



June 2008

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Southern African Montessori Association

Message from the President

Dear SAMA Members

Many of you will be preparing for holidays or have just started your winter break and hopefully are able to rest, recoup and get a little time to breathe. As Montessorians, we all know there are not really such things as 'holidays' but believing in a possibility gets us through!

I was inspired today, after reading an article written by an American Montessori teacher, preparing for her summer holiday. Heidi Larson wrote, "As Montessori teachers, we are part of the triangle that makes a Montessori learning environment thrive. We work to empower children in the classroom but we must also strive to continue empowering ourselves. Give yourself opportunities to embrace and encourage your own light so it will shine more brightly and relish the rare opportunities to sit back and listen to your body breathe...."

And then when school starts in the spring, I'll see them all again, but it will never be exactly the same. The same configuration of wills and spirits and personalities that make up this class at this moment in time will never be repeated. They are unique, like dangling particples in the universe, a permanent adjunct to the composition that is the life of a teacher...All of us on this Earth are these ever-changing cosmic particples, unique in our design, but striving to feel empowered in our actions" (AMS Montessori Life, Vol. 20, No 2).

What a beautiful way to prepare ourselves for the start of the winter holidays and then the start of a new term – and all the moments that follow.

We hope to inspire you with this newsletter filled with ideas for practical life as well as lots of interesting bits and pieces in between. If you are fortunate enough to be having a winter break, enjoy the holidays!

Warm Regards

Sam Streak

SAMA President

The Practical Life Spiral Overview

Sam Streak

Based on a presentation by Judith Luman and Dorothy Paul given at the American Montessori Society Annual Conference, 2008, Washington DC. For a full version of their presentation, please email me and I can forward the pdf file to you. This was available on the AMS website but has now been removed. It is an excellent overview of the Practical Life Spiral. You can email me at president@samontessori.org.za

"The expert at anything was once a beginner." Maria Montessori

The normal work of each family within their home is referred to in our Montessori class as *practical life work*. It is regarded as the single most important aspect of a young child's education. It is the practice of doing the activities, which the child sees going on around them throughout the day. The child learns to work purposefully, using their body and mind to concentrate. It is through the practicing of these skills that the child lays the groundwork for all future physical, mental and academic work.

Practical Life for the toddler and 3-6 yr. old child...

Practical Life lessons develop the following:

- Grace and courtesy skills
- Concentration
- Coordination/ Refinement of Movement
- Sense of Order
- Independence
- Strengthening of the Will
- Love and Respect for our Work

Practical Life for the 6-9 yr. old child...

Lower Elementary:

- Contribution to family
- Self- confidence
- Awareness of others
- Pride in task completion
- Earning Money
- Simple Projects
- Serve others locally and globally

Practical Life for the 9-12 yr old child....

Upper Elementary:

- A 'means to an end'
- Cultural awareness
- A sense of success
- Organization skills to plan and run fundraisers, to coordinate school-wide events and programs, food drives, involvement in local and global charities and organizations
- Garden skills to plant/harvest produce
- School outreach, role modeling and mentoring
- Building Projects, i.e. sets, greenhouses, indoor and outdoor environments



- Cottage Enterprises, i.e. salad bars, lemonade stands, dances, holiday stores
- Planning functions

Refinement of Movement / Elementary Movement

"Movement and activity are natural functions of childhood, and learning comes through them. Everything in the Montessori school environment is arranged to this end, with a wide assortment of materials and the freedom to move about. Activity becomes increasingly important to development, and the young child needs many opportunities for observation, movement and exploration. It is the movement that starts the intellect working. Manipulative exercises involving the use of the hand and mind together make the child an active participant in his own learning process." Elizabeth Hainstock, *The Essential Montessori*, pg 76

Care of Self

"...these activities are called "exercises in practical life" because the children lead a practical life and do ordinary housework with a devotion and accuracy that becomes remarkably calm and dignified."

Maria Montessori (*Discovery of Child*, p 64,65)

For the 3-6 yr old child the care of self includes activities through which the child gains feedback on his own progress and development. Lessons include refining their movement, practicing dressing frames, basic grooming and toileting skills. This is a time when they are self absorbed and trying to maneuver their environment into something meaningful. These skills provide groundwork for all other academic and physical work.

