



National Newsletter

March 2008

Inside This Issue

Message from the President

Conference Update

Educating for Peace

Centenary Publication

"Best Practices"

Conversations with Montessorians

Best Practice Key Points (Dorer)

Best Practice Grid (Dorer)

The Teacher's Creed

SIG Meetings

Good Reads

Members Page

FAQ: Middle Schools

Advertising Policy

Membership Renewals

Marketing

Posts Wanted / Available

SAMA Contacts / Products

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Southern African Montessori Association

Message from the President

Dear SAMA Members

We hope the first term has been successful for everyone and you are all looking forward to a good break over Easter.

As you know, I was privileged enough to attend the American Montessori Society's annual conference in Washington, DC and represent Southern Africa on their second Global Forum. There were representatives from the Ukraine, South Korea, the United States and Europe on the panel. Many interesting things transpired during the discussion which I will share over time but the most encouraging one was being able to reflect on how far we are in this region from a Montessori perspective. Although we still have a long way to go, we should be proud of our achievements so far.

From a SAMA perspective, we are one of the few associations globally who are on positive terms with many of the government and significant education bodies – NAISA, Umalusi, SACE and the ETDP SETA. This means we are communicating with the right people to improve and get recognition for Montessori training, Montessori teachers, Montessori schools – all of which benefits the children in our region. Our plan is to continue with this and become a stronger and more united voice for children's rights and become more powerful advocates for every child who deserves a better life.

I have returned home grateful for our fantastic country – which is not perfect but definitely is, as the tourism board tells everyone, Alive with Possibility. I am also grateful for the open and enthusiastic attitude with which we tend to address challenges. As Montessorians in this region, we all have our own understanding and perception of how Dr Montessori intended her vision to be expressed each day. My feeling is that we are getting closer and closer to collective and similar understanding of this vision. The more members I engage with, the more that feeling of unity is present and this can give us all hope – both for the future of Montessori education and for the future of SAMA.

A huge benefit for all SAMA Member Schools – adverts in the Joburg's Child, Durban's Child and Cape Town's Child listing all SAMA member schools have just been placed on your behalf. Please give us feedback on how these ads worked for your school. Pretoria schools were included in the Joburg's Child and Eastern Cape schools in the Cape Town's Child. We are looking for similar publications (free distribution) in other areas so please assist us with contacts if you have them.

Looking forward to meeting many of you at the SAMA Conference in partnership with the IMC, in Knysna.

Warm regards

Sam Streak

SAMA President



**“Entering the Ecozoic Era through
Authenticity, Sustainability, Community and Mentorship”
2008 Annual SAMA Conference**

in partnership with the International Montessori Council (IMC)

26th April to 28th April 2008 in Knysna, South Africa

**Management Training and Professional Development Workshops to be held from 29th
April to 1st May 2008**

KEYNOTE SPEAKER:

Tim Seldin, President of the Montessori Foundation and Chair of the International Montessori Council.

Other Speakers include:

- Dr Lindsay van den Berg – The Imaginary Island
- Professor George Ellis – Teaching Out of the Box
- Susanne van Niekerk – Move to Learn...Learn to Move
 - Sam Streak – The Outdoor Classroom
- Sharon Caldwell – Science in the Primary Classroom
- Heidi van Staden – Practical Life in the Middle School
 - Taddy Beyleveld – Timelines as Your Thread
 - Mathew Rich – Compassion in the Casa
- Dr Margo de Kooker – Stress Management and Emotional Intelligence for Educators
 - The Childhoods Network – Sustainable Communities

Several well-known Montessori Equipment and other suppliers will be present to show you their latest products.

Download booking forms and further info at www.samontessori.org.za or email admin@samontessori.org.za

IMPORTANT CONFERENCE UPDATE

You will not believe that we have more than 170 bookings for the conference as at the end of the early bird booking special. This means we only have a **limited number of conference spaces available and we strongly recommend you book NOW to avoid disappointment.**

There is still accommodation available in the Knysna Montessori School Hostel and this has now been opened up to all (i.e. no limit on the number of delegates per region as everyone has been given an opportunity to take advantage of this special offer). Contact the school directly for accommodation info (044 3825316) and the SAMA Admin office with all other conference related queries (041 581 2874).

WE ARE CLOSING ALL BOOKINGS ON FRIDAY 11th APRIL 2008 and no bookings will be accepted after that date so that we can plan and prepare accordingly.

Educating for Peace – A Montessori Best Practice

By Sonnie Mc Farlane

SONNIE MCFARLAND IS A LEADER IN THE FIELD OF PEACE EDUCATION. Her background includes more than 30 years as a Montessori teacher and/or Head of School. She currently sits on the American Montessori Society Board, chairs the AMS Peace Committee, presents workshops and consults both nationally and internationally on holistic peace education, including the concepts in her two books, Honoring the Light of the Child - Activities to Nurture Peaceful Living Skills in Young Children and Shining Through - A Teacher's Handbook on Transformation

Article first published by [Montessori Life](#), January 2005. This article has been used in the SAMA National Newsletter with the permission and blessings of the author.

