



The Montessori OBSERVER

Confirm Accuracy
Clarify/Expand

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Child working with math materials at the Cypresswood Montessori School in Spring, Texas

Cypresswood Montessori School in Spring, Texas

The Cypresswood Montessori School in Spring, Texas, was established in January 2003 by its founder, **Sahera Nasser**, who now serves as its main director. An active early childhood educator for 30 years, Sahera began her interest in Montessori teaching with the birth of her youngest son. At that time, she acquired training in Montessori education in England and taught there for several years.

After moving to Houston in 1998, Sahera became involved in founding a private school in the southwest part of Houston, where she served as Principal for six years. Then, in 2002, she decided to open her own Cypresswood Montessori School in nearby Spring, Texas.

As director and owner of Cypresswood, she says she is now "living the dream" to attain Peace through preparation of the child. She says, "My vision is to make a difference in every child's life that comes my way by preparing, encouraging, motivating and leading all the staff that are directly involved with children at my school". She adds also that the school is now well-established in the Spring community, serving students from 6 weeks through kindergarten. The school also includes a Before and After school care program for Elementary students as well.

Sahera says that she and the school staff are excited to be under the recognition of IMS, and appreciate the work and leadership of IMS director, Lee Havis, for being there for the 'new education'. To Lee, she says, "Your articles are being read by all our

staff members so they are leaning towards the laws of nature and the emergence of the child's true natural being!"

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Hiring a Montessori Teacher

By Lee Havis

Question: We are looking to hire a Montessori teacher. Do you have anyone available?

Answer: Hiring a Montessori teacher, you must first find a candidate with the vital spiritual qualities of patience and humility. In addition, the teacher will need to know or learn the pertinent technical skills and knowledge in the field, such as found in the IMS technology. While an IMS trained graduate would be ideal, but few, if any, available since all are heavily engaged already.

You may, however, find a number of willing candidates who hold teacher certification from conventional non-IMS training institutions. Hiring one of these, however, may be a problem since, even if they have the right spiritual qualities, they would still need to be re-trained in the skills of "true natural" Montessori teaching. This is especially true if they have learned certain prejudicial ideas and loyalty to non-IMS Montessori teacher training that is bound to personality or culture instead of laws of nature.

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IMS Network in Nigeria

Evelyn Onyke, Nigeria educator, writes about how she created an IMS network in Nigeria to expand awareness of the "new education", and introduce the unique IMS approach and technology of 'true natural' Montessori teaching.

By Evelyn Onyke

I recently stumbled on to the founder of the International Montessori Society (IMS) Lee Havis, on Facebook through some mutual friend while searching for foreign partnership to conduct a training workshop on the Montessori method of education. Until then, my journey with Montessori had been based on research I was pursuing while studying Child Psychology for a post-graduate degree at the University of Nigeria Nsukka campus.

After discussing with Lee, I decided to volunteer for IMS to create awareness for the 'new education' in our country. Considering the vast usage of Mobile phones in Nigeria, I thought it would be easy to contact many people on social media by creating a WhatsApp group platform, which I named "IMS New Education Nigeria." So far, this network has reached many educators in Nigeria, creating awareness of IMS and its scientific techniques that show how to bring about true natural development in the child.

The IMS New Education Nigeria is now helping many acquire a better understanding of Montessori teaching, and broadening the horizon of those experts in the field now trained outside the IMS organization. In the network platform, educators are engaging with me in a dialogue-type conversation, asking frequent questions with Lee giving a quick response to each one in short audio

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Evelyn Onyke, organizer, IMS New Education Network in Nigeria



Confirm Accuracy - Clarify/Expand

by Lee Havis

"Our method actually does not encourage respect for defects or superficiality...we must help the child to liberate himself from his defects without making him feel his weakness."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Child in Family* p.66-67

Even in a prepared, well-ordered Montessori environment, the young child can sometimes encounter missteps, errors, and faulty perception of reality that leads him off the path of true natural development. When this happens, the IMS technology provides several protocols to help correct this deviation from harmony with laws of nature. One of these protocols, *confirm accuracy, clarify/expand*, directs you to resolve this problem by offering some brief clarifying language on the subject at hand. Done well, these brief clarifying comments can most effectively support the child's natural tendency towards exactitude in acquiring knowledge from his self-directed learning in the environment.

