



# The Montessori OBSERVER

Perception

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## Government and Education Analyzing results of recent political action

By Lee Havis

In today's modern society, IMS and "true natural" Montessori teaching are in fundamental conflict with government in its support of conventional education. This conflict arises due to the government's monopoly control and operation of a vast system of public and approved private schools that all parents are forced to support and send their children to under the threat of punishment for violating compulsory attendance laws.

Although in theory, non-government education offers an alternative to the public school system, many private business interests, including those in the Montessori community, have joined in to repress "new education" schools and educators through a network of restrictive, special interest licensing laws and regulations. In this situation, IMS has frequently stood alone to oppose these dark forces of government censorship and tyranny in education.

The IMS fight for educational freedom has involved legal action in federal court and a persistent pleading with government legislators and licensing officials as well. In addition, I have personally brought wider awareness of this issue through "public interest" political action in support of free market choice and competition in education.

While IMS works to support the free exercise of the "new education" by its certified teachers and recognized schools throughout the world, much of the practical fights have been carried out in the United States where a national constitution pledges to assure and protect individual freedom as an inherent natural right for all. Despite this constitutional mandate, however, American government at all levels has grown more complex and repressive with time, especially in the sensitive area of public education.

In America, I have especially chosen to actively oppose government tyranny in the state of Maryland where the IMS offices are located. In the May, 2017 *Observer*, for example, I reported on my testimony before a Maryland commission whose purpose was to support "innovation and excellence" in Maryland education. I testified that this commission's approach actually aims for the opposite by advocating for more government censorship and monopoly control in the state. In the March, 2018 *Observer*, I further reported on testimony before the Maryland General Assembly, this time to oppose a bill that would

recognize a "Montessori certificate" that would grant favored employment status to an exclusive group of conventional business interests in the Montessori community.

Frustrated by this long history of abusive government policy and practice in Maryland education, I decided to run for public office as a candidate for Maryland State Senate in the 2018 elections. Now, having lost this election held on November 6, I am analyzing the results of my campaign to measure what was achieved, and what remains to be done in the continuing fight to secure freedom for the "new education" in Maryland.

In my year-long campaign, I learned many things, such as the large number of good, fair-minded people who share my concern for freedom and fair competition in the free market economy. Unfortunately, not enough of these people voted to assure my victory in the election. Instead, an overwhelming number of less well-informed citizens showed up to vote for my opponent and his allies who support an agenda of greater government control in all areas of the economy and individual life in society.

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### Montessori Tools and Tips

*Lee Havis answers questions raised by members of the Facebook discussion page, "Montessori Tools and Tips".*

#### Teaching Letters

**Question:** Can anyone tell me the right way to teach letters – in ABC sequence or jumble them up?

**Answer:** First, focus on the child's interest, which is NOT the letters themselves, but rather how they function together to make words. In this sense, teaching letters, following the protocol *basis of interest*, is really about learning how to read.

The key idea to teaching letters is therefore: "letters make sounds, and sounds together make words." Once this key connection is made, the child proceeds very intelligently on his own to learn new letter-sounds and words in a very spontaneously and self-directed way

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Children display work with Montessori math materials at the Lexington Montessori School in Lexington, Kentucky.

### Montessori Materials - How Important?

Looking at a Montessori classroom, the first things you usually notice are the unique, colorful "materials." However, in truth, these distinctive objects are actually secondary to the unseen, intangible aspect of Montessori teaching which is the teacher's "way of being". While nice materials are useful in Montessori teaching, your primary work is "observing" the children using the materials, rather than "teaching" with them as common in conventional education. So, in this sense, the key value of the materials comes from how the adult displays and presents them to facilitate the child's free, self-directed learning.

Montessori teaching is a scientific way of observing by following laws of nature, not a textbook of teaching according to formalized routines that present a certain prescribed set of materials. This way of following laws of nature, rather than personality or culture, is what IMS has been representing as Montessori teaching since its founding in 1979.

More recently, IMS training helps prepare for this exacting work by presenting a unique 'technology', which allows you to conduct your scientific observation in a precise, reliable manner that has never been possible before. While this training also includes the proper use and presentation of "materials," this is only given after a careful presentation and preparation for Montessori teaching with the IMS technology.