It is upon peace that the very life of the nation depends, perhaps even the progress or decay of our entire Civilization (Montessori, 1986)

Seventy two years ago in 1932 Maria Montessori made the above statement to the International Office of Education in Geneva, Switzerland. She had experienced the horrors and ravages of World War I and was speaking to the necessity of consciously educating children for peace. She strongly stated that the seeds of war and violence begin with young children who are not recognized for their intrinsic value.

When the independent life of the child is not recognized with its own characteristics and ends, when the adult man interprets these characteristics and ends, which are different from his, as being errors in the child which he must make speed to correct, there arises between the strong and the weak a struggle which is fatal to mankind. For it is verily upon the perfect and tranquil spiritual life of the child that depends the health or sickness of the soul, the strength or weakness of the character, the clearness or obscurity of the intellect. (Montessori, 1986)

She went on to say that,

But, when the intrinsic value of the child's personality has been recognized and he has been given room to expand, as in the case of our school (when the child creates for himself an environment suited to his spiritual growth), we have had the revelation of an entirely new child whose astonishing characteristics are the opposite of those that had hitherto been observed. We may, therefore, assert that it would be possible, by the renewing of education, to produce a better type of man, a man endowed with superior characteristics as if belonging to a new race.... Herein lays the part that education has to play in the struggle between war and peace.... (Montessori, 1986)

Since Maria Montessori began her first Children's House in Rome, 97 years ago, we have witnessed the unveiling of "new children" who fulfill their potentials and live life from centers of integrity and positive regard for all life. Indeed, they give us hope in the future for a more peaceful world. A vision we all share in these turbulent and often violent times of 2004.

As Montessori educators we have a great gift to offer the world-an educational philosophy and practice that encourages children to be peaceful within themselves, with others and the environment. This is accomplished by: 1) respecting the intrinsic nature of each child, 2) preparing learning environments to meet the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual needs of the children, and 3) having aware adults guide the process. When these three elements come together in synchronicity, the children thrive. They feel good about who they are, what they do and how they relate to others. They desire peace because they experience it within themselves.

While all the elements for peace are inherent in the Montessori classroom, there are ways to enhance and expand its manifestation in a more conscious manner. In this same speech to the International Office of Education, Maria Montessori called for a conscious effort to create a Science of Peace.

How strange it is therefore that there exists no science of peace, no science with an outward development comparable at least with the development of the science of war in the matter of armaments and strategy.... We must gather together all the elements of this new world and organize them into a science of peace. (Montessori, 1986)

These words challenged me to define “Peace,” and as I met with various audiences over the last few years, I raised the question-“What is peace?” Almost everyone had a different idea about what constituted peace. I then asked myself, how can we systematically and consciously educate our children for peace if we have difficulty defining it? I began playing with all these various aspects of peace and developed a holistic model to serve as a framework for peace education from birth through adulthood. It is called the Flower of Peace Model and is fully described in my new book, Honoring the Light of the Child - Activities to Nurture Peaceful Living Skills in Young Children. (McFarland, 2004)

By having a framework to describe the multi-faceted dimensions of peace education, we can more clearly understand what constitutes peaceful activities, what activities we are actually offering, and determine what additional areas we need to include in the classroom. We can also observe and measure the results of conscious implementation of peace activities and more readily share it with others.

This model is a holistic model which means that the outer world is seen as a reflection of the collective inner world of people. It is only through changing the hearts of individuals that lasting peace can be maintained. Political peace is only as good as the personal peace among the people.

The six basic elements of this model are: 1) Spirit of Love, 2) Basic Needs and Human Rights, 3) Self Awareness, 4) Community Awareness, 5) Cultural Awareness, and 6) Environmental Awareness.

Spirit of Love

The Spirit of Love refers to the connecting love that resides deep within all people, all of nature and throughout the universe. This model focuses on the interrelationship of all things with the Spirit of Love as the common bond. This is central to Montessori's Cosmic Education with its deep reverence and respect for all of life. This is probably the most important element of educating for peace. Almost everything we teach, if done from a perspective of love, awe and wonder, touches the heart and spirit of the children. When the heart is touched, peace emanates from it.

Basic Needs and Human Rights

In order for peace to flourish and basic human dignity to be sustained, people's basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, safety, health care, education work and freedom must be met. In our Montessori classrooms we focus on the basic needs of people and encourage the children to develop understanding, empathy and compassion for others. This work often culminates in various service learning projects where the children become involved in thoughtfully helping others. Many of our Montessori children become involved with various United Nations Non-Governmental Organizations (UNNGO's) that work to meet the basic needs and human rights of individuals around the world.

