



The Montessori OBSERVER

INSTINCT

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



Participants in the Society's Montessori conference held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — July 17-18, 1999

Creating the New Education in Asia

Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — July 17-18, 1999

"A new Asia is in the course of building while the old one slowly disintegrates."

Dr. Maria Montessori — from *To Educate the Human Potential*, p.28

On July 17-18, 1999, the Society conducted its first "Creating the New Education" conference on the continent of Asia. Held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, it was attended by parents, teachers and school owners from Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines.

Lee Havis led the conference discussion to show how to effectively apply Montessori principles in various problem situations with children. Many specific examples, exercises and role-play scenarios were used in the process of this discussion — to afford greater understanding and emphasis in the learning process.

Havis pointed out how certain "rules of thumb" could be identified and used to help guide our efforts in applying Montessori principles. He stated that "even though our ultimate commitment must be to such fundamental principles as 'observation' and 'individual liberty', we can still improve our efforts at Montessori teaching by following some basic rules like 'never interrupt a child involved in concentrated work activity'." After the conference, Havis wrote up a summary of some of the most useful "rules of thumb", and distributed it to all participants.

The conference also gave some considerable attention to how adult "dependency" in children can be controlled through such means as questioning and eye contact. He noted that "when we are tempted to answer a child's question directly, we should instead reflect back or question the child on the problem presented. In this way, the child learns to think more independently for its own resolution to the problem, while the adult still maintains a supportive, positive engagement in the situation."

After the conference, Havis visited several schools that had staff attending the conference — to observe and assist their efforts at implementing the learning experiences of the conference. He particularly noticed the excellent observational skills that were being employed with the children.

Havis stated that the success of this first Asian Montessori conference may well lead to further teacher education and conference events in the region. He noted interest in further conferences in Singapore, Philippines and Australia, and again in Malaysia. He also indicated the possibility of conducting a Montessori workshop for teachers in China.

TRUST Tutoring Trains New Regional Directors

The International Montessori Trust (Lee Havis, trustee), continues to apply Montessori principles with its operation of TRUST TUTORING in the United States. This program of in-home tutoring is now training new regional directors to expand its operation in Richmond, VA, Atlanta, GA, Baltimore, MD and Rialto, CA.

Regional directors set up contracts with clients, evaluate students and supervise the tutors who directly implement the unique TRUST TUTORING program. These supervisory personnel become qualified for this challenging work through a series of audio tapes which are coordinated with questionnaires and a special Handbook of forms and procedures.

Regional directors are now also being required to become certified to administer the TRUST TUTORING "Evaluation of Basic Skills" test, which is ordinarily conducted with students as part of their initial evaluation. In addition, they must successfully write-up a sample "addendum agreement" for tutors and "progress summary report", based on a realistic practical situation. These are two of the key documents that regional directors must prepare as part of their supervisory work in each assignment.

For further information about TRUST TUTORING, contact their main offices at (301) 589-0733.

MONTESSORI CONFERENCE

Creating the New Education
Inner Preparation for Montessori teaching

Washington, DC

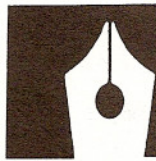
November 6-7, 1999

Register by October 6, 1999

\$160/member

\$200/regular

For full cost and registration details,
contact: IMS, 912 Thayer Ave., #207, Silver
Spring, MD 20910. Tel. (301) 589-1127.



INSTINCT

by Lee Havis

"...instinct...is the source of true progress in civilization, for men have a natural instinct to work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.187

Dr. Montessori believed that natural instincts lead us to work for our own self-perfection in harmony with the ultimate progress of all mankind. She particularly noticed these instincts at work in the young child — bringing about such normal qualities as precocious intelligence, spontaneous self-discipline, independence, order and complete harmony with others. In the Montessori environment, we can see these qualities today in the "normalized" child which arises from a mysterious inner force of nature.

Mysterious Inner Force

"Man is ... urged by a mysterious inner force to the attainment of our ideal determined form."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. the Hum. Potential*, p.78

Montessori teaching allows the child's own instincts to guide its basic education according to an unerring inner force of nature. This mysterious "teacher within" the child seems to direct its normal outward action to pursue certain fundamental tendencies; i.e., to explore the environment, protect its physical survival and express its own unique being in harmony with the total interrelated functioning of all. Modern society has, however, largely overlooked these fundamental tendencies, and suppressed those parental instincts that would otherwise so effectively support the emergence of the child's true *normalized* nature.

Suppressed Instincts

"...we live in a highly artificial civilization, in which the natural instincts with which nature has endowed the mother are largely suppressed."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p.19

Although parents naturally desire to love their children, these instincts have been largely suppressed by society's long-established prejudices and limited vision about the fundamental nature of man. Ordinary teaching reflects this prevailing prejudicial mind-set, by seeking to control and manipulate the child on the assumption of its being essentially bad or devoid of any inner guidance. Of course, the child's vital instincts for normal self-directed learning cannot be realized in such a repressive educational environment.

