



The Montessori OBSERVER

Confusion

Published by the International Montessori Society • 912 Thayer Ave. • Silver Spring, Md. 20910 • Phone (301) 589-1127



Linda Rusthoven, new member of Society's Advisory Committee for Accreditation.

Rusthoven Appointed to IMS Advisory Committee

In April, 1993, Linda Rusthoven was appointed to the Society's "Advisory Committee"—the final decision-making authority for accreditation of the Society's Montessori teacher education. As one of a three-member panel, Ms. Rusthoven will lend to the committee's work her considerable background and experience in educational planning, analysis and review from the U.S. Department of Education and elsewhere.

Ms. Rusthoven's educational background includes a B.A. degree in Elementary Education (*Hanover College, 1973*) and M.A. degree in Education (*Northeastern University, 1976*). Since 1976, she has had considerable direct experience with children as a reading specialist and regular classroom teacher in Indianapolis, Indiana and Fairfax, Virginia. In addition, Ms. Rusthoven served from 1986-89 as Special Assistant to the Executive Assistant for Private Education in the U.S. Department of Education. In that capacity, she served as representative and spokesperson for the Department at numerous meetings and conferences.

On April 26, 1993, Ms. Rusthoven participated in the most recent Advisory Committee meeting in Silver Spring, MD—to consider the Society's Review Committee recommendation for accreditation of the "Independent

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

Society Accepts Accreditation Agency Proposal

Resolution signed in April, 1993

By resolution signed on April 25, 1993, the Society committed itself to participate in a new "umbrella" accreditation agency for Montessori teacher education. Known as *International Montessori Accreditation Council (IMAC)*, this new agency will provide accreditation services for all of the Society's teacher education activities. The agency's broad standards and multi-level structure assure its "inclusive" purpose and function for accreditation of any interested Montessori organizations and programs.

The April resolution commits the Society to serve as a "collaborating organization" within the new agency—to appoint representation for the Board of Directors, conduct its own Review Committee activities and help sustain the Council's Advisory Committee which will provide all final decision-making on accreditation matters. The IMAC agency structure offers broad, inclusive curriculum standards based on Dr. Montessori's published writings, consensus decision-making on critical issues, and an Advisory Committee comprised entirely of impartial "public" members. Lee Havis, IMS executive director, has stated that "I believe this structure will assure compliance with suitable standards and an effective accreditation process for all participating programs—process and procedures that will also protect each program's vital interests and needs for distinctive innovation, creativity and choice in their operating particulars."

The Society has sent its own resolution statement for the new IMAC agency to other interested Montessori programs—with an invitation for their similar action to participate

in its formative process. Thus far, the *Montessori School of Rowland Heights (Rowland Heights, CA)* has submitted its resolution statement for participation as an unaffiliated sponsoring institution. Accreditation of such "unaffiliated" programs will be conducted through the Council's special General Review Committee. All signatories to such resolution statements—whether as "collaborating organization" or "unaffiliated sponsoring institution"—will then be consulted on the scheduling of the agency's first organizational meeting.

For further information, to participate and/or to receive a copy of the agency proposal and resolution statement, contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave. #207, Silver Spring, MD 20910 (tel. 301-589-1127).

Montessori Conference

Creating the New Education

**October 2-3, 1993
Atlanta, Georgia**

The Society's two-day weekend conference, "Creating the New Education" is for parents, teachers, and others to expand their Montessori teaching skill and ability with children. Led by Lee Havis, the uniquely open discussion format of the conference has evolved from the successful completion of over thirty-five (35) such similar conferences held throughout the United States and elsewhere since 1986.

Location/Accommodations: The conference is located in a hotel with sleeping rooms available for those outside of commuting distance from the Atlanta, Georgia area. Registration fee includes lunch on both days and refreshments in the conference room at all times. Specific information will be sent upon registration.

Registration: \$200 per person (\$160, member) rate by September 2, 1993. A \$30 discount applies to registrations received by August 2, 1993. For every three registrations received from the same school, a fourth person may attend at no extra cost.

Send registration fee to:
International Montessori Society
912 Thayer Avenue
Silver Spring, Maryland 20910
Tel. (301) 589-1127

Regional Directors for Trust Tutoring

In January, 1993, *Trust Tutoring* expanded its in-home educational activity with the appointment of its first regional directors to conduct student evaluations and contracting with clients. Sponsored by *International Montessori Trust* (Lee Havis, trustee) and committed to Montessori principles, this home-based tutoring program has been successfully operating in the Washington, D.C. area since July, 1992. See *Observer, September, 1992*.