The IMS technology is also presented in introductory form through the Danbury audio cd and study guide, which is available through the IMS website: <http://imsmontessori.org>

# Perception

by Lee Havis

*"When an obvious truth cannot be seen, we must retire, and leave the individual to mature. A struggle 'to bring about perception of evidence' would be bitter and exhausting."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Spont. Act. in Ed.* p. 237

Observing children to bring about their true nature only begins with your perception of their outward behavior, such as how they interact with physical objects and each other in the environment. After this initial perception, you must enter into a much deeper form of pure, perfect observation guided by laws of nature, to uncover the child's ultimate truth as a spiritual being which is hidden from view by many distracting inner obstacles.

Since 2003, the IMS technology has been giving Montessori teachers a precise means for conducting this type of scientific observation with ease and skill. However, since only a relatively few know about or use this knowledge, even the best, well-meaning teachers achieve only partial and limited results. So, the child's true nature remains widely misunderstood and limited to a superficial perception based on outward obedience and polite manners.

## Misunderstood Child

*"An attempt is being made to transform education...all this, however, is being effected around the same figure of the misunderstood child who is seen through eyes distorted..."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.73

After Dr. Montessori discovered the child's true nature in 1907, the question of Montessori teaching became how to bring this about through observation alone. In fact, this mystery was only solved in 1979, when IMS emerged to reveal a new understanding of this type of scientific observation. Conventional educators, however, still remain ignorant of this knowledge, and therefore remain trapped by prejudicial perception of the child based on superficial appearances and effects alone.

## Appearances and Effects

*"...the adult...judges appearances and effects without worrying about the causes that produce them."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Formation of Man*, p.10

In truth, we ordinarily perceive the child through the lense of unknown prejudices that come from our own past childhood conditioning. So, based on these prejudices, the teacher confuses the child's true nature with his outward appearance of obedience and good behavior. Instead, more likely, these outward effects come from a condition of dependency on the dominating external control of the supervising adult personality.

In "culture" type Montessori teaching, the adult's control over the child remains dominant, although hidden by such means as "ground rules" she imposes on children. However, since such "rules" necessarily limit the authority of laws of nature with children, IMS provides such protocols as 'no rules for children' and 'enhance independence' to assure that such adult control doesn't occur, and your focus always remains on the child as an unknown spiritual entity with his own perfect inner guidance of nature.

## Unknown Entity

*"Prejudices...are confused and strengthened by the evidence of facts because 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

Since ordinary perception of the child is based on outward effects and inner prejudices rather than his perfect true nature, we must train ourselves to think of the child instead as an unknown entity. For example, imagine the child's brain as if it were full of cotton wadding so that whatever ill will or evil desire you think is in the child, you see instead as a projection of your own flawed and prejudiced personality. Now, act with faith in the child's perfect, good natural instincts and intentions.

## Faith

*"It is therefore not enough to see in order to believe; we must believe in order to see. It is faith which 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 *Spont. Act. in Ed.* p.232-33

While Montessori teaching is relatively easy with children who behave well, you need great faith and patience while observing severe, persistent misbehavior. Knowing and using the IMS technology, helps you gain this faith by bringing to your awareness certain experiences as you analyze each situation of misbehavior to find and remove detrimental influences around the child you are observing at that time. In this way, you come to develop faith in true natural being as you see emerging such qualities as peace, order, and spontaneous self-discipline in the child's outward behavior.

This faith in true natural being grows with experience, just like it does elsewhere in life. For example, through experience, we have faith that fast oncoming cars will not cross over the median strip to hit us while driving in the opposite direction. With children, however, faith in true natural being is more difficult due to negative past experiences. So, we need to practice much in-depth observation to overcome our perceptual errors and contradictory experiences of children from the past.

## Observation

*"...the possession of senses and of knowledge is not sufficient to enable a person to observe; it is a habit which must be developed by practice."*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p 102

Beyond our perception of outward behavior, Montessori teaching requires a type of pure, perfect observation to discover the ultimate truth that is well hidden by negative thoughts and beliefs from childhood and the surrounding popular culture. Using the IMS technology, however, you observe beyond these false and misleading perceptions of the child. In this way, your observation leads to a new experience and awareness of the child as you analyze the external facts in the right way that leads to the emergence of child's true nature.

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## Look for the March, 2019 **Observer** featuring **Unity**

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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 in Montessori education, and to extend awareness of Montessori teaching that brings about the child's true nature throughout the world.

