"It is impossible to make an observation of something that is still unknown . . . What is unknown must reveal itself through its own proper energies."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 112

"Observation" as a Montessori principle ultimately aims to discover the child's true nature as it freely emerges in outer form; i.e., being in complete harmony with its entire environment. Such a process of discovery employs the three Montessori principles as an inner "control of error" to guide one's expansive being with children. Montessori teaching therefore follows the true method of science in its profound investigation of the unknown phenomena of the human spirit.

## Method of Science

*"... the method of Positive Science . . . puts man in the way of knowing the truth."*

Maria Montessori  
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 242

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Look for the  
**March Observer**  
featuring  
**Faith**

### 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 the promote harmony within the Montessori community.

### INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

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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

November, 1987

Dear Mr. Havis,

I am learning so much from each new lesson. Every time I feel like it cannot get any better I discover just how little I still know . . . I was sick several weeks ago and I could not talk. I discovered during that time that the child truly learns through observation, not from listening to words . . . I am looking forward to the Atlanta conference.

Sincerely,

Jean Wilson  
Lawrenceville, Georgia

*Ed. Note: Jean Wilson is a student reflecting on her participation in the Society's "Independent Study Course" and working with children as a Montessori teacher.*

November, 1987

Dear Lee,

Some of my exciting results (from the Society's Rhinelander, Wisconsin conference, October 24-25, 1987) were, finding out some very interesting reasons for certain misbehavior through questioning. Then, being able to deal more effectively with the misbehavior. I feel that the conference has given me a deeper understanding of the Montessori Principles that I relate to in every lesson, and every day in the classroom. The principles are not just words anymore, they now have a much deeper meaning to me!

Sincerely,

Amy Wald  
Jackson, Wisconsin

November 28, 1987

Dear Lee,

A week has passed since our time together (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, November 21-22, 1987) and a great deal of experimentation with the three Principles! I feel that I am beginning all over in the classroom, just when I thought I was comfortable and secure in my interactions with the children. And new beginnings mean excitement, frustration, and a desire for more insight!

Sincerely,

Peggy Nolan  
Neptune Beach, Florida

November 25, 1987,

Dear Lee,

Peggy (Nolan) and I can't thank you enough for last week-end (Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, November 21-22, 1987). It completely opened us up to a "new education possibility". We talked all the way back to Jacksonville Beach about the future *Montessori Tides*. . . . We will be letting you know how things are progressing. So far the biggest change is Peggy and I!

Sincerely,

Kathy Graham  
Jacksonville Beach, Florida

*Ed. Note: Kathy Graham is director of the Montessori Tides Montessori School. She reflects here on the experience of herself and her associate, Peggy Nolan, at the Society's conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida held on November 21-22, 1987.*

November 27, 1987

Dear Mr. Havis,

I wish to express my thanks for a very valuable conference I attended recently (Ft. Worth, Texas, November 14-15, 1987). This conference helped me to understand better and to know the differences of my personality and my being. It also gave me the courage to apply the three Montessori principles.

I hope that every Montessori teacher will attend the future conferences to know and understand better the Montessori teaching conducted by you. Hoping that someday you would have a conference in Houston or in Texas in the near future.

Sincerely,

Florence Swaminathan  
Houston, Texas

## Truth

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Montessori teaching employs the approach of scientific "observation" and "experimentation" in one's presence with children to discover the truth of their "normal" being as intended by nature. As one's awareness of Montessori principles expands in conscious thought, the child reveals the stabilized form of "normalized" being which was observed and described by Dr. Montessori—and further verified by many others since Dr. Montessori in diverse circumstances throughout the world. Ultimately, one's own experience of commitment to Montessori principles will reveal that such "normalization" is indeed an established fact and reality.

## Normalization

*"'normalization' . . . after so many years, and so vast an experience, the truth of it is established . . ."*

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 204

The truth of "normalization" which returns the young child to a state of complete harmony with its environment and natural development is readily proven in one's own practical experience of true Montessori teaching with children. However, since such "normalization" defies the ordinary "truth" of conventional society, serious consideration of this striking phenomenon has remained generally unexplored among teachers and parents. Lacking a complete commitment to Montessori principles, ordinary teaching therefore fails to realize true "normality" and the remarkable "new child" is seen as little more than a myth, accident or ideal which never really extends far beyond the domain of idle speculation or academic debate.

## The "New Child" Myth

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

Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 270

Failing to fully consider the real possibility of true "normality" in children, traditional teaching tends to view the "normal" child as limited according to that which is ordinarily known from past experience; e.g., docile, fanciful, unstable, noisy, disorderly, weak, dependent, etc. By contrast, the Montessori education considers Dr. Montessori's observation and description of "normality" as a matter of verifiable scientific truth. The Montessori teacher therefore functions as a true scientist to penetrate into the great mysteries of human being by observing the child as it emerges in an environment prepared for its own free self-expression.

