



The Montessori OBSERVER *Thoughts*

Published by the International Montessori Society web: <http://imsmontessori.org> Tel. (301) 589-1127

Blue Ridge Montessori in Lynchburg, Virginia

The Blue Ridge Montessori School (BRMS) was established by Tom Taylor in the fall of 1985 in Forest, Virginia. At that time, Tom was owner, administrator and lead teacher all in one!

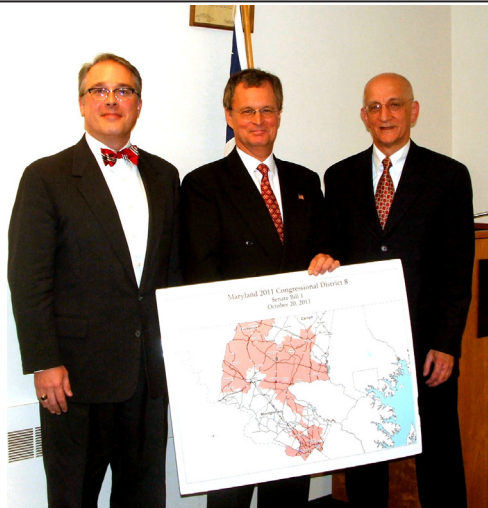
In 1999, BRMS became a not-for-profit organization, run by a Board of Directors made up of Montessori educators, parents, and local business leaders. As it outgrew its one-room location, the Board made plans for a new building, designed from the ground up to be a beautiful Montessori school. Its amenities include lots of windows for natural light, heated floors for the children to work on, and covered porches for year-round Outdoor Environments.

The new location, which opened in 2009, caused a slow but sure population explosion at the school, which now consists of two Primary rooms (ages 3-6) and two Early Learner rooms (18 mos.- 3 years), total capacity of 90 children. Being the only Montessori school in the area, Blue Ridge Montessori aspires to provide continuing Montessori education by adding lower and upper elementary programs.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 1



Child working with pink tower at the Blue Ridge Montessori School (Lynchburg, VA)



Candidates at vetting forum sponsored by Free State Patriots in Wheaton, Maryland on May 2, 2012. Map shows their congressional district. from l-r, Mark Grannis, Kenneth Timmerman, and George Gluck

Free State Patriots Conducts Candidate Forums in Maryland

The Free State Patriots (FSP) was organized in the state of Maryland, USA, as a non-partisan civic organization to help improve conditions for liberty and constitutional government. Lee Havis established this patriot group as part of a wider awakening to the need for freedom from repressive government in the United States.

Since February 2012, FSP has been holding a series of forums to compare and evaluate candidates running for the national office of congress and senate in Maryland. Lee says, "These forums focus the candidates on such issues as excessive federal government control and wasteful spending on social welfare programs. In the field of education, this control leads to censorship and special interest regulations that fundamentally stifles individual liberty in society. The only practical way to change these conditions is by electing patriot candidates who will uphold the principles of liberty and limited government as set forth and protected by American's founding documents, the US constitution and Declaration of Independence."

The candidate forums are a key aspect of the FSP plan for vetting patriot candidates in a consensus-building manner with other similar patriot groups in the state. Lee says, "These forums help us identify the best possible patriot candidates for each office. Then, hopefully, voters in the state will support them in the next coming general elections in November, 2012."

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 2

IMS Elementary Course offering New Technology

In 2003, new technology was consolidated to revolutionize the learning and scientific application of Montessori teaching. Since then, IMS has been gradually incorporating this breakthrough knowledge into all levels of IMS teacher education.

While the unique IMS technology has been gradually incorporated into the primary (2-6) level training, it is now just beginning to be brought into the elementary level (6-12) course as well. Robbyn German (IMS '07) is the first student to participate in the course with its new emphasis on the technology.

Lee Havis, course creator and evaluator, states that even without the technology, IMS teacher education always follows the true natural philosophy of Montessori teaching. However, now, he says, "The technology adds a new dynamic impact to the course, which will be felt in each of its four components: (1) Philosophy and Technology, (2) Child Development, (3) Observation, and (4) Elementary curriculum."

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col 3

Montessori Workshops

Technology of Montessori Teaching in the Scientific Approach to Normal Being

Brunei Darussalam

June 2-3, 2012

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

June 9-10, 2012

Lynchburg, VA (USA)

July 28-29, 2012

The IMS workshop is a two-day weekend learning experience, featuring Lee Havis, IMS executive director, presenting the specialized technology for conducting scientific Montessori teaching that leads to true natural being in children.

