



The Montessori OBSERVER

Eye
Contact

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(l-r), Patty Brophy (IMS student), Lee Havis, and Esther Rupert (IMS '07) engaged in lesson presentation demonstration at the IMS workshop in Lynchburg, VA (July, 2012)

Transforming IMS Teacher Education

When IMS was founded in 1979, a primary first task was to formalize an effective program for the preparation of Montessori teachers. At that time, the format for training was based on a commitment to the three Montessori principles: *Observation, Individual Liberty, and Preparation of the Environment*. With experience, however, the course focus shifted away from these principles to directly following laws of nature instead. Then, in 2003, this shift became even more pronounced with the discovery of a specialized technology for Montessori teaching.

The IMS technology remarkably simplifies the conduct of Montessori teaching by providing a set of very practical tools, consisting of 10 techniques, 20 protocols, 3 lesson presentations, and various safe words. Only recently, however, has this technology been refined sufficiently to warrant its full incorporation into the formal IMS training course, rather than just indirectly in summary form through workshops and audio cd. Now, however, the technology is dominating the content and approach of IMS teacher education even though Dr. Montessori's own writings remain important as background information.

In June, 2012, **Patty Brophy** (Lynchburg, VA) enrolled into the IMS course, and is now learning the technology from the coursework, as well as from her experience in the IMS workshop she attended in Lynchburg, VA in July and through the Danbury audio cd. Patty is also gaining greater practical knowledge of the technology through her work with children at home and

during her regular observations at the local IMS-recognized *Blue Ridge Montessori School* in Lynchburg, VA.

Another new student, **Citlalli Bustamante**, a native of Mexico, is taking the course from her residence in Thornhill, Ontario, Canada. Before her enrollment in September 2012, Citlalli was active with children for several years as a home day care provider. Now, she is looking into opportunities to practice her skills at one or more of the schools in the Toronto, Canada area.

In October, 2012, **Cheryl McGowen** (Morgan Hill, CA) was readmitted as a student in the IMS course after several years absence due to personal reasons. Since her prior coursework did not extensively cover the IMS technology, she is completing the first two lessons of the revised course to catch up in her study, before she continues where she left off before.

Lee Havis, course creator and evaluator, says that the new course format will measure and evaluate skills in using the technology by presenting students with many different practical problem situations. He adds, "Coupled with my new text on the subject, students as well as active practitioners will soon be able to learn the technology in a more rapid, efficient manner than ever possible before. This new efficiency will be especially useful when we

2012 Elections in America

On November 6, 2012, Americans voted, by a slim majority, to maintain in power the current radical socialist leadership as before. Since this political philosophy favors greater government control of education and personal life choices, Montessori teaching will continue to suffer censorship and repression from government through many layers of its special interest laws and regulations.

During this recent election period, Lee Havis, IMS executive director, fought alongside other committed patriots to change this political leadership, especially in his home state of Maryland. Here, he was most active through the group he organized, known as *Free State Patriots*.

The role of Free State Patriots (FSP) has been to help unify the process of comparing and evaluating candidates on the basis of their commitment to fundamental principles of liberty and laws of nature. In this process, FSP endorsed several patriot candidates in Maryland, some of whom were on the ballot in the 2012 general elections. Lee said, "Although all FSP endorsed candidates finally lost in the elections, much good work and learning occurred in the process which will hopefully improve conditions for more successful results in the future."

Lee especially pointed out the value of the candidate forums that were held in the FSP 'vetting' process. He said, "based on what I learned in these forums, I prepared a series of commentaries under the title '*Lessons from the Forums*.' Part I, *Glossary of Terms*, provides a list of definitions of various words and phrases typically used to deceive and distort their true meaning. For example, "Public education" is a pre-text for compulsory government indoctrination of the young. Part II, *Issues*, presents such topics as the proper role and relationship of government concerning 'Education.' Each topic summarized the problem and proposed the best possible solution. Part III, *Communication Strategies*, offers practical advice on specific subjects such as 'Focus on Main Topics'; and what is 'The Socialist Mindset.'"