Vital Instincts

"...the mind was looked on as superior to the vital instincts, to be impressed and trained from without."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p.45

Traditional education emphasizes teacher-controlled curriculum to achieve some limited academic content knowledge. With this approach, the child's vital instincts to develop its own individual needs and interests are essentially ignored and disregarded by a mass of rigid rules, schedules and group instruction — a repressive, controlling system which is enforced by a complex web of rewards and punishments. The ordinary child can therefore not freely express its natural instinct of love and obedience to adult authority.

Obedience

"A child readily obeys an adult. But when an adult asks him to renounce those instincts that form his development, he cannot obey."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.104

Children can only normally obey an adult authority which follows such natural laws as (1) "Observation", (2) "Individual Liberty" and (3) "Preparation of the Environment". This true natural obedience will eventually emerge in the child as we apply these three basic Montessori principles to "control the environment, not the child". Such Montessori teaching is particularly important with the child under six, when its whole personality is being built up through the operation of certain powerful, but temporary instincts.

Temporary Instincts

"...a child's psychic development does not take place by chance...it does not originate in the external stimuli but is guided by transient sensibilities, that is, by temporary instincts intimately connected with the acquisition of specific traits."

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

The young child has certain important temporary instincts which guide its basic personality development in early childhood. During this formative period, the child's uniquely "absorbent mind" will take the environment within itself through a process of effortless, spontaneous learning — establishing within the child such basic faculties as order, language and culture. A powerful instinct of imitation is at work in the child during this period — modeling the essential behavioral patterns and culture that are presented by the surrounding adults.

Instinct of Imitation

"Nature does not merely give the instinct for imitation, but the effort in oneself to become transformed into whatever the example demonstrates."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. for a New World*, p. 45

The very young child instinctively imitates the behavior and language of others. Parents and teachers must therefore carefully control their personality expression with young children — to serve as an effective model of proper cultural values and polite social grace and courtesy. The instinct to coordinate is also evident during early childhood, to bring the child's physical movements into intimate harmony with its intellectual development and inner mental order.

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

Look for the
November Observer

featuring

L A W S

The Montessori Observer

ISSN 0889-5643

published by

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

912 Thayer Ave., Suite 207

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Tel. (301) 589-1127 • e-mail: havis@ezols.com

Worldwide Web:

<http://www.wdn.com/trust/ims>

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.

IMS ADVISORY BOARD

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author

Dr. R. Orin Cornett, Professor Emeritus

John Bradshaw, Author, Public Speaker

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* and other 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 \$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.

© 1999

Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

ADULT CONTROL

When other adults in the classroom are not consistently following Montessori principles (see *Observer*, May, 1999), the Montessori teacher must control the detrimental influence of the "adult personality" in the environment. The behavior of all adults in the environment must be under the authority of the teacher who is committed to applying the approach of "control the environment, not the child".

Even though the assistant says she is willing to listen and learn proper Montessori teaching techniques, her actions show a lack of compliance that has not been resolved by mere verbal admonition, instruction and discussion. The teacher must therefore set in motion a more robust form of control of this disruptive element in the children's environment.

The teacher might begin a greater control in this situation by directing the assistant to simply sit down in a chair and passively observe the classroom for a while — perhaps taking notes about what she observes in the teacher's behavior and in her interaction with the children. In this way, the teacher is giving a lesson to the assistant on proper Montessori teaching skills in practice. Following this observation exercise, the teacher and assistant may then discuss what was observed, and clarify any particular details that need attention or emphasis.

In time, the assistant may be permitted more active interaction with the children — but only according to the teacher's specific guidance and direction. The combination of observation and practice with children should considerably advance the "inner preparation" of the assistant, and gradually assure her more consistent application of Montessori principles in the environment.

Multiple Scenarios

A new Montessori has just taken over a classroom which has been in disorder a long time, under the influence of considerable traditional teaching. When the new teacher calls the children together, only several children comply — the others continuing a general pattern of distraction to various forms of fantasy. While the teacher offers a group lesson on practical life routines, there is little attention, and multiple scenarios of misbehavior break out around the room. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, November, 1999

INSTINCT

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Instinct to Coordinate

"The child has an instinct to coordinate his movements and to bring them under control."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.180

From the moment of birth, the child instinctively exercises its body and mind to coordinate their various separate faculties into a single integrated whole. The young child will therefore engage in many types of coordinating activity which bring about its unitary purpose and personality development. Such an instinct to coordinate will also express itself as an irresistible urge to handle objects in a thoughtful, intelligent manner — to directly experience the diverse attributes of physical objects through the sense of touch.

Irresistible Urge

"...the child shows an irresistible urge to touch everything...His intelligence needs a world of things which provide him with motives for his activity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.104

The normal child has an irresistible urge to touch — to directly experience the various qualities of size, texture, shape and function that pertain to physical reality. Montessori teaching must therefore provide a neat and orderly arrangement of physical objects — a prepared physical environment for the child to experiment with and handle such objects according to its own individual needs and interests of the moment. This thoughtful manipulative work leads the child to a fundamental mastery and control of itself — following its first instinct towards independent activity which is active in all children from the moment of birth.