To register and for further information, Contact: IMS, tel. 301-589-1127; havis@imsmontessori.org



Thoughts

by Lee Havis

"...when imagination starts from contact with reality...thought begins to construct works by means of which the external world becomes transformed; almost as if the thought of man had assumed a marvelous power; the power to create...all creation is the divine thought, which has the property of realizing itself."

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

Montessori teaching requires a very unconventional way of thinking with children to focus on controlling the environment, rather than the child itself. The IMS technology helps you do this in an objective scientific manner that follows laws of nature. However, using the technology in this way is opposed by a steady stream of unconscious inner thoughts from childhood that we must recognize and overcome.

Reality

"...do not think that when the mind is not attracted to reality it ceases to function. On the contrary, it is very active...This type of man can reason very, very well on certain topics, but this reasoning is not upon reality but upon imagination."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p. 197

Our automatic way of thinking comes from early childhood conditioning, which ordinarily brings about thoughts that limit and restrict our functioning throughout life. Unconsciously, these restrictive thoughts create a reality of children as being weak, dependent, and even inherently evil. So, when children misbehave, we reactively manipulate, scold, or punish them under the hypnotic power of suggestion from our early childhood past.

Power of Suggestion

"The solidarity of adult society...assumes the power of suggestion and the appearance of an absolute truth on which all agree."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man* p.69

Before the age of six, children have a unique absorbent mind that takes experiences from the environment and incorporates them directly into their whole basic framework of truth and reality. So, when punished or blamed for wrong, children develop thoughts of fear, self-hatred, and weakness that become an intimate part of their personality for life. Unless opposed, these thoughts become judgments and prejudices in the adult personality that are then unconsciously projected on children in a continuing cycle of hypnotic suggestion of truth from one generation to the next.

Judgments and Prejudices

"Many people...cannot help themselves from having their judgments affected by their prejudices."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Voice of Dr. Montessori*, p.201

As adults, we typically have negative judgments and prejudices that unconsciously exist as an incessant stream of ideas to influence whatever we do in our conscious life. In Montessori teaching, we must oppose this influence with conscious thoughts that are focused on controlling the environment in harmony with laws of nature. Resolving this inner conflict is part of the process of self-examination we must carry out in the abstract world of thoughts and ideas.

World of Thought

"...even the intellectual people make little progress in the world of thought, looking with hostility on any idea that challenges mutual security."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. The Hum. Pot.* p.52

Thoughts have a powerful creative impact on what we do. So, for example, if our thoughts are focused on conflict, violence, or fear, then what we do will naturally turn in that direction as well. Likewise, suppose you think you are being chased by a wild animal. Even if this is only imagined, the thought alone will nonetheless generate real feelings of fear in the present moment, which then lead you to "run and hide" or "turn and fight."

As adults, our world of unconscious thought is largely an emotional mine-field of motives, feelings, and needs from childhood, rather than a clear focus on reality in the present situation. Therefore, for example, if you are facing a present-time conflict with children, the old childhood thought "don't make waves" or "run and hide" can easily emerge to cause you to abandon a child to fantasy. While this thought might have been a good practical idea in your own childhood many years before, it no longer serves a useful purpose for Montessori teaching in the present-moment situation.

Practical Ideas

"The intellect builds up its store of practical ideas through contact with, and exploration of, its environment."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p.99

In early childhood, experiences with the environment bring about many logical and practical ideas. For example, the idea of watching carefully before stepping into a new or unknown situation helps us make prudent choices throughout life. In the same way, we internalize other practical ideas of grace, courtesy, and patience by learning to peacefully solve social conflicts with others.

Unfortunately, however, many harmful ideas are also born from early childhood experiences as well. For example, when we experience punishment, abuse, and neglect in childhood, ideas

of lying, cheating, and stealing emerge that are destructive and dangerous in later adult life. Likewise, childhood experiences of excessive dependency on parents logically results in low-self esteem, which in turn, leads to thoughts of being impotent slaves and mindless robots before the arbitrary will and authority of others. With children, acting on these irrational thoughts will lead us far away from ever discovering the "new child" described by Dr. Montessori.

The 'new child'

"The great majority of teachers, in the absence of sufficient training and experience, end by thinking that the 'new child', so eagerly expected and of whom so much has been said, is nothing but a myth or an ideal."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.270
Cont'd. on Page 3, Col 2

**Look for the
September , 2012
Observer**
featuring
Cosmic Education

ISSN 0889-5643
The Montessori Observer
Published by
INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY
Tel. (301) 589-1127
havis@imsmontessori.org
Worldwide Web:
<http://imsmontessori.org>
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

SUBSCRIPTION
Subscription to this Observer publication may be obtained by requesting Society membership, which is open to all individuals for a \$30 annual fee. Associate schools, \$35 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, and then follow instructions to request placement on the list.

