



The Montessori

OBSERVER

Individuality

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Educational Choice Meeting in Washington, D.C.

On December 15, 1992, the executive committee of Americans for Choice in Education (ACE) met at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. to discuss strategy and how to better continue implementation of the parents' school choice reform in view of the new U.S. federal government administration. The committee meeting was led by ACE vice-chairperson Mae Duggan and included the participation of some 36 persons from many diverse groups and backgrounds in the United States. Lee Havis, ACE president, participated also as a representative of the International Montessori Society.

Curran Tiffany (*National Association of Evangelicals*, Washington, D.C.), spoke out against the "uniformity of accreditation", indicating his concern for regulation of private schools by the state or federal government. Charles Richardson (*Literacy Council*, Huntington Station, NY) underlined this concern by reminding the group of "the danger of private schools becoming public schools in the event of school choice." He indicated that we should take precautions to avoid this from happening.

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**"Bulk Mail" Subscription for Montessori Publications**

In December, 1992, the Society initiated a new "bulk mail" subscription program for schools to receive the Society's regular publications, "*Montessori Observer*" and "*Montessori News*". For a cost of only \$3.00 per person (minimum order, 50), the publications are mailed to the subscribing school in a single package at their regular dates of issue: "*Montessori Observer*", four (4) times per year: March, May, September and November. "*Montessori News*", the Society's eight-page newspaper, two (2) times per year, Spring and Fall. Schools can initiate the program for a one-year term at any time during the year.

Schools that cannot directly budget the entire amount for their parents may still wish to invite parents to 'sign up' individually and contribute the \$3.00 amount themselves. A "sign up" sheet, with sample copies of the publications to

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Meeting for Educational Choice in Washington, D.C. - December, 15, 1993

Inclusive Accreditation for Montessori Teacher Education

.... progress update

Since 1979, the Society has consistently supported the concept of an inclusive "umbrella" accrediting agency for Montessori teacher education - to engage in a useful exchange of ideas and to expand supportive communication throughout the entire Montessori community. Likewise, the Society has opposed any government recognition of a single non-inclusive accrediting agency in Montessori education. See *Observer*, May, 1987. The Society believes that official government recognition of this type of exclusionary accreditation would tend to discourage creative diversity, innovative and meaningful communication in the Montessori community. In 1989, the Society therefore urged patience in the process of setting a definite 'time-table' for any formal establishment of such an umbrella agency - favoring instead a resolution of all significant issues beforehand through open discussion and "consensus" decision-making among all interested parties.

In December 1989, the Society specifically reiterated its opposition to the impending formation of an exclusionary "umbrella" accrediting agency in the field - emphasizing again its concern for the detrimental consequences of such an agency being officially recognized by the government. Despite this expressed concern and the lack of consensus on such crucial issues as basic standards, procedures and voting participation, such an exclusionary agency has nonetheless now been formed and appears intent on submitting itself for official government recognition. To balance the detrimental

effects of this exclusionary type of accreditation, and to assure the availability of an inclusive "umbrella" alternative, the Society is now renewing its active initiative on behalf of a specific proposal for this purpose.

In January, 1993, the Society renewed its invitation to join in the creation of a new inclusive Montessori "umbrella" agency. Thus far, the following organizations have expressed definite interest: Woodlands Training Centre for the Montessori Method of Education (*Sri Lanka*); Peter Hess-Stiftung (*Germany*); Maria Montessori Rio Grande Valley Teacher Training Center (*Brownsville, TX*), London Montessori Centre (M) SDN.BHD. (*Malaysia*) and International Montessori Society (*Silver Spring, MD*).

The original working papers for the proposed agency were prepared by Lee Havis in 1977 and were based on a similar type of successful existing "umbrella" model for the allied health professions (CAHEA). The CAHEA agency has conducted its "umbrella" accreditation activities for health care professionals for many years - providing a useful means of program review and supportive communication for a wide range of diverse interests and needs in the health care field.

The present inclusive Montessori "umbrella" proposal is now being sent to all interested parties for their comments and suggestions. Consisting of a set of basic operating documents, standards and organizational structure, this detailed proposal has undergone substan-

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Individuality

By Lee Havis

"There is only one real biological manifestation, that of the living individual; and education . . . should be directed towards these individuals as they are observed one by one."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.61

Montessori teachers must supervise a group of children with a most delicate regard for each child's uniquely developing "individuality". From the moment of conception, such "individuality" is constantly evolving from the child's own distinctive inner plan of creation; i.e., a state of "normal" being in complete harmony with one's own time, place and group. Returning the young child to this state of true individuality, "normalization" is the central focus of Montessori teaching during the formative epoch of early childhood life.

