



The Montessori OBSERVER

Rewards and
Punishments

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Child working with practical life "spooning" exercise at Montessori Tides Montessori School (Atlantic Beach, Florida)

Education Meets Nature in Florida

The Hilltop Montessori School (Hollywood, Florida) places a special emphasis on combining nature with education within its total Montessori environment. Carol Bubani, Hilltop owner and director, believes strongly that "learning need not be confined to the classroom." Accordingly, Ms. Bubani provides many opportunities for the children to observe and care for animals and otherwise engage in a wide range of outdoor study of nature.

Ms. Bubani is also co-owner with Dr. Jerome Taft of the University Private School (Davie, Florida). This second school site includes a large outdoor setting providing interesting experiences with domesticated animals and wildlife and plants which are uniquely characteristic of this tropical part of southern Florida.

In November, 1987, these two schools funded the attendance of a large percentage of their teaching staff to participate in the "Creating the New Education" conference held in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida on November 22-23, 1987. Sylvia Starkie (IMS '87), staff member at the Hilltop School, was a principal coordinator for this first Society Florida Montessori conference.

For further information, contact: Carol Bubani, Hilltop Montessori School, 2921 S. W. 56 Ave., Hollywood, Florida 93023; Tel. (305) 987-5485.

Pennsylvania Montessori Conference Dramatic Step Forward for New Education

On April 23-24, 1988, the Society held its second Pennsylvania Montessori conference in Reading, Pennsylvania—a most dramatic step forward in the Society's work of "creating the new education" in that area of the United States. In attendance were school owners, teachers and parents from throughout the states of Pennsylvania, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts and Vermont. Many students and graduates from the Society's Montessori teacher training program were also in attendance from throughout the region to help support and encourage this important creative opportunity.

Conducted by Lee Havis, the two-day weekend conference considered such practical teaching concerns as managing misbehavior according to the Montessori approach of "control the environment, not the child". The conference particularly considered how personal experience and actions at the conference could be compared to similar circumstances of challenge and opportunity with children and other adults in one's own school and community. This comparison was particularly useful to distinguish one's being as "personality" from that of "commitment of Montessori principles".

Further Society conferences are scheduled for Jacksonville, Florida (June 4-5, 1988); Milwaukee, Wisconsin (August 6-7, 1988); and Greenville, South Carolina (August 13-14, 1988). To register or to obtain further information, contact: International Montessori Society, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

New Education Conference Coordinators Needed

The Society is seeking persons to coordinate and help organize participation in its unique two-day weekend Montessori conference entitled "Creating the New Education". The primary function of such conference coordinators is to communicate with local Society members and other persons interested in Montessori education to assure a successful registration and participation in the conference. Such local coordination will help to develop a stronger continuing communication and support of "commitment to Montessori principles" in the area—well beyond the single event of the conference itself.

The Society maintains a close working regular communication and personal relationship with its coordinators throughout the entire process of conference organization—to help resolve whatever problems and difficulties that may arise in the course of such efforts. In addition, the Society provides appropriate names, addresses, telephone numbers, specific conference literature and other information and assistance as may be required and useful for the particular circumstances. Conference coordinators are presently designated in the states of Florida, South Carolina, California, Wisconsin and Maryland.

Initial coordination efforts are directed towards personal communication with local schools and individuals to establish a basis of knowledge and interest in the Society's conference. Thereafter, the Society will schedule and sponsor its "Creating the New Education" conference for a date and location according to the specific interest that emerges from the initial communication. For further information about the Society's conference coordination, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, Maryland, 20910, Tel. (301) 589-1127.

Montessori Conferences

June 4-5, 1988 Jacksonville, Florida

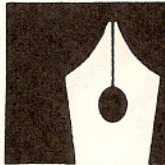
August 6-7, 1988 Milwaukee, Wisconsin

August 13-14, 1988 Greenville, South Carolina

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

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.



Rewards and Punishments

by Lee Havis

"... if a child has to be rewarded or punished, it means he lacks the capacity to guide himself; so this has to be supplied by the teacher."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 245

Rewards and punishments in ordinary education reflect the wide-spread belief that children lack a substantial inner guidance for their own constructive self-development. By contrast, Montessori education views the child as capable of guiding its own normal development—the adult role in this development being more that of a supportive assistance to prepare a proper “normalizing” environment. Montessori teachers therefore “control the environment, not the child” in the process of providing a responsive condition of life for the child’s own independent normal development.