The first regional director to be appointed for *Trust Tutoring* was Alethea Farzad (IMS '88)—to serve the Anne Arundel County area

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3



Confusion

by Lee Havis

"Why are there so many difficulties, so many contradictions, so much uncertainty, with regard to what are commonly called 'Montessori schools'...yet in spite of this confusion and these difficulties, our schools continue to progress..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.3

Since Dr. Montessori first discovered the "normalized" child in 1907, her schools have grown and developed in a rather confusing and imperfect manner. Despite the benefit of Dr. Montessori's published writings over many years, a great mystery remains around her central vision of the "normalized" child; i.e., loving order, independent, spontaneously self-disciplined and otherwise in complete harmony with its entire environment. Committed to the emergence of such true "normalized" being, Montessori teaching must necessarily confront the many perplexing anomalies which surround one's study of Man the Unknown.

Man the Unknown

"The basis of the reform of education and society which is a necessity of our times must be built upon the scientific study of Man the Unknown."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.12

Beyond the care and supervision of children, Dr. Montessori's "new education" implies a psychological inquiry into the basic formation of the human personality itself. With young children, Montessori teachers must therefore constantly experiment to discover the unknown potentialities for human life. Despite the many years of such experimentation into Man the Unknown by so many persons, much confusion yet remains about the child's true nature because of the enormous obstacle of inner prejudices.

Prejudices

"What we have done is not understood. Many people...cannot help themselves from having their judgments affected by their prejudices."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 24 Nov. '41, p.A

Our knowledge of the "normalized" child is considerably limited by the persistent influence of deeply entrenched prejudices about children and education; e.g., misconceptions about a child as either "bad", "empty" or "unguided". Such prejudices customarily reinforce the adult's tendency to punish, control

or manipulate—to unconsciously propagate further negative reactions in children which then appear to evidence and justify the adult's original prejudices. So pervasive and unquestioned are these prejudicial beliefs about children, that little interest or attention is given to the mysterious underlying causes of behavior.

Interest

"We only know that in the human psyche, there exists an enigma, not yet touched upon by our interest..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.10

Traditional teachers usually show little, if any, interest in questioning their basic repressive attitude and approach to children. So deeply entrenched are their various prejudices, that any momentary confusion about underlying psychological factors in behavior is quickly explained by the superficial logic of conventional wisdom. By contrast, Montessori teaching requires a continual questioning into basic life phenomena—a very awkward and imperfect process of expanding observation.

Observation

"It is impossible to make an observation of something that is still a mystery...what is unknown should reveal itself through its own proper energies."

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

Accurate observation of human life is considerably limited by our unknown inner expectations, misconceptions and distorted perspective; i.e., we tend to "see" what we expect to see. Even if we consciously nurture a belief and expectation for the "normalized" child, its timing, form and nature of emergence may yet still reflect our unconscious distorted beliefs and expectations. Confusion and error must therefore be accepted as part of one's experimental way of being with children—to approach each child as an "unknown entity".

An Unknown Entity

"...prejudices...are confused and strengthened by the evidence of facts because all, or nearly all, see the child as he is commonly known only, not the child as he is, still an unknown entity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.60-61

Blinded and confused by unknown inner prejudices, we tend to misinterpret the child's motives according to our own incomplete understanding of its external activity—so that

the child we observe becomes a sort of metaphorical reflection of our own wounded "inner child". In a group, individual defects become even more pronounced in the dramatic interplay of misbehavior and disorderly association with others. Within such a confusing social situation, the adult's own personality can become detrimentally enmeshed with children in many types of abnormalities.

Abnormalities

"...if the first period (0-6) has been neglected, so that deviations of character and abnormalities have come about...the adult period will result in complete confusion."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice*, 15 Jan. '42, p.A-B

Adults ordinarily carry deeply entrenched abnormalities from early childhood into their present-day personal relations with others—hidden character flaws which can significantly interfere with one's effort to create a "normalizing" environment for children. Committed to the fundamental principles of (1) "Observation"; (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment", Montessori teachers must constantly seek to control

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

Look for the
September Observer
featuring
Abandonment

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 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.

IMS ADVISORY BOARD

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author
Ronalda Spalding, Reading Specialist
Dr. R. Orin Cornett, Professor Emeritus

SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to this Observer publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership which is open to all individuals 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.

© 1993

Moment of Peril

The Wanderer

from *Observer*, March, 1993

by Lee Havis

A child that wanders away from the classroom may present a serious "moment of peril" for the supervising adult (see *Observer*, March, 1993). If the "wanderer" is alone in its disruptive activity, the "other children" and "physical objects" are not directly involved as detrimental influences in the environment. In this case, the obvious detrimental influence is primarily the "adult personality"—and this is particularly evident when the "wanderer" defies the teacher's direction to "come back".

