



The Montessori OBSERVER

Using Technology
with Adults

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Character Teaching Progress update

Since 2001, IMS has been sponsoring a Character Teaching (CT) project to overcome cultural poverty by creating new conditions for the normal character development of poor children involved in these circumstances. The project calls for a local consultation board to help set in motion an initial visit by Lee Havis to present the unique technology of Montessori teaching.

Mexico

In February, 2009, **Tanya Maldonado**, Director, *Instituto Inmagusa*, (Coahuila, Mexico), joined the CT board. Her initial task has been to help draft a letter to the local state governor seeking an official letter of support for the project there.

Pakistan

CT board member, **Abdul Reyman Sani**, Director, *Al-Sani Institute*, (Karachi) plans to attend the IMS workshop in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, to acquire first-hand knowledge of the pertinent Montessori technology.

India

Suja Saikumar, CT board member (Arcadia, CA) has written other CT board members in India to encourage and coordinate their efforts to obtain suitable letters of support from local government officials and NGO's.

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Participants in the IMS "Creating the New Education" workshop in Edmonton, AB, Canada, (April 18-19, 2009)

Creating the New Education Workshop in Edmonton, AB, Canada

On April 18-19, 2009, parents and educators from western Canada met in Edmonton, Alberta, to learn and develop skills in using the IMS technology of Montessori teaching. **Dawn Burgess**, Edmonton Montessori educator, provided the local coordination for this first-ever IMS 'Creating the New Education' workshop in the province of Alberta. In addition to presenting the technology, this event also offered a rare opportunity for local Montessori educators to get acquainted with each other and develop relationships for closer mutual support in the future.

At the workshop, Lee Havis showed how to use the IMS technology with children to bring about their true natural development. The format included lecture, discussion, role-play drama, and a slide-show presentation that was first introduced at the Pasadena workshop in February, 2009.

Group discussion emphasized especially using the protocol *least amount of adult involvement* to help control detrimental tendencies in the adult personality towards abandonment and negativity with children. Lee also highlighted the value of the technique *eye contact* in following the *least amount* protocol. He said, "Eye contact is ideal interaction with children because it follows so closely various key protocols, such as *least amount* and *basis of interest*. Using it from a single stationary position keeps your activity and involvement to a minimum while resolving small issues of inattention before they become major misbehavior scenarios."

While in Edmonton, Lee visited a number of the schools participating in the workshop. He applauded the efforts of so many who were experimenting with the workshop technology in their actual classroom situations. He also encouraged teachers to continue these efforts by meeting together for further learning and study as often as possible.



Children working at Montessori and Me School in Edmonton, AB, Canada (April 20, 2009)

Montessori Convention

Technology of Montessori Teaching
for the Scientific Approach to Normal Being

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
May 30-31, 2009

The 2009 International Montessori Convention features Lee Havis, IMS executive director, presenting the unique 2003 technology for conducting true natural Montessori teaching. Other speakers will also present various topics on the convention theme "Montessori leading the way for reinventing teaching and learning."

For further information, call Ms. Kelly Ng at 034270 6677 or 012-323 1079 or e-mail to info@montessoriconventions.com or visit the website: www.montessoriconventions.com



Using Technology with Adults

by Lee Havis

'...man is dependent upon other men...his whole life will be in danger if the personalities of those about him have been warped.'

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.187-88

Although IMS technology is designed for children, it can also be very useful with adults as well. For example, it can guide your communication with co-teachers, assistants, and parents to remove their various detrimental influences on children in your environment. This is the challenging work of controlling the adult personality which must include the influence and effect of all adults involved.

Controlling the Adult Personality

"The teacher's happy task is...removing the obstacles, beginning with those she herself is likely to present (for the teacher can be the greatest obstacle of all)."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Spont. Act. In Ed.*, p.264

Controlling the adult personality means to remove its bi-polar projection of abandonment and negativity on children. This projection tends to either repress children directly or abandon them by failing to effectively communicate the order of the environment. These detrimental tendencies are so automatic and unconscious in ourselves that we can only see them through the objective, impersonal perspective of others.