Self Awareness

Self Awareness activities are those that bring greater understanding and appreciation of the beauty, characteristics, talents and creative potential within each individual. In our Montessori classrooms, we focus on self awareness through the reflection of the light within each child, personal care, grace and courtesy, self-management skills, creative expression, journaling, self reflection, choice making, fostering independence, character education, silence and much more.

Community Awareness

Community Awareness activities focus on developing safe and nurturing communities that encourage respect for the essential nature of others and facilitates effective interpersonal relationships. In our Montessori classrooms we focus on community awareness through activities of grace and courtesy, sharing, cooperative learning, listening skills, empathy training, problem solving, group meetings, conflict resolution, service learning, mentoring, acknowledgements, and much more.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural Awareness activities focus on recognizing the connection or commonality among people, understanding and appreciating cultures, developing compassion for others and encouraging commitment and involvement when responsible action is called for. In our Montessori classrooms we focus on cultural

awareness through our work with the fundamental needs of people, human rights, similarity and diversity of other cultures, multi-cultural arts, service learning projects cultural exchanges, cultural immersion experiences and much more.

Environmental Awareness

Environmental Awareness activities focus on establishing an appreciation for the interconnectedness and fragility of our global environment, including our place in it. Further it focuses on nurturing empathy and care for the environment, encouraging responsible use of the environmental resources and promoting responsible engagement when action is called for. This work goes beyond the academic study of the elements of the environment by inspiring awe and wonder in the students. In our Montessori classrooms we focus on environmental awareness through many activities such as the study of the universe, the earth and its elements, botany and zoology, habitats, terrains, the care of plants and animals, gardening, recycling, ecology, use of resources, food chain, outdoor education, and much more.

Most of the activities described above are already embedded within the Montessori curriculum and materials at each plane of development Early Childhood (birth to six), Elementary (six to twelve), Adolescent (twelve to eighteen) and Adult (eighteen and beyond). It is important that we become aware of **what** we are presenting in the area of peace education and do our best to create a balance of activities within Basic Needs and Human Rights, Self Awareness, Community Awareness, Cultural Awareness and Environmental Awareness. It is also important that we look at **how** we are presenting these activities. Are we filled with the spirit of love? Are we inspiring wonder and awe in our students? The more we can answer yes to these questions the more we touch the hearts of the children and educate for peace.

In May of 1999 over 10,000 people, representing hundreds of organizations from around the world, came together in an historic gathering at The Hague in the Netherlands for the purpose of organizing a collaborative and cooperative global effort to begin to change our culture of violence to a culture of peace. Fifty agenda items came out of this gathering and the first agenda item spoke to the necessity for global peace education. The agenda item:

- Insists that peace education be made compulsory at all levels of the education system
- Demands that education ministries systematically implement peace education initiatives at a local and national level
- Calls on development assistance agencies to promote peace education as a component of their teacher training and materials production. (Hague Appeal for Peace, 1999)

Since that time a global network has formed where individuals and groups share and encourage each other in the implementation of peace education at every level throughout the world. The organization leading this effort is the Hague Appeal for Peace in New York City. In 2002, Dr. Betsy Coe, Pat Yonka and I were invited to speak to a gathering of international peace educators at the Hague Appeal for Peace. Our purpose was to share how Montessori schools implement peace education at all levels. We used the *Flower of Peace Model* as a framework to describe what we do.

At the conclusion of the conference we were inspired by the work that is going on around the world to bring a greater awareness of the need to educate for peace. We also realized that as Montessori educators we have a great deal to offer the global education community in this area. We are one of the few groups that address the young child and recognize the importance of educating for peace at this most sensitive stage of development. Most peace curriculums are designed for the elementary age children and beyond. As Montessori educators we offer excellent examples of experiential peace education as opposed to more traditional ways of learning about peace. Finally, Montessori philosophy and practice has been developing and refining itself for nearly 100 years, has schools worldwide and offers a replicable global model for educating children for peace.

The world of 2004 is crying out for a culture of peace and non violence. People are searching for alternatives and ways to move from a culture of violence to a culture of peace. We, as Montessori educators, have a great gift to share with the world-our best practice of Educating for Peace.

Shining Mountains Press (Peace Books) - shiningmts@aol.com

References

Montessori, Maria, (1986) *Peace and Education*, Adyar: Visanta Press, 3

Ibid. 20

Ibid. 20-21

Ibid. 3, 31

McFarland, Sonnie. (2004) *Honoring the Light of the Child - Activities to Nurture Peaceful Living Skills in Young Children*, Buena Vista: Shining Mountains Press.



100
steps for
Montessori

Thank you for all your beautiful contributions to the SAMA Centenary Celebration Book. We are rushing to put everything together properly to have the publication ready for the Knysna Conference. From the pages received, it promises to be an awesome compilation of memories and stories.