A child may wander away from the group as a means of "acting out" its sense of neglect and abandonment from the teacher and other children. The long-term resolution of this situation is therefore to engage in frequent eye contact and other forms of positive verbal and non-verbal interaction with the child to help re-connect the child with its surrounding environment. However, once the child has left the classroom and is exploring on its own in a dangerous and unsafe manner, the supervising adult must act on the basis of the potential "physical harm" to the unsupervised child.

When the teacher's initial direction to "come back" is ignored or defied by the child, one's communication can still continue effectively by directing the child's attention to constructive activity in the classroom. Otherwise, the teacher's comments should focus on some immediate aspect of reality to divert attention away from the emotional "power struggle" in the adult-child relationship. If the child seems to divert its attention from this verbal communication, the teacher may then be able to approach the child and lead it by the hand back to the classroom. Thereafter, the child should be included as much as possible in the activities of others—or otherwise directed to some object of particular interest for its own activity.

Disturbing the Group

Before leaving to go outside, the children gather together briefly in a group. However, Jenny disturbs this social procedure with her wild and manipulative interaction with the other children; e.g., poking, kicking, fantasizing, etc. Distracted from the process of "clean up" or waiting for others to complete their tasks, the other children are often drawn into Jenny's provocative disruptive behavior—and the wildness and disruption spreads throughout the whole group. *What to do?*
Answer in *Observer*, October, 1993.

Confusion

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

the detrimental influences of their "personality" in the child's environment. This particular aspect of "preparing the environment" requires a continual search within oneself for the most critical unknown errors.

Unknown Error

"...unknown error...holds the secret to progress...The adult must find within himself the still unknown error that prevents him from seeing the child as he is."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.14-15

Even well-meaning and committed Montessori teachers can fail to recognize some problematic inner error which is preventing their effective being with children. While these failures are outwardly evident in the continual disorder and misbehavior of children, the hidden cause within remains unknown and beyond our effective mastery or control. Unable to resolve such deeply hidden unknown defects, we can only grope in the dark for an answer.

Groping in the Dark

"...fear of making 'a mistake', the sense of groping in the dark, of having to bear the consequence of an error we are not certain to recognize, makes us run behind another person like a dog on a chain."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spontaneous Act. in Ed.*, p.182

As a constant experimenting and observing with children, Montessori teaching may at times feel like a real groping in the dark with much confusion and uncertainty. Faced by overwhelming emotional distress and confusion, we are easily led into various forms of traditional repression, control and manipulation. To find our way through this maze of

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1.

Regional Directors

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

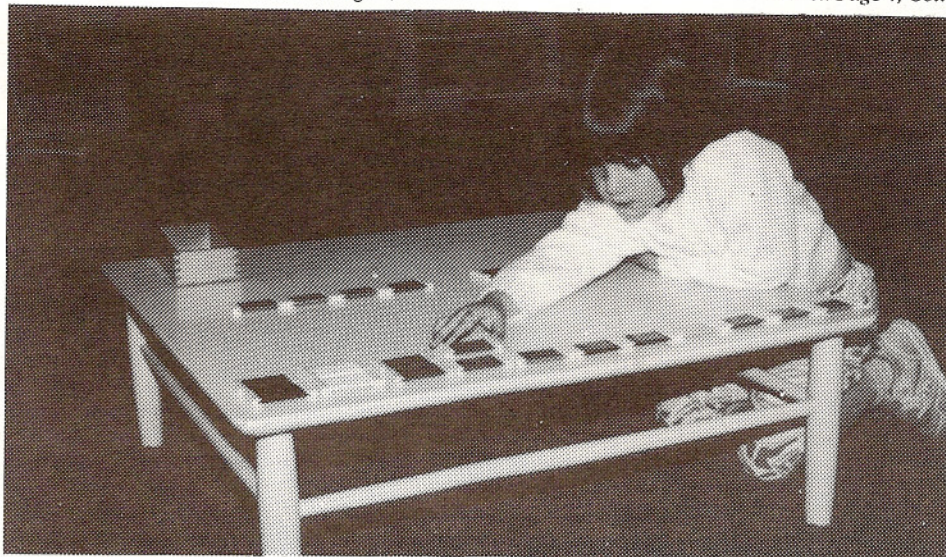
in the state of Maryland. In addition to her 1988 IMS Montessori teaching credential, Ms. Farzad holds a B.A. degree in International Cultural Studies from Illinois Wesleyan University. Her activity in Montessori education includes attendance at eight Society conferences from 1986-92 and service as the Society's Assistant Director from 1988-89.

In March, 1993, Gloria Belton was appointed regional director for Prince George's County, Maryland—a nearby suburban area of Washington, D.C. A certified teacher in special education (K-12), Ms. Belton completed her B.S. degree in special education from D.C. Teacher's College (1976) and Master of Education from Howard University (1985). Since 1987, she has served as individualized education program developer with the Public Schools of the District of Columbia.