Conditions of Life

"... faults can be made to disappear without the need of preaching, punishment or even setting a good example by the adult. Neither threats nor promises are needed, but conditions of life."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p. 78

The Montessori environment represents a condition for natural spontaneous expression in children in which all goal-directed activity is invited and welcome. Such an expansive condition of life may be best described as a process of the adult’s being a complete commitment to three fundamental infinite principles of nature: (1) “*Observation*”; (2) “*Individual Liberty*”; and (3) “*Preparation of the Environment*”. These three Montessori principles provide the adult with an inner “directionality” to expand as a process of their continual conscious awareness with children. Within this expansive Montessori environment, the child is able to correct its own mistakes by following the mysterious guiding force of nature within itself. Misbehavior and disorder disappear spontaneously in time to reveal eventually the child’s own true “normalized” nature in complete harmony with the entire environment. Montessori teaching is therefore sharply distinct from the moral organization of traditional education which imposes direct adult control in the form of various rewards and punishments.

Moral Organization

"Prizes and punishments . . . are exponents of the moral organization of the school."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 315

The moral structure of traditional education generally reflects that of adult society; i.e., rewards for “obedience” and punishments for violations of the established authority. Since children are essentially assumed to be like adults as generally dependent, unreliable and morally deficient, a system of rewards and punishments with children appears as both

“logical” and “necessary”. Within such a restrictive moral organization, rewards and punishments are commonly imposed through various classroom rules and procedures under the guise of justice.

Justice

"In schools and in society . . . justice often means only that there is a single law for all; for the rich and powerful and for those dying of hunger. . ."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 284

“Justice” in ordinary education emerges as a subtle expression of prejudicial discretion and manipulative power enforced by the prevailing figures of adult authority. Although devices such as classroom rules may appear to provide a superficial “equality” of treatment for all, individual differences are necessarily overlooked, diminished or disregarded. Such a limited concept of “justice” does not fully account for many important individual differences; e.g., natural instincts, biological limitations, abilities, prior experiences and opportunities. Limited by the teacher’s control, judgment and approval, all success, progress and achievement in children emerges generally as a process of intense rivalry and social competition.

Competition

"... a deficient child . . . becomes more and more discouraged as the zealous teacher scolds and punishes him for his weakness and points out the radiant example of the strong."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p. 317

A system of rewards and punishments is necessarily accompanied by a considerable competition as the children struggle for the conditional approval available from the prevailing adult authority. The young child is thereby distracted from its own self-directed normal growth to compete with others for the limited gain and benefit of external approval. Within such a competitive social environment, the more capable children become distorted and limited in their mental and emotional development, while the less capable children tend to acquire a self-defeating attitude of general resignation and discouragement towards life.

Discouragement

"All the crosses made by the teacher on the child's written work, all her scolding, only have a lowering effect on his energies and interests . . . if a child is to stop making mistakes, he must become more skillful, and how can he do this if, being already below standard, he is also discouraged?"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 245

Traditional teachers tend to discourage the child’s own independent self-development through the use of such devices as group instruction, the grading system and standardized tests. The more deficient children may well feel this discouragement most heavily when even

their very best efforts towards improvement and correction are consistently undervalued or unfavorably compared with the work of others. Children who customarily receive low grades and disapproval from the teacher may eventually give up entirely on making any serious efforts to correct their own mistakes—seeking instead the relative comfort of dependence on adult authority or escape from reality altogether into a world of fantasy and habitual misbehavior. Discouraged children gradually develop a diminished self-image wherein feelings of envy arise for that which apparently cannot be attained through their independent effort, ability and skill.

Envy

"Envy and struggle are roused by the limitation of what can be conquered. A vast space gives different sentiments—sentiments which engender a passionate devotion for what makes for real progress."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 49

Greed and envy naturally arise from the condition of rewards and punishments imposed by traditional education. By contrast, children

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Look for the
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featuring
Will

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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.
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LETTERS TO IMS

March, 1988

Dear Lee,

I want to acknowledge the important contribution you have helped me to make to my children, husband, school and church. Through your efforts to help me discover and understand my personality, my life style is very positive. I understand it will be a continual struggle to separate my true being from my personality but it will be well worth the effort.

With Great Appreciation,

Jean C. Wilson
Lawrenceville, Georgia

Ed. Note: Jean Wilson is a student in the Society's Montessori teacher training course. She also attended the recent Society conference in Atlanta, Georgia (February, 1988)

February 24, 1988

Dear Lee,

Thank you for sending information about the Society's membership program. I accept your invitation to participate in the work of creating "the new education."

After listening to you (and) reading the 'Montessori News' (several issues), I feel your work on behalf of the child and those people, including myself, who understand and believe in the reality of "the normalized child" is valid and necessary . . . I know your Society will help me and I wish to support your work in any way I can.

Sincerely,

Nancy Hawkins
Santa Fe, New Mexico

March 31, 1988

Dear Mr. Havis,

. . . I am planning to make a speech on the new Montessori movement in the U.S. including your Society's activities at the Japanese Society for the Study of Education. This is the greatest society in Japanese educational circles . . . I have been interested in your activities, in other words, your Montessori Movement, which you have developed . . .