“Best Practices” By Jacky Price

A catch phrase that packs a powerful punch, set by the American Montessori Society (AMS), yet guides Montessori schools in a real and practical way. They require that schools constantly review their philosophies and procedure to make changes when necessary to meet the standards put forward by AMS affiliation and accreditation guidelines. Browsing the internet I came across many schools incorporating a best practices policy into their programmes. One good read is Tim Seldin’s article at www.montessori.org/story.php?id=48

I also remember Michael Dorer at the 2005 Cape Town Montessori conference, explain how to create a Best Practices grid to guide us in frequently reflecting on what we do in our schools and classrooms. He even informed us on practices to avoid in our schools, for example work sheets, broken work periods, early not using vertical age grouping of 3 to 6, 6 to 9 etc, insistence on a child achieving ‘mastery’ before next lesson and many more. Best practices also refers to financial, administrative structures of the school. (His views on shared with us in Cape Town and the Best Practice Grid referred to are included later in this newsletter)

The question is then what are we doing in maintaining true and real South African Montessori schools in following the needs of the children in our care? Let’s reflect on our “best practices” to ensure that we not only incorporate these in our school policy but practise them as well. There **should** be an abundance of written materials by our Southern African Montessori teachers who have had years of experience, as there are many books and articles in the traditional teaching field, but there is not. Let’s get it done.

Conversations with Montessorians



Taddy Beyleveld is the Head of School at Knysna Montessori School, our host school for the 2008 SAMA Conference. In addition to her training and many years experience in traditional education, she is Montessori trained at 3-6 and 9-12 levels. Under her direction, over the past ten years, the Knysna Montessori School has grown offering environments for Toddlers, 3-6, 6-9 and 9-12 years, to a Montessori Erdkinder High School for 12-15 years, and within the 15-18 year student group, the first matriculation group will complete their studies this year.

How did you become involved with Montessori education?

During the 1970s I was asked to train teaching students at a Bantu Teacher training college in Eshowe. There was a need for tools and methods which would work with the children being taught by these student teachers. I had been reading various educational methodologies in my own time for several years, and was particularly impressed by Montessori, although initially at the Eshowe college, I used more Steiner material because it was nature related and better suited to the environment.

Describe your involvement in Montessori over the years. Has it evolved? Stayed the same? Declined? What is your involvement today?

When I moved to Knysna, I opened a crèche and began formal study of Montessori, firstly with Sam in Port Elizabeth and later through Mercy Montessori. By the end of 1997 we decided to convert the growing crèche to Montessori. We started the Trust and became better established as the parents kept pushing for more growth. We went first into junior level and eventually into high school – I had no idea I would end up with a high school! I became more deeply involved in Montessori with every passing year, and this year I am delighted to be hosting the SAMA National Conference.

Did your Montessori training have a significant impact on your philosophy of education? A significant impact on who you are now?

Yes. It made me more aware that changes could be made within the framework of traditional educational teaching; changes which would make a significant difference. Montessori life and teaching philosophies make sense wherever they are applied.

Has experience in the classroom altered your philosophy or view of yourself?

Definitely. As a traditional teacher, you think the knowledge is yours and the classroom revolves around you. It is humbling to realise that in a Montessori environment, the children teach you, and you continually have to ask what you are doing wrong when behaviour in the classroom isn't working.

What do you see as the most significant accomplishment of the Montessori movement in South Africa in the past few years?

SAMA has got us all together. In the past there have been divisions based on, for example, where one trained, but now there is a shift in attitude towards sharing and the necessity of helping and supporting one another. It is, after all, a relatively small organisation within the educational scheme of things, albeit a very

valid and an important contribution, and we need to provide a united and dedicated front. Thanks to SAMA, we are more realistic and more open to ideas for promoting Montessori growth in South Africa.

And what about the most significant need to be addressed?

Training Centres. There is a need to improve the standards and practical work of students before they are entitled to their diplomas. Whilst they may know how to work with the Montessori equipment, this does not necessarily mean they are equipped to work in a Montessori classroom. For example, there is often too much freedom of speech allowed, and not enough emphasis on listening skills. This is a problem in general – not just in Montessori training, but the problem needs to be addressed by training centres.

What is your favourite book written by Maria Montessori?

“The Absorbent Mind”. I use it often for lectures and training, especially where Montessori writes about teachers. In the high school, we draw a lot from “From Childhood to Adolescence”.

What is your favourite book or resource of any type that you use or refer to often?

Polk Lillard's books are excellent – “Montessori Today” and also her book on the classroom diary. There are so many good resources. Those on discipline are becoming more Montessori which is nice. For the children in the 9-12s a favourite book is The Cay by Theodore Taylor – it is a wonderful story of teaching and tolerance.

Describe a favourite Montessori memory (from class, conferences etc)

One of my most startling and outstanding Montessori memories was the first time I witnessed the experience of a child's explosion into reading. I had read about it but never actually seen it happen. I was working with a group of children who had completed sandpaper letters, and suddenly, three weeks later, they were all reading. I was completely amazed. I could hardly believe that this system was actually working before my eyes!

Did you have a mentor, supervisor, teacher or student who has significantly affected you?

