



The Montessori OBSERVER

Faith

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Umbrella Accreditation Proposal Considered

In January, 1988, Lee Havis, Society executive director, published and distributed for comment his latest proposal for an inclusive umbrella accreditation Council for Montessori teacher education. Styled after a similar model employed in the field of allied health (CAHEA), the Havis proposal was extensively reviewed at a meeting held for this purpose on January 29-30, 1988 in Washington, D.C.

In attendance at the January meeting were: **Jane Dutcher** (Chair, Curriculum Committee; St. Nicholas, Tennessee); **Lee Havis** (Chair, Structural Organization Committee; IMS, Maryland); **Charles Plath** (Montessori Institute of America; MIA, Missouri); **Christina Miller** (London Montessori Center, Florida); **Dr. Marie Yankee** (Institute Montessori Internationale, California); **Alethea Shiplett** (IMS, Maryland).

The January meeting concluded with the resolution and clarification of many issues which were included thereafter as specific revised pages in the original proposal. These revisions were then distributed to interested persons throughout the entire Montessori community. Issues and concerns unresolved at the January meeting, such as specific Council fees and the procedures necessary to initiate actual Council operation, were left for further consideration in the future.

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... In Other Words

by **Bonnie Sanders**
Beaufort, South Carolina

A True Montessori Teacher

The Montessori environment involves the conscious awareness and application of three principles—observation, preparation of the environment, and individual liberty. These principles work together as one. It does not matter so much to me now that I cannot understand why these particular principles work as opposed to some other 3 or 4 or 5. I keep seeing that they do work. These principles give the Montessori teacher an amazing inner guide for her own intelligence. They point out error and pave the road to successful actions.

Thinking these principles produces the fruits of a true Montessori environment. I find out why from a Biblical principle. "As a man thinks, so is he." As I consciously think of the three Montessori principles, so am I a true Montessori teacher.



Lee Havis conducting "Creating the New Education" conference held in Atlanta, Georgia on February 6-7, 1988.

New Education Conference in Atlanta, Georgia

On February 6-7, 1988, the Society's most recent "Creating the New Education" conference was held in Atlanta, Georgia. In attendance were teachers, school owners and parents from throughout the states of Georgia, South Carolina and Maryland.

Conducted by **Lee Havis**, executive director of the International Montessori Society, this two-day seminar analyzed many practical teaching problems based on one's being as "commitment to Montessori principles." Many scenarios of "misbehavior" were considered and resolved according to the approach of "control the environment, not the child."

The Atlanta conference was attended by many persons familiar with the Society's communication from participation in its teacher training program or through attendance at similar prior conferences. Mr. Havis stated that "the Atlanta conference showed real progress in the ability of participants to assume their own responsibility for helping each other in the

process of analyzing and resolving specific teaching difficulties. Many issues were resolved with very little direct assistance from myself."

Society conferences are scheduled according to interest in the local Montessori community. The next such conference is scheduled for Reading, Pennsylvania on April 23-24, 1988. Registration is due by March 23, 1988. For further information, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Reflections . . .

Pouring Water by **Nell Rollo**
(Forest Hills, New York)

A certain little boy works a great deal with pouring water. Simple? No! 1 tray, 1 sponge and 2 pitchers can cause a large disturbance—he pours slowly at first—then faster and faster. Water is on the tray, on the table, on the floor, on him. When the sponge is called into action—to mop and squeeze is wonderful. The water is still everywhere but where it should be.

I was doing everything I could think of—I re-presented the lesson. I put out squeezing a sponge in large bowls. I suggested he work with table washing. I controlled the materials many times . . . I blew it and lost my patience and got myself involved in a full scale power struggle. I really could have put the child in one of the pitchers, the sponge in his mouth and mailed him off to Montessori heaven . . .

A few weeks ago . . . I got a large roll of paper towels from the kitchen, put it on the table and said to the child "when you are

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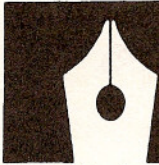
Montessori Conference

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.



Faith

by Lee Havis

"... The Montessori teacher . . . must have faith in the child who will reveal himself through work. The different types of deviated children do not shake the faith of the teacher, who sees a different type of child in the spiritual field . . ."

Maria Montessori
from Ed. for a New World, p. 86-87

When misbehavior and disorder arises in children, the Montessori teacher especially needs real faith to see the child's inner true nature of love and harmony. With faith, one can see beyond the limitations of immediate reactive feelings and thoughts to discover the deeper reality of being as promised by Dr. Montessori; i.e., the new "normalized" child which is reflected in its complete harmony with the entire environment. Even before Dr. Montessori herself discovered this remarkable truth of "normality" in children in 1907, her dedicated scientific observation of children was guided by a great inner faith in the unknown possibility of human being.