Throughout the election cycle, Lee kept the 55 FSP members informed of opportunities to participate in the political campaign of each endorsed candidate. In addition, he organized several specific events for each candidate, such as meetings with students at several college campuses in Maryland. In addition, Lee was active in the campaigns of each endorsed candidate through such means as sign-waves, sign installing, phone bank calling, and

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Eye Contact

by Lee Havis

"it is therefore not enough to see in order to believe; we must believe in order to see. It is faith that leads to sight, not sight which produces faith. It is not enough that an object should be before our eyes to make us see it..it is not evidence but faith which opens the mind to truth."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spon. Act. In Ed.*, p.232-33

Eye contact is a deep and powerful type of interaction, especially with young children (0-6) who are most strongly influenced by the environment during this absorbent period of development. In Montessori teaching, it is a specific technique that aims to control the adult personality by making you aware of flaws and defects you are unconsciously projecting on children.

As a Montessori technique, eye contact must be done in a completely objective, impersonal manner. Otherwise, it can easily increase a child's misbehavior by projecting your unconscious negative thoughts and feelings. Done well, however, it can successfully resolve many forms of misbehavior in a simple, quick way. This technique is therefore an important tool in your work of making prudent observations to remove the various detrimental influences in the environment around the particular 'hub' child in question.

Prudent Observations

"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

In Montessori teaching, your essential focus must be to control the environment, not the child. In using eye contact, however, the common tendency is to pay more attention to the 'hub' child instead, which can lead to a serious power struggle conflict.

In any misbehavior scenario, therefore, avoid eye contact with the hub child if possible. Focus your prudent observations instead on other children to obtain a friendly, supportive eye contact with them. This will usually help them move away from the misbehavior to become interested and involved in something positive and constructive instead.

Eye contact with any suitable child is almost always effective because it so closely follows the various protocols of the IMS technology, such as *well-being of the total environment*, *least amount of adult involvement*, and *basis of interest*. For example, it comports closely with the *well-being* proto-

col because you can apply it without moving from a remote scanning position in the environment. It follows the *least amount* protocol since it requires only some brief momentary turn of the head and glance across the room. It follows the *basis of interest* protocol since you can only employ it if the child first shows interest in this type of interaction with you. Using this technique helps you avoid heavier techniques, such as by approaching a child with the technique, *proximity*.

Approaching the Child

"A teacher makes an almost timid attempt to approach the child whom she believes is ready to learn the lesson."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Discovery of the Child*, p. 106

A brief moment of eye contact is the first, best action to take in resolving any misbehavior. However, since the child may not look up at the right time, you may need to strengthen your involvement by approaching the child, using the technique *proximity*. With this technique, follow the *least amount* protocol by stopping your advance as soon as the child looks up at you. Then, your very light eye contact is all you need for a child to feel your supportive personal presence.

Teacher's Presence

"...The teacher...must take care never to turn her back on the class while she is dealing with a single child. Her presence must be felt by all these spirits."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.247

Resolving misbehavior often requires a variable range of light-heavy interactions, using one or more of the ten techniques available at different times. So, beginning with the lightest eye contact technique, gradually increase involvement until the child finally senses your presence. In extreme misbehavior situations, you may need to use heavy techniques, such as *repetition* or *distraction*, until you achieve the necessary level of impact on the environment. Hopefully, however, eye contact with an individual child will resolve many situations without taking the matter any further.

Individual Child

"There is only one real biological manifestation, that of the living individual...an education... should be directed towards these individuals as they are observed one by one."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Montessori Method*, p.315

Montessori teaching supervises children by observing them one at a time. The basic idea is to first identify the single 'hub' child that is the center of some misbehavior situation. Then, identify and remove whatever is detrimental around that child in the environment, consisting of other children, physical objects, and adult personality. In this process, be sure to always view any child

you observe as a completely unknown entity.

Unknown Entity

"...all, or nearly all, see the child as he is commonly known only, not the child as he is, still an unknown entity."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.60-61

Observing any child, the mental challenge is to distinguish his true nature from his outward physical body and behavior. In a misbehavior scenario, this can be quite difficult because we ordinarily think of that child as somehow at cause or "intentional" in his misbehavior.

Applying eye contact, we can overcome these distorted perceptions of children by

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**Look for the
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Observer
featuring
Proximity**

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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

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.