## Science of Truth

*" . . . the science of truth, penetrating into nature, serves to exalt and illustrate its mysteries."*

Maria Montessori

from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 267

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Positions  
& Placements

**Montessori Teachers:** (3-6). For July, 1988. Two positions: Montessori teacher with extended day and part-time Administrator. School established 1976, enrollment 50 students. Contact: Keene Montessori School, 91 West St., Keene, New Hampshire 03431.

**Montessori Teacher:** (6-12) For January, 1988; full-time in well-established elementary Montessori program for children ages 6-12. Also available for September, 1988. Salary negotiable. Send resume to Dr. Cheryl Rosaen, Principal, Livingston Montessori Center, 7400 W. Grand River, Brighton, MI 48116, Tel. (313) 227-4666.

## . . . In the Field

By Alethea Shiplett

Terry Patton (IMS student; Spartanburg, South Carolina) recently accepted the position of president of the South Carolina Conference of Montessori Educators (SCCME), a new support group for Montessori education in that state. Set in motion at its first regional meeting held in Spartanburg, South Carolina on November 21, 1987, this new South Carolina Montessori organization plans to hold future regional meetings in the Charleston and Columbia areas of the state. As SCCME president, Terry will be the contact person to help organize the next Society conference for South Carolina in the near future. . . . Sr. Elizabeth Pinto (IMS student; Parsippany, New Jersey) reports that she found the Society's Ft. Lauderdale conference which she attended on November 21-22, 1987 to be an encouragement to communicate more openly and honestly with her staff to resolve problems they are experiencing with the children at her school. She states that the staff is responding favorably to more frequent meetings and observations she is conducting in the classrooms. Sr. Elizabeth reports that she is experiencing a "revitalization" in her school.

## Montessori Organizations

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now being distributed for comment and information to all interested parties in the Montessori community.

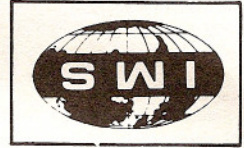
The January, 1988 meeting will also address a specific proposal prepared by Lee Havis for the organizational structure and program accreditation standards of the new agency. Adapted from the "umbrella" agency with conducts accreditation for educational programs in the field of allied health, i.e., the *Committee on Allied Health Education Accreditation (CAHEA)*, the new Montessori "umbrella" agency is likewise proposed as a collaboration of diverse participatory organizations and institutions. The new Montessori accrediting agency is proposed to follow closely the established practices and procedures of CAHEA—to assure an effective balance between respect for individual differences and the

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**Truth**

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The truth of Montessori education is a real science of constant exploration and discovery to reveal human phenomena which were formerly unseen and unnoticed. Such a science of truth aims to study the child which lies beyond the level of superficial external behavior. The discovery of this "normalized" child likewise reflects the fundamental essence of man's true nature.

**Man's True Nature**

*"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

As a scientific study of the human spirit, Montessori teaching is committed to those principles of nature which ultimately reveal man's own true nature in the external form of the new "normalized" child. Mankind is thus seen in its essential character as a complete harmony of being with all creation—the transcendent truth of one's experience of life as perfection in the present moment.

**Creating the New Education**

April 23-24, 1988. . . . . Reading, Pennsylvania

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.

**Montessori Organizations**

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need for autonomy and independent judgment as to final accreditation decisions. Havis states that "CAHEA has a reputation for reliability and a long history of successful accreditation experience in its field. Their procedures and practices therefore provide an important reference and point of departure for development of similar collaborative accreditation in the field of Montessori teacher training."

The new proposed Montessori "umbrella" accreditation agency is organized within the operation of three basic documents: **Essentials and Criteria** (accreditation standards against which all programs will be evaluated); **Statement of Basic Accreditation Principles** (procedures, policies and practices to conduct accreditation); and **Articles of Association** (the legal instrument to provide essential agreement among the participating parties).

Accreditation within the new agency would assure substantial program review and evaluation by "collaborating organizations" through the operation of their respective review committees. A special "Generic Review Committee" would provide similar evaluation for programs operating without affiliation with a specific collaborating organization. Recommendations for accreditation action by the new agency would be forwarded from these review committees to an autonomous "Accreditation Committee" which would make all final accreditation decisions.

The new umbrella agency is intended to "reform" existing Montessori accreditation agencies within the new "umbrella" authority to include the entire Montessori community. Once formally operational, the new "inclusive" agency is to seek recognition for its accreditation activity from the United States Department of Education. Ultimately, the new agency may well provide an important means for greater cooperation and communication to improve the quality of Montessori teacher training throughout the entire Montessori community.

**Moments of Peril**

Readers are invited to submit scenarios of disorder or misbehavior with children for comments based on "control the environment, not the child". Reflective remarks to resolve the particular "moment of peril" according to commitment to Montessori principles will be provided in the following issue. Requests for anonymity will be respected.

**The Demonstrative Child**

—Submitted by Lynn Philip  
 (Somerville, Connecticut)

A five year old girl in our school is a very demonstrative "emotional" child. When upset (particularly not getting what she wants when she wants it) she begins to yell and verbally castigate the specific teacher involved (if that's the case) and then all. She tells us how she'll deal with us and what harm she'll do to the school building. Usually, during this tirade, she begins to hit us. Some of the younger ones are now following suit. How to resolve?

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