Sister Aloyse was enormously helpful when I started the High School. She took me all over the States to visit other Montessori schools and I was able to draw from her extensive knowledge and learn so much. One of her skills was bringing a sense of drama into the classroom in order to bring the sometimes dry process of education to life. She encouraged me to bring drama into everything, and after performing her play on Maria Montessori's life, our children now often create and perform plays from their timeline research. As for the students who have affected me, all my students have had a greater or lesser impact on both the school and me, but on a lighter note, I have to reflect that perhaps there are not many teachers who have changed a baby boy's nappies and then appointed him Head Boy in later years!

Do you have any particular memories of your first day(s) of teaching?

Yes - the initial chaos in the classroom! In the Absorbent Mind, Montessori writes about trying to introduce and concentrate on the equipment to allow order to emerge. My traditional teaching training had not prepared me for the ensuing chaos, but I held my tongue and miraculously, everything fell into place. Time and time again, I have been reminded to allow the child who cannot concentrate to find something to work with – no matter what it is, as long as he works with what he has chosen. A student in my high school couldn't focus and spent two weeks knitting. He was absorbed and concentrating; the cycle of non-concentration had been broken. Concentration and listening skills are vital keys.

What more could we as Montessori educators be doing?

I think in our Montessori schools we need to be more consistent about ground rules in the classroom and focus more on the importance of listening skills. In the broader context, I think we need to open up our rather

exclusive Montessori enclosure, and allow others to share the knowledge given to us by Montessori. The NCS and OBE are so “Montessorian” and we are in wonderfully strong position to help others, but we seem to want to hold on to what we have for ourselves instead of serving all children and improving all education. Traditional teachers are crying out for help. Montessori advocates educating the world, and yet we are limiting it, and limiting ourselves. This is just a question to put out there – I don’t have the answer but I believe its an important question to ask.

What do you think the future holds for Montessori education in Southern Africa?

Once again, I think we as Montessorian ought to think about global rather than exclusive education. The more we train teachers, the more we will bring about peace between people, and the accomplishment of Montessori’s dream. There is so much incredible value in many of the things we have learned to do. We are not sharing this value enough – we are not putting ourselves “out there”. I think its time we did.

Best Practice Key Points (Michael Dorer and Jonathan Wolff)
This document was distributed by Michael Dorer at the 2005 SAMA Conference

HOLISTIC

Montessori “Best Practice” is about seeing and serving the whole child, through the application of developmentally appropriate learning curricula, instruction, classroom leadership and prepared environment design.

MONTESSORI REFERENCED

Montessori “Best Practice” is rooted in and founded upon Dr Montessori’s principles of human development and learning. Any and all alterations or adaptations of the Montessori curriculum and instructional process must be compatible with Montessori theory and philosophy.

PROCESS BASED

The exploration of Montessori “Best Practice” must encompass a process that is objective, reflective, and research-based. To be comprehensive and balanced in our pedagogy we must inquire into current findings and practices both within and outside the Montessori educational culture.

Montessori teachers want to exercise the best possible practices. We have spent a great deal of time preparing ourselves in cooperation with rigorous teacher education centres. By the time we begin in the classroom we have high aspirations and desires to do well. So, why do we sometimes fall into poorer practices? What motivators are there, that can lead us into practices that vary from the best? If we begin to understand the motivations that lead us away from the best practices, we may be able to correct ourselves. This is a beginning list. Please add to it from your own experience and insight.

Some teacher motivators away from best practice:

- Control
- Personal favourite subjects or areas
- Personally distasteful or disliked subjects or areas
- Materials that either appeals or does not appeal
- Lack of understanding
- Favourite children
- Personal Ease
- Past or lingering habits
- Satisfy parents or other clientele (other than the children)
- Need for friendship
- Excessive order
- Lack of respect for children

Fifteen Practices to Avoid in Montessori Programmes

1. Single grade or dual grade programmes
2. Short or broken up work periods
3. Skill grouping
4. Split sessions
5. Worksheets or work books
6. Daily or weekly work plans
7. K-1 or K-1-2 Classes and also grade 6-7 and grade 6-7-8 programmes
8. Early childhood programmes that do not include 3 or 4 year olds.
9. Partial week programmes (one/two/three/four day programmes)
10. Five year olds nap in the afternoon

11. Specialist teachers for maths, sensorial, language or certain materials
12. Departmentalisation
13. Required daily work
14. Insistence on achievement of “mastery” before next lesson
15. Task cards, work cards, assignment cards etc (card driven classroom)

A Best Practice Grid (From Michael Dorer and Jonathan Wolff)