Very truly yours,

Kimiko Kai, Assoc. Professor
Kyushu Jogakuin Junior College
Kumamoto, Japan

Reflections . . .

Killing Time

By Alethea Farzad
(College Park, Maryland)

After the children had eaten their treats for the Valentine's Day party, the adults were wondering what to do to "kill some time" because they had finished eating rather quickly and it was early in the morning program for them to conclude with handing out Valentines.

But what happened was more spontaneous and rather snuck up on us, the adults. The children immediately began to return to their work. They got out materials and the flow of work activity began again, almost without any sense of it having been interrupted.

There was no rowdiness or misbehavior, or no desire expressed to get to the part where they could hand out their Valentines. It was as if they wanted to get this interruption over with and get back to work. This happened again, after they had passed out their Valentines. They again, all returned to work. It was the most amazing thing I have ever seen.

Ed Note: Alethea Farzad (IMS '88) reflecting on her observations in a Montessori environment.

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working according to their own individual interests in the Montessori "normalizing" environment come to happily share in the accomplishments and successes of each other. When mistakes do occur in the Montessori environment, they are resolved indirectly by removing the obstacles in the environment to thereby give more space for the spontaneous revelations of the child's own true nature.

Giving Space

"The usual conception of direct correction and suppression of defects is wrong . . . Correction is possible only by expansion, by 'giving space', by opening up the means for the expansion of the personality.

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *The Formation of Man*, p. 49

The Montessori environment gives an expanding space for the child's true nature to freely emerge according to the teacher's growing awareness of the three Montessori principles. The specific principle of "preparation of the environment" directs the Montessori teacher to remove or resolve all detrimental influences in the child's environment. Any direct adult "approval" or "encouragement" of the child which may arise in such Montessori teaching is only responsive in nature—a result of the initiative and invitation of the child itself.

Encouragement

"The valet . . . may even say 'How lovely' of something he does not find beautiful at all. In the same way, if a child shows a wish for our approval, we should give it generously."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 281

The true Montessori teacher serves as a good "valet" to offer encouragement to the child—"encouragement" not as an external reward, approval or motivation for order or good behavior, but rather as a responsive support to the child's own emerging spiritual expression. Teacher approval in Montessori education does not aim therefore to objectively judge or to avoid judgment with respect to the superficial quality of the child's work, but rather to subjectively encourage the child to gain a greater self-confidence and freedom in its own independent activity in the environment. As the child develops profound concentration on work of its own free choice, the need for this type of supportive encouragement and approval tends to diminish and disappear entirely.

Pride and Avarice

"The child, in fact, once he feels sure of himself, will no longer seek the approval of authority after every step . . . What interests him is finishing his work, not to have it admired, nor to treasure it up as his own property. The noble instinct that drives him on is far removed from pride or avarice."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 274-275

As children become "normalized" in the Montessori environment, they increasingly pursue their own self-directed independent activity and interest—without the customary pride or avarice which otherwise so commonly accompanies the attainment of various external goals and rewards. Traditional teaching tends to deter this process of "normalization" in

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Moments of Peril

The "Clean Up Lady" Syndrome
from Observer, March/1988

Response by Lee Havis

Adults who "clean up" after children tend to reflect in their own "personality" expression a detrimental influence in the environment which deters the independence and "normalization" of children. Such adults must especially examine how their reactive tendencies emerge from one's urgent impatience, embarrassment or humiliation with respect to "looking good" in a purely external sense.

Rather than "pick up" after a disorderly child, the effective Montessori teacher must "prepare the environment" consistent with a child's complete "individual liberty" to return materials to their proper place in the environment. If "physical objects" are being misused, a firm hand may be placed on such "physical objects" to effectively control this particular aspect of the child's environment. As the child looks up and eye contact is established with the adult, one can then direct the child in a friendly way to attend to the prior disorder. If the child appears confused or resistant to this direction, the teacher can invite the child to "watch" as she shows the first part of the "clean up" work. Such "clean up" lessons are in the nature of "practical life" exercises to develop independence in the children's care of their own environment. Sometimes other children can be invited to participate in this "clean up" process.

In any case, the adult's substantial "clean up" other than this delicate lesson presentation process to develop and enhance the child's independence should be conducted *only* after the children have left the environment for the day. Otherwise, the adult's presence tends to emerge as detrimental—to build up dependency and disregard in the children being supervised. The adult's being as "commitment to Montessori principles" is therefore quite distinct from the more limited role of "clean up lady".

Total Chaos

The classroom is full of many 2-3 year old children who imitate each other pulling objects off the shelf, putting them in their mouth, throwing them on the floor at each other and fighting each other for their possession. There is no discernible "hub" of the chaos and disorder. What to do?