Seeing Ourselves

"In order to discover...subconscious failings....We must see ourselves as others see us."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.149

The ordinary adult personality plays out a continual inner drama of unresolved suffering and struggle from childhood. Unless controlled, this drama automatically projects itself outwardly on children, causing many forms of misbehavior and disorder. To accurately see ourselves in this drama, we must step outside it to observe our personality from the perspective of being committed to laws of nature. The IMS technology provides an excellent means of helping others in this process by pointing out errors in their role of following laws of nature.

Pointing out Error

"...we must point out the defects in our future teachers that would hinder their work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.150

Pointing out errors in others is delicate and difficult because it can easily be taken as a personal insult, negative self-evaluation or condemnation, rather than objective

observation about the person's outward behavior that deviates from effective Montessori teaching. With adults, the protocols *don't correct child* and *no negative attention to misbehavior* help guide us towards a calm and objective form of critical communication with others. The IMS technology also provides other protocols, as well as various safe words and techniques, which can help you avoid the ordinary defensive reactions of adults that block the way to correcting the pertinent errors involved.

Correcting Error

"If we readily enough admit the need of correcting errors which we recognize in ourselves, we do not so easily accept the humiliation of being corrected by others. We would rather make a mistake than admit it...Instead of attempting to perfect ourselves interiorly, we continue to fight."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.150

Correcting error in others must proceed in a slow, careful manner, focusing on objective criteria as much as possible. The protocol *present moment*, guides you in this process by avoiding blameful condemnation and undue attention to past failures. Instead, it directs you to focus on the pertinent corrective action required in the present moment situation. For example, when a child breaks a glass jar, don't say 'How did that happen?'. Rather, use the technique *clear direction*, saying, 'Get a broom.' An even lighter interaction would be to bury the mistake by directing attention to something else entirely. Later, you can come back to the issue when the person is more able to address it in a calm and rational manner. With adults, focus on the indirect approach of giving space to help others discover and correct their own mistakes.

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 the personality."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Formation of Man*, p.49

Following the protocol *enhance independence*, Montessori teaching allows children to learn through experience by making and correcting their own mistakes without undue adult interference. With adults, this same protocol teaches you to give others the space they need for independent self-correction as well. In this process, giving space means to moderate the intensity of your interaction by following the

protocol *least amount of adult involvement*. For example, use heavy interactions when defenses are strong, and lighter polishing when the person is more aware and sensitive to the error.

The IMS technology also offers several other protocols which are specifically designed for correcting errors in a careful, sensitive manner: *simplify complexity – hint, confirm accuracy – expand/clarify* and *emphasize main point – isolate variable*. Follow these protocols especially with older children and adults who respond well to verbal communication and a more abstract mode of understanding. Choosing which protocol to use at any particular time, however, is always a matter of adjusting your behavior to fit the needs of the overall situation.

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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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IMS ON THE INTERNET

An on-line IMS discussion group, intmonsoc (International Montessori Society) is available for anyone to join at no charge.

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

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Moment of Peril

by Lee Haviv

Working with Adults

Co-teachers Rebecca and Sarah work together in the same Montessori environment with considerable conflict and tension. Rebecca has a somewhat harsh, controlling personality, and Sarah is somewhat reactive and defensive about her lack of experience and confidence in Montessori teaching. (See *Observer, March, 2009*) In this *moment of peril*, the teachers are so distracted and negatively reactive with each other that they are not paying attention to controlling the overall detrimental influence of the adult personality in the environment.

The first step in resolving this problem is for Rebecca and Sarah to establish an effective working agreement while actually supervising children in the present moment. For example, while Rebecca is supervising, Sarah is in the secondary position as passive observer, and vice versa. As a passive observer, Sarah watches Rebecca to check for any mistakes. If Rebecca does make a mistake, Sarah slowly approaches her to quietly point it out. If the problem continues, Sarah approaches again to simply ask to 'take over' supervision duties, allowing Rebecca to assume the role of passive observer for a while.