General Area	The Best Practices	Contra-indicators
The Children	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A multi-aged, multi-graded, heterogeneous group of students within the Planes of Development 2. Concentration is the first developmental priority 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Single grade or dual grade programmes; b. K-1 or K-1-2 Classes; grades 6-7 and grade 6-7-8 programmes c. Early Childhood programmes that do not include three and four year olds d. Skill grouping e. Excessive early emphasis on academics
The Adult	<p>The adult is an enlightened generalist;</p> <p>Physically models the presentation or less in whole or part;</p> <p>Models appropriate behaviour (voice etc);</p> <p>Lowered Body;</p> <p>Low Intervention;</p>	<p>Departmentalisation;</p> <p>Specialist teachers for maths, sensorial, language or certain materials;</p> <p>Talks through presentations;</p> <p>Adult behaviour not congruent with expectations;</p> <p>Hovering or standing while addressing children;</p> <p>High level of control and intrusion</p>
The Schedule	<p>The Great Period</p> <p>Quality Montessori programmes and environments throughout the day</p> <p>No split sessions</p> <p>Five day a week programme for early childhood and older</p>	<p>Short or frequently interrupted sessions;</p> <p>Poor quality “day care” before school, after school and in the afternoons;</p> <p>Five year olds naps in the afternoon;</p> <p>Separate morning and afternoon classes;</p> <p>Partial week programmes (one day, two day, three day and four day programmes)</p>
The Curriculum	<p>Practical Life, including grace and courtesy, is emphasized at all levels</p> <p>Elementary curriculum designed to spark the imagination</p> <p>All Montessori work is defined as learning activity – peer teaching, reflection etc</p> <p>Silence is practiced at all levels</p>	<p>Practical life is minimal, mostly pouring. It is offered only at the Early Childhood level</p> <p>Grace and Courtesy is offered only in the first few weeks</p> <p>The Elementary curriculum is overly didactic, focus on basic, measurable skills</p> <p>Peer teaching, reflection and other activities are denigrated.</p> <p>Silence is seldom or never practiced and only at the Early Childhood level.</p>

<p>Assessment</p>	<p>The adult sits out for regular daily observation</p> <p>The physical environment optimises observation and assessment</p> <p>60% or more of the class uses Montessori materials</p> <p>Student self assessment in self-worth and work is encouraged</p>	<p>Observation is minimal</p> <p>The physical environment may block observation</p> <p>Children are not using the Montessori materials</p> <p>Observation and assessment are entirely teacher driven</p>
<p>The Approach or Technique</p>	<p>Move from Concrete to Abstract – delay the abstract</p> <p>Whole to parts</p> <p>Following the child / developmentally appropriate work</p> <p>Minimal large group presentations</p> <p>Guided Discovery</p> <p>Self-created challenge</p> <p>Variations in material uses when possible</p> <p>Give only what is necessary</p> <p>Avoid the technical</p>	<p>Abstract precedes concrete</p> <p>Montessori material used to “explain” or clarify abstract material</p> <p>Initial focus on details</p> <p>Minimal or no observation</p> <p>Little understanding of planes of development or human needs and tendencies</p> <p>Dependence on large group presentations</p> <p>Insistence on achievement of “mastery” before the next lesson.</p> <p>Worksheets or workbooks. Work plans. Task cards, work cards, assignment cards etc</p> <p>Required daily work</p> <p>Only one proper use for every material; Rigid use of material</p> <p>Giving every variation and example</p> <p>Low emphasis on imagination in elementary</p> <p>Readiness exercises</p> <p>Test preparation</p>

Some thing to share

I would like to share this beautiful piece of scripture that a friend and colleague gave to me. I feel that it really embodies and communicates the spiritual preparation and dedication that we as Montessorians have for our children. I call it "The Teacher's Creed" and it hangs on the wall in our environment. It is a great source of inspiration and guidance on those trying days and it makes one proud to have taken the pathway to educating children in the Montessori way.

The Teacher's Creed

Toward you I will exercise
patience
and I will be kind.
I will not be jealous of your
talents
and I will not be boastful of
mine.
Toward you I will not be
arrogant or rude
but I will honour your dignity as
a person.
I will not insist on having my
own way in everything
but will cherish and
accommodate your uniqueness
as an individual.
I will not be irritable with you or
resentful toward you.
When it comes to you I will bear
all things,
I will always believe the good
about you,
I will endure everything from
you, because in Jesus
we belong to each other and I
will love you.

1 Corinthians 13: 4-7

**Ferial Middleton - Bugs and
Butterflies Montessori
(Helderkruijn)**

Special Interest Group Meetings

Gauteng SIG Meeting: 8th March 2008 held at Little Star Montessori in Parkhurst Johannesburg.

Our guest speaker was Jeanette Trollip who is an Art Instructor. She creatively brought her message through to the members that “**Anyone** can draw” using shapes and colours. If we prepared lessons using our senses, children will identify with that and will be very willing to sit through an exercise.

Each member was given a drawing exercise to complete and everyone had an opportunity to see that art can be fun. She explained that creativity comes from the left side of our brains and that there are exercises one can do to activate this side of the brain.