This Epoch

"The individualities form the society, and it is this epoch of which we are concerned that the individuality is formed by the child."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 22 Jan. 1942, p.H

From birth to about age six, the young child acquires its own distinctive language, social habits and personality traits – a uniquely individual way of being with which one becomes closely identified for life. To nurture this "normality" during the early childhood epoch, the adult must patiently respond to each child's individual interests, instincts and needs for self-constructive interaction with the environment. Emerging at times with great intensity of feeling and action, these spontaneous expressions reflect the child's self-image of being the center of the universe.

Center of the Universe

" . . . the child . . . is in the process of forming his own individuality, he therefore sees himself as the center of the universe."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 19 Jan. 1952, b

The self-centered young child must still have the support of a "prepared environment" which respects the interests and needs of others in the group. Montessori teaching must therefore constantly respond and act in each situation with children from the perspective of the total group situation – to balance the fundamental principles of "preparation of the environment" with each child's "individual liberty". This experimental balancing approach to the total group situation must still view each child as an

"unknown entity" – to respect and recognize its inherent being as a true individualist.

An Individualist

" . . . the child is not selfish. He is an individualist and his whole strength is towards building up his individuality, therefore it has the appearance of being selfish."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 15 Jan. 1942, b

Although apparently stubborn and selfish at times, the young child's behavior is nonetheless working out an inner plan for harmony and order with others. Superficial disharmony with immediate group interests is just "acting out" the child's unconscious emotional needs for love and attention from the environment. Even as its own individuality is slowly forming within through these spontaneous interactions with the environment, the young child tends to view others essentially as a whole without distinctions.

A Whole without Distinctions

" . . . the child . . . remembers all the people around him, and thinks of them as a whole without distinctions."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 19 Jan. 1942, f

From infancy, the ego-centric young child tends to view others in the environment as "objects" for its vital sensory stimulation and development. Not until language and personality more fully develop does the child finally recognize others for their distinctive place and separate identity from oneself in the social group. Recognition of individuality in others develops slowly as one's own individual being is nurtured by a warm and comforting maternal love.

Maternal Love

" . . . individuality in order to develop takes years and years, and that is why maternal love . . . lasts among human beings a life-time."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 22 Jan. 1942, G

The infant particularly needs to feel a very personal attention and caring from others – to become conscious of its own special self-worth and value. With such supportive maternal love, the young child gradually acquires an inner poise and balance which enables its later more elevated forms of expressing true individuality. In time, the child becomes less dependent on the maternal relationship, to find its own way in life with others through the long process of adaptation.

Adaptation

" . . . Each man must prepare for himself an adaptation which is not given by heredity. He must prepare his own adaptation. This is the great difference between man and animal."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *The Meaning of Adaptation*, p.3

From the moment of birth, human life must adapt itself to a challenging new environment – far beyond the passive state of being in the mother's womb. Now, such adaptation requires the child to negotiate and adjust itself to many new dangers and difficulties which arise in ordinary family and social life. Individuality must now ordinarily develop in the face of considerable chaos, danger and confusion – the battle-front of daily living and being with others.

Battle-front

"The individual treads the path of life, beset with dangers on all sides; Life is a veritable battle-front; one may come through but be crippled or scarred . . ."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Educate the Hum. Potential*, p.119
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Look for the
May Observer
featuring

Confusion

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ISSN 0889-5643

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912 Thayer Ave.
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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The Montessori Observer is mailed four times each year to Society members throughout the world. The *Observer* is sent during the months of March, May, September, 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 to this *Observer* publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership which is open to all individual for a \$20 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.

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Moment of Peril

Individual or Group

from *Observer*, November, 1992

by Lee Havis

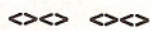
The teacher who is working with one individual child while others are in a state of considerable "disorder" (see *Observer*, November, 1992) must judge what action to take from the perspective of the "total classroom" environment. In such a "moment of peril", effective action must balance and harmonize one's being with respect to both the individual child and the total group situation – to decide whether to leave the individual child to attend to the "other children" or to remain with the individual child to help complete its particular cycle of activity.