For the 6-12 yr old student care of self extends in to family, society and the world. Care of self becomes about learning how things came to be and how they fit into the world. These issues include manners, religion, different cultures, their own social norms and world issues.

Care of Environment

"Nothing awakens foresight in a small child, who lives as a rule for the passing moment and without care for the morrow, so much as this. When he knows that animals have need of him that little plants will dry up if he does not water them, he binds together with a new thread of love (for) today's passing moments with those of the morrow." Maria Montessori (*Discovery of the Child*, pg. 71)

For the 3-6 yr. old child this is a time to practice basic movements which allow them to move freely and purposefully in their environment. They will now transfer the elementary movements into a sense of order and independence which allows them to explore and create meaningful connections to their environment.

For the 6-12 year old student they begin to involve themselves into issues of cooperation, peace work and local/global causes. This student welcomes challenge and his interests lie in translating his prior concrete skills into abstract problem solving. They now have a perspective of contribution and take their role in society seriously. Their work is with aim and has a means to an end. They tackle personal and moral issues through their relationships at home and school. They realize that their actions have consequences and they become more aware of the 'ripple' effect.

Questions for reflection

Do your practical life exercises reflect your culture, your community?

Are the practical life exercises meaningful and relevant to the children in your environment? Or are they paying lip service to this important element in a Montessori environment?

Are the children able to fulfil real cycles of activities? For example able to collect water and all the necessary materials to scrub sticky glue split on the floor. Do they self-regulate when they are feeling hungry or tired?

Are you the role model of grace and courtesies in your classroom? Do the children “catch you out” in the acts that you are trying to impart to them?

Are your expectations age appropriate? For example the child under 6 has not yet developed the ability for empathy, but we can still model behaviour with the pragmatism of compassion and thoughtfulness. We model through the lessons/stories or role-playing we do, remembering not to single any one child out.

Jacky



The exercises of practical life are formative activities, a work of adaptation to the environment. Such adaptation to the environment an efficient functioning therein is the very essence of a useful education. Maria Montessori

Practical Life in the High School

Searching the web I came across Meadow Montessori in Michigan, USA where they have a 3 year high school programme with the following curriculum divided into 4 sections:

- Academics
- Global View
- Community Action and Leadership
- Practical Life

To graduate the students under community action have to “*Start something new*”. Saying that true leadership happens when one starts something new – a new service, club, or activity.

Here are a few examples of what previous individual students have done for this.

- Built an observation hut in the meadow for elementary students to observe nature, comes with field guides.
- A walkathon sponsored by Meadow Montessori to assist the victims of Hurricane Katrina.
- Started a school newspaper, which is edited, written, and published by the upper elementary students.
- Coordinated a literacy project for the homeless
- Directed and produced a drama/comedy, which is hoped to be a continuing tradition
- Organized a clean-up of historic Sterling Island and to become an annual event
- Developed and implemented a Latin program for our upper elementary classrooms

This is what is said for Practical life “*We recognize that education involves real life skills. In the Montessori world, real life skills are taught from the earliest ages, so it only makes sense that we continue this practice in high school.*” And has the following headings:

- Driver's training (including basic mechanics)
- Basic culinary skills
- Personal finance
- Consumer education
- Physical education / activity
- Health

<http://www.meadowmontessori.org/>

Practical Life Exercises

Tania Coetzer
Montessori Academy

Yet, in point of fact, no other occupations which could be undertaken by the children ... could be more important for their whole development – physical, mental, and moral – than these “exercises of practical life” as they are called.