During the talk she explained the Art Elements she uses in her classes and they are:

- Line
- Shape & Form
- Colour – using only the primary colours
- Texture

Jeanette went on to explain that Art should be a ‘fun’ exercise and that we, as directress should learn to ask the correct questions and positively encourage the children to do their best. At the end of her talk we were reminded that the Art Program must be adapted to the child’s potential.

Everyone was asked to share any thoughts or ideas on ART.

Laurie Parr who is also a Montessori Lecturer spoke about Spiritual Preparation – this was a topic that everybody enjoyed. Laurie reminded us that as directresses we need at all times to keep our focus on the larger version of what we are doing on a daily basis.

She spoke about children who are spiritual beings that come into the world with adults who still need to be spiritually prepared. We need to be their guardians and to incorporate a spiritual element in every aspect of the environment.

For last part of the meeting we discussed ideas on creative cooking and baking for children. Baking can be used as an effective language preparation as well as teaching children to eat healthy by using vegetables & fruit in the recipes.

Since Practical Life exercises prepare the children to:

- To spoon
- To Pour
- To whisk
- To carry
- To clean up

The children can use these skills in a baking/cooking class. I showed members examples of simple recipes to use in a class.

An example of a very simple but delicious recipe for “CARROT SALAD”

Ingredients

- 4 Large carrots
- ¼ cup raisins

Dressing

- 1 orange
- ½ lemon
- 1 teaspoon honey
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Method

1. Peel & grate the carrots & combine the raisons
2. Squeeze the juice from the orange & lemon
3. In a shaker – Mix the juice, honey & olive oil together. Shake well
4. Pour the dressing over the grated carrots & raisins. Serve

At the end I thanked everyone for attending & wished them well for the rest of the term & until we meet again

Sumaya Tar Mahomed

Western Cape SIG Meeting held at Chameleons Montessori School on the beautiful Nitida Wine Farm in Durbanville

This meeting was well attended by mostly northern suburb members. We were very fortunate to have a passionate and dynamic guest speaker; Janis Ford, who gave invaluable insight into early indicators to learning difficulties. Janis is a prolific writer of children's stories, poems, plays and early readers and takes pride in her efforts to incorporate African Myths as part of the child's reading experiences.

Through years of teaching in the classroom and support teaching to children with difficulties Janis was driven to write a book for parents so that they too could detect any problems and provide the right stimulation through games and fun at home, rather than wait until it is late.

Janis believes in early intervention in supporting those children with difficulties and this intervention can come from the home if parents are properly informed. The book is very user friendly not only for parents, but for teachers as well. It is full of games and hints for parents and teachers to do to extend the child's learning experiences and potential.

It is called; MOMS & DADS You NEED this book! Accessible through emailing orders@trafford.com or contact Janis on 021 674 2595 or email her at janandju@mweb.co.za

Kwa-Zulu Natal SIG Meeting held at Oceanview Montessori School on 8th March 2008. The meeting was well-attended with 18 people present. The two speakers shared the following insights:

Mathematics Extensions – Anna Prentice

Anna gave a very interesting presentation on Mathematics extensions for quantity and numeral 1 – 10. Her ideas for a pre-maths shelf were particularly inspiring and she explained that although children entering our schools may be able to count and recognize numbers, many are not ready for the Montessori maths materials. A pre-maths shelf provides opportunities from to develop independence, order, concentration, classification, patterning, fine and gross motor skills etc.

Grade R Record Keeping

Lucy Watson handed out copies of the Assessment Standards for Grade R and gave a presentation detailing how these could be aligned to the Montessori curriculum. She also shared with the group her development of Portfolios of Evidence. She encouraged schools with Grade R learners to develop their Portfolios to pass on to the Grade 1 teachers as evidence of the enriched Montessori learning environment.

Date of Next Meeting

The date for the next meeting was set as Saturday 31 May 2008 at Ocean View Montessori School, 8.30 – 11.30 a.m.

Good Reads

Word Fun with South Africa is a 68 page fun/interactive and educational book. It is filled with interesting facts about all nine provinces and the Big Five as well as crosswords, word searches and other word games – and stunning pictures. The book is aimed at the 9 to 12 age group and is suitable for use in a Montessori classroom as it encourages independent thought and work. It is full colour and available directly from the publishers. You can contact Zed Davey at Unleashed Publishers unleashed.zd@mweb.co.za They are only R25 per full colour book and will serve as an excellent resource. (Submitted by Sam Streak)

Cooking for Birds by Diane Ward, Struik Publishers, Cape Town

This wonderful treasure of a book gives recipes to attract not only birds, but other creatures. This small recipe book gives many different ways in feeding and attracting birds into your garden in all seasons. Children can thread "Lekkar children in class. It inspired us to use the left over fruit slices and with a darning needle we threaded pieces onto string and hung in the garden. Laces" with fruit, popcorn and nuts; they can make "Moth Broth" or even create a worm home.

I found this book delightful, informative and easy to use with our our children in class.



