



The Montessori OBSERVER

Scanning and
Supervision

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Character Teaching *Progress in Nigeria and India*

The Character Teaching (CT) project, sponsored by IMS, aims to help overcome long-term cultural poverty by supporting true normal character development in children. On April 18, 2008, **Kunle Rotimi**, CT board member in Nigeria, met with Deputy Governor of Lagos State, Her Excellency **Mrs. Sarah Sosan** and other senior officials of the Lagos State Education Ministry, to present and discuss the project's basic concept and approach.

Kunle later reported the favorable results of this meeting, indicating that government officials were looking forward to the project's operation in their jurisdiction. He added that the Lagos Ministry may be able to assist public school teachers to attend the training workshop which is a key component of the project's initial consultation visit.

Lee Havis, CT executive director, indicates that his initial consultation visit would also include personal meetings with local government officials and other interested persons to plan for the project's full-scale operation. Lee says that this plan includes operating a model school for young children and conducting daily informal tutoring for poor working children as well.

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Montessori Workshops

Technology of Montessori Teaching for the Scientific Approach to Normal Being

The IMS workshop is a two-day weekend learning experience, featuring Lee Havis, IMS executive director, presenting the unique 2003 technology of Montessori teaching. This technology is precise practical knowledge for conducting the scientific approach with children that leads to true normal being as discovered by Dr. Montessori in 1907.

Workshops are scheduled according to local interest. Contact: IMS, tel. 301-589-1127; havis@imsmontessori.org



The New Way Montessori School (Meridian, Idaho)

Resolving Transitions at New Way Montessori School

From April 15-29, 2008, **Lee Havis** conducted a personal consultation at the *New Way Montessori School* (Meridian, Idaho). Since January, 2007, Lee has been conducting these types of occasional consulting visits to study and support the practical application of IMS technology with children at this school. During the April, 2008 visit, Lee focused primarily on resolving issues of disorder and misbehavior during times of group transition, such as lining up after outside recreation, sitting down in a circle after cleaning up the room, eating lunch, and laying down on mats for a rest period.

Lee's consultation also included video recording of the program director, **Wendy Lieberman**, while supervising children at various critical transition times in the daily schedule. Both Lee and Wendy agreed that this recording helped identify and resolve several key mistakes, such as fast, excessive movement around children. Viewing the video, they could both clearly see how the children became more calm and orderly as Wendy slowed down, remaining relatively stationary outside their activity area.

During the consultation, Lee and Wendy also identified several useful tactics to better manage order in a group situation. For example, (1) while children are sitting in a circle, stay off the circle to better move around as needed to settle individual children; (2) Lining up outside, return all equipment first, before beginning the line-up

procedure; (3) Talk over any group confusion or disorder, focusing on present-moment reality, such as while walking in line, eating lunch or getting coats. Lee believes that these tactics will help many other practitioners resolve their own similar problems with children.

IMAC Accreditation News *Recognition Issues before the US Department of Education*

In April, 2008, IMAC issued a formal statement opposing the renewed recognition of the *Montessori Accreditation Council for Teacher Education* (MACTE) by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE). **Lee Havis**, IMAC spokesman says that "MACTE recognition presents a serious obstacle to progress and success in Montessori education because it accredits only one type of Montessori teaching, which is prominently represented by the *American Montessori Society* (AMS). By contrast, the IMAC agency allows all types to participate. Unfortunately, the USDE doesn't recognize the IMAC agency because it claims there is 'no need'. So, this preferential recognition of MACTE presents an incomplete and limited picture of Montessori teaching to the general public, favoring the AMS-type of conventional philosophy of commitment to culture rather than laws of nature that leads to the child's true nature."

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Scanning and Supervision

by Lee Havis

Scanning and Supervision:

Second stage of Montessori teaching where the teacher observes primarily from a stationary position outside the activity area of the children. In this stage, the teacher interacts with children as needed, to resolve misbehavior and to aid their concentration on work.