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The International Montessori Society is sponsored by Educational Services, Inc., a non-profit corporation organized in Maryland, USA. The IMS purpose is to support the scientific approach to true natural being throughout the world.

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## Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

### Disrupting your Lesson

The teacher here is frustrated by a child disturbing her lesson with the pink tower. (See *Observer*, September, 2018). She wants to know how to restore order in the environment when she is feeling so confused and uncertain about what to do in this *moment of peril*.

**Analysis:** Kicking and scattering objects, whether during a planned lesson presentation or not, is a misbehavior scenario involving level 2 priority for your attention. The hub child is the one who is kicking or scattering the objects, and the “physical objects” are the primary detrimental influence in the environment to resolve at that time. In this scenario, assume that the other children are not actively engaged in the misbehavior at that time.

**Practical Advice:** If the hub child continues scattering the objects, use the technique *distraction*, such as by touching or holding the objects to get his attention. When he looks at you, give him a *clear direction* to sit with hands folded and legs crossed, as you continue with the lesson by giving *clear directions* to the other children to restore order to the work.

If after scattering the objects, however, the child walks away, first compose yourself (control your adult personality), such as by using the technique *patient waiting*. Then, applying the protocol *well-being of the total environment*, look around to notice what the “hub” child may be doing harmfully away from your present location. For example, is he moving fast and talking loudly, showing an outward intention to disorder or harm other objects in the environment? If so, get up and move towards him using the technique *proximity*.

Now, while walking towards the child, if he looks up at you, stop and use the techniques *patient waiting* and *eye contact*. Also, apply the protocols *no negative attention to misbehavior* and *least amount of adult involvement*, to make sure you have a neutral expression on your face; no head shaking or looks of disapproval. And, don’t direct him to come back to fix up the objects he scattered, as this would only draw negative attention to his behavior.

If the child shows a calming down, such as by approaching you with a question or comment, use the protocol *basis of interest* to give him a lesson, such as by using the safe word phrase, “Come over here. Let me show you something.” Then, bring him back to the pink tower presentation to have him sit down and watch as you restore order to the objects and continue your presentation to the other children.

If instead of calming down and walking back with you, however, the “hub” child shows continuing disorder, such as by turning away from you to continue misbehaving, practice the technique *repetition*, to again stop and apply the techniques *patient waiting* and *eye*

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### External Facts

*“External facts, which can be fully observed, offer practical guidance which it is worthwhile to pursue.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.52

The IMS technology works through an analytical framework for conducting precise experiments to remove the detrimental influences around a specific “hub” child you are observing at that time. In this framework, the first step is to identify the specific “child” in question, which then allows you to recognize his “environment,” consisting of adult personality, physical objects, and other children. Now, use various techniques and protocols of the technology to conduct experiments to *control the environment, not the child*.

Controlling the physical objects, for example, begins by displaying and introducing the order of physical reality to children. Using these objects for self-directed learning, the young child then comes to perceive the things in the environment with such precision that their order become incorporated into his whole basic way of being for life.

### Perception of Things

*“...it is necessary to prepare children to perceive the things in their environment exactly, in order to secure for them the material required by the imagination.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Spon. Act. In Ed.*, p. 254

Montessori teaching creates an orderly arrangement of objects, first by placing them on open shelves for the children to use according to their own individual interest and goal-directed activity. The Montessori sensorial materials, for example, especially focus the child’s attention and interest to the natural attributes of things, such as by isolating and

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other children. So, after even one initial nomenclature lesson, you can turn your attention more to help other children who have greater need for your direct instruction.

Remember that each child has a teacher within himself. And, this inner teacher has a curriculum plan that is foremost for the child to follow. Although you can’t see this plan directly, you can see the child’s outward interest in following this plan by what he looks at, touches, and asks for from you.

So, when the child shows this interest in “letters”, treat this as a request to “teach me to read” Then give him a nomenclature (Seguin 3-period) lesson, using the letters “c” “u” and “p” to arrive at the simple phonetic word “up”.

grading such qualities as size, shape, and dimension. By handling the objects as intended by specific exercises and activities, the young child enlarges his field of perception of reality.

### Field of Perception

*“The training and sharpening of the senses has the obvious advantage of enlarging the field of perception and of offering an ever more solid foundation for intellectual growth.”*

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

Working with sensorial materials, handling and ordering them in various ways, the young child comes to sense their basic order, which then becomes a solid foundation for developing intelligence which is then applied to such basic academic skills as reading, writing and math. Even more, by handling these objects, the young child comes to a moment of deep concentration, which signals the event of “normalization”, and his entry into the normal state of true natural being.

