



The Montessori OBSERVER

Change

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Internet Update

Computer users can find the International Montessori Society on the internet at: <http://www.wdn.com/trust/ims>. This web site is updated on a regular basis to reflect the various current changes, such as the list of recognized Montessori schools and new Society activities, such as the "Creating the New Education" conference on September 20-21, 1997 in Columbia, South Carolina.

A new special web page is also being prepared for the *Montessori Observer* — to maintain a stronger presence on the
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Children engaged in sensorial "sorting" exercise at the College of Early Learning in Columbia, South Carolina. This Montessori school is providing important local support for the Society's conference on September 20-21, 1997

MONTESSORI CONFERENCE

Creating the New Education Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

The Society's two-day weekend conference, "Creating the New Education" provides a psychological "inner preparation" for Montessori teaching — in-depth study and experience in applying Montessori principles with children.

**Columbia, South Carolina
September 20-21, 1997**

Register by July 20, 1997

Member rate — \$130 per person

Registration — \$200 per person (\$160, member), 4 weeks before conference. Other discounts apply for early registration and multiple registrations from the same school.

Location — The conference is located in a hotel with sleeping rooms available. Registration fee includes lunch on both days, refreshments in the conference room and all study materials.

Call or write for details :

International Montessori Society
912 Thayer Ave. #207
Silver Spring, Maryland
Tel. 1-800-301-3131
email: havis@erols.com

Standardized Test Option for Montessori Educators

In 1996, the "Evaluation of Basic Skills" test was introduced by TRUST TUTORING to assist schools, teachers and parents in their standardized testing of students — to measure such basic academic skills as reading, writing and math. The test is designed for children aged 3-18 and is offered to all schools, teachers and parents throughout the world. It is offered as a Montessori alternative to the more costly traditional standardized tests that have been the only ones available in the past.

Since 1995, the EBS test has been employed for the evaluation of students of all ages in the TRUST TUTORING program directed by Lee Havis. He indicates that "the EBS test is quick and easy to administer and it provides a reliable and effective measure of basic skills. We use this test for all our preliminary evaluation of students — to help us structure an effective individualized plan of instruction for all subjects and ages. The test has also proven itself many times in practice as very useful for the diagnosis of a wide range of educational and psychological difficulties in the learning process".

Havis, who developed the test, noted particularly that persons may be certified to administer the test to help build up its recognition and use in the general public throughout the United States and else-

where. "Our present operation in the mid-Atlantic states could be expanded to other area as we find those persons committed to our Montessori approach to in-home tutoring. As our test becomes more widely known and used, we should see
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Public Assembly Follows Montessori Principles

Since March, 1997, the Maryland Public Assembly has been following Montessori principles in developing its plans for grassroots citizen political action in Maryland. Lee Havis, interim Assembly chairperson, indicated that the Assembly is open to all Maryland voters and is committed to such fundamental principles as "individual liberty" in all its organizing activities. He stated "We are creating here a basis for non-partisan participation in the electoral process — to develop a platform of issues and endorse candidates for the public interest."

The interim state central committee has been most active so far in the field of public relations — to inform voters of this opportunity to participate more actively in the public process of political decision-making that affects all people in the state.

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Change

by Lee Havis

"The most characteristic phenomenon of modern life is the sudden change in our social conditions...this change is perhaps not so apparent at deeper levels and more essential levels than those outward changes in our civilization."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. and Peace*, p.24

While we are usually well aware of the rapid changes that take place around us in our outward circumstances, we are not often as conscious of the inner changes which are at cause in the matter. Montessori teaching, however, must focus on these essential inner changes which are so necessary as they particularly relate to the outward emergence of the child's true "normalized" nature in the world. Unfortunately, the ordinary adult is not generally disposed to this type of deep inner examination — so Montessori teaching can be quite difficult to master in practice.

The Adult

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

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum. Potential*, p.120

Montessori teaching requires the adult to fundamentally change from the ordinary being of "personality" — to that of being committed to such fundamental principles as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". These three Montessori principles provide an effective basis for making the necessary inner changes which are at the heart of our ability to create a successful "normalizing" environment for children. From such a committed environment, the new "normalized" child may then freely emerge with its self directed, independent nature in harmony with others — to gradually realize a far greater social change towards the "normalization" of all mankind.

Social Change

"Normalization of adult society...must be done through education. A social change of this type cannot come about from the ideas and energies of individual reformers, but from a slow and steady emergence of a new world in the midst of the old, the gradual appearance of the world of the child and adolescent."

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

While we may see some very significant positive changes in the children we work with directly on a daily basis, the

larger outward change to a new "normalized" society is a much slower and more uncertain process — a social change which is opposed by many well-established patterns of repression and limitation in the world. These detrimental influences surround us all, and present a constant obstacle to our effective application of Montessori principles with children. We must therefore work with considerable patience and determination to control our personality — to normalize the conditions of children we supervise during the most critical early years of their formative development.