The teachers must also agree on times during the day that each one will ordinarily be responsible for supervising the environment. For example, Rebecca handles the most challenging times of clean-up transitions, lunch, and naptime, allowing less experienced Sarah to supervise the children during the more routine times of individual work activity.

After class, Rebecca and Sarah must then carefully analyze the various issues or errors that occurred during the day. However, this analysis must focus on the objective, impersonal standards of IMS technology, rather than trying to explain some idea based solely on personal experience and opinion. Using the IMS technology in this way provides a common basis for understanding and communicating with each other, laying the foundation for ultimately resolving their mistakes through such follow-up means as IP exercises. In time, they will naturally come to respect and appreciate each other's skills and insights about Montessori teaching, working together now more cooperatively for the true normal development of children.

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Adjusting your Behavior

"The details must be left to the judgment of the teacher...It is for her to judge whether it is better for her to raise her voice amid the general hubbub, or to whisper to a few children...."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p. 245

Adjusting your behavior is a process of using the technology in a flexible scientific manner, polishing the environment in harmony with the changing needs of the situation. For example, using the *least amount* protocol, don't give a heavy polishing full-body embrace (fbc) when a light polishing eye contact lesson from across the room will do as well.

With infants and toddlers, the technique *co-operative touching* provides the substantial physical support that children need at this tender age. However, adults have a more mature, abstract mentality which is better suited to nomenclature lessons and questioning as in the well-known Socratic method of learning. At times, you can also apply the technique *questioning* for very heavy polishing through harsh accusations.

Harsh Accusations

"Harsh and persistent accusations bring to the level of consciousness that which has lain buried in the subconscious."

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

Intense questioning can sometimes help to uncover unconscious and deeply buried errors in adults. For this, your questioning might involve making harsh and persistent accusations, like a lawyer cross-examining a hostile witness. This is useful with adults who seem particularly unaware of their outward behavior or resistant to facing the issue at hand. While giving this heavy polishing, however, always look to lighten it as soon as possible, following the *least amount* protocol. With light polishing, you are then working more cooperatively with the other person to untangle complex adaptations of the personality.

Untangling Complex Adaptations

"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

Resolving personality defects in adults is ultimately a process of untangling complex adaptations to conventional reality. These adaptations are often so strong that even very gentle questioning about them will trigger the most hostile negative reaction, such as abruptly cutting off discussion, fervent denial, or angry counter accusations. When this occurs, use the technique *patient waiting* to allow the other person to discover the obvious truth of the matter through direct experience.

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Messages to IMS

February, 2009
Lahore, Pakistan

Lee Haviv

Thanking you for informing us about your...(CT) Project. We really appreciate you, and have a great interest in your project after reading your project details. ... It was my great wish that poor little and innocent children should have the privilege of education...I feel that all my dreams will come true which I have for poor children....It will be my honor if I join you...I want to increase Montessori education in Pakistan, because it's really rare in our country.

Sehrish Naz

April, 2009
Meridian, ID

IMS list:

Wednesday was a great day. The children had their usual misbehavior but I stayed calm and objective when they did. ...I was also doing well at staying light all around the room. At nap time I used a lot of *eye contact* and *proximity* and things there went very smoothly. I think I did so well because of my IP last night. I imagined, at nap time, that I had just stood back and gotten eye contact with the children. I imagined what would happen if I did that and all I could think was that the children behaved as they should. I knew that would be the result. I highly recommend IP.

Wendy Lieberman, Director
New Way Montessori School

April, 2009
Prince George, BC, Canada

Lee

Coming (to the Edmonton workshop) as a group was really good for us...Yesterday I saw some excellent *patient waiting*, *eye contact* and *distraction* from the people I work with. It was interesting to watch as we all remember different pieces (of the technology) clearly...I realized that I am not as patient as I had thought I was. We are meeting as a group next Wednesday to discuss our progress.

Shelley Bond, Participant
Edmonton, AB, workshop

March, 2009
Vojvodina, Serbia

Dear Lee

I am working in Montessori...I use it on an every day basis with my kids. I teach 1,2,3 graders and I use every single technique you have taught me. It works every time...I have learned tremendously from you...I am working closely with a special school in my town. They have just incorporated the Montessori program.