In this scenario, the "hub" child is the central focus of the misbehavior of the other children. From the perspective of the "total classroom", the attentive individual child is one of the "other children" who must be removed as a detrimental influence.

In general, the best "rule of thumb" for resolving any disorderly situation must consider what action involves the least possible movement and physical activity of the teacher; e.g., eye contact, a gesture, a brief word rather than direct physical contact and control. The best action here then is to gently re-direct the disruptive "other children" to reality while the adult's physical presence remains with the original individual child. In this way, the teacher's activity with the individual child is only briefly interrupted by a momentary glance, gesture or word to the "other children".

If this initial brief interruption and re-direction does not allow the "other children" to disengage from the scene of disorder, a more "intrusive" type of interruption may be necessary; e.g., perhaps to call the "other children" over to the teacher to watch what she is doing

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Inclusive Accreditation

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tial revision since 1977 through extensive consultation and discussion among many Montessori practitioners, groups and teacher educators in the field. Following consensus agreement on the particulars of this proposal, an organizational meeting will be scheduled to formally initiate the agency's operation and accreditation activity.

For further information, to participate and/or to receive a copy of the inclusive "umbrella" proposal, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910 (Tel. 301-589-1127).

Individuality

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The individual's normal creative action must invariably encounter and engage the battle-front of ridicule, contempt, disregard or even possibly, the threat of physical annihilation. Such individual self-expression is constantly at war with massive prejudices and repressive social forces which reactively oppose anything new, different or even just "unknown". As ever, progress to overcome these entrenched repressive forces can only be achieved through the courageous actions of a single individual – the crystallization point for all vital new growth and fundamental change in human society.

The Crystallization Point

"The crystallization point of hundreds of intellects is in the person of one man, who expresses something strikingly useful or discovers new knowledge."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *To Educate the Hum. Potential*, p.81

Individuality must ultimately become realized in some specific purposeful event and action in time – a crystallization point which defines and affirms one's unique opportunity to serve the overall process to life. A single act of courage may then represent a starting point for vast new human destinies in the world. The progress and well-being of all humanity therefore critically depends on each one's ability to follow their own unique path of development.

Path of Development

"It is not in human nature for all men to tread the same path of development . . . Every human personality has its own way of doing things."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.114

"Normalized" children work together in group harmony as each participating personality is allowed to follow its own unique path of development. Likewise, any successful functioning of the whole is invariably opposed by repressive group uniformity, narrow standards and arbitrary, rigid rule-making which excludes or otherwise limits the full range of individual creative diversity. With adults as children, individual differences must be carefully respected and reconciled as the responsible educator acts to resolve each new problem situation in the group.

The Educator

" . . . the educator should seek the development of the individuals forming that class."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Voice*, 12 Jan. 1942, a

Montessori teaching manages the entire group by effectively serving the interests and needs of each individual child. Sometimes passive and observing, and at other times, outspoken and lively, the true educator is constantly looking for the "normalized" child to arise from one's commitment to such fundamental

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Book Review

The Voice of

Dr. Maria Montessori

Lectures, Madras, India (1941-1942)

By: Joy Hardinge

Publ. by: Joy Hardinge (Sussex, New Jersey); 1992

In 1992, Joy Hardinge finally revealed her "secret" communication from Dr. Montessori – now offered to us in her publication *The Voice of Dr. Maria Montessori*. This set of lectures by Dr. Montessori was compiled by Hardinge during her attendance at a teacher education course conducted by Dr. Montessori at the Theosophical Garden Campus (Adayar, Madras, India) from November, 1941 to January, 1942. While attending each lecture, Hardinge carefully transcribed by shorthand Dr. Montessori's verbatim communication – words spoken in Italian by Dr. Montessori and then spontaneously translated into English by Mario Montessori (referred to in *The Voice* as Dr. Montessori's "nephew").

Any knowledgeable student of Dr. Montessori's other published writings will immediately recognize the authentic content of *The Voice* – Dr. Montessori speaking to students with her familiar expressive style, manner and precise presentation. *The Voice* allows us to "listen" to Dr. Montessori as if we were actually there – to feel the flow of intimate, immediate communication with all its distinctive spontaneity of expression. The reader senses the authentic nature of Hardinge's faithful transcription, which likewise confirms and reinforces Dr. Montessori's unfailing commitment to the "normalized" child and her uniquely spiritual approach to education.