Early Years

"...the pattern of an adult is fixed in his early years."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.11

The primary focus of Montessori teaching is directed to the early years of life when the most profound formative changes are taking place in the human personality. From birth to about age six, the child undergoes an immense change from the unknown potential of a newborn infant to its final fixed and predictable self-identity; i.e., its "personality" which remains essentially unchanged for life. Without the support of a Montessori "normalizing" environment during these early years, the young child must struggle desperately for its normal development — to overcome a wide range of detrimental adult influences in the environment.

Desperate Struggle

"...man's desperate struggle to adapt to his environment without being prepared to do so brings about changes in his personality that might be described as pathological."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. and Peace*, p.44

The young child can only form itself from what is absorbed in the environment — so this process is ordinarily quite imperfect in an environment which is dominated by such adult impositions as negative judgment, untimely interruption, manipulation and psychological abandonment. When the early years are bound up in this type of desperate struggle for self-expression, the ultimate result is a dysfunctional personality that reflects an underlying drama of unmet needs and unresolved conflicts throughout life. Montessori teachers can only overcome these pervasive obstacles in their own personality with powerful transforming thoughts centered on the reality of the "normalized" child.

Transforming Thoughts

"When man loses himself in mere speculations, his environment will remain unchanged, but when imagination starts from contact with reality, thought begins to construct works by means of which the external world becomes transformed..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. in Ed.*, p.241

Montessori teachers must fundamentally transform their thoughts from those of control, dependency, limitation and prejudicial expectations with children — to a much more expansive vision of harmony with fundamental laws of nature. Thinking about the Montessori principle "preparation of the environment" can guide the teacher to change from her ordinary tendencies to control and manipulate — to approach the child more indirectly by "controlling the environment, not the child". In practice, this Montessori

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The *Montessori Observer* is mailed four times each year, in March, May, September and November, to Society members throughout the world. The purpose is to provide news and information about the Society's work in Montessori education, and to extend awareness of Montessori principles throughout the world.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, USA. 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 individuals for a \$20 annual fee. Society members also receive a subscription to the *Montessori News* and other membership benefits.

ADVERTISING
Advertising space is available for services and products relating to Montessori education. Market-place ads are \$7/line. Position and placement ads are \$20 each and will be set and edited by the Society to conform to space requirements. Write for the Society's advertising outline for details about design advertising rates.

Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

LEAVING MOM

When a young child does not wish to voluntarily leave its mother to begin the school day (see *Observer*, March, 1997), the Montessori teacher must employ Montessori principles in cooperation with the mother if possible, to assure an effective result for the child. Since Nell's mother in this case is willing to cooperate, the teacher should explain to her the approach of "control the environment, not the child", and give her specific instructions to behave properly in this situation.

Here, the teacher must help the mother to disengage her "personality" from Nell's environment — to restrain and control those various subtle manipulative devices of her being that prolong and frustrate Nell's normal entrance into the classroom environment. The teacher should advise the mother to restrain any undue drama, such as prolonged hand-holding, sitting on lap and other types of psychological attachment and mutual dependency.

When Nell shows an undue need for the mother's attention and physical proximity, the mother should point Nell to something of interest or activity in the environment. As Nell begins to find comfort and warmth in the companionship of the teacher and other children, the mother should be able to obtain eye contact and gesture "good bye" in a brief and matter-of-fact manner.

This process of leaving Mom should result in a shorter period of drama on each occasion. However, if the mother-child relationship is simply too dependent and attached, it may be best to advise the mother to take the child home and try again another time, if possible. In no case, should Nell be forced or manipulated to leave her mother because of the potential mistrust, fear and disturbance that this would cause in this fundamental parental relationship.

Disturbing Negativity

Five year old Jenny is constantly criticizing the other children with whom she holds a considerable influence. Because of her age and outgoing personality, she can influence many children with her strong negative invectives and judgmental opinions. However, this tends to discourage the younger children, and they have begun to imitate Jenny's negativity in their self-criticism and communication with each other. Despite the teacher's considerable efforts to control Jenny's negativity

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Change

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approach involves a thorough analysis of the child's environment — to remove and correct those various detrimental influence around the child that deter its true normal development.

A Thorough Analysis

"Only a thorough analysis leads to the discovery of the changes that occur continually in the child...It is precisely these changes that have the greatest bearing on the method of education."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *From Childhood to Adolescence*, p.2

Montessori teaching requires the adult to thoroughly analyze the scene of a child's "misbehavior" — to find and remove those detrimental aspects in the environment which are at cause in the situation. Such a thoughtful analysis must begin with a careful "observation" of our own "personality" — to change those thoughtless patterns and tendencies which deter the child's full normal self-expression. In this way, an evolution occurs in the child — a fundamental change in the child's whole being from a state of disorder and random fantasy to the well-ordered self-discipline of the child's true nature.