A Great Faith

"A great faith animated me . . . It was almost as if I prepared myself for an unknown mission."

Maria Montessori
from Montessori Method, p. 33

Dr. Montessori's faith in scientific observation constantly challenged her to inquire into unknown human phenomena through a process of observing the apparently insignificant behavior of children. In time, her faith revealed the new "normalized" child as a totally unexpected discovery—the "impossible reality" around which all Montessori education is fundamentally centered.

Impossible Reality

"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 Formation of Man, p. 66

To discover the "impossible" and observe the "unseen" is the paradoxical mandate of true Montessori teaching. Without external evidence of the "normalized" child, one can only proceed with genuine faith to discover this "impossible reality" as a matter of scientific experimentation and personal experience. Ordinarily, the reform of one's thinking necessary to prepare for such a discovery of the "impossible" is quite difficult because of the established adult "mind set" about reality which tends to oppose one's freedom for true creative being.

Adult Reform

"The adult is beyond reform . . . He is a tough subject too set in his mold for the revelation of new human possibilities."

Maria Montessori
from To Ed. the Human Potential, p. 120

Faith in the "normalized" child must necessarily overcome a rigid adult "mind set" which tends to automatically oppose any fundamental reform. Limited and separate from others, one's being as "personality" constantly persists as a fundamental self-image unless there is some conscious effort for being otherwise. Built upon the ground of prejudice and unconscious fear arising from one's own painful early childhood experiences, one's "default" being as "personality" constantly opposes any being as a commitment to the absolute and infinite principles of nature upon which true scientific observation is essentially premised.

Prejudice and Fear

"That prejudice which forbids us to 'believe the extraordinary', the fear of being thought credulous . . . is common to all."

Maria Montessori
from Formation of Man, p. 28

Deterred by the underlying prejudice and fear with which one's personality is fundamentally formed in early childhood, the mature exercise of faith in the "normalized" child is ordinarily quite difficult, if not impossible. The adult's daily association with others in society tends to reflect the essential drama of blame, punishment, manipulation and repression from one's formative period of early childhood. Within such a complex hidden drama, "faith" appears more as irrational "superstition"—a sort of childish "credulity" associated with weakness and dependency on others.

Credulity

"Credulity is, indeed, a characteristic of immature minds which lack experience and knowledge of realities . . . credulity may exist in adults . . . as a mark of the uncivilized."

Maria Montessori
from Spontaneous Act. In Ed., p. 259

The capacity for true faith does not emerge in the immature mind which merely "absorbs" its environment without significant discernment or discretion. Such an "absorbent mind" reflects a quality of "credulity" which is vital to the young child's formative development at such time. After about the age of six, the normal child loses its unique "absorbent mind" as it acquires the capacity for mature thought, creative imagination and real faith based on its own further experiences. Distinct from immature "credulity", such real faith expresses a mature experience which is the very sentiment of truth itself.

Sentiment of Truth

"... faith and fable are 'as the poles apart' since fable is in itself a thing without faith, and faith is the very sentiment of truth."

Maria Montessori
from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 266

Based on truth, real faith is fundamentally distinct from the "credulity" associated with the immature mind. However, such distinction is frequently confused by widespread prejudices and fear. Even religion and education can readily institutionalize "credulity" under the guise of "faith". By contrast, true Montessori teaching is guided by faith in the truth of the "normalized" child—extending far beyond the immature state of "credulity" with which popular traditional education is ordinarily associated.

Beyond Credulity

"Credulity gradually disappears with experience . . . the evolution of civilization and of souls tends to diminish credulity . . ."

Maria Montessori
from Spontaneous Act. in Ed., p. 261

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Look for the
May Observer
featuring
Rewards and Punishments

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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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LETTERS TO IMS

February 10, 1988

Dear Mr. Havis:

I want you to know that I am all for the Montessori education . . . The problem that I am facing right now is that not too many people in New York know about the Montessori education. We have to get together soon, to see if we can do something to expand this new education in New York.

Cordially yours,

Ester Riveros
Les Enfants Montessori School
Astoria, New York

February, 1988

Dear Mr. Havis,

. . . you personally started the most amazing changes in me as a person, mother, wife and "child within" . . . After completing lesson #1 (of the "Independent Study Course") where I was to go back into my childhood I became unhappy, nervous and unfocused. I was waking up in the morning full of self hate . . . I tried to do lesson #2 but the pain was too great . . . I would very much like to finish this course. In many ways it may have saved my life . . . I am also wondering if other people have had such startling changes happen because of this correspondence course.