Glossary of Montessori Terms (GMT)

After stage 1, *Beginning Conditions (Observer, March, 2008)*, Montessori teaching continues to polish the environment through *Scanning and Supervision*. This stage 2 polishing is a transitory phase that leads children to deeply concentrate on some piece of work. In this way, they finally arrive at the stage 3 condition of true normal development.

Transitory Phase

"...a transitory phase...is like the state of convalescence after an illness...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.270-71

In Stage 2, children engage in self-directed learning with physical objects over a period of some two months or more. It is a transitory phase of psychological healing and preparation for full normal development. During this phase, you must remain constantly alert to resolving misbehavior around the environment while still giving lesson presentations with the materials to individual children as needed. The IMS technology provides a precise set of techniques, protocols, lesson presentations and safe words to effectively carry out these two different functions.

Two Different Functions

"...the teacher must carry out two different functions...General surveillance and individual teaching, given with precision, are two ways in which the teacher can help the child's development."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.270-71

Scanning is a process of general surveillance to analyze and detect any misbehavior scenarios in the environment. Supervision involves removing the detrimental influences around the central "hub" child in each scenario. Implementing these two different functions is an imperfect, experimental process of following laws of nature, which is aided by the guidance of such basic Montessori principles as observation.

Observation

"...observation must be made from a psychic point of view and aim at discovering the conflicts that a child experiences in his relations with adults and his general social environment."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Secret of Childhood*, p.11

Scanning the environment involves observing what the children do, and then conducting experiments to control the environment to remove any detrimental influences there may be. Guided by such key Montessori protocols as *well-being of the total environment*, this careful observation helps you resolve each misbehavior scenario in logical order of priority, beginning first with the ones that are most likely to bring about some physical harm. You are, therefore, always watching and directing the children to enhance the well-being and normal development of all.

Watching and Directing

"A teacher of experience,...before she draws aside to leave the children free...watches and directs them for some time, eliminating their uncontrolled movements..."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.245

Supervising children in stage 2 can be very active in the beginning, perhaps often using such techniques as *proximity*, *cooperative touching* and *clear direction*. It is a process of watching and directing children to analyze each situation, and then, remove the detrimental influences that arise around each child in question. Noticing the children's motor activity will especially help you make good decisions in your Montessori teaching from one moment to the next.

Motor Activity

"Motor activity, therefore must have a goal and must be connected with mental activity...All the exercises that promote the coordination of movement are undertaken for a definite pre-conceived goal."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Discovery of the Child*, p.306

Young children commonly show their need for your assistance by how they touch objects and move around the environment. Observing this motor activity, therefore, helps you know exactly how to control the environment in each situation. For example, if a child is moving quickly, talking loudly, mishandling objects, or wandering aimlessly around, you may need to intervene in some very active manner, such as by using the technique *distraction*.

Distraction

"If there is some child who persistently annoys the others, the most practical thing to do is to interrupt him...Often a question will serve, such as 'How are you Johnny?' Come with me, I have something for you to do."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Absorbent Mind*, p.254

Facing some high priority misbehavior, you can often use the technique *distraction* to restore calm and order in the situation.

With this technique, your aim is to get the child's attention away from the misbehavior and on to something more positive somewhere else. For example, you might get the child's attention by briefly holding some object in the child's hand. Then, give a *clear direction*, such as by saying "Come over here. Let me show you something". Finally, present the new activity, doing as little as possible in the process.

As Little as Possible

"We must...prepare an environment in which we do as little as possible to exhaust the child with our surveillance and instruction."

Dr. Maria Montessori

from *Child in the Family*, p.27

The protocol *least amount of adult involvement* guides you to carefully limit any
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Look for the
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featuring

Verbal Techniques

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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 Wendy Lieberman

Looking Around the Room

The teacher tends to get overly involved with individual children and doesn't look around at the rest of the class for eye contact or to observe their behavior. (See *Observer*, March, 2008). This recurring problem results in misbehavior coming up in the classroom that the teacher is not aware of until it is very disruptive.

