



The Montessori

Technology

# OBSERVER

Published by the International Montessori Society • 8115 Fenton St. #304 • Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA • Tel. (301) 589-1127



Participants in the IMS 'Creating the New Education' workshop in Stirling, Scotland, July 9-10, 2005

## Montessori Workshop in Scotland

On July 9-10, 2005, the Society conducted its 'Creating the New Education' workshop in Stirling, Scotland. **Ann Travers** provided local coordination for this event, which included the participation of educators from throughout the United Kingdom, as well as Germany, Canada, Nepal and West Africa.

**Lee Havis**, IMS executive director, guided the discussion through a presentation and analysis of the technology of Montessori teaching he consolidated in 2003. The discussion analyzed many examples and situations using this technology, consisting of a precise set of techniques, protocols, lesson presentations and safe words to 'control the environment, not the child'.

Havis especially emphasized the importance of language and context for effective Montessori teaching. He said 'we experience, communicate and understand within a context, which is usually a conventional reality that does not allow for normal being as described by Dr. Montessori. We must therefore create a totally different context to experience the very unconventional possibility of true normal being. For this, we need a suitably distinctive vocabulary with a correspondingly precise terminology.'

The workshop viewed Montessori teaching as a context of experiential understanding — a way of being committed to laws of nature. Havis said 'Montessori teaching is thinking and acting in ways that are consistently committed to these laws. This is actually a work of consciously creating a new reality to experience the child's true nature as discovered by Dr. Montessori in 1907. Without this creative action, we tend to interpret experience within the context of surrounding conventional reality.'

Havis presented and discussed a document entitled 'New Education Terminology', which includes precise definitions of such key words as experience, understanding, and normal being. Havis said 'using this new terminology will help you consciously follow laws of nature, even while you may be automatically bringing up old images of the old conventional reality also as well.'

After the workshop, Havis visited several nearby schools to observe and consult with educators about their actual experience and practices with children. He expressed his hope to further support these efforts to renew and revive the original authentic practice of Montessori teaching in Europe.

## 2006 Workshop Schedule Planning

The Society invites anyone interested in attending an IMS "Creating the New Education" workshop to contact the Society now about setting up the 2006 schedule of these events. **Lee Havis**, IMS executive director, indicates the workshop must be scheduled at least about four months before the event itself.

Havis emphasized the importance of local initiative in creating these events, to achieve their maximum value to improve and develop Montessori teaching skills. He said, "Much of the workshop success depends on how people attending take responsibility for its initial creation. Then, it is more likely there will be good understanding, implementation and communication after the event is over."

The IMS workshop scheduling begins with an inquiry from an interested person, who then receives instructions about potential dates and other interested persons in the area. Thereafter, the Society and the local coordinator work together to build consensus for a tentative date and location. Based on this interest, the workshop is actually scheduled and the registration process set in motion.

Contact IMS for further information. 301-589-1127. [havis@erols.com](mailto:havis@erols.com).

## Montessori Workshops

Learn Montessori Teaching Skills  
The Technology of Montessori Teaching

### Boise, Idaho

October 15-16, 2005

The IMS workshop presents the most current available technology for Montessori teaching. It includes techniques, protocols, safe words and lesson presentations that anyone can use to scientifically create conditions for complete self-directed normal development in children as described by Dr. Maria Montessori.

For full cost and registration details, contact: IMS,  
8115 Fenton St. #304, Silver Spring, MD 20910.  
Tel. (301) 589-1127. Email to — [havis@erols.com](mailto:havis@erols.com)



# Technology

by Lee Havis

*"Education ...is ...a technological science...addressed directly to the needs of man in development of the child."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Child in Family*, p.68

In 1907, Dr. Montessori was engaged in a scientific experiment with children when she discovered the surprising true nature of the child. Although she validated this phenomenon many times over 40 years thereafter, she never fully realized exactly how this effect occurred. After her death in 1952, Montessori teaching has therefore been struggling to overcome this lack of suitable technology to effectively serve the spirit as originally envisioned with Dr. Montessori's new scientific education.

## Serve the Spirit

*"In the psychological realm of relationship between teacher and child, the teacher's part and its techniques are ... to serve the spirit."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.256

As a scientific approach to discover the child's true nature, Montessori teaching must certainly begin by viewing the child as a spiritual *unknown entity*. The technology for this approach must then create a condition that allows this spirit to freely express itself according to its own inner guidance. Unfortunately, Dr. Montessori's science of the human spirit directly conflicts with the conventional pseudo-science of ordinary schools, where the whole aim of technology is to achieve only more and better academic performance on certain predetermined teacher-directed curriculum.