Evolution

"The process of self-perfecting is called Evolution..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum. Potential*, p.19

The child perfects its own being in the Montessori environment through the process of "normalization" — an evolution that is marked by a series of focused activities and various points of contact with the environment. As the child begins to take an intense interest in some object or activity, the teacher changes her initially active, directive manner to one of a passive, detached observer. During this process, the Montessori teacher must particularly observe to notice signs of the child's profound concentration on one single object of interest — the defining moment of "normalization" when a sudden inner change occurs in the child at its deepest level of being.

Concentration

"...change, which creates almost a uniformity of type, does not occur gradually, but appears all of a sudden. In any given child, it follows invariably upon a spell of deep concentration on some activity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.202

The event of "normalization" — the central focus of Montessori education — occurs in a moment of profound concentration when the child's whole attention is

focused on one single object of interest. After such normalization, the child reflects such qualities as a calm, self-disciplined manner and independent learning through a wide variety of goal-directed activities. The teacher must continue to support these fundamental inner changes in the child by following the guidance and direction of eternal and infinite laws of life.

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Internet Update

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internet through various newsletter services which reach a much broader segment of the general population. In this way, the general public with access to computers may more easily find the Society's newsletter, and obtain the corresponding subscription membership.

The Society's web page is also linked to related Montessori services, such as the TRUST TUTORING home page at <http://www.wdn.com/trust>. This page features the "Evaluation of Basic Skills" test — a revolutionary breakthrough in standardized testing which is based on Montessori principles.

Also, this web page is linked to the home page of the *Montessori Education Discussion List* which provides an on-line conference discussion with hundreds of parents, teachers and others throughout the world — a wide-ranging dialogue on a variety of Montessori topics. Manager of this Montessori newlist is Society member, **Sonja Buhlman**, who is located on the internet at "buhlman@earthlink.net".

The Society is also linked to other sites concerned with Montessori on the internet. The *Maryland Public Assembly* will also be linked with the Society at the address: <http://www.wdn.com/trust/mpa>



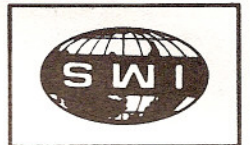
Child matching geometric solid objects with their corresponding names — College of Early Learning (Columbia, South Carolina)

Address correction requested

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OBSERVER

The Montessori



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Public Assembly

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"The Assembly includes an active membership in the three major jurisdictions of the state — and we are prepared to include every local jurisdiction where there is interest."

In May, 1997, the Assembly agreed to local rules for voting for state representatives and other Assembly officers in each jurisdiction. Once the permanent state central committee is determined by such voting, the platform committee and other Assembly activity will be set in motion. Eventually, endorsement procedures will be established, and voting will be carried out for specific candidates throughout the state.

Havis said he was encouraged by the initial effort and good will of those participating so far. "Several persons have volunteered to make telephone calls, and to work on the various committees. Several persons have also volunteered their services to help us prepare a web site for the Assembly on the internet. I hope that our efforts here in Maryland will encourage others to set up similar organizations elsewhere". For further information, contact: Maryland Public Assembly, 912 Thayer Ave. #205, Silver Spring, MD 20910; tel. (301) 589-0733.



Moment of Peril

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with others, she persists with great determination as a major disruptive influence on the normalization of the entire classroom. *What to do?*

Answer in September, 1997 Observer



Elementary aged child using language materials to learn French at College of Early Learning — Columbia, South Carolina

Standardized Test

Cont'd from Page 1, Col. 2

more favorable changes and growth to our program and related tutoring services. More importantly, I think the test will help focus teachers, parents and schools on the Montessori principles in their planning and implementation of instruction".

The start-up kit to administer the "Evaluation of Basic Skills" test is \$49.95, and includes the administration manual, 50 test forms and more. Society members may order through the Society for only \$39.95 (postage included). For more information about TRUST TUTORING and the EBS test, contact: TRUST TUTORING, 912 Thayer Ave., #205, Silver Spring, MD 20910, Tel. (800) 301-3131.

Change

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Laws of Life

"...programs can be changed; the laws of life are immutable. If we base education on the laws of life, we will create genuine levels of education rather than mere curricula."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Education and Peace*, p.106

While the teacher must certainly change to meet the changing needs and interests of the child, her guidance must always be that of unchanging commitment to fundamental laws of life. Even with the "normalized" child, the Montessori teacher must continue to apply such principles as "preparation of the environment" by providing new materials and lessons as indicated by each new point of interest expressed by the child. The adult can always refer to these fundamental Montessori principles as a reliable inner guidance for effective action with children.

Montessori Principles

"Times have changed, and science has made great progress, and no less our work; but our principles have only been confirmed."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p.ix

Montessori principles provide an inner control of error — to help us change our behavior according to the needs of the "normalized" child. These basic principles of nature help us focus our "inner preparation" to control and remove the detrimental influence of our "personality" in the child's environment. As we make these necessary inner changes in our being with children, the larger outer change to a new and better humanity begins to appear from this "new education" in the world.