Standing, Maria Montessori, Her Life and Work, 1984, p. 213

Practical Life Exercises (hereafter referred to as PLE) helps a child to *adjust & adapt* to his/her environment, but more importantly, they *prepare children for Life*. PLE give children the ability and opportunity to refine their actions, to practice & develop the necessary skills to become independent, exercise & coordinate body movement, develop a keen concentration level and learn the value of Order in a “real world” (Standing, 1984, p. 214). PLE are exercises in which children can imitate & emulate activities usually reserved for “grown-ups”. This includes cleaning, dressing, and restoring order etc. For adults, these activities have only a preservative & restorative function, yet for the child it is so much more. For the child it is much more personal, the exercises are *developmental, creative & constructive* in that while the child carries them out, he /she is totally *engaged* in his/her preparation for life. The direct aims in each of the Practical Life Exercises are to refine the skill being learned e.g. to pour water or to dress her/himself or to behave in a socially acceptable way. The indirect aims include to improve fine motor control, eye-hand coordination, develop concentration, independence, self-confidence, and logic, sense of order, self-discipline and social skills, while preparing the child for later learning.

We know all this as Montessorians, but do we give the exercises the right amount of importance in our environments? Or are they just the precursor to Sensorial, Language and Mathematics?



The students of the 6-9 course at the Academy for Teacher Training discussed this during their Practical Life module in March 2008. Do we as Montessorians still believe in PLE as Montessori described it in the quote above? Or do we direct the children towards the rest of the areas and discourage any PLE after Math and Language have been introduced? Does the need for independence end when a child can spoon successfully, or clothe herself, or interrupt someone in a gracious manner? When a child's balance and co-ordination have been refined in a way where he can successfully do the bow frame and carry the water activities without spilling or bumping into anything, is he “cured” from being clumsy forever?

The answer the students have come up with lies in the difference between the developmental needs of a 3-6 child and a 6-9 child. The 3-6 child needs to practice his growing need for independence, on a physical, emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual level. We know he can do this through the PLE where he practices to tie his own shoes, lets Mom or Dad say goodbye at the gate, choose to do purposeful work spontaneously, work successfully in small groups and corrects his own mistakes without external judgment through the control of error inherent in the material. But instead of seeing the PLE as a sequence of activities coming to an end when a child turns six, I tend to agree with Judith Luman and Dorothy Paul¹ that the practical life activities should be a cycle that meets the new developmental needs of each developmental plane.

With a certain amount of maturity, the 6-9 child might not need to develop the kind of basic independence of the 3-6 child, but they still need to refine their independence, coordination and concentration to develop fully on their plane. Due to physical growth spurts they also sometimes go through a phase where their balance needs to be re-coordinated and will need to carry things, move objects and walk in a queue or on a line. Also, their social needs have changed, so they are much more attuned to others, wanting to add or contribute to their social unit. To

¹ Practical Life Spiral, AMS Annual Conference, Washington, DC, March 2008

learn the practical skill of sharing with the less fortunate, or helping those in need in which ever way one can will prepare them to be what Montessori envisioned; normalised social beings contributing to society. Learning to handle conflict situations between friends as well as the murky moral ground between right and wrong is another social skill the 6-9 child desperately needs to acquire. Taking care of their environment is sometimes a bigger challenge for the 6-9 children than it is for the littlies, because they are much more focused on acquiring social relationships than an ordered environment. Yet, if we direct them in refining the practice of an ordered environment, their concentration and intellectual independence develops as well.

In doing so we also meet the learning outcomes of the National Curriculum Statement in that the child develops Life Orientation skills concerning him-/herself in society. They learn health promotion, hygiene, physical and personal development, as well as orientation to the world of work. Economic management sciences can be included through the fact that the child practices to manage their time during work cycle, manage a small budget for tuck shop, and develop an understanding for their unique role in the family unit.

Montessori has been quoted in saying that *“The expert at anything was once a beginner”*. In their educational journey to the “expert” man or woman they are to become, it is our job to give the children as many opportunities to develop their whole being as possible. May we never forget that PLE is a powerful tool to do so, whether it is in the 3-6 or the 6-9 Environment.



“Just as the little child cries out “help me to do it by myself” through his actions, so does the older child demonstrate the same need at successive levels of sophistication as he grows.” Maria Montessori

3 Ideas for Practical Life Activities for the Elementary Child

Chore Wheel / Chore Cards in the classroom:

- Each child gets a chance as the ‘wheel’ turns to do the chores needed to keep the environment beautiful. (Or children choose random job cards from a hat.)
- Daily chores should be decided on WITH the children’s input.
- It needs to be made clear that the assistant staff are not just the cleaners.
- The children should take responsibility because, after all, it is THEIR environment.
- The class should be equipped with all the necessary cleaning equipment.