## Ordinary Schools

*"The technique of teaching in ordinary schools is a slow successive progress...which are graded and classified in advance. Children left free in the prepared environment on the contrary, revealed original techniques which we could not have suspected."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.38

Conventional teaching views the child as an unguided and passive agent in the learning process; i.e., not the unknown object of study that reveals its own self-directed guidance of nature. Therefore, ordinary schools view children as physical objects or formed personalities to control and manipulate according to the demands of the predetermined curriculum. By contrast, Montessori teaching follows laws of nature — an indirect intervention with the child that aims to remove whatever detrimental influences there may be in the environment to oppose the child's free and full self-directed normal development.

## Indirect Intervention

*"The pupil can show his surprising achievements only if the teacher applied the scientific techniques of 'indirect intervention' while helping the natural development of the child."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.38

Montessori teaching aims to control the environment, not the child — a way of being that must have its technology organized for indirect intervention with children. Faced with misbehavior, the technology must offer a range of choices for suitable indirect action — from light and subtle techniques to those that are more heavy and intrusive when necessary. Teachers must have a precise knowledge of this technology, to effectively allow children to move from the ordinary state of disorder to the normalized condition of being with such qualities as self-discipline, order, independence and complete harmony with the entire environment.

## Precise Knowledge

*"The teacher...has many difficult functions...She must acquire a precise knowledge of the techniques for dealing with the child."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.150-51

Unfortunately, many practitioners today have only flawed, imprecise, partial and inaccurate knowledge to guide them in their efforts at Montessori teaching. Without precise knowledge, you have only random chance or experience within a conventional context of understanding. In such restrictive circumstances, it is highly unlikely that you will ever achieve and sustain a wholehearted concordance with the basic reality and experience of Montessori teaching as originally intended.

## Wholehearted Concordance

*"...It is difficult to obtain of the teachers a wholehearted concordance with the technique, before she has actually witnesses a phenomenon."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p.46

Of course, it is still possible that a good instinctive teacher may accidentally happen upon an experience of normal being in children; however, this will not likely lead to a wholehearted concordance with Montessori teaching, because there is no objective basis of technology to follow. Human nature therefore tends to reduce and confine these random experiences into a fixed context of understanding, which then restricts all further experiences to the past. The technique of the expert in Montessori teaching must rely less on these vague subjective instincts, and more on a definite objective means to measure and correct experience in light of

the ultimate truth of infinite and eternal laws of nature.

## Technique of the Expert

*"...if you want to see any phenomena...then you must give attention to the technique of the expert."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p.375

You can perhaps gain some useful knowledge about Montessori teaching from reading books, watching others, taking courses and even trying out certain thoughtful experiments on your own with children. However, the technique of the expert ultimately must be firmly committed to laws of nature. Since 2003, the Society has been offering the technology for

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

Look for the  
*November 2005 Observer*  
featuring  
**Understanding**

ISSN 0889-5643

## The Montessori Observer

published by

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

8115 Fenton St. #304

Silver Spring, Maryland 20910

Tel. (301) 589-1127 • e-mail: [havis@erols.com](mailto:havis@erols.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  
John Bradshaw, Author, Public Speaker  
Donald E. Seymour, Author, businessman

## SUBSCRIPTION

Subscription to this *Observer* publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership, which is open to all individuals for a \$25 annual fee. Associate schools, \$30 annual fee. Society members also receive a subscription to the *Montessori News* and other membership benefits.

## IMS ON THE INTERNET

An on-line IMS discussion group, *intmonsoc* (International Montessori Society) is available for anyone to join at no charge. To subscribe to this list, send an email to - [intmonsoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:intmonsoc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com), and then follow instructions to request placement on the list.

© IMS, 2005

# Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

## Questioning

The teacher here is frustrated when the technique *questioning* doesn't work in the routine daily 'clean up' situation in her environment. See *Observer*, May, 2005. The problem involves her using this *questioning* technique without due regard for the protocol *basis of interest*, and the Montessori principle *individual liberty*.