In this *moment of peril*, the primary detrimental influence is the adult personality. It continues as a problem because the teacher is unable to notice and control her abandonment behavior at the time. The good thing, however, is that she does recognize this behavior when she looks back on her actions afterwards. Now, however, she must find some way to signal herself to "stop and think" about what she is doing in the present moment situation.

The teacher can only solve this deep tendency towards abandonment through a kind of inner preparation that distinguishes her being as personality from being as commitment to laws of nature. Using the technique IP (*Imagination-previsioning*), she needs to look back on a specific situation when she was overly involved with one child and failed to monitor the rest of the class. Then, she recalls specifically what she was thinking about or feeling at that time, using these thoughts and feelings to signal her to immediately return to more effective Montessori teaching.

Let's say she remembers that when she was getting overly involved with a child she was thinking about an object in the child's hand while feeling sleepy. Then, she imagines saying a trigger word to herself, like "sleepy" or "object" to signal her to say a wake-up phrase, such as "What is going on now?", "Look around the room" or "Montessori", to get her back into Montessori teaching.

The trigger word signals the teacher to stop and think about what she is doing and clear her mind. Then, she says "What is going on now?" to prompt her to look around the room and analyze the situation from a fresh perspective in the present moment. Now, she can consciously employ such key protocols as *well-being of the total environment* and *least amount of adult involvement* to look around for the scenario that is the highest priority for her attention, determine who is the hub child, and what are the detrimental influences to control.

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interaction with children. By doing as little as possible, you are also closely following the *well-being* protocol, because this allows you to quickly return to your primary function of scanning the environment from a stationary position outside the children's activity area.

In fact, many situations require only *patient waiting* or *eye contact* at most, which you can easily do from a single stationary position. Then, the children may well resolve the problem on their own without any direct adult interference from you at all.

Adult Interference

"When adults interfere, they nearly always make mistakes... (the teacher's) solution differs from that of the children and this disturbs the harmony of the group. Apart from exceptional cases, we ought to leave such problems to the children."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.224

Non-physical social conflicts are usually low-priority scenarios that children can effectively resolve on their own. Following the *least amount* and *well-being* protocols helps you restrain any harmful adult intervention in these situations. Then, you are balancing and moderating your actions so that conflicts and disorder tend to gradually subside and disappear altogether, leaving the class so calm that only light polishing, if any, will be necessary.

Class Calm

"Now we see the class calm... Usually the teacher is satisfied... Many of the schools get no further than this."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.269

In Stage 2 polishing, you are gradually moving from heavy polishing with such techniques as *distraction* and *cooperative touching* to lighter ones, such as *eye contact* and *patient waiting*. In this way, the class can soon become so calm that you might well believe the children are in a true normalized state of being. In fact, however, this is usually not so, because children require a considerable time in stage 2 before they arrive at any true normalization.

Normalization

"Normalization comes about through concentration on a piece of work."

Dr. Maria Montessori
from *Absorbent Mind*, p.206

Montessori teaching in stage 2 requires great patience while watching children go in-differently from one piece of work to the next. For a long time, indeed, they may show little signs of any deep concentration at all. However, when this moment of normalization does occur, the children do finally enter upon the stage 3 condition of stable normal

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Montessori Tactics

Bringing Children Together

By Wendy Lieberman

Wendy Lieberman, director of New Way Montessori School (Meridian, ID) has identified one common problem situation with children, and a useful Montessori tactic to address it in the classroom through IMS technology.

The problem situation is two separate misbehavior scenarios in different parts of the room. Resolving this problem, you can sometimes bring a child from one scenario over to the area where the other scenario is taking place. For example, Gary is over at a table in a very persistent state of fantasy without any particular work to do. At the same time, Jenny and Angela are having snack elsewhere in the environment, and need some oranges cut for them. I approach Gary first, inviting him to come over and sit down by the snack table and watch me cut oranges. After watching me cut the first orange, he takes over the exercise as Jenny and Angela watch. Then, he returns to his table, now more settled in reality with a piece of work he took from the shelf.