Presenters

- Children can present lessons to younger/new children. (Isn’t this one of the reasons that we have mixed age groups?)
- ‘Presenters’ may wear a special pin to show that they can be asked for help at any time.
- Agree with the children just what these presenters can be asked to do. (E.g. where to find the language cards, how to record work, help with reading etc.)

Cheque Books

- You will need to make actual cheque books – complete with counterfoils!
- Each child brings in e.g. R100.00 and enters this into their cheque book. (Money goes into the class ‘bank’.)
- A cheque is written out each time a purchase is made from the school store for e.g. a pencil, eraser, ruler or a school outing.
- ‘Presenters’ can help younger children to write cheques and reconcile their cheque books every month.

This is a great way of helping children realise the natural consequence for losing or not taking responsibility for their belongings. We encourage parents to make the children do some household chores to earn their cheque book money.

**Heidi van Staden
Montessori Academy**

What I Know About Life

Michael Josephson

The older I get, the less I know, but I know some things:

- I know I'm a work in progress and there will always be a gap between who I am and who I want to be.
- I know I don't have to be sick to get better, and every day brings opportunities to improve my life and my character.
- I know it's easier to talk about integrity than to live it, and the true test is my willingness to do the right thing even when it costs more than I want to pay.
- I know character is more important than competence.
- I know it takes years to build up trust and only seconds to destroy it.
- I know I often judge myself by my best intentions and most noble acts, but I'll be judged by my last worst act.
- I know I can't control what will happen to me, but I have a lot to say about what happens in me.
- I know pain is inevitable, but suffering is optional.
- I know attitudes, both good and bad, are contagious.
- I know winning is more than coming in first, and there's no real victory without honour.
- I know it takes a conscientious effort to be kind, but kindness changes lives.
- I know neither gratitude nor forgiveness comes naturally; both often require acts of will.
- I know real success is being significant.
- I know happiness is deeper and more enduring than either pleasure or fun, and I'm generally as happy as I'm willing to be.
- I know the surest road to happiness is good relationships, and the best way to have good relationships is to be a good person.

Some of Exco's current projects (all works in progress!)

- A simple guide on how to set up a Montessori school
- The draft document of our Best Practice Guidelines to be workshopped at 3rd and 4th Term regional meetings
- A brochure for parents and members of the public on the basics of Montessori and SAMA
- A Salary and Fee Survey
- Improving our website
- Exploring advertising opportunities for SAMA and all its members
- Conference Planning for Cape Town, 2009

Currently we are collaborating together to put a **"Best Practices"** document together and as members we ask what you think should be included in this. Please send any contributions or questions we should be exploring through to president@samontessori.org.za

"The environment itself will teach the child, if every error he makes is manifest to him, without the intervention of a parent or teacher, who should remain a quiet observer of all that happens"

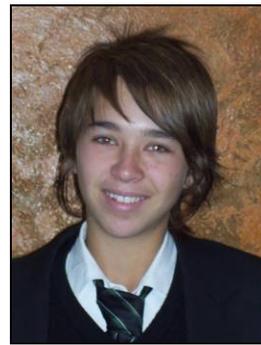
Maria Montessori



Conversations with Montessorians



Cherry – in the front, aged 4...



Cherry now at almost 17!

Cherry Smith, a Montessori graduate

Cherry was a learner at the Port Elizabeth Montessori School from the day its doors opened at the beginning of 1995 to the end of her primary schooling 10 years later (end of 2004). Cherry, along with a group of 4 other children, inspired me to open our primary section in 1998 and has continued to offer inspiration through her attitude, energy and presence in my life. She continues to visit as often as possible and is now in Grade 11 at Pearson High School (a traditional, government school in Port Elizabeth). Cherry was awarded honours for academic excellence earlier this year and has set herself amazing goals for the future. These questions were submitted by the Exco and Cherry answered them at home and then with me over a cup of coffee (she had rooibos!). Hopefully you get a sense of just what an incredible human being she is! (Submitted by Sam Streak)

How has your experience in Montessori helped you cope with the big challenges of being a teenager - things like peer-pressure, behaviour (drugs, sex etc.), issues of friendship, loyalty etc.?