The principle of *individual liberty* implies true choice in the child; i.e., the child has some knowledge about the issue at hand. Freedom is not simply a matter of guessing or randomly acting without knowledge, control or guidance. The teacher must therefore assure the child has sufficient knowledge before using the technique *questioning*.

In 'clean up', a question such as "Do you see anything out of place?" is often effective, because it directs attention to perception and awareness only, implying no commitment to actually doing any specific activity. In any case, we know through prior experience that children have some basis of knowledge about the general order of physical objects provided. If the child says 'No', the teacher can easily provide knowledge to shift the context to a choice for specific action by using the technique *clear direction*; e.g. 'Come over here. Let me show you...'

A question like "Would you like to clean the table?" is different, because there may be no context of knowledge and probably no basis of interest as well in this specific activity. The child is not likely to clearly know what is involved; e.g., how much cleaning, for how long, what kind, what materials to use, etc. If the child says 'No', the teacher cannot easily follow up with further effective questioning.

If the teacher follows up the child's 'No' response with 'Why not?', she is simply inviting unnecessary distracting dialogue away from the issue at hand. Quite likely, this will lead to power struggle, disobedience and more fantasy.

The teacher may however use questioning in a clean up situation when the child has been watching some specific activity, indicating a clear basis of interest; e.g., the child watching the teacher wipe the table. The child then has some definite knowledge about the activity to choose. The question "Would you like to do it?", will therefore likely have a good result of the child saying 'Yes'.

In the present *moment of peril*, the problem is not so much 'clean up', as resolving misbehavior of children engaged in some

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 3

# Technology

Cont'd from Page 2, Col. 3

precisely following these laws of nature, which is particularly important in the delicate and challenging work of controlling the adult personality.

## Controlling the Adult Personality

*"...that technique which responds to the child's needs without letting her personality be felt in any way...that is the spiritual technique."*

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p.377

Montessori teaching must control the 'adult personality' as a significant potential detrimental influence in the child's environment. The IMS technology of techniques, protocols, lesson presentations and safe words, serve particularly well to resolve even deeply hidden obstacles in the adult personality. *Patient waiting* is one very useful light polishing technique of this IMS technology, which can be quite important in controlling detrimental influences of the adult presence with children.

## Patient Waiting

*"...it is important to define the method and technique of experimentation and then, after making specific use of them, to wait for the results of the experiment."*

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 19

Many teachers tend to rush into situations involving disorder and misbehavior, making mistakes that only add negative energy to the situation. Applying the technique of *patient waiting* at certain critical times, allows techniques used before, such as *proximity*, *eye contact* or *distraction*, to fully take their effect as intended. This patient waiting is also very useful in power struggle situations in the adult-child relationship, where you can apply it most favorably to bring about very positive revelations in the child.

## Revelations in the Child

*"...If the teacher applies the techniques to the child then those revelations will appear."*

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p. 376

Applying the IMS technology will eventually bring about the revelations of the *normalized* child, with its independent, self-directed nature as discovered and described by Dr. Montessori. However, this ultimate result comes only as an experimental process of correcting mistakes in working through a range of problem situations with children. This process will certainly also involve a preparation of self, which must be a regular aspect of your discipline as a true Montessori teacher.

## Preparation of Self

*"The technique is at the same time a preparation of the self...while the technique is being acquired, the teacher herself undergoes a change, and she perfect herself."*

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p.376

Montessori teaching involves taking actions that may strongly oppose conventional reality — a fundamental preparation of self that distinguishes

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

# Messages to IMS

July 14, 2005

Contanou, Benin

Hi Lee

Interesting to know that our people are finding the importance of the Montessori technologies offering to child management and development. Many will still contact you to share from a marvelous experience I gained in Scotland.

Olawale Jimoh

Participant in Scotland workshop (July, 2005)

June 6, 2005

Okinawa, Japan

Dear Mr. Lee Havis,

My school had been an associate member of your organization and I was so glad to receive the *Montessori Observer*. I learned a lot from it and it give me ideas, and enhances my knowledge on my work with the children. I am also interested to attend your workshop in the future.

Lorna Nakasone

August 5, 2005

Callander, Scotland

To: Lee Havis

The feedback I have had is excellent with people willing and ready to try everything and meet again to discuss. I hope someone in England will pick up on this success and perhaps invite you to do another seminar in England.