### Concentration

*“The child who concentrates is immensely happy...when he comes out of his concentration, he seems to perceive the world anew as a boundless field of fresh discoveries.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.249

Dr. Montessori found that young children enter into normalized being in a moment of profound concentration on some one particular piece of work. At this point of “normalization,” the child then comes to show such normal outward qualities as spontaneous self-discipline, order, peace and harmony with the entire environment. However, before these outward effects fully emerge, you must patiently observe over a long period of time, holding always the vision of one single type of normalized child you aim to bring about.

### Single Normalized Type

*“The teacher...sees that single normalized type, which lives in a world of the spirit... So what must she look out for? That one child or another will begin to concentrate.”*

Dr. Maria Montessori  
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.252

The ordinary young child enters into the Montessori environment with various personality flaws of inattention, disorder and fantasy acquired at home. So, an important first step in Montessori teaching is to set aside your initial negative perception of the child, and practice seeing instead only the single normalized child you have faith will emerge from your efforts. This perceptual shift, however, only comes with time and experience as you patiently resolve your various inner errors that blind you to the ultimate reality of his perfect true natural being.

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**OBSERVER**  
*The Montessori*



Lee presenting his campaign for greater freedom for choice and competition in education at a candidate forum sponsored by several community groups in Beltsville, Maryland.

**Government and Education** *Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3*

Since only about 50% of qualified adults in my district actually showed up to vote, I suspect that many of my potential supporters didn't have sufficient interest or confidence that their one vote would do any good to overcome a well-funded political "machine" that supported my opponents. Other non-voting supporters simply didn't want to take the time to fill out a long, complex ballot with many other candidates and questions to answer.

By contrast, voters for my opponent and his allied "machine" candidates had available a comprehensive "sample ballot" that gave them all his 'right' choices already marked for them to copy exactly in the same manner on their own real ballot. So, many ill-informed voters could complete their ballot in a relatively thoughtless and simple-minded manner, which led to the defeat of individual non-machine candidates who offered a genuine better "citizen-friendly" alternative.

Besides the benefit of a 'sample ballot', machine candidates were mostly incumbents who in public office were able to give favors to various special in-

terest groups over time. In return, voters who benefited from these favors returned their loyalty to these candidates by giving generous campaign donations and voting support on Election Day. Over time, this machine-style special interest politics, however, breeds great government corruption as politicians gain power and control for themselves from one election to the next.

Breaking the hold of this corrupt "machine" style politics will require greater organization and coordination among those alternative "public interest" candidates and their supporters, such as by circulating their own common sample ballot to a large enough segment of the receptive voting population. While this work of organizing for a citizen-friendly "public interest" politics is likely to be long and hard, I'm convinced it can be done beginning with just a few principled citizens committed to this purpose. Success in this effort in Maryland would then lead to similar efforts for good government political action elsewhere, which will ultimately allow the "new education" to bring about the emergence of the child's true nature into the world.

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*Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1*

contact as often as necessary until he settles into calm, orderly activity elsewhere in the environment. At that point, leave the child to his work, as you return to continue your lesson presentation with the pink tower as before.

If, at the pink tower location again, the children are still sitting and interested in the presentation, give directions to one of the children there to return the scattered objects to the workspace, if not done so already. On the other hand, if the children have left the location, or otherwise show no further interest in the demonstration, call one of the children to return the materials to the shelf.

In resolving sudden disorder that emerges like this, always remember to apply the protocol *present moment*, which teaches you to quickly let go of what happened bad or wrong in the past, and what you may fear will happen in the future. Instead, ask yourself, "What do I do NOW?" The IMS technology provides all the tools you need to keep adjusting your behavior in harmony with laws of nature so you can remain calm and objective in your experimental interactions with children from one moment to the next.

**Disinterest of 6-9 Children**

A teacher has a classroom of 6-9 children who have not had prior preparation for free, independent work in the Montessori elementary environment. As a result, they show terrible problems with motivation, interest and work completion. For example, there is lots of work avoidance, choosing easy work and avoiding any sort of challenge. The teacher is especially frustrated with the children constantly talking with each other in a fantasy, superficial manner, while showing almost complete disinterest in any serious learning or work. What to do? *Answer in Observer, March, 2019*