My experience in Montessori has made me an extremely independent person and a leader. I am unique and strive to be different and therefore I am not influenced by others. I am on my own mission and am ambitious. I also only surround myself with the 'right' people so I hardly ever find myself in difficult situations.

Has Montessori given you a different attitude to global issues than your peers who were in a traditional school? Is this a good or bad thing?

Yes – being in Montessori has given me a different attitude. We were taught to care for the environment and it was really part of our daily life. We learnt to appreciate the world, and understand it but it was just there all the time. A lot of kids from traditional schools just don't care – they litter and also have bad attitudes from home. It is seen as not being "cool" to care about nature or the world.

What are the challenges that young people face in traditional schools that a Montessori school would be able to support them with?

They are not interested in utilizing their potential...All kids need Montessori. Generally, most kids are unmotivated and don't even try. The weird thing is

that if they did try, they would realize it is really not that hard to do well, be happy and achieve stuff!

How has your Montessori experience in Primary School prepared you for High School? Do you think that you are able to cope better? Why?

Montessori prepared me in the best way ever! I had such a great start that really moulded my character and personality – my experience at Montessori made me who I am today and taught me to value the right things. Not only did I gain a respect for 'work' (our school motto was learning to love to learn), but also had amazing life lessons and to have a positive attitude towards everything. Montessori gives you a way to think, feel and act. I went into high school with the right attitude for school, work, and learning and because of this I basically did well automatically. This is a skill and you don't just cope better – you cope exceptionally well. And it is not just like this is for school – it applies to all situations.

Having had experience in a traditional school for a while now, do you think that Montessori education should be adopted as the preferred method of education in South(ern) Africa? Why?

Definitely! It will build stronger people who are more likely to succeed. With the right attitude and character from school, anything is possible!

What learning area/s in the Montessori curriculum do you think gave you the most advantage now that you are in a traditional high school?

I thought about this for a long time and realized it was everything. For me it was all about having awesome variety, high standards, a wonderful environment and great teachers. Our school really gave us a lot of different experiences and opportunities from drama to yoga to music to cultural to...everything!

If you compare yourself and your work ethic to your non-Montessori peers, how do you think you, or your approach are different?

I have determination, ambition, time and other management skills. And the drive to succeed and be the best I can be. I have a great work ethic and value knowledge. I love and want to learn. This now means good grades! I want to succeed and do well.

Non-Montessori (and this is generalising a bit!) kids will settle for average and even failing. They would rather not work unless forced to and probably don't know the basic skills of how to learn properly. For the most part, the people in my class don't apply themselves and really don't focus in class. This was one of the hardest things for me to deal with when I went from Montessori to a traditional school.

Now being in a traditional environment, what if anything, would you change in the Montessori environment to prepare you for the demands of this traditional environment?

Really, there is nothing I would change. Yes the transition to a traditional high school was tough but it was good for me. It taught me how to adapt and was a change for the better because I am a stronger person from it. The hardest part for me was the social aspect – I found most people really immature and had to struggle a bit to find like-minded people.

Did you feel different for the type of school you attended? How do you think it has helped you with high school? And your understanding of your world around you? What do you think you have been prepared for the best?

Yes I do feel different and I have learnt to embrace my differences. It has strengthened me and built ambition. I have always been extremely independent and head-strong – I have always had this naturally and never wanted to be like anyone else! Montessori allowed me that and I truly believe I am unique! This has helped me a lot, especially with being independent. I am not influenced by others – I am on my own mission in life! It has also helped me have the right people around me and to choose friends better and carefully. I think I have a great outlook on life. I value the right things and I know I am going to go somewhere! I have prepared for the best life and know I can handle anything.

Does your view of school differ from those of your friends? Why/Why not?