Answer in Observer, September/1988



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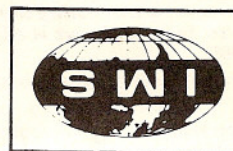
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children by interrupting the child's goal-directed activity in moments of profound concentration. Such interruption often arises as well-meaning yet unsolicited "encouragement" in the form of some sort of praise.

Praise

"Mistakes are often made . . . by uttering an encouraging 'Good', in passing a hitherto naughty child, who at last is concentrating on some work. Such well-meant praise is enough to do damage; the child will not look at work again for weeks."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Ed. for a New World, p. 88

Traditional education with its active "teaching" role for the adult tends to interfere with the child's normal development through various forms of external motivation, praise and approval. By contrast, the Montessori teacher assumes a more passive role of "observation" which allows the children to become increasingly concentrated on their own independent activities. Such "observation" directs itself primarily to an awareness of all detrimental influences in the environment—even to those most subtle forms of adult "personality" expression which arise as unconscious manipulation.

Manipulation

"We not only do not force a child, but we do not even invite him, or in any way coax him to do that which he does not wish to do."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Montessori Method, p. 302

The tendency of adults to control children may well arise unconsciously as subtle manipulation to induce certain "good" behavior in children which in outer form appears as quite useful and constructive to their development. Teachers engage in this subtle manipulation by such means as offering restrictive choices based essentially on prejudicial adult judgment as to what the child "needs" at the particular time, e.g., "would you like to do *this* or *that*?" More expansively, the offering of real "choice" is that which directs inquiry for a

process within the child itself; e.g., "what work would you like to do now?" The child is thereby allowed its own complete freedom to choose from among the full range of possibilities for work in the environment.

Freedom to Choose

" . . . the children must be free to choose their own occupations . . . No work may be imposed—no threats, no rewards, no punishments."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Absorbent Mind, p. 263

Guided from within by the principle of "Individual Liberty", the Montessori teacher avoids even subtle forms of manipulation and control over children. Lesson presentations are therefore intentionally kept brief and simple to diminish any unnecessary influence of the adult personality in the process of one's "preparation of the environment". By controlling the adult presence in the child's environment, even the most disorderly and discouraged of young children will gradually come to discover and follow their own independent road to life.

Road to Life

"Sweetness, severity . . . do not help at all. We do not sentimentalize over the troublesome child, or call him stupid; . . . he must construct his own behavior from life and its experiences, and if set on this road of life, all will be well."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from Ed. for a New World, p. 77

The adult's being as "commitment to Montessori principles" gives the child the necessary space to find its own way along the road of life. The three Montessori principles serve as the adult's inner "control of error" in the process of removing detrimental influences in the child's environment—including particularly the detrimental presence of the controlling adult "personality". This Montessori teaching to "control the environment, not the child" does indeed show that children have their own means within themselves to guide their own normal development—without the detrimental adult imposition of various rewards and punishments.

... In the Field

By Alethea Farzad

Kathy Graham (Ft. Lauderdale, FL conf., 11/87), Administrator of Montessori Tides Montessori School in Jacksonville, FL, is serving as conference coordinator for a Society conference to be held in Jacksonville on June 4-5, 1988. For more information, call Kathy at (904) 241-1139 . . . Amy Wald (IMS Student, Jackson, WI) reports "exciting results" after attending the Society's conference in Rhinelander, Wisconsin in October, 1987, and that she "hopes to bring these results to others in her community". Amy is now coordinating the Society's second Wisconsin Montessori conference, scheduled for the Milwaukee area on August 6-7, 1988. To register, contact Amy Wald at (414) 677-4610 . . . Brad Wright-Hulett (Atlanta, GA conf., 2/88) is currently authoring a series of articles on Montessori principles and the contribution of Montessori to the spiritual advancement of humanity and as a means of promoting peace for *CounselNet*, a publication committed to the promotion of such principles. Brad writes that "the conditions required to fulfill the child's potential" lie in commitment to Montessori principles and therefore "should be investigated".

Positions & Placements

Montessori Teachers: (2-6), (6-12); Fall, 1988, possibility of part-time summer, 1988. Salary negotiable dependent on experience and training. School established in 1968, situated on 9 wooded acres adjacent to Michigan State University. Send letter of application and resume to: Lila Radway, Michigan Montessori Internationale, P.O. Box 49, Okemos, Michigan 48864.

Montessori Teacher: (3-6); for two classes (a.m. and p.m.) in August, 1988. Salary negotiable, insurance, benefits. Well-established school, new building, waiting list. Send letter of application, resume and references to: Staff Search Committee, Montessori School of Champaign-Urbana, 1403 Regency Dr. East, Savoy, Illinois 61874.