Nature of Exactitude

"The child's interest in doing better, and his own constant checking and testing, are so important to him that his progress is assured. His very nature tends towards exactitude and the ways of obtaining it appeal to him."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.250

Dr. Montessori found that the young child has an instinctive desire for precise, exact knowledge, which he primarily acquires by handling objects that reflect the perfect order of nature. However, when he encounters some obstacle in his self-directed learning with materials, he may seek more exactitude by approaching you for help and guidance. When this happens, IMS technology provides such protocols as *least amount of adult involvement*, to encourage the child to correct many little mistakes on his own without any lengthy adult instruction.

Little Mistakes

"...it is the environment itself which helps to make the children continuously better...the teacher...can remain a quiet spectator of all the little mistakes that occur around her."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *The Child* p.12-13

In the Montessori environment, helping a child means to allow him to resolve little ordinary mistakes by using such techniques as *reflective language* or *questioning*. For example, when a child asks, "How do I do this?", answer back reflectively, "How do you do this?" or, if necessary, "Who else can help you with that?" With big mistakes, however, such as an issue of false reasoning on

some key subject matter concept, you may then need to apply the *confirm accuracy* protocol.

False Reasoning

"...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 mind can reason 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

Deceived by some deep-seated false reasoning, a child is simply not aware of the cause of his problem and therefore not likely to find a solution through *reflective language* or *questioning* alone. For example, suppose a child shows you a picture of a kangaroo, confidently asserting, "That's a deer". Here, applying the *confirm accuracy* protocol, answer back, "Well, it does look like a deer since it has fur and coloring like a deer, and is about the same size (*confirming accuracy*). But look at the size of its nose; and its small front paws and long tail. Here (pointing to the caption of the picture) is the name of this particular animal (kangaroo)." (*clarify/expand*).

If you don't offer this clarification of "That's a deer", the child will take your silence as confirming his false knowledge, which could then lead to other similar mistakes of learning later on. In this situation, using the *confirm accuracy* protocol works well to resolve the error by removing the detrimental influence of your adult personality in its projection of "abandonment."

Abandonment

"The principle of liberty is not therefore a principle of abandonment, but rather one which, by leading us from illusion to reality, will guide us to the most positive and efficacious 'care of the child.'"

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.*, p.9-10

In Montessori teaching, allowing the child freedom is right and necessary. But this doesn't mean to abandon him to fantasy based on some fundamental false or misleading perception of reality. So, when a child departs from the solid ground of reality, and approaches you with some false knowledge, this is the time to apply the *confirm accuracy* protocol to return the child to a truthful perception of things in the environment.

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 require by the imagination."

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

In the Montessori environment, the young child normally corrects his perception of reality by handling objects that reflect the truth of reality. To aid in this further, the materials themselves often have a built-in control of er-

ror. However, even so, a child can make mistakes unless you provide occasional direct clarification.

For example, suppose a child shows you some incorrect information, proudly saying, "See what I did?!" Here, using the *confirm accuracy* protocol, say, "Look what you did. You added the numbers right here (*confirming accuracy*). But this time, you have to move to the next column to add the others." (*clarify/expand*).

You can also effectively use the *confirm accuracy* protocol when a child disputes a true factual statement that you make in your lesson presentation with him. Here, the challenge is to clearly distinguish some key difference in the work, without causing the child to feel guilt or negative judgment from you in the process.

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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 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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Moment of Peril

by Lee Havis

Teaching Right from Wrong

Frustrated with children who act and talk in a rude manner among themselves, the teacher wonders how to address this situation so she doesn't project "abandonment". (See *Observer*, May, 2018).

Analysis: The misbehavior scenario here is a social conflict, involving the adult personality and other children as detrimental. It is a low priority scenario because there is no outward danger of serious physical violence. Focus on "other children" as the primary detrimental influence to resolve.

Practical Advice: First, following the protocol *well-being of the total environment*, check to see there is no high-priority misbehavior scenario elsewhere, such as a child in danger of serious physical harm. If not, then give attention to this "social conflict" scenario, which is misbehavior involving only bad words and loud, rude activity in the nature of 'fantasy'.

Dealing with this scenario, begin by walking towards the conflict by using the technique *proximity*. As you approach, notice if there are any of the children who look up at you. If so, using the protocol *least amount of adult involvement*, stop approaching, to use only the techniques *patient waiting* and *eye contact*. If this reduces the level of rude, bad language, continue with these techniques, until more children notice your presence, and breakup the misbehavior spontaneously on their own. If not, continue approaching, using *repetition* and *proximity*.