Sanela Jakoljjev, Student
IMS teacher education course

Marketplace

Positions and Placements

Montessori teachers: Palm Harbor Montessori Academy (Palm Harbor, FL). 250 students, ages 1-year to 8th grade. Competitive salary with benefits. Fax or e-mail resume and letter of interest: Christine Varkas, Palm Harbor Montessori Academy, 2355 Nebraska Ave., Palm Harbor, FL 34683, (727) 786-1854; Fax: (727) 786-5160; www.floridamontessori.com, cvarkas@gate.net

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Obvious Truth

"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

Helping adults resolve deep personality flaws is like approaching a hurricane from a distance. The closer you get to the eye, the more intense the turmoil and distress, often involving irrational thoughts and strong emotional reactions. At the most intense moment of this distress nearest the eye, remain silent and observant, using the techniques *patient waiting* and *eye contact*. This allows the person to discover the obvious truth that suddenly appears in the calm, peaceful eye of the hurricane.

When emotions become less intense, you can then again use the technology in a more active manner as before. Now, however, the other person will more likely respond to a calm, rational discussion about any personality mistakes with children. In this way, the other person easily sees and corrects these mistakes by objectively comparing outward behavior with the reliable standards of conduct laid out by the IMS technology.

Standards of Conduct

"External conformity to accepted standards of conduct is important since it makes us become aware of our faults."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Secret of Childhood*, p.150

With experience and skill in Montessori teaching, we become increasingly able to accept and even welcome the constructive criticism of others. Then, we can more easily forgive minor indignities in the process of observing our various personality flaws and defects with children. At this level, using the technology with adults becomes a natural part of controlling the adult personality to bring about true natural development in children.

Character Teaching

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Kenya (Africa)

CT board member, **Jared Otiendo**, submitted a letter of support for the project from his NGO, *Centre for Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance* (CDMHA). Jared is secretary general and co-founder of this agency. He has also met several times with the Ministry of Education in Kenya to seek its official support for the project.

Nigeria (Africa)

In January, 2009, **Erica Ereku** became the latest member of the CT board in Nigeria. In April, she obtained a letter of support for the project from the Nigerian chapter of *World Collegiate Association for the Research of Principle*, World-CARP. Erica has also obtained responses from over 50 schools in Nigeria expressing interest in attending a Nigeria Montessori workshop to learn about the IMS technology.

Moment of Peril

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Dependency

The teacher realizes that she has developed a dependency relationship with several children, who now regularly challenge and disobey her direction about even the most modest issues of basic classroom order. She realizes that she must reduce her involvement with these children, but when she does, they seem to act out in fantasy even more, reflecting a condition of abandonment.

What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, September, 2009

Reflections

By Suja Saikumar

Suja (IMS student) reports her experience in using IMS technology to resolve misbehavior with a child she was supervising. (Arcadia, CA)

Good Job

Jerry (4 1/2) was dumping the triangle box and started to play with it. He was throwing them and catching them. I approached him (*proximity*) and asked him what he was doing (*questioning*). He did not look up at me so I touched the materials (*distraction*). He pulled them away violently. I took my hands from them (*least amount of adult involvement*) and asked him if he was done with it or if he is going to use it. He said he was not done. I told him "Let me show you how to do it" (*clear direction*; safe words) and asked him to sit down. He became very aggressive. I thought I should give him a fbe (full-body embrace; *distraction*) but when I tried to touch him, he started to react heavily (power struggle). I caught myself going after him. So I backed away (reverse *proximity*) and waited for him to calm down (*patient waiting*). He calmed down a few minutes later.

Again he was putting the triangles in and out of the box. I approached him (*proximity*; *repetition*) and asked him if he was going to put them away (*questioning*). He said yes and started to throw them into the box 1 at a time. I touched the material (*distraction*) and told him "let's do it this way" (*clear direction*) and showed him how to put the big triangle first and then told him to put the next biggest and then the next biggest and backed a little. He started to put in the order and when he was done, he came and showed the box to me. I told him that he did a good job.