Copyright © IMS, 2012

Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Fantasy or Work

In this *moment of peril*, the teacher is unsure if 5-year-old Michael is using a simple practical life material for work or fantasy (See *Observer*, March, 2012). If it is work, she knows she must allow it to continue. But, if fantasy, she must interrupt it to resolve any abandonment of Michael in this situation.

The first problem here is that the teacher can't see exactly what Michael is doing because she is too far away. For example, she can't hear whether Michael is making odd noises or verbalizing fantasy dialogue, such as "Let's get the bad guys!" In addition, since Michael is not handling the materials in a physically rough or harmful manner, the only evidence of fantasy is that the work is below Michael's intellectual level of ability, and that he has been handling it in the same way for many days.

To solve the problem, the first thing is to observe Michael's activity more closely. So, start by approaching Michael (*proximity*), and then use the technique *questioning* to ask, "What are you doing?" If Michael explains what he is doing in real terms, his activity is most likely reality-based activity which you can safely allow to continue. However, if Michael's activity is fantasy (more likely), he may avoid dialogue, such as by saying, "Go away." Or, he may give a fantasy or emotional reply, such as "When is my mom coming to pick me up?" or "I'm getting the bad guys."

If you judge that Michael is in fantasy, then interrupt his activity. If necessary, use the technique *distraction* (put hand on materials to get his attention). Then, offer more *questioning* or *clear direction*, such as, "Fold your hands in your lap" and "Watch." Then, while Michael is watching, proceed to return the materials back to the shelf. If he objects, such as by saying, "Stop! I'm still using this," follow the protocol *basis of interest* to show him some more challenging way to handle the materials. If he starts talking about feelings or interests in the activity, follow this up with *reflective language* or further *questioning*, such as "What do you like about that?" or "Why do you want to do it that way?"

If Michael attempts to continue further fantasy activity, use the techniques *repetition* and *clear direction* to show Michael again how to return the materials to the shelf. With this type of persistent interaction, Michael will eventually choose some type of normal reality-based activity. Then, you can fully retire to your usual distant position for visual scanning of the total environment.

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 2

Thoughts Cont'd. from Page 2, Col. 3

Montessori teaching is very difficult when prejudicial thoughts are foremost on your mind with children. New teachers especially must therefore work to set aside these self-defeating thoughts by cultivating faith in the "new child" that will eventually emerge through your patient, committed Montessori teaching. One good practical idea for keeping open to this new child is to think of the child as a completely unknown enigma.

An Enigma

"The child is an enigma...he has the highest potentialities, but we do not know what he will be."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood* p.32

Controlling the environment, not the child requires us first to clearly distinguish between the "child" and "environment." This is not so easy to do since we ordinarily identify the child with some detrimental projection of our personality. In fact, the child is an unknown spiritual being, which is a complete enigma to our conscious rational mind.

The real focus of thinking in Montessori teaching needs to be on analyzing how best to remove whatever detrimental influences there may be in the physical objects, other children, and adult personality around the child. Done well, this indirect approach to children soon leads to a real redemption of thought from any prior negative mind-set you may have had towards the child.

Redemption of Thought

"Positive science represents to us the 'redemption of thought'; its purification from original sin, a return to the natural laws of psychical energy...the method of positive science...puts man in the way of knowing the truth, of gathering up realities."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.* p.241



Child working with continent map and globe at Joyful Kids Montessori School in Brunei Darussalam

As children change to become more calm and orderly, your thoughts about their true nature will also logically change as well. In time, these outward positive changes in children will redeem your thoughts from captivity to the conventional idea of children being evil, weak, and unguided. Then, your mind will awaken to the reality of that single normalized type that Dr. Montessori discovered in 1907.

Single Normalized Type

"...the Montessori teacher is constantly looking for a child who is not yet there... In her imagination she sees that single normalized type...which lives in a world of the spirit."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.276

Montessori teaching doesn't resolve all misbehavior right away, but only gradually as you remove many different obstacles in the environment. With young children, misbehavior only ends completely in a moment of profound concentration, which Dr. Montessori referred to as *normalization*. After this event, children are then *normalized*, showing their true inborn qualities of perfect peace, order and harmony.

Before normalization, Montessori teaching is a variable process of polishing the environment, first using such heavy techniques as *distraction* and *questioning*, and then later the lighter ones, such as *eye contact* and *patient waiting* as the children become more calm and orderly. In this process, you are constantly making judgments about exactly what to do, moving through a cycle of thoughts and actions until children finally reach the stage of complete self-directed true normal development.

Cycle of Thoughts

"...movement is the last part that completes the cycle of thought, and spiritual uplift is attained through effort and work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Ed. For a New World.*, p.49

New and inexperienced teachers must especially practice clearing their minds of any judgmental thoughts towards children. One exercise to do this is to imagine the child's brain as if it were completely full of cotton wadding. Then, any motives or ideas you perceive in the child are instead simply a mental projection of your own personality.

In Montessori teaching, your thoughts must focus not on the child at all, but rather on the environment around that child. The central question is "What do I do now?" which then leads to a cycle of other logical thoughts, such as, "What is

Cont'd. on Page 4, Col. 1



Thoughts

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 3

the primary detrimental influence to control?" and "What technique or combination of techniques would be most useful to remove this obstacle?" Based on these key questions, your inner preparation of thought aims to make wise decisions that lead to children expressing their true natural development.

Preparation of Thought

"Where the right preparation of thought is complete, discoveries may take place by the organization of many minds in this suitable mental atmosphere."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. The Hum. Pot.*, p. 81

IMS Montessori technology includes 20 protocols to help guide your decision-making to properly control the environment. For example, the protocols *well-being of the total environment* and *least amount of adult involvement* help keep you from getting too involved with any one particular child or problem scenario. Following these protocols, your thoughts will consistently lead to true natural being in children. Working with others, these same thoughts will lead to the reality of Dr. Montessori's *new education* in the world.

Blue Ridge Montessori

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 1

In 2012, **Robin Bolling**, current BRMS director, contacted IMS to see about having an IMS workshop in the Lynchburg, VA area. Now, Robin is serving as local coordinator for the IMS workshop scheduled for Lynchburg on July 28-29, 2012. For information, contact: Robin Bolling, director, Blue Ridge Montessori School, 1071 Woodberry Square Lane, Lynchburg, VA 24502 Tel. 434-525-0061; E-mail: brmsinfo4u@gmail.com

Moment of Peril

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

Home Schooling

The teacher has several parents of young children who wish to follow up Montessori teaching with their children at home. So, they ask her advice about what materials and curriculum to set up in their home environment. When you explain that the philosophy is more important than "materials," the parents still seem confused and more interested in practical suggestions for curriculum. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, September, 2012

Free State Patriots

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 2

The most recent forums were conducted for US Congress in districts 7 and 8. In district 7, **Frank Mirabile** was interviewed and finally endorsed, based on his strong support for free market solutions to social problems rather than total government control. "In education," Lee says "government action often comes under the guise of 'fairness,' and 'help' to various 'victim' classes of people. In practice, this 'help' only condemns everyone to the worst forms of conventional schooling. In these tyrannical conditions, Montessori teaching cannot effectively function at all."

Free State Patriots is affiliated with the *Patriot Vetting Committee* (PVC), a national organization which provides support and guidance for vetting patriot candidates in each of the 50 states. For further information, contact: Free State Patriots, <http://meetup.com/Free-State-Patriots>; and PVC: <http://patriotvoting.com> Lee Havis is prime organizer for both organizations, and can be reached at lee@patriotvoting.com.

IMS Elementary Course

Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3

The *Philosophy and Technology* component offers a series of seven lessons that present key concepts of elementary Montessori philosophy, such as cosmic education, role of the teacher, and the unique Montessori elementary environment. "With these lessons," Lee says, "there is some instruction and practice in using the technology as well. For example, one assignment is to identify what technique or protocol applies at each stage in the process of resolving a particular misbehavior scenario."

The *Observation* component involves real-life experiences to practice self-analysis in using the technology while giving lesson presentations with elementary aged children. The *Child Development* component relates especially to using the technology to analyze and resolve realistic misbehavior scenarios with children. The *Elementary Curriculum* component provides several key lesson presentations in language, math, and cultural studies to prepare teachers for giving instruction in a much wider field of learning. This is the typical practical teaching situation with elementary aged children.

Lee states that his new text, *Technology of Montessori Teaching*, will also soon be a key element in all IMS training. He says, "At present, the IMS courses provide only summary written knowledge about the technology. Fortunately, however, this knowledge is also available through the IMS workshop *Creating the New Education*, which many students will have already attended before entering the elementary course."

IMS teacher education is conducted by correspondence on an individual basis. For more information, see IMS website: <http://imsmontessori.org>. Or call: 301-589-1127 (USA)