



The Montessori OBSERVER

Sensorial Introduction

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IMAC Accredits GIMI in Bangalore, India

On April 24, 2007, the IMAC advisory committee met in Silver Spring, MD to consider the application of *Gear International Montessori Institute* (GIMI) for IMAC accreditation. The committee, consisting of **Dr. Jerry Duvall**, **Dr. Kent Baker** and **Dr. Richard Matteson**, discussed the favorable report and recommendation of the IMAC Generic Review Committee (GRC) and authorized IMAC accreditation for a two year period.

Since 2005, GIMI has been seeking IMAC accreditation for its Montessori teacher education program conducted in Bangalore, India. During that time, the GRC has been supervising a self-study of its program, which finally led to an on-site evaluation visit in February, 2007. Members of the on-site term were **Lee Havis** (GRC member) and **Needra Di Silva**, Montessori educator from Sri Lanka.

GIMI was granted accreditation with qualifications requiring the program staff to submit a series of observation and progress reports to the GRC to demonstrate

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 3

Reflections

by Robbyn German

The Making of a Montessori Teacher

I taught for over 18 years as a Special Education Teacher. By the end of my career, I was mostly at meetings or testing. I had little contact with students. I taught for Standard State Tests. Parents and teachers were not supportive. Teaching was no longer fun.

Then, by accident things changed quickly. I left the public school and taught drama and music in a Montessori-like school. It took me awhile to change from being a traditional teacher. It was a big step to be called Miss Robbyn. ...I loved the hands on materials that were self correcting. They enjoyed working with the dressing boards, lock puzzles, and pink tower. Children loved to learn.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2



Participants in the IMS new education workshop in Corpus Christi, TX (April 14-15, 2007)

IMS Workshop in Corpus Christi, TX

On April 14-15, 2007, IMS conducted its latest *Creating the New Education* workshop in Corpus Christi, TX. Participating were parents, teachers and other educators from throughout the state of Texas. **Mayra Halm**, director of *Mi Casita Montessori School* (Corpus Christi, TX), was the primary local coordinator for the event.

Lee Havis, IMS executive director, led the participants through a systematic presentation and study of the 2003 Montessori technology. He gave many practical examples of its use, especially as related to controlling the adult personality.

Lee noted the automatic tendency of the ordinary adult personality to project inner errors of abandonment and negativity on children. He said, "Misbehavior patterns persist in children as a reflection of our own hidden drama of conventional conditioning from childhood. In western cultures, this conditioning is often towards abandonment, which tends to persist under the guise of freedom."

At the workshop, participants practiced resolving many common misbehavior scenarios by using such techniques as *eye contact*, *proximity* and *clear direction*. Lee emphasized the primary need to control the adult personality using such techniques as *imagination previsioning* (IP). He said, "the technique IP is imagining some persistent misbehavior scenario, and previsioning a solution that you later try out as an experiment in the real-life situation. Using IP, you can often notice repressed feelings of tension and fear that lead to impatient excessive involvement with children. It can also

help focus attention to feelings of doubt and confusion that bring about dangerous inactivity as well."

After the workshop, Lee visited several schools in the area with staff attending the workshop. He consulted with teachers working to apply the IMS technology to their actual classroom situations. Lee indicated the importance of regular observation among the teachers to continue the positive changes set in motion at the April workshop.

Montessori Workshop

Learn Montessori Teaching
as the Scientific Approach to Normal Being

Kenai, Alaska

July 28-29, 2007

The IMS workshop features Lee Havis, IMS executive director, presenting the unique 2003 technology of Montessori teaching. This technology consists of a precise body of practical knowledge for conducting the scientific approach that leads to true normal being as discovered by Dr. Montessori in 1907.

Workshop location:
Challenger Learning Center.

Limited dorm sleeping accommodations is available at Center. Regular rate: \$210/person Register by June 28, 2007. Discounts for early registration, group participation and IMS members. Contact: IMS, tel. 301-589-1127; havis@imsmontessori.org



Sensorial Introduction

by Lee Havis

"A teacher...must acquire a precise knowledge of the techniques that have been experimentally determined for the presentation of the material..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.151

Sensorial introduction is one of three basic types of lesson presentations in the IMS technology of Montessori teaching. It especially aims to link a child's natural interest with some specific physical object or piece of work in the environment. This child-centered lesson presentation differs fundamentally from the conventional teacher directed lesson of ordinary education.

Conventional Lesson

"Our materials are not a new means to be placed in the hands of an 'active' teacher to help her with her teaching."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.149

Conventional teachers provide materials to young children to support their make-believe fantasy play or to implement the teacher's predetermined academic curriculum. The conventional lesson, therefore, leads away from the child's normal self-directed activity. By contrast, Montessori lessons are an experiment to support the child's perfect inner guidance of nature.