There is something to be said to living in Cape Town. We have an island, a peninsula, mountains, bays and capes to name but a few and after building the broad stair horizontally upwards the three (almost four) year old exclaimed "it looks like Table Mountain" now that's what I can building on the child's own experiences

"Create the right environment and even small children will 'explode' into learning"

Maria Montessori

Members Page

This will be your page

Letters and comments from members as well as frequently questions and answers.

The intention behind this page is to offer members an opportunity to share / comment on the contents of previous newsletters. We often receive very positive feedback that we want to share with you. We sometimes get other comments or questions on articles included and want to create a forum to discuss these further.

Parents and members of the public also ask us many questions and we, as an Exco, are busy compiling answers to those Frequently Asked Questions all the time (mostly to simplify our jobs and to be giving consistent answers). The first of these FAQs is being uploaded onto the SAMA website for everyone to access.

To start with, we will use one example of an explanation on Montessori Middle Schools:

Montessori Middle School (by Heidi van Staden, SAMA General Secretary and Head of The Montessori Academy and College, Pretoria and Director of The Montessori Academy for Teacher Training, Southern Africa)

Maria Montessori envisioned a secondary programme for Montessori called the Erdkinder programme (Children of the Earth), and while her ideal was to have children between 12 and 15 leave their homes and ‘work the land’ – modern Montessori secondary programmes have adopted a slightly different approach.

In keeping with the traditional separation of primary and high schools in South Africa, the children from 9-12 move into a new environment. Some Montessori schools simply call their 12 – 18 programme ‘high school’. Another breakdown is to have a Middle school, which encompasses grades 7-9, and then high school which includes grades 10-12. These three year ages groups are consistent with Montessori’s planes of development. As children in Southern African Schools, and indeed around

the world spend their last years preparing for school leaving exams, the Montessori emphasis completes it’s curriculum during the Middle School phase.

The development of Middle School children is addressed on three broad levels – service to the community, earning money by operating and managing a small business (often linked to ‘land’ work), and personal development - all of which enshrine the Montessori Erdkinder principles.



Middle School learners from the Montessori Academy and College, Pretoria

ADVERTISING POLICY

A new advertising policy is being compiled at the moment to simplify and co-ordinate all advertising opportunities within all SAMA publications, including advertising on our website. Details of this will be published in the April newsletter to coincide with the start of the new SAMA year.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

It is that time of year again when SAMA membership renewals are due (1st April). You can download renewal forms from the SAMA website and please remember ALL MEMBERSHIP related queries are to be addressed to our membership administrator LORRAINE WRIGHT (lorraine@ilm.co.za). We will have a SAMA membership table at the conference for your convenience.

Marketing

We are importers and distributors of
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If you would like to advertise in
the SAMA Newsletter, please
send the relevant information
through to
admin@samontessori.org

Employment Wanted

A 3-9 Montessori directress with 5 years
experience is looking for a position in the 6-9
primary school environments. School locations
need to be in and around the Alberton and
Johannesburg South areas. Please contact Priya
Bhaga on 082 599 6129.

Vacancies

'My Montessori School - Vredendal' A new
Montessori School opening June 2008.
Looking for a passionate Montessori directress
who is looking to settle in a beautiful countryside
town. Needed for the group aged 1 - 4 years. We
occupy a large house with large gardens. We are
situated 300 km from Cape Town. We offer a
very competitive salary and can help with
accommodation. Contact Elizna Wiese at
0844008044, before 30 April 2008.

We are a corporate Montessori school in Crown
Mines, looking for three qualified & motivated
directresses, to start April 2008. Contact
Madeline 0114954601
PEDGARDALECRECHE2@edcon.co.za

Chameleon's Montessori School, in
Durbanville Cape Town is looking for an
Afternoon Program Co-ordinator. For more
information please contact Emma on **(021) 976
9611** or email
montessorichameleon's@hotmail.com.

For more information on Job Vacancies, Associate
Member(suppliers), Member schools and more, visit
SAMA website www.samontessori.org.za

Please ensure that all your SAMA staff members have the opportunity to read this newsletter.

The following products are available:

- **The SAMA Recommended Curriculum** – an integration of A Montessori Recommended Curriculum with the Revised National Curriculum Statement. For queries and to order, contact the SAMA office. The curriculum is printed and bound, and is available to paid up SAMA Institutional Members for R250.00 and to all other categories of membership for R1000.
- **SAMA Policies and Procedures CDs** – a comprehensive compilation of government laws, acts, and policies on CD 1 and examples from various Montessori schools and resources to use in school management on CD 2, at R50.00 each. These prices are for school members only. All other categories of membership may purchase the CDs for R500 per set.

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Focus for April issue: Fantasy, Imagination and Creativity
Deadline for submissions: 20 March

All articles are contributed by SAMA members. We would love to hear from our readers. Please send interesting snippets, valuable insights and amusing anecdotes to share with others and help make this newsletter an exciting and interesting one. If you feel you would like to contribute, please send to Jacky via: admin@samontessori.org.za