Finally, if you arrive close by the children, your extremely close presence will likely provoke some child in the group to speak to you directly, at which time you can use *reflective language* or *questioning* to further engage more heavily in the situation. [In discussion, be sure you don't repeat any 'bad words', by changing the language slightly, without losing the meaning. For example, if a child says, "Michael is a (bad word)", you repeat back "You don't like Michael?"]

While engaging the children this way, using *eye contact*, *proximity*, *reflective language*, and *questioning*, keep glancing up and around the environment, to continue applying the priority *well-being* protocol. However, if at any time, the conflict appears likely to burst into physical violence, use *distraction* by touching to protect one of the "other children" from physical harm. In time, this gradual use of techniques and protocols will reduce and finally eliminate the rude and bad language among the children.

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Distinguishing Differences

"...a teacher...intervenes to enlighten a child who has already succeeded in distinguishing differences through his own spontaneous efforts. It is then that she can...provide him with words to describe the differences he has perceived."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p.155

In a nomenclature lesson for beginning reading, suppose you are showing the letter-sound distinction, saying, "This is 'c'" (using the letter sound). And to this, the child responds, "That's not 'c' (saying the sound) that's 'c' (saying the letter name). Applying the *confirm accuracy* protocol, answer: "Yes, that's the name of the letter (*confirming accuracy*)...and it makes the sound...'c' (*clarifying/expanding*)." Such a brief, clear statement will then effectively bring out the pertinent distinction so the child can use this knowledge in his further learning in that subject matter.

Brief Lessons

"...we admit that every lesson infringes the liberty of the child and for this reason we allow it to last only for a few seconds."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Spon. Act. In Ed.*, p.42

With children 2-6, the *least amount* protocol teaches you to keep your lessons brief, using just enough words, and no more, to point out the main feature of the piece of work you are showing. Another protocol, *emphasize main point(s) – isolate variable*, also reinforces this idea,

Hiring a Montessori Teacher

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The best practical way to hire a Montessori teacher is to find a local person with the right spiritual qualities, and who is willing to learn the specific skills required to "observe" rather than "teach". Then, with the support and resources of IMS, you can help the teacher learn the pertinent skills and knowledge in this approach, such as the IMS technology. While in training, however, be sure the candidate spends sufficient time observing another skilled teacher with children, before actually entering into direct teaching on her own with children.

IMS training resources are available and very useful for preparing a newly hired teacher. The IMS website points to a number of resources for learning the IMS technology, such as the individualized distance learning course, the self-help Dan-bury audio CD and study guide, and occasional two-day workshop seminars that IMS conducts based on local interest and support. In addition, IMS also provides a number of articles, videos, and publications at its website as well.

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especially to remove any distractions coming from your excessive movement and language.

Likewise, while applying the *confirm accuracy* protocol, you must also limit your words to the least number possible, and then quickly move away as the child successfully takes over the activity. Such a clear, brief lesson will then enhance the child's independence and confidence in his further learning on his own.

Enhance Independence

"If teaching is to be effective with young children, it must assist them to advance on the way to independence."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p..57

Following such protocols as *enhance independence* and *don't interrupt concentration*, you must also carefully avoid any lengthy or unnecessary interactions with the child. So, for example, only apply the *confirm accuracy* protocol when the child approaches you for help and guidance in his work. With young children, therefore, applying the *confirm accuracy* protocol should be rare and infrequent only.

Over the age of six, however, the child's mind changes from its prior sensitivity to physical objects, to become more sensitive to abstract reasoning, imagination, and verbal interaction with others. Now, you can apply the *confirm accuracy* protocol much more frequently to help the child's true natural development in that age range.

That said, Montessori teaching with any aged child is still always an indirect approach to *control the environment, not the child*. This means to function primarily to give space for the child's own free, spontaneous activity, rather than imposing adult instruction in the typical manner of conventional education.

Giving Space

"The usual conception of direct correction and suppression of defects is wrong...Correction is possible only by expansion, by 'giving space', by opening up the means for the expansions of personality."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Formation of Man* p.49

Montessori teaching follows laws of nature by observing children to discover and support their true natural development. This means that your function is primarily passive as a way of giving space for the child's own free, self-directed activity. Even so, there are times when following laws of nature calls you to interact more directly with children, such as to resolve fantasy, which may involve some attachment to a fundamental false knowledge or unknown error in the perception of reality. Here, applying the protocol *confirm accuracy – clarify/expand* may then be the most useful and effective way to help the child's unfolding perfect inner guidance of nature.