Experiment

"The teacher must not limit her actions to observation, but must proceed to experiment... the lesson corresponds with an experiment..."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p.107

Following the basic Montessori principle *observation*, you must sometimes actively interact with children. The sensorial introduction lesson is an interaction that applies this principle in the context of helping children properly handle some specific piece of work. Following such protocols as *basis of interest*, you must, however, carefully limit what you do with children in the process.

Basis of Interest

"There is a direct interchange between the child and his environment while the teacher with his offerings of motives of interest and his interactions constitutes primarily a link."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.39

The Montessori environment provides a basic orderly arrangement of materials for children to freely use according to their own individual needs and interests. But, children normally want to know first exactly how to use each piece of equipment. So, when children show a basis of interest for this type of interaction with the teacher, you may approach the child to start a suitable lesson presentation.

Approach

"The teacher...must be able to make prudent observations,...to assist a child by going up to, or withdrawing from, him, and by speaking or keeping silent in accordance with his needs."

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

The protocol *basis of interest* directs you to approach a child only if there is a specific green light signal of interest for your involvement. This signal is given by the child either (1) asking directly for a lesson or (2) touching a piece of work while looking at you. When the child does one of these two things, you may then approach the child to announce your purpose to give the lesson, saying, "Let me show you this". Then, proceed to presenting the materials from the shelf.

Presenting the Materials

"The teacher...must be able to choose an object suitable for a particular child and place it before him in such a way that he understands it and takes a keen interest in its use."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.153

The protocol *from the shelf* directs you to begin the process of presenting the materials at their designated resting place in the environment. This reinforces the basic order of the environment, showing children exactly where the materials remain when not in use. Next, you must properly order the lesson presentation in a specific workspace in the environment.

Ordering the Lesson

"General surveillance and individual teaching...are two ways in which the teacher can help the child's development...she must take care never to turn her back on the class while she is dealing with a single child."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.270-71

Large materials are usually done on work mats on the floor. To show these materials, you must, therefore, first order the lesson by giving the child a *clear direction*, "Get a mat and bring it over here". Have the child position the mat where you can clearly observe all the other children in the group. Then, return to the shelf to begin showing the basic movement involved with carrying the materials to the mat.

Showing the Movement

"The assistance which the teacher should give a child in presenting the material to him consists in showing him how to use it."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.153

Before taking out the materials, get the child's attention with eye contact and say,

"Watch." For ordering materials, such as sequential blocks, take out each piece singly, using the same handling action for each one. This respects the protocol, *same routines all the time* to avoid confusing the child with random, awkward, or disorderly movements.

Following the protocol *take out everything*, remove all the objects of a particular piece of work, carrying all the elements to the designated workspace area. Personally, you will carry only the first few pieces, to minimize the possibility of children imitating any careless mistakes you make in the process. Then, invite the child to get the next one. For example, with a set of 10 objects, show

Cont'd. on Page 3, Col. 2

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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

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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, and then follow instructions to request placement on the list.

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Moment of Peril

by Wendy Lieberman

Verbal Communication

Five-year-old Matt sometimes hits or pushes to communicate what he wants. In response, the teacher tries to stay near him when he starts to seem frustrated around other children to protect them. (See **Observer**, March, 2007) But, he keeps acting out physically instead of talking to other children. What to do?

This scenario is a level 1 priority for attention because it involves the most serious kind of misbehavior that threatens physical harm to a child. The hub child is Matt. The primary detrimental influence is other children. The teacher's personality is also part of the problem.

The teacher is right to approach the situation (*proximity*) when Matt seems to be getting frustrated with another child. She needs to be able to protect the other child if necessary.

The mistake the teacher is making is to not talk enough to help give Matt words to use instead of acting out physically. She is abandoning him in this situation, violating the protocols *well-being of the total environment* and *modeling good behavior*. Matt is reflecting the teacher's lack of communication and instead acting only physically the same way the teacher does.

The way the teacher can solve the problem is by working on her verbal communication skills. She can give Matt a clear direction to ask for things when he wants them and even give him specific words to use if necessary and show him how to hold his hand out, palm-up, so that the other child can give him the object. The more she models the desired behavior of using words, the more Matt will learn to talk out his problems instead of resorting to physical aggression.

Lining up

Andrew and Brad tend to act silly and misbehave when it is time to line up. They argue about who will stand where and get very wiggly and touch and grab each other in line, sometimes pushing each other into other children in the line. The teacher tells them to stand up straight and put their hands down at their sides. She also tells them to keep their hands to themselves. Sometimes she becomes irritated by their behavior and raises her voice. The behavior still seems to occur every time they line up. What to do?

Answer in **Observer**, September, 2007

Sensorial Introduction

Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

the handling routine with only the first three objects. Then, turn over the carrying task to the child, using the phrase, "Would you like to get the next one?" In all your movements, notice the impact on the child who is watching.