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To subscribe to this list, send an email to - intmonsoc-subscribe@yahogroups.com, and then follow instructions to request placement on the list.

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Two-year old whinning

In this *moment of peril*, the teacher is confronted with two-year-old Kevin. a whinning tearful child whose only comfort seems to be his ever-present pacifier. When Kevin does interact with materials, it is only with disorder and fantasy. (See *Observer, September, 2012*).

Analyzing the environment around the 'hub' child Kevin, physical objects and the adult personality are detrimental. Between these two, however, choose the 'physical objects' as the primary detrimental influence to remove first because this is usually the easiest one to handle. Controlling the physical objects here, do not touch or interact with the child's pacifier, because this has too much negative energy attached to it. Touching it then would likely bring about a bitter power struggle or other negative reaction. Instead, wait for Kevin to start mishandling some physical piece of work on the shelf.

When Kevin is NOT handling work materials, however, control the 'adult personality' by giving Kevin lots of steady eye contact whenever he looks up, especially during his tearful periods of self-isolation with his pacifier. This positive attention helps overcome the personality projection of abandonment, which is most likely a critical cause of his original insecurity and abusive interaction with materials.

Suppose Kevin takes a piece of work off the shelf, drops it on the floor, and then walks away to mishandle something else. When this happens, approach Kevin (*proximity*) and hold whatever object he may be handling or trying to handle at the time. Use the *distraction* technique to get his attention. If he quickly leaves that object to touch something else, follow him to prevent him from touching that object as well until you finally get his attention. Then, give him a *clear direction* to "come" or "take my hand" to lead him back to the first object he dropped on the floor. If he returns to mishandling this or something else, just use the technique *repetition*, to continue interrupting him until he finally comes back to the first mishandled object and returns it to the proper place on the shelf. When this happens, the basic problem is resolved.

Once a disorderly young child senses order and consistency in the physical environment, he quickly becomes secure and at ease, and will therefore give up his prior psychological attachment to any special blanket, pacifier or other security object he may have been using before. Therefore, controlling

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thinking of the child's brain as if it were full of cotton wadding. Then, we more easily accept the truth that the child's harmful thoughts and intentions are really our own in projected form.

Time and practice helps you develop the habit of thinking of the child as an unknown entity. Then, you can more easily look for the true cause of misbehavior in your own negative projections, such as a frown or some other indication of fear, sadness, or anger on your face. Ultimately, eye contact with a child will reveal the real unknown source of any misbehavior in you.

Revealing the Unknown

"It is impossible to make an observation of something that is still unknown...what is unknown should reveal itself through its own proper energies.."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.112

Eye contact helps you recognize the cause of misbehavior as your own detrimental projections on children. It takes time, however, to reveal this unknown inner cause since it is typically well hidden by layers of defensive thoughts and feelings from the past. Therefore, couple your eye contact with the technique *patient waiting*, to allow sufficient time to unravel the mystery of your unknown inner error.

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

In time, eye contact naturally leads to the cause of a child's misbehavior which is some unknown flaw or error you are unconsciously projecting on children. For example, it may be some attitude of blame or negative judgment towards children, which then leads to harsh words or negative behavior. Finding this inner error is often a challenge because it is so well hidden by a complex web of adaptations built up in your personality from childhood.

Complex Adaptations

"...the secret of an adult's subconscious is something that he represses within himself... To assist an adult we must help him untangle a skein of complex adaptations that have been made over a long period of time."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.110

The adult personality is hard to control because we can't see it with our physical senses. We may instead sense it as a mysterious structure of complex adaptations which was originally set up to protect us from pain and fear in early childhood development. In a moment of eye contact, however, you can begin to unravel this hidden drama from the past.

Hidden Drama

"An inner wall is built up which closes the spirit and conceals it as a defense against the world. Behind these multiple barriers a hidden drama is unfolded."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.160

In present time, our personality tends to automatically act out a drama of repressed fear and pain from childhood. In outward form, this inner drama manifests itself in the fantasy and disorder of children which will persist until and unless you resolve the cause within yourself. The technique eye contact specifically helps you do this through inner preparation, so that you will eventually arrive at the child's true spirit of perfect peace, order, and harmony with our own.