Thanks so much,

Nancy Boehm
Maui, Hawaii

February, 1988

To Lee Havis:

Thank you for the Atlanta conference (Feb. 6-7, 1988). I have allowed the children to solve their own problems and it works!! I didn't realize how easy my job could be!

Dana Knight
Lawrenceville, Georgia

February, 1988

To Lee Havis:

I left the Atlanta conference (Feb. 6-7, 1988) with a much greater insight into just what a "commitment to Montessori principles" means. I have been a commitment to the Montessori principles this week. Thank you,

Virginia Jones
Lilburn, Georgia

February, 1988

Dear Lee,

Again, I thoroughly enjoyed the conference (Atlanta, GA, February 6-7, 1988), but I disagree with something you said, that we may be inspired for a short time after—only to return to our old ways. That may be true to a very small extent. What I have found is that the profound and the quiet understandings I gain have only grown with time. I believe the changes in the way I am with children are permanent. I have gotten something new, something different, something deeper at each conference, even in the midst of great misunderstandings among each other. Thanks again.

Bonnie Sanders
Beaufort, South Carolina

February 21, 1988

Dear Lee,

I thank you everyday for your insight on the Montessori principles. As the children become more normalized, their dependency on the adults in the environment is beginning to diminish. Peggy and I are *really* observing. More and more lessons are being taught by the children and *not* by the adult.

Last week we had an observer from India. She was awed by the degree of spontaneous activity among the children. She was especially moved by the tenderness and care given to the younger ones by the 5-year olds. As she observed, she and I noted all the similarities to Montessori principles in India and those being applied in our classroom. With relief she exclaimed, "I'm so happy to see Montessori is the same in the United States as it is in India!"

Fondly,

Kathy Graham
Atlantic Beach, Florida

Faith

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Beyond the constant tendency towards "credulity" in adult society, true faith reveals the unknown possibility of creative being in each new moment of time. By merely thinking of the phrases "observation", "individual liberty" and "preparation of the environment", one is already "being" a true Montessori teacher—distinct and independent from the ordinary default condition of being as "personality". As a "control of error" over time, these three Montessori principles provide a real process for one's exercise of faith in the eventual emergence of the "normalized" child. Even repeated failures in what one "does" with children is considered as part of this process of "correction of error" with which one's perfection of Montessori teaching is necessarily associated.

Repeated Failures

"Every great cause is born from repeated failures and from imperfect achievements."

Maria Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p. 6

Faith in the "normalized" child is reflected outwardly in various tentative experimental actions which invariably include considerable failure and error in one's expansive being as a complete "commitment to Montessori principles". Since the child is considered essentially as an "unknown being", observation is only "complete" over time as a process of considerable patience and experience. Courage to admit and correct repeated failures in such Montessori teaching is how one's faith is manifested in action on behalf of the unseen inner spirit of the child's true nature.

Faith in Action

Through long experimentation we have now arrived at much elimination of error, and the possession of a key which can unlock for children the gates of a healthy and happy education. On our courage and perseverance in its use depends the future of humanity."

Maria Montessori
from *To Educate the Human Pot.*, p. 118

Despite its verification as truth in the experience of many besides Dr. Montessori since 1907, the "normalized" child yet remains a most fragile reality in opposition to the widespread conditions of prejudice and fear which have become generally institutionalized in society as traditional education. The discovery of such an "impossible reality" as the "normalized" child must still be won as a great personal victory of faith, courage and patience with children—far beyond any mere belief or some theoretical, academic "understanding". Limited to the individual efforts of a few, Dr. Montessori's great vision of a "new education" remains yet a rather foolish hope readily crushed out by the continuing repression of children which has become so established in society under the guise of "education".

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...In the Field

By Alethea Shiplett

Florence Swaminathan (IMS Student) attended the Society's Ft. Worth conference in November, 1987 from which she gained so much insight and "courage" that she is now gathering interest for another such Texas Montessori conference. She says of the conference "It gave me the courage to actually apply Montessori principles with children." If interested in attending a new Texas Montessori conference, contact Florence Swaminathan at 11914 Creekhurst Drive, Houston, Tx 77099; (713) 568-2066.

Reflections

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

finished, please make sure everything is dry." I kid you not—one hour and twenty minutes later this child came and gave me a hug and said "I put it away."

The material was back on the shelf—refilled with water, the table, floor and chairs were dry and the remaining towels were placed by the kitchen doorway gate. This child has never touched that exercise again and is currently working very, very carefully with sensorial materials (his choice).