Child Watching

"...an adult...must always be calm and act slowly so that the child who is watching him can clearly see his actions in all their particulars."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.98

The protocol *child watching* recognizes that young children are keenly aware of even very small details in the environment. Unhappily, they can also easily notice and imitate your mistakes of random body movements and unintended gestures while giving a lesson. So, keep your movements and language as brief and simple as possible. At the workspace, use slow and deliberate motions in handling the materials to show their specific use. This slow, careful movement especially applies the protocol *emphasize main point(s) — isolate variable*. Respecting the protocol *enhance independence*, invite the child to take over the activity as soon as possible, using the safe word question phrase, "Would you like to do the next one?"

Inviting the Child

"The instruction of the teacher consists then merely in a hint, a touch — enough to give a start to the child. The rest develops of itself."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Dr. Montessori's Own Hand.*, p.58-9

Following the protocol, *least amount of adult involvement*, show only just enough to get the child started with the materials in an intelligent and thoughtful manner. After inviting the child to take over the activity, move far away, ideally to a stationary position outside the activity area of the children. Hopefully, the child will then continue to constructively work with the materials for quite a while, putting the work away when finished.

Putting Work Away

"...when a child has spontaneously given up an exercise...the child puts the material back in place and everything is left in perfect order."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 155

After children are finished handling the materials, they normally put them away on their own in a correct and efficient manner. They know how to do this because you showed the materials from the shelf in the beginning. However, if they do leave work out, you can always give another lesson at the right time to put it away. Often,

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1

IMAC Accredits GIMI

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

its closer compliance with IMAC standards and criteria. Lee said "based on the GRC review so far, I believe our qualifications will effectively support the program's continuing progress in quality of its operation."

The GIMI program is sponsored by the GEAR Foundation, which conducts a full range of educational programs from infancy through college age. GIMI will integrate its operation with these other programs, which are located at the same large campus facility. For example, the GIMI students will conduct observation and practice teaching at the Foundation's GEM Plus Montessori school. Lee said "The effective integration of these other programs with GIMI is a very important aspect of its successful progress and future development."

The GIMI program director, **Vijayalakshmi Ramanathan**, is now qualified to serve on the IMAC Board of Directors to represent the interests of non-IMS teacher education programs. Lee indicated his hope that this first accredited program in India will encourage others in this country to apply for accreditation with IMAC. He said, "An important goal of IMAC is to provide mutual accountability and cooperation to improve the quality and development of all Montessori teacher education."



Participants practice nomenclature lesson presentation at the IMS workshop in Corpus Christi, TX (April 14-15, 2007)

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Sensorial Introduction

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 2

a question will serve quite well, such as, "Where does this go?" If a lesson with materials is really successful, it will usually bring about a deep level of concentration, peace and calm in the child. Dr. Montessori spoke of the child's *normalization* that occurs in a moment of especially deep concentration.

Concentration

"Children find it very hard to concentrate on spoken words, but they have no difficulty concentrating on objects."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Education and Peace*, p. 80

Concentration to work is a hopeful result of any sensorial introduction lesson. With this concentration, children gain much more than academic understanding about size, shape, numbers or letters. They develop inner peace and order, showing such outward normalized qualities as self discipline, independence and complete harmony with others in the group. The sensorial introduction lesson, therefore, is an important aspect of Montessori teaching with young children to support their true normal development.

Marketplace

Positions and Placements

Montessori teachers: Palm Harbor Montessori Academy (Palm Harbor, FL). 250 students, ages 1-year to 8th grade. Competitive salary with benefits. Fax or e-mail resume and letter of interest: Christine Varkas, Palm Harbor Montessori Academy, 2355 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor, FL 34683. (727) 786-1854; Fax. (727) 786-5160; www.floridamontessori.com, e-mail: cvarkas@gate.net



Left to right, Vijayalakshmi Ramanathan, Gita Sudha Sridhar and Lee Havis, in discussion during February, 2007 on-site evaluation visit to accredit the GIMI teacher education program in Bangalore, India

Reflections

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

Additionally, my students are well-behaved because they are able to select their own materials at their own level. Furthermore, they learn to enjoy organizing, concentrating, and returning their materials to their proper places. Montessori Technology helped my students to achieve. For example, I have many 4 year olds that are starting to read.

Now, with Lee's help, I should become a certified Montessori Teacher within the next month. I am excited to start a new venture of a Montessori school in my house this summer.

Robbyn is a student in the IMS teacher education program.

Messages to IMS

May 7, 2007
Corpus Christi, TX

IMS correspondents,

Like Montessori students who learn from repetition and perfect their skills, Montessori teachers must also learn from repetition. In attending Mr. Lee's workshop for the second time, I was able to refocus on the daily task of "analyzing the adult personality". This time around I also realized that to help your own adult personality more effort than personal will is required. Not only did I have the chance to reinforce my knowledge of the technology but I was able to find a network of other teachers to support my efforts.

Mayra Halm
Participant, IMS workshop (Corpus Christi, TX)