IMS Network New Education in Nigeria *Cont'd. from Page 1, Col. 3*

clips. Between the month of June and July, we have grown considerably in the number of members on this network "chat" which has been well received by many. Because of this, we hope for more positive growth to eventually schedule an IMS training workshop training with Lee in the near future as well.

Sally's Scenarios

In July, 2018, Evelyn invited several IMS trained teachers to offer comments about their practical use of the IMS technology, to report on the IMS Nigeria network. In response, **Sally Korte**, IMS '15 (Kansas), joined the network, offering several sample scenarios, which are re-printed here below.

Scenario #1 – checking spot

The Montessori teacher needs to know how to stay silent and observe in a humble manner, because the adult personality is detrimental in the Montessori classroom. It is, therefore, very important that we have a checking spot, where we can observe the child at work. And only have intervention when we need to. Do you observe your classroom on a regular basis? Where is your checking spot?

During my training with IMS, I learned the importance of having a checking spot where you can be standing or sitting. My students do better if I am sitting down. As to intervention, there are three types of misbehavior that may require moving from your checking spot: A child hurting another child, a child mishandling materials and a child absorbed in fantasy.

Scenario #2 "I don't want to"

The other day in my classroom there was a student that wasn't behaving in a peaceful way. He was disturbing others by walking around the classroom and touching the other children's work.

First I made eye contact. But, he only smiled at me and kept moving around the room laughing. I walked towards him and

he looked at me again. Then, I gave him a *clear direction*, "Bring a rug and lay it here." He answered, "I don't want to".

Being very friendly, I repeated the same *clear direction* to which he responded the same way. As he was telling me that he doesn't want to, he started walking towards the rugs and then grabbed one. With the rug, walking towards me, he kept repeating "I don't want to." And every time, I responded with clear directions in a very friendly manner.

Finally, he laid out the rug, and we walked to the shelf. I then showed him a set of nomenclature cards, which I brought to the rug where I then gave him the lesson. After checking for his understanding, I walked away to my "checking" spot, where I noticed he became very interested in this work, and concentrated with it for about 30 minutes. This showed me the true child sitting in peace with his perfect spirit.

Scenario #3 – patient waiting

In our society, we have a crisis of disobedience. Every day when I am working with children, I face this reality. But the technique *patient waiting* has always helped me to see the true child. Was I born patient? Not at all. But IMS training helps me to identify my weaknesses so I can control them around children.

Today there were many children who didn't want to obey. Before my training I would have been very frustrated with them. Now, as I reflected on that this morning, I said, "Thank goodness for the technology." Every day, using IMS technology, especially the technique *patient waiting*, I discover the true child and true me.

Scenario #4 – My stomach hurts

Children love repetition. They choose to work with the same materials over and over; week after week.

Why is this? Their true nature is to perfect themselves, so they can take on ever more complex learning.

I have a boy in my classroom who was working with the same materials in the sensorial area week after week. He had a great concentration with this work. Last week he asked me to teach him how to work with the spindles in the math area. I did, and I saw his natural understanding of number concepts. Then he asked for the red and blue rod lesson and every work in the math area until the color bead activity. He has now been repeating this activity over and over perfectly.

Let me tell you that this same boy misbehaves greatly at home. He fusses and doesn't want to obey, making many excuses. He says, "My tummy hurts" to his parents and everyone else who cares for him.

Every morning I could hear his whining in the hallway; but, as soon as I greet him and make eye contact, he gives me a big smile and is at peace. When his mom picks him up, however, as soon as he sees her, he says "My stomach hurts".

Last Saturday, I visited with his parents and trained them with some IMS techniques that they could use at home. Speaking with the parents, I could see that this little boy had them believing a serious illness was happening. So, they gave him laxatives to help him. But as soon as they started using the techniques *reflective language* and *clear direction*, no more stomach pain.

Moment of Peril

Cont'd. from Page 3, Col. 1

Disrupting your lesson

In the middle of your introductory lesson presentation with the pink tower, another child comes along and gleefully kicks the blocks over, scattering them off the rug, interfering with the work of other children. What to do? Answer in **Observer**, November, 2018.