Umbrella Accreditation

Cont'd from Page 1, Col. 1

On February 15, 1988, representatives from many Montessori organizations and institutions (including those represented at the meeting held on January 29-30, 1988) met in Berkeley, California to consider Montessori accreditation structure and procedures. After an initial discussion of the history and purpose of accreditation in the field of Montessori education, a motion was passed to constitute the assemblage as an *ad hoc* committee for the purpose of establishing an umbrella accreditation agency for the accreditation of Montessori education programs.

The *ad hoc* committee, designated as "Accreditation Council for Montessori Education" (ACME), intends to meet again on May 14-15, 1988 to consider proposals for a specific structure of the new agency.

For further information about the formation of a new "umbrella" accreditation agency in Montessori education, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910.



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Moments of Peril

The Demonstrative Child
from *Observer*, January, 1988
Response by Lee Havis

The emotional "demonstrative child" reflects an essential "power struggle" and "fantasy" which primarily implicates the adult personality as detrimental in the environment. To remove this detrimental influence is delicate indeed—to distinguish between "having" a personality and "being" a "commitment to Montessori principles".

With a "power struggle", one's first attention should be directed towards the three Montessori principles—by saying them to oneself over and over again like a "mantra". From this "being", there will gradually emerge the ability to stand and watch the inevitable emotional tirade in the "moment of peril".

As the child's "emotionality" becomes evident in verbal expression, there may emerge an opportunity to expand the Montessori principle of "observation" as a process of active questioning; e.g., "why would you want to hurt the school?"; "why are you feeling so angry?", etc. Through this patient and expansive "observation", the underlying drama of repressed feelings will gradually reveal itself, allowing the child's temper to find its own natural resolution as it returns to the normal activity of real goal-directed activity with a calm and happy spirit.

The "Clean up" Lady

David, a distracted self-absorbed three year old, has poured out all the rice from the rice pouring activity onto the floor. (There is no eye contact with the teacher.) David then proceeds to wander off to pick out another object from the shelf, taking it to a table to engage in further fantasy manipulation with the object. As the teacher sees other children slipping on the spilled rice, she proceeds to clean it up herself and put the rice pouring activity away for the rest of the day. How to disengage from being the "clean up" lady and to effectively encourage independence in children?

Faith

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Foolish Hope

"It is foolish to hope or even imagine that theoretical reforms or individual efforts could fill a void as that which has been made in the world through the oppression of the children."

Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p. 207

While massive prejudices persist in the world to unconsciously suppress the reality of the "normalized" child, individual efforts for a "new education" remain as yet quite tentative and uncertain to say the least. Through traditional education, many parents and teachers continue to unconsciously repress the child's true nature so that the same essential repressive patterns of the past tend to continue and stabilize likewise in future generations. In such circumstances, hope in the "new education" must primarily remain as an inner experience with little, if any, supportive tangible evidence in the reality of external appearances.

Hope

"This is the hope we have—a hope in a new humanity that will come from this new education . . ."

Maria Montessori
from *Reconstruction in Ed.*, p. 14

Real hope in Montessori teaching emerges as a result of one's faith in the reality of the "normalized" child—even as one's immediate circumstances may appear as indeed quite "hopeless" and discouraging. Beyond whatever transitory feelings of "discouragement" and "fear" which may arise in the process of Montessori teaching, the children themselves offer hope in a "new humanity" as they reveal a genuine faith in life which can sustain itself even in the face of considerable adversity and hopeless "impossibility".

Faith in Life

"Our method encourages children to have faith and confidence in . . . the Author and Preserver of Life."

Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 299

With faith in three infinite and eternal principles of nature, the Montessori teacher finds a harmony in the emerging faith of children in that which rises above the "hopeless" appearances of external reality. By thinking about these three Montessori principles in those most difficult moments of peril and tension, one's being is distinguished from its ordinary identification with "personality" to ultimately reveal a reality which is more than man itself.

More than Man

" . . . to be more than man. This is a dream to him who lacks faith; but it is the realizable goal, the aim of life, to him who has faith."

Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 346

As a "commitment to Montessori principles", one's being transcends the customary definitions of "man" as it is ordinarily known from past experience. With children, this expansive new way of being as a true Montessori teacher reveals the "normalized" child in complete harmony with its environment—to substantiate one's faith in creative being which is constantly evolving a new reality for the unknown future of humanity.

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Montessori Teachers: Head teacher (9-12); ½ time assistant teacher (9-12); Full-day assistant teacher (6-9). School founded in 1980 by parents, and currently in 4th year in own building. Located in rural setting near two universities. Salary negotiable and competitive. Applicants willing to attend training acceptable. Reply to director: Karen Drazen, Oak Grove Montessori School, 132 Pleasant Valley Rd., Mansfield, CT 06226.