While other published writings of Dr. Montessori; i.e., *The Absorbent Mind*, have been based on Dr. Montessori's lectures in India while she was interned there during World War II, *The Voice* seem to capture an unparalleled measure of immediacy and intimacy in her actual verbal communication with students. Despite some occasional spelling and grammar errors and somewhat difficult page numbering, *The Voice* compels the reader's attention with its intriguing conversational tone – as if hearing the voice of Dr. Montessori herself! Hardinge's publication is not only valuable as an historical document but also significant as a research tool for study of Dr. Montessori's expansive thoughts and ideas about children and education.

Could there exist yet more undiscovered "secret" communications from Dr. Montessori? –

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Moment of Peril

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with the individual child. If this "calling" action is not effective to disengage the "other children", and the disorder continues to escalate, the teacher may then have to interrupt more directly in the "misbehavior" of the other children. If there is no "eye contact" with the disruptive children, the teacher would then slowly move towards the scene of disorder - to speak to the "other children" to get their attention on what they are doing, to non-judgementally re-direct their activity towards a more constructive purpose; e.g., to say 'what are you doing?' or 'look'; to get "eye contact".

While the teacher is using "eye contact" and friendly, verbal conversation with these "other children", she should nonetheless glance back towards the "individual child", to support this child's more concentrated attention to the original lesson material. With each effective "eye contact" lesson of support for the individual children in the group, there will gradually arise a closer harmony in the adult-child relationship - to enable the children to return eventually to their own goal-directed activity and more "normalized" being with their individual work and relationship with each other in the group.

The Wanderer

Two year old Christopher has a stubborn, rebellious personality. Even when the other children are relatively peaceful in their interaction and activity, he wanders away from the group to "explore" out of the room. When the teacher goes to the door to call Christopher back, he defiantly walks away even further. The teacher cannot abandon the child wandering "out of the room", but she is uncertain about leaving the room at this point to apparently "abandon" her visual scanning of the total group. *What to do?* Answer in *Observer*, May, 1993.

Individuality

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Liberty"; and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". Consistent with these fundamental laws of nature, Montessori teaching in practice must nonetheless reflect the particular skills, instincts and abilities of the true individual.

True Individual

"... the desire to be a better teacher than another, such instincts of competition will disappear, for they have no more connection with the true individual and they will have no reason of being."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 12 Jan. 1942, a

As a Montessori teacher with children, the true individual is being at once committed to Montessori principles and yet also distinctively consistent with the reality of one's own personality. Mysterious and incomprehensible, such a duality of being transcends the ordinary comparisons and competition among personalities - to seek with others a higher level of individuality in harmony with the order of infinite and eternal principles of nature.

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Bulk Mail

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examine, are provided at no cost by the Society for display and use at any interested school. For schools with fewer than 50 participants, a slightly higher per person rate is charged - so that even very small schools can participate with a minimum payment of only \$150 per year.

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Educational Choice

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At the meeting, Lee Havis distributed copies of the latest ACE newsletter indicating the executive committee action to support the withdrawal of federal recognition regulations over private accreditation agencies. The newsletter pointed out the favorable response of ACE coalition members to a resolution for this purpose which was initiated in July, 1992. Havis stated that the existing regulations impose a burdensome and discriminatory restriction on educational choice. Their removal would therefore tend to encourage competition, diversity and choice in the field of higher education.

Mae Duggan summed up the day-long meeting as an enriching experience and inspiring gathering to exchange ideas and offer strategy suggestions for educational reform. She stated that "The meeting demonstrated the varied aspects of the parents' choice in education movement that must be addressed to win a solid victory nationwide over the government school monopoly . . . We must keep the movement going."

For further information about the ACE coalition proceedings and its work on behalf of "educational freedom", contact: ACE, 927 S. Walter Reed Dr. Suite #1, Arlington, VA 22204.

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Book Review

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maybe even an audio tape of her actual speaking voice! If Joy Hardinge can finally share her own personal "secret" communication with us now, perhaps then others may do so as well.

To order *The Voice* (Joy Hardinge, 1992), 389 pgs., send \$30 to IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., Suite 207, Silver Spring, MD 20919.