Ann Travers

Participant in Scotland workshop (July, 2005)

July 28, 2005

Edinburgh, Scotland

Dear Lee,

Thank you ... for your most interesting workshop in Stirling — it was both challenging and inspiring which is what I suspect most people hope they will get from a workshop of this kind.

Judy Park

Participant in Scotland workshop (July, 2005)

## Positions & Placements

**Executive Director:** Head of school founded in 1961, 170 students, infants through age 12. Parent board of trustees. To start July, 2006. Oak Park, Illinois. Contact Gary Gruber, search@carneysandoe.com • tel. 800-225-7986; • fax 617-542-9500

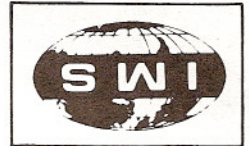
**Executive Director:** Head of school founded in 1965. 280 students from infant to adolescent. Parent-run board of directors. To start July, 2006. Lake Forest, Illinois. Contact: Gary Gruber: search@carneysandoe.com • tel. 800-225-7986 • fax. 617-542-9500

Return Service Requested

8115 Fenton St. #304 • Silver Spring, MD 20910 USA

## OBSERVER

The Montessori



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

## Technology

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

between being as personality and being as commitment to laws of nature. Repeat the actions of IMS technology over time, and you will begin to acquire a new understanding and experience of Montessori teaching — a very creative way of being that can become an intimate aspect of your whole being with children and others. You will begin to understand Montessori teaching in an experiential manner that appears to bring about the normalized child as a consistent regular reality in the world.

### Understanding

*"If science began to study man, it would not only succeed in offering new techniques for the education of children...it would further lead to a profound understanding of many human and social phenomena that are still enveloped in obscurity."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.9

Montessori teaching will continue to deviate from its original scientific objectives and purpose, as long as there remains only the fixed conventional understanding of its past traditions and superficial effects in well-behaved, obedient children. Practitioners must therefore adjust to a new way of experiential understanding, which constantly enlarges itself by following technology that closely approximates the eternal and infinite laws of nature. Properly applied, the IMS technology will serve this purpose quite well, to lead you reliably towards the ultimate emergence of the true normalized child as discovered by Dr. Montessori in 1907.

## Reflections

By Wendy Leiberman

*Applying the principle of "Observation" and the technique of Imagination-Previsioning (IP) to resolving inner feelings. Reported to IMS list June 7, 2005*

### Observing Feelings

...I have had some difficulty because my emotions have been influencing my behavior with the children. I have a high-strung personality and I tend to act irrationally when I am stressed. I have been working hard to learn to control my personality even when my emotions are very strong.

I...started to do more previsioning about situations when I was very emotional. I worked on making the scenario seem very real to me in my previsioning so that I felt the same emotions, but instead of behaving badly because of my feelings I imagined myself doing the right thing.

I started to track my emotions throughout the day. I would decide to target one feeling I was having that was causing problems and I would write down the time whenever I felt that way. I made sure that I only would write down the time if it was at least 15 minutes after the last time I wrote it. I started out with fear. I moved on to anger. Then I went for numb which turned out really to be sleepy. Finally, I hit on one that really helped and that was tense.

Apparently, I was avoiding the feeling of tension. I would do this either by spacing off in a sleepy daze or by acting out. Neither of these was good Montessori teaching. I finally realized that by tracking the tension I could remember to pay attention when I felt tense because many times something was about to happen. Then I was ready to apply techniques when things came up.

## Moment of Peril

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

unproductive fantasy activity away from the order of the environment. Here, the technique *clear direction*, not *questioning* is a better choice; e.g., 'Come over here. Let me show you something'. This clear direction *safe-word* phrase requires no yes/no response. So, if the child does not respond, the teacher may then use such techniques as *repetition* and *patient waiting*, to finally achieve some proper point of contact between the child and present moment reality.

Certainly, the teacher here should not simply abandon children to fantasy, but rather invite them to work in the 'clean up' context of present moment reality. She can therefore overcome this abandonment by using the techniques of *clear direction* and more appropriate *questioning* as indicated before.

## Eye Contact

The teacher is not finding good results with the technique *eye contact* — particularly when using *distraction* in resolving the misuse of a physical object. She notices that when she gets the child's attention with eye contact, the child will usually just continue mis-handling the object; i.e., rather than stop and respond to the teacher's *clear direction* to 'come over here'. It appears that eye contact doesn't work as indicated. However, she suspects that she may be making some unknown error in this situation. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, November, 2005