The Child's Spirit

"...the relationship between child and teacher is in the spiritual field...the mater whom the teacher serves is the child's spirit."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.281

Eye contact, coupled with patient waiting, gradually leads you through the web of your distorted thinking until you finally experience the child's true natural spirit. Here, misbehavior and disorder disappears by itself because you have discovered and removed your personality flaws and defects at cause. The child is then free to fully follow his perfect inner teacher of nature.

Inner Teacher

"...the child...has a teacher within himself and...this inner teacher also follows a program and a technique of education, and...we adults by acknowledging this unknown teacher may enjoy the privilege and good fortune of becoming its assistants and faithful servants by helping it with our cooperation."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Formation of Man*, p.46

Eye contact is one of the most effective, reliable tools we have for creating the right psychic conditions for true natural development

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Messages to IMS

October 2012
Lynchburg, VA

Dear Lee,

..I do want to express how grateful I am that you came to Lynchburg and spent so much time with the BRMS staff. For me personally, I review the study guide often and it has helped me stay on track and it has helped me with the transitioning back into the classroom. I hope that we can arrange for you to come and visit in the near future

Best Wishes,

Robin Boling, Director
Blue Ridge Montessori School

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to arise in children. In these conditions of commitment to laws of nature, the child can freely follow his perfect inner teacher which guides him to normalize by concentrating on some particular piece of work. In a moment of concentration, the child enters the state of true normal development where he functions in a fully self-disciplined, independent manner with others. Now, there is no further need for active adult involvement of any kind, even by using the very simple, lightest technique of eye contact.

2012 ELECTIONS

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door-to-door canvassing.

On the future, Lee sees a great need for unifying and expanding patriot political activity. "We need to involve many more patriots in basic campaign and organizing activity. We must create a 'sea of locusts' spreading the patriot message of liberty and limited, constitutional government to all voters. Only the participation of many such committed patriots, working together to enlighten others, can effectively overcome the massive countervailing efforts to hypnotize voters by special-interest politicians and their willing associates in the major news media."

For the next election cycle is 2014, Lee is already planning how Free State Patriots and others can work together around the country to better organize for future success. *Free State Patriots*, <http://meetup.com/Free-State-Patriots> Patriot Vetting Committee, <http://patriotvoting.com>.

Moment of Peril

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physical objects around Kevin will soon bring about an end to his whining and attachment to the pacifier. Then, he will then begin interacting more normally with the objects for work as intended.

Long-term, you will still need to help Kevin's parents address and correct their abandonment and negativity with Kevin at home. Therefore, carefully explain to them how to use basic techniques, like *eye contact* and *distraction*, to resolve their harmful personality projections. Working together, you and the parents will then assure a supportive environment for Kevin's true natural development.

Group Fantasy

The teacher is frustrated with several children who habitually gather together for group fantasy activity. On the surface, it looks like work, but actually they are using objects for make believe play. When the teacher approaches to interrupt that behavior, the children either ignore her presence or become hostile and argumentative. At this point, the teacher backs away to avoid a power struggle. What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, March, 2013

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initiate large-scale teacher preparation in the 'Character Teaching' project which is being planned for countries such as Ecuador, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Nepal."

Being Fake

Parents are often frustrated by teachers who are being "fake" in their presentation of Montessori teaching. For example, suppose your son says, on several occasions, that his teacher has screamed at him, "No" and "Don't do that." Confronting the teacher directly, however, she shows her false convictions to Montessori teaching by complaining that your son doesn't follow her directions "on purpose."

Objectively, you can sense that the teacher's 'being fake' is really projecting a defensive, nervous, and insecure reaction to her lack of understanding and commitment to Montessori teaching. However, discussing the matter with the school director, you can't resolve the problem by simply agreeing with her that the teacher should "get real" with the children.

Resolving delicate attitudes and personality problems such as these, focus on facts and philosophy, rather than personal attacks. For example, state the facts of your son's statement about the teacher using negative words, and inquire about the underlying philosophy associated with this negative language. If the school director excuses or justifies this language in any way, then there is evidence that the whole school is being "fake" towards Montessori teaching as well. At that point, the only practical solution is to remove your child from this fake Montessori environment and place him in a genuine one instead.