Another example is during the transition from lunch to nap. Steve remains at the table in a fantasy conversation with another child, even though he has finished lunch, and I had told him several times to clean up his place and get a mat to lay down. Jenny and Angela are laying on their mats, but not completely settled. Since I can not leave Jenny and Angela, I go to Steve and bring him over to sit quietly next to me with the children laying down. When Steve settles back into reality, I direct him to clean up his lunch place and then come back and lay down. In this way, I am able to resolve the two separate scenarios by bringing the particular children together in one place with me for closer supervision.

Character Teaching

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In India, Dr. Meera Singh (New Delhi) recently joined the CT consultation board for that country. She promised to contact government officials and local NGO's to gain their interest and participation. Lee says that New Delhi would be ideal for the initial consultation visit, since it is the country's capital city and near to Pakistan where other CT board members are also actively working for a similar project there.

The CT project is also planned for operation in other countries facing conditions of severe poverty and abusive child labor. Lee believes the project has the best chance of success in these difficult social circumstances, since Dr. Montessori found these same conditions ideal for the emergence of the child's true nature in her own initial experiments in Rome, Italy in 1907.

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development, showing such outward qualities as self-discipline, independence, order and complete harmony with others. Then, your function is primarily as a quiet spectator, watching children happily engage in normal self-directed activity and learning with each other.

Quiet Spectator

"...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

Once normalized, children need only your supportive presence as a quiet spectator. Then, your function is primarily to add or replace materials in the environment according to the children's changing needs and interests for independent, self-directed learning with each other. Observing this level of true normal development helps you realize the value and benefit of Montessori teaching that came before, including the long, slow period of stage 2 scanning and supervision.

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

Moment of Peril

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Reinforcing her imagined plan of action, the teacher replays this plan in her mind until she feels herself returning to good Montessori teaching each time. If she imagines her actions in a very vivid and detailed manner, she will most likely remember to do it the same in the real-life situation as well.

With practice, the teacher may find she needs to adjust the details of her plan to help her stop and think each time. Using further IP, she can then experiment with other thoughts, feelings, words and phrases, until she finds the ones most meaningful to her. Ideally, she will arrive at a single, simple word that works in every situation.

Finally, the teacher will not need any trigger signals at all. This happens when she has developed such firm habits of good Montessori teaching that they have become an integral part of her regular, consistent way of being all the time.

Talking Over Disorder

The teacher notices that the children are especially disorderly during transitions, to clean up, line up, and laying down for nap-time. She gives clear direction by talking to children, saying "sit down" or "line up" or "lay down", being sure to follow such protocols as *model good behavior* (quiet voice during nap-time); *least amount of adult involvement* (staying in one place while talking) and *talking only after eye contact* (waiting for eye contact before talking). However, since the children don't seem to respond to her talking during these disorderly times, the teacher wonders how she might effectively talk over the disorder without violating any of these important protocols? What to do?

Answer in *Observer*, September, 2008

IMAC Accreditation News

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The IMAC statement also argues that the MACTE agency fails to comply with the USDE's own criteria relating to qualifying institutions for federal funding and protection against conflict of interest in the decision-making process. Lee says, "There is no genuine need for MACTE recognition. MACTE's real purpose in recognized status is not federal funding at all, but rather to leverage and control the preferential treatment of AMS-type Montessori teacher certification. For example, MACTE openly states that 'It is vitally important that each of the 50 states grant recognition of Montessori certification obtained from institutions and programs accredited by MACTE for Montessori classrooms'."

If MACTE is successful with their campaign to gain control over Montessori certification, Lee says it would effectively censor out any competing alternatives to the AMS-type of conventional Montessori teaching, bringing about a virtual monopoly for this type of Montessori certification. Of course, this would stifle competition and innovation that is so important for progress, quality, and development in the field."

The USDE will formally consider MACTE's petition for renewed recognition renewal at its meeting in Washington, DC on June 9-10, 2008. IMAC plans to present oral testimony at that time. For further information, contact IMS; email havis@imsmontessori.org. You may also submit your own comments directly to USDE: The Hon. Margaret Spellings, Secretary, United States Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. SW Washington, DC 20202