First Instinct

"The child's first instinct is to carry out his actions by himself, without anyone helping him."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.90-91

The ordinary infant enters into a complex world of considerable confusion and disorder — a mass of chaos that it must overcome through an inborn instinct for independent action. This first instinct will normally lead the young child towards a moment of profound, prolonged concentration on some particular object of interest — the event that Dr. Montessori referred to as "normalization". Thereafter, the child employs a natural instinctiveness that guides its actions for successful learning throughout life.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3



SOFTWARE REVIEW

MONTESSORI MANIPULATIVES

Sensorial Lesson #1

by Display School, Huntsville, AL, 1999

A new type of computer software is now available from Display School — showing Montessori manipulative equipment for use by children, parents and teachers. The first of their series of CD's is called "Sensorial Lesson #1", and features the introduction and use of four common pieces of sensorial equipment: Pink Tower, Knobbed Cylinders, Color Box III and Sound Cylinders. Charles Martin, president and CEO of Display School states that further CD's will be offered in the near future which feature other Montessori equipment.

This first Display School CD employs a simple user-friendly screen that prompts the viewer to choose from among several options: (1) "work the activity" (using common mouse clicks and the drag/drop function; a friendly prompt of "well done" when activity is completed), (2) learn "about the activity" (written instructions with audio in English, German, French or Spanish), and (3) "watch a movie" showing basic use of equipment with English voice over description. These options offer an interesting range of learning opportunities and experience with the materials.

The young child can learn basic computer use in the interesting context of manipulating virtual materials — and parents and teachers can become acquainted with their use and presentation in a very easy and convenient manner. This virtual presentation and manipulation of Montessori equipment is certainly a useful opportunity for learning when the full physical reality is not readily available.

Although the overall technical quality is quite excellent, I hope that certain minor defects of sound and color quality in the demonstration copy reviewed here will be corrected in the later market versions. Kay Anderson, Montessori consultant for this product, has demonstrated her considerable expertise and knowledge in rendering the various presentations. To the Display School team, I say "well done".

The price is quite reasonable at \$29.95 plus \$3.95 shipping and handling.

For more information, contact:

Display School, 2600 Newby Rd., Suite D, Huntsville, AL 35805-4273, Tel. (256) 533-9282, email: support@apochtech.com
url: <http://www.apochtech.com/displayschool.htm>

Address correction requested

912 Thayer Ave. • Silver Spring, Md. 20910

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

OBSERVER

The Montessori



Proceedings of the Society's Montessori conference — Louisville, Kentucky (May 22-23, 1999)

Montessori Conference in Louisville, Kentucky

"The first step to take in order to become a Montessori teacher is to shed omnipotence and to become a joyous observer..."

Dr. Maria Montessori — from *To Educate the Human Potential*, p.121-22

The Society held a 2-day weekend Montessori conference on May 22-23, 1999 in Louisville, Kentucky. Attending were parents, teachers and school owners from Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan and Georgia.

Lee Havis IMS executive director, led the conference discussion into a journey of discovering and experiencing 'what is *Montessori*'. He employed many dramatic exercises, role-playing scenarios and visualization techniques to highlight the various delicate features of Montessori teaching with children.

The conference particularly emphasized the process nature of Montessori teaching — to recognize the value of making even small, imperfect steps in the right direction of "*controlling the environment, not the child*". Havis stated that "when we get into action with these small beginning steps, we find encouragement,

support and inspiration to continue to proceed further. Then, it becomes possible to take stronger steps later on, as we gain confidence in the direction of positive changes in our behavior with children."

The Louisville conference was recorded on audio tape, and an edited version is now being prepared for sale to the general public. Havis stated that "I hope this newest conference tape will help expand the value of such good *inner preparation* work that took place in this unique Montessori conference. Although the tapes can certainly not replace the dynamic experience of being at a conference itself, I believe they will still help support and expand the outreach of this work to many parents and teachers who have never attended this exciting conference experience — to encourage their efforts to try out this '*new education*' for themselves."

INSTINCT

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

Instinctiveness

"...instinctiveness in children is a kind of inspiration which leads them to self-constructive work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.181

The *normalized* child has a quality of instinctiveness that helps it overcome many perils that otherwise significantly oppose its fundamental progress towards a new and better future. Such instincts for normal being are within ourselves as well — inspiring and encouraging us to face and overcome the many obstacles to our mastery of the environment and success with others in society. We must therefore discover and employ these inner instincts if we are to effectively pursue the critical work of creating Dr. Montessori's vision of a *new education* in the world.

Montessori Conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Comments from Participants:

"It was a great experience in KL...words can never describe the conference and its benefits...a total success."

Sharmila Suthesh (Singapore)

"It was 2 days very well spent...a time of self-discovery...I am so glad I had the opportunity to attend..."

Roelie Murphy (Brisbane, Australia)

"...thank you for the invaluable experience of the conference. It was a very enlightening and mind opening experience."

Ajit Chawla (Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia)