



The Montessori *Failure* OBSERVER

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Adapting Technology to Specific Situations

by Lee Havis

While applying the technology of scientific education is most common with a mixed age group of preschool aged children, it can also be successfully adapted to many other situations as well. I pointed out some of these adaptations in my book, *"The Technology of Scientific Education"*, at Chapter 8 (*Specific Adaptations*). Most recently, I have been adapting this technology myself to an in-home tutoring situation, such as described on page 206 of my text.

In my tutoring situation, the student is a 12-year-old studying English as a second language (ESL). We began with various lessons and exercises in this area. However, the student has shown a sullen, resistant attitude, constantly voicing a strong desire to play video games alone in her room instead. Analyzing the situation, the "adult personality" here is the primary detrimental influence, emerging as a projection of "abandonment".

This particular situation most resembles the "moment of peril" described in the text as "Disengaging Fantasy" on page 224 in Chapter 9, *"Practical Applications"*. The basic solution for this is described in Appendix C, page 342. I must, however, adapt this solution to my own particular situation.

As an outside tutor, resolving the "adult personality" is better achieved through the mother's action with her child instead of me. So, I am instructing the mother what to do; for example, enter her room to disengage her from escape into video game activity. For this, the mother must act in a friendly, but persistent manner, using such techniques as *distraction*, *proximity*, *questioning*, *eye contact*, and *patient waiting*. Start with just entering the child's room (*proximity*) and sitting next to her to silently watch what she is doing (*patient waiting*). How will the child react? Wait and see...

The next step depends on what the child says or does. For example, if she tells her mother to leave, Mom would use *reflective language*, to just repeat those words (In English, of course! - see how ESL is developing?) If the child doesn't react, touch the cell phone to get the child's attention (*distraction*). When there is eye contact, use *questioning*, by saying "What are you looking at?". From there, let the conversation proceed in a logical manner from one moment to the next. Ultimately,

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Everline Oiyie with children graduating from her program in Kibera slums of Nairobi, Kenya.

Character Teaching Project in Kenya

by Lee Havis

In April, 2023, the *Character Teaching* (CT) project was recently revived in Kenya after it was first initiated there in 2007. This new beginning was sparked by the inclusion of **Everline Oiyie** as a new member of the CT consultation board in that country.

The CT project itself began in 2000, as an initiative of IMS to employ scientific education and its specialized technology to address the cause of severe cultural poverty, which is due so directly to defective character development of children growing up in such conditions. This project seeks to emulate the "ideal circumstances" for bringing about normal character development that Dr. Montessori found in her first experiments with low-income families in Rome, Italy in 1907.

In Kenya, Everline brings a substantial background of experience, interest and love of children to this project. Besides holding a diploma from Dean's Teacher College in Nairobi, she has taught children as a volunteer in the Kibera slums of Nairobi for the last 15 years. She states, "I love doing this so much. Despite so many challenges we face here in Kibera slums, these children are gifted and talented in so many ways.... Life is very tough here but we always embrace happy faces wherever we go."

In her work, Everline takes special interest to share her learning experiences and knowledge with parents as well. She says, "I also have a group of parents who meet every Saturday in the evening. Together we share experiences with children, so I can guide and counsel them."

On May 8, 2023, I wrote a letter to the president of Kenya on behalf of IMS, to introduce the CT project and request his support and approval.

For further information about this project and its development in Kenya, contact: Everline Oiyie, evalineoiye@gmail.com. Tel. +254-720-362739.

Outreach with the Tech Book

by Lee Havis

Since February 2023, my new text, *"The Technology of Scientific Education"* has been available for purchase in the US through the IMS website (<https://imsmontessori.org/books-resources/>). Outside the US, the book is available through books stores and libraries everywhere, when they order it from www.ingramcontent.com

Even though this book is not sold through the popular on-line "Amazon.com", it has been purchased through IMS and elsewhere by a number of school directors, teachers, and educators in the field of scientific education in various states around the US. And outside the US, 8 units have been purchased in France, one in Germany and one in Poland.

So far, initial reaction from readers is very positive, especially among those who are applying the technology with children in their everyday work with children. A special website is under construction to introduce the text more widely to the general public. At this website, there will be a means to write and submit written reviews, and to view several inside pages of the text.

Jacketed Hardcover

Retail price: \$64.99

Paperback

Retail Price: \$45.99

IMS members receive a 20% discount on all orders placed through IMS.



Failure

by Lee Havis

"Every great cause is born from repeated failures and from imperfect achievements"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p.6

Although failure is part of life for all, it is especially visible and problematic in an important experimental process such as scientific education. Happily, however, new technology and practical guidance in the field is now available to help reduce and ultimately eliminate the problematic nature of such failure, which has been so common in the past. However, even with this technology for success, failure still emerges quite often in those moments of peril that occasionally arise with a child's intense and persistent misbehavior.

Moment of Peril

"It is primarily necessary to depend on oneself, because in the moment of peril we are alone"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.*, p. 183

New, inexperienced teachers commonly make many mistakes with children, especially when misbehavior emerges in a sudden and unexpected manner, such as with a new child entering the scientific environment for the first time. If not quickly resolved, persistent mistakes can easily lead to a continuing fear of failure or doubt in your ability to resolve problems when they arise in the future.

Fear of Failure

"The fear of making a mistake, the sense of groping in the dark, of having to bear the consequences of an error we are not certain to recognize, makes us run behind another person like a dog on a chain."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.*, p.182

The IMS technology gives you the tools to easily correct most mistakes right when they occur in a calm, objective manner. However, unaddressed or ignored, the inexperienced teacher can develop fear of failure in using the technology as intended. At such times, it can be very difficult to recognize that the ultimate cause of errors is not the technology, but rather flaws and defects within yourself.

The Cause of Errors

"The adult finds himself embroiled in a labyrinth of problems...he does not know the cause of his wanderings, his errors, lies within himself"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood* p.14

In scientific education, errors always involve some harmful words and actions you are projecting on children. The IMS technology provides excellent tools to

correct these "personality" projections by offering specific techniques and protocols to correct such errors.

However, recognizing your various projections of negativity and abandonment on children can be hard to detect, since they are due to deep flaws of thought and attitude within yourself. And, behind all these inner errors lies one basic error that is common to all to one extent or another.

Basic Error

"...the whole human race has become afflicted by some basic error."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.184

In a collective sense, all humanity has deviated from the perfect guidance and intelligence of nature. In each individual, however, this basic error comes out in a pattern of thought and action that is unique to your own personal experiences and influence from others in your childhood past. And addressing the present moment problem situation, however, there is always one key "unknown error" at the heart of the matter.

Unknown Error

"The adult must find within himself the still unknown error that prevents him from seeing the child as he is. If such a preparation is not made...he can go no further"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.15

Mistakes which are visible and obvious to you are relatively easy to resolve, even without the need of any specialized technology. However, when the error is unknown, the technology becomes especially important. To resolve such an "unknown error", the technology offers the technique "imagination-prevision" (IP).

Using this IP technique involves you being alone, still and silent, away from the children. In such a calm, relaxed state of mind, imagine the problem with children you are facing as clearly as possible. Then, prevision a change to your behavior that you think may resolve the problem. Later, try out this previsioned solution in the actual real-life situation with children.

If your first try at an IP solution doesn't work, just keep trying this "never-fail" IP approach until it does. Very often, the ultimate solution will be so subtle and unconventional that friends and co-workers in your personal social life will think it all happened by luck or chance.

Social Life

"Social life is extremely complex, fraught with errors and contradictions...we no longer understand the origin of the things in the outside world that men themselves have constructed."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Education. And Peace* p. 85

Ordinary life in society is replete with lies, illusion, prejudice and limiting beliefs about the true nature of children and education. Consulting with others is therefore not ordinarily reliable guidance when you are seeking to create a genuine "true natural" reality with children. From the perspective of scientific education, customary social life amounts to a complex state of illusion, which necessarily restricts and limits the emergence of the child's true nature.

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Lee Havis, Executive Director

The Montessori Observer is mailed four times each year, in March, May, September and November, to IMS members throughout the world. The purpose is to provide news and information about the IMS work scientific education to extend awareness of Dr. Montessori vision of a "new education" to bring about this reality of the child's true nature in the world.

INTERNATIONAL MONTESSORI SOCIETY

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IMS ADVISOR

Elizabeth Hainstock, Educator, Author

SUBSCRIPTION

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IMS ON THE INTERNET

MeWe:: <https://mewe.com/p/internationalmontessorisociety> An on-line IMS discussion group, "Exploring IMS Scientific Education" is available for anyone to join at no charge. To join this group discussion, visit <https://mewe.com/join/imsscificeducation>

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Training New Staff

Marylyn Lewis, the owner of a small Montessori school, must replace her long-term reliable head teacher with some new hire. How should she proceed? (See *Observer*, March, 2023).

Analysis: There is no single, specific “hub” child in this situation. However, the obvious detrimental influence here is clearly the “adult personality”, which affects the integrity and well-being of the total environment.

Practical Advice: In this “moment of peril” Marilyn must first see the problem as her own “adult personality” reflected in the person she is going to consider for hire as a new staff member. If there is no logical substitute, assistant teacher or other well-known candidate to hire for her new head teacher, she must look to public sources of new hires, such as employment exchanges on the web.

While many “Montessori” teacher training institutions offer their certified graduates for hire, these individuals are usually conditioned to follow rigid rules and academic teaching, rather than laws of nature and the new technology now available in the field. So, efforts to re-train such teachers for scientific teaching on the job would likely be bitter, exhausting, and ultimately futile.

Therefore, on the web, place suitable advertising, such as: “Wanted: teacher for young children, ages 2-6. Must have a calm, patient attitude and love of children. Eager to learn. Will train. Experience preferred. (city-area location). Submit resume. Contact: (email)

When candidates apply, review their resumes, and choose from among these the ones who seem most suitable. Check their references and set up a personal interview to further get acquainted, describe the basics of scientific education, and assure there is a likely compatible relationship and mutual understanding. Notice such things as the candidate’s appearance, speech, demeanor, and manner of behavior, such as steady eye contact, friendly nature, interest in learning, etc.

Based on these interviews, offer a time for each one to visit and observe a class session in operation. After each session, discuss what was observed and assess further each candidate’s level of awareness and interest in the pertinent job assignment.

Then, choose the best candidate to offer a two-week employment contract, which would essentially be a trial period for further observation and training to observe a class in session, and attend a few evening and weekend hours to learn technology and presentation of materials. In these sessions, use role-play

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

State of Illusion

“The truth is we make mistake after mistake and do not correct ourselves. We fail to realize our faults; we live in a state of illusion shut off from reality.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind* p.3

The truth is that what we think of as real in ordinary life only appears that way due to its widespread agreement of most others in society. Bound by such a self-deceptive state of illusion, many well-meaning teachers don’t even recognize that their fundamental failure with children lies in not following the perfect guidance of nature.

Until recently, practitioners of scientific education had only vague ideas, coupled with instinct and intuition, to guide their actions in harmony with the absolute, eternal laws of nature. And, in this confused climate of “mist and clouds”, practitioners usually gave up entirely on Dr. Montessori’s mysterious vision of the “normalized” child, returning instead to the comfortable state of conventional teaching in harmony with the surrounding limiting beliefs of their own cultural sense of truth and normal. Scientific teaching therefore became like life on a battlefield, beset with danger, confusion, doubt and failure on every side.

A Battlefield

“The individual treads the path of life beset by dangers on all sides; life is a veritable battlefield. One may come through but be crippled or scarred....”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. The Hum. Pot.*, p.119

After Montessori’s discovery of the child’s true nature in 1907, teachers seeking to achieve this same result were ultimately met with continual failure due to lack of a clear understanding and practical knowledge to bring this about. Until her death in 1952, Dr. Montessori and her loyal followers were therefore constantly engaged on a battlefield of conflict, betrayal, failure, and opposition from others outside and well as within their circle of friends and associates. And, after her death, this legacy of continuing failure, conflict and confusion has continued to the present, to retard and delay the hopeful unity she sought to realize in the fundamental truth of our common humanity.

Common Humanity

“Cruelties and exploitations, wars and all forms of violence have had to play their part, because men have not realized their common humanity”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *To Ed. The Hum. Pot.* p.77

Human civilization has always been beset by division and even outright violence and warfare among families, tribes, and nations, interrupted only rarely by a few great moments of insight to realize the unifying spirit of all humanity. And even now,

after so many years since 1907, scientific educators still struggle to recognize the essential true nature of our common humanity.

In 1979, however, another great breakthrough emerged in the field of scientific education, this time a discovery of the practical way to practice this “new education” by observing the child as an unknown spiritual being within a unique type of “individual child framework”. Even so, failures in the use and practice of this new knowledge continued to emerge when teachers sought to implement it in their own situation with children.

After 1979, this failure was not in the validity of the framework itself, but rather in the perceptual errors of practitioners themselves who lacked the practical tools to correct their errors in a completely consistent scientific manner. Happily, this lack of practical guidance was finally resolved with the consolidation of a new, comprehensive technology in the field in 2003.

Then again, even after this consolidation of technology, further refinements and field-testing were needed before all this knowledge could be presented in a complete comprehensive text on the subject, which was finally published in 2023. In this text, therefore, practitioners have a single reliable source to access this powerful practical knowledge, so that what remains now is to help one another put it more widely into use all around the world.

Help One Another

“The only way by which the individual may escape is that by which all humanity may be saved...help one another of you will die.”

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Ac. In Ed.* p.277

As with any great cause, success in scientific education only advances through many failures that are inevitable in working with others. In this process, we can nonetheless applaud and appreciate great steps forward, such as writing a book, starting a school, or gaining some type of formal recognition in the field. However, the journey in this field is still part of a larger, never-ending quest to realize man’s true nature in the world.

The logical place to begin such an expansive task is with your own immediate situation with children. And here, you can only overcome failures by including others around you in this work, such as school owners, parents, and others you encounter each day. Only by this type of help for another can we hope to finally realize man’s true nature of perfect peace, order, and harmony in the world.



Moment of Peril

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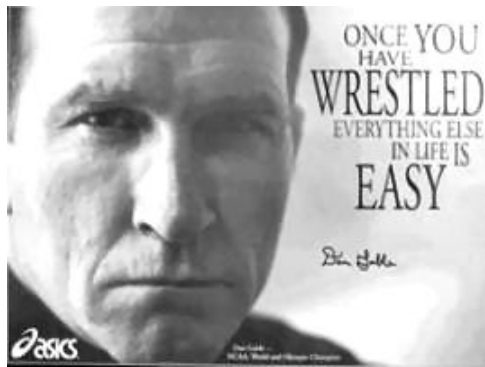
drama for practical learning as much as possible. Follow each classroom session with discussion to answer questions and clarify any issues that arose at that time.

As you are comfortable with the new hire's passive observation status, gradually allow her to take on a more active role, such as by conducting certain routine practical life tasks to handle bathroom routines, cleaning, and food preparation activities. At the end, of the initial "trial" period, if suitable, offer a long-term contract. Then, gradually allow the new hire to take a more active, supervisory role. However, continue observing the classroom and consulting with her to provide further evaluation and training as needed.

Ideally, the new hire gradually shows more capable, responsible performance in the classroom, so you can function to expand the school's scope and function elsewhere. For example, see about hiring and training potential substitutes, conduct parent education, and opening up new classrooms. This continued support for developing skills of others will then ease the overall problem of hiring and training new staff in the future.

Security Toy

3 year old Jonathan comes into class each day, clutching on to a toy action figure in his hands. Although the teacher instructs him to leave it with his belongings at his coat hook, he insists on carrying it with him throughout the session. The teacher knows that forcing removal of the security toy would bring a power struggle. What to do? Answer in **Observer**, September, 2023



Dan Gable, worldwide legend and role model of skill and excellence in the sport of Wrestling.

Adapting Technology

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use *clear direction* to have the child leave the cell phone video games and conduct some reality-based activity, even if it is just showing her how to use the Spanish-English dictionary on her phone. Or, show how to order her room and schoolwork activity.



Social grace and courtesy in action at the Shalom Prince of Peace Montessori School in Augusta, KS.

Meeting Dan Gable A Wrestling Legend

by Lee Havis

On May 3, 2023, I attended a reception for **Dan Gable**, iconic figure of excellence and quality in the sport of wrestling for many years. His almost perfect winning collegiate record, Olympic gold medal, and unsurpassed winning record as head coach of wrestling at the University of Iowa, has made him a legend and inspiration for many. Most recently, he has been an ambassador and spokesman for wrestling all over the world.

Dan's reception was held in the state of Maryland and was attended by many world-class champion wrestlers and coaches from all over the country. As a high school and college wrestler myself, I knew Dan as many others did by his reputation for fierce competition and commitment to success at all times.

At the reception, Dan immediately focused his comments on the future, challenging those attending to join his campaign to help link wrestlers into careers in the business world, where their high-level of self-discipline, courage, and determination could be best employed for the benefit of all. He also spoke about his own children and grandchildren as the greatest success and pride of his life, far beyond the many trophies and honors he received over his amazing wrestling career.

When I spoke to him personally, I asked what life was like now that his formal coaching career is over. He stated that he never quit coaching. And, on the question of excellence, he stated his goal was to always "hit a home run" every time at bat. When asked about his thoughts on losing a match, he said that both wrestlers "win" if they fought hard and did their best in the process.