Sharon Woodson was appointed regional director for the Montgomery County, Maryland area near Washington, D.C. in May, 1993. Ms. Woodson holds a B.S. degree in Elementary Education from Boston State College (1980) and M. Ed. degree in Special Education from Howard University (1982). She presently serves as program developer for special education services for the Public Schools of the District of Columbia.

To completely cover the entire metropolitan Washington, D.C. area, other regional directors will be employed as they are qualified through their experience as tutors with *Trust Tutoring*. Havis states that "our structured, supervised program provides a strong support for effective tutoring through agreements, procedures, progress reports and evaluations—structure and supervision which emphasizes basic learning development regardless of the particular subject matter. We are constantly learning more about how to improve our program through the experience with tutors—to help students develop more effective 'study skills' and 'basic concept understanding'. Regional directors are closely supervised and supported by special routines and policies

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3



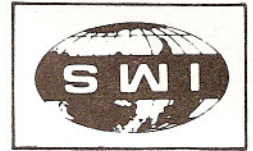
Child working with sensorial color tablets at the Fairport Montessori School (Fairport, New York)

Address correction requested

912 Thayer Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20910

OBSERVER

The Montessori



Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 3875
Silver Spring, MD

Confusion

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

confusion to the clear vision of the "normalized" child, we must simply the situation—to look carefully at reality as it emerges in even the most insignificant details.

Insignificant Details

"At times a trivial incident can open up a new and boundless horizon. By nature man is an explorer, and it is only by the discovery of the seemingly insignificant details that he advances."

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

In moments of confusion with children, we may find some new direction and clarity by focussing our attention on some specific detail in the environment. No matter how insignificant this detail may at first appear, our attention begins to help us achieve a greater inner clarity, order and calm in the situation. Centered and calm, we can more easily see our confusion as only a feeling which is signalling the beginning of new creative activity for a "normalizing" environment.

Creative Activity

"Creative activity...begins in confusion and then moves on to making distinctions and, ultimately, to creative action."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.42

A sense of confusion is often the first awareness of one's creative activity in Montessori teaching. Thereafter, our experimental activity follows the three Montessori principles to make distinctions and otherwise proceed to "control the environment, not the child". Such experimenting and observing may then lead to some particular ordering activity in the environment—to help resolve the child's own inner chaos of incomplete knowledge and conceptual understanding.

Chaos

"The mind of a little child is certainly not a blank...but his concepts are confused...The chaos of his mind has greater need of ordering what it already knows than of gaining more knowledge."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.172

Montessori teaching simplifies and orders the objects in the environment—to help children resolve their inner chaos of incomplete and uncertain concepts about reality. Simple eye contact, gestures and brief words such as "watch" are often the most useful means of communicating a basic order in the environment to children. However imperfect and modest may be our success in creating such a "normalizing" order in the environment, we may have then taken the first step to finding our ultimate answer in the vast imposing reality of the 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."

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

Montessori teaching can only finally resolve confusion with children according to transcendent laws of the universe—an imposing reality which offers an answer in its own time through our committed activity for the "normalized" child. Our limited and incomplete knowledge must therefore constantly adjust itself to the mysterious unfolding evolution of life. As we continue to experiment, distinguish and discover, we will encounter confusion as the necessary first experience in this process of creating Dr. Montessori's "new education" in the world.

Regional Directors

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3

which we have established for evaluating students and contracting with clients. As we more completely computerize our central office with data base management and telecommunications, I believe we will soon be able to successfully operate our in-home tutoring program in many diverse locations outside of the immediate Washington, D.C. area."

For further information about *Trust Tutoring*, and its designation of 'regional directors', contact: Lee Havis, Trust Tutoring, 6812 Dartmouth Ave., College Park, MD 20740, tel. (301) 589-0733.

Rusthoven Appointed

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

Study Course". Since the Advisory Committee could not fully uphold the Review Committee's recommendation at that time, it was referred back to the Review Committee for further action.

Lee Havis, Society executive director, expressed his appreciation for Mr. Rusthoven's participation on the Committee—recognizing the considerable value and importance of this public service to the improvement of Montessori teacher education. He stated that "since 1984, the Society's Advisory Committee has offered valuable consultation and advice to improve our accreditation process—to include more structure and support through such means as the operation of a more active Review Committee operation. I appreciate very much the public spirit and voluntary commitment of Committee members such as Linda Rusthoven—to help us assure compliance with standards of quality in Montessori teacher education. This Committee work is providing us with valuable experience to help improve the design and operation of a similar accreditation activity for the new inclusive IMAC 'umbrella' agency for the entire Montessori community."