I love and value school greatly! Most of my circle of friends does too which is why I surround myself with people with similar values to me. Generally though, the other kids think it is just another motion you have

got to go through. They are not really interested or bothered about school.

What kind of memories do you hold significant to your Montessori education?

For me it was a family away from home. There are lots of memories about great friends (and all our nonsense we got up to over 10 years!); amazing role models in our teachers and lots of unique experiences like camps, outings, visitors.

When you enter parenthood do you think you will be sending your child to a Montessori school and if so is there anything particular you would look for in that school?

DEFINITELY! I would want a great teacher as dedicated as Sam was to me and all my friends and the rest of the entire school!

Compare your relationship with your teachers and friends in Montessori and the traditional high school you are in now.

My relationships with teachers at Montessori – special and personal. At school now – I respect them and let them do their job. My relationships with friends at Montessori – 10 years of solid, deep, wonderful friendships. Really strong! I know if we got together again now it would be as if not much had changed. It is a really special bond through Montessori that we will have forever. At high school now, I have friendships that have built up slowly over the years but they are nothing compared to Montessori. I find it very hard to find people who are on the same wavelength as me and that I can connect really well with.

What was the most difficult part about moving from Montessori to a traditional high school?

Leaving such a wonderful, perfect place is like leaving home! To go to a place where they want you all to be "normal", be uniform and not different. Also the realisation of how immature everyone is and that feeling of just not belonging there. But I figured it out and worked on my own attitude to get through it.

Did you find it difficult to go from the relative freedom of a Montessori class to doing things like exams? Why/Why not?

At first yes but you quickly adjust. Those things are easy to figure out when you apply your knowledge and manage the situation properly.

What are the most valuable lessons you learnt in Montessori that you will carry with you (hopefully for the rest of your life)?

Montessori is about the way you think, act and feel. It teaches you compassion for others and the world. It showed me to be the best I can be, that I am unique and strive to be that way! With the right attitude anything is possible.

Thanks Cherry, your individuality and insights inspire us to continue to keep the Montessori field blooming.

“The Blind Men and the Elephant”

from John Godfrey Saxe's (1816-1887) version of the famous Indian legend.

*It was six men of Indostan
To learning much inclined,
Who went to see the Elephant
(Though all of them were blind),
That each by observation
Might satisfy his mind.*

*The First approached the Elephant,
And happening to fall
Against his broad and sturdy side,
At once began to bawl:
"God bless me! but the Elephant
Is very like a wall!"*

*The Second, feeling of the tusk
Cried, "Ho! what have we here,
So very round and smooth and sharp?
To me 'tis mighty clear
This wonder of an Elephant
Is very like a spear!"*

*The Third approached the animal,
And happening to take
The squirming trunk within his hands,
Thus boldly up he spake:
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a snake!"*

*The Fourth reached out an eager
hand,
And felt about the knee:
"What most this wondrous beast is
like
Is mighty plain," quoth he;
"'Tis clear enough the Elephant
Is very like a tree!"*

*The Fifth, who chanced to touch the
ear,
Said: "E'en the blindest man
Can tell what this resembles most;
Deny the fact who can,
This marvel of an Elephant
Is very like a fan!"*

*The Sixth no sooner had begun
About the beast to grope,
Than, seizing on the swinging tail
That fell within his scope.
"I see," quoth he, "the Elephant
Is very like a rope!"*

*And so these men of Indostan
Disputed loud and long,
Each in his own opinion
Exceeding stiff and strong,
Though each was partly in the right,
And all were in the wrong!*

The parable originated in China during the Han dynasty. There is an African version of this tale as well as the Indian version.

Tim Seldin mentioned this parable in one of his talks at the recent SAMA Conference and it is the basis for a brilliant presentation from an AMI Conference delivered by Annette Haines entitled 'The Totality of Montessori'. This article was included on the conference CD of notes given to each conference delegate (in the folder called articles)

The parable serves as a reminder of how limited we are when we only look at one part rather than the whole picture. One of the learners in our 9-12 class did the accompanying illustration.

Submitted by Sam Streak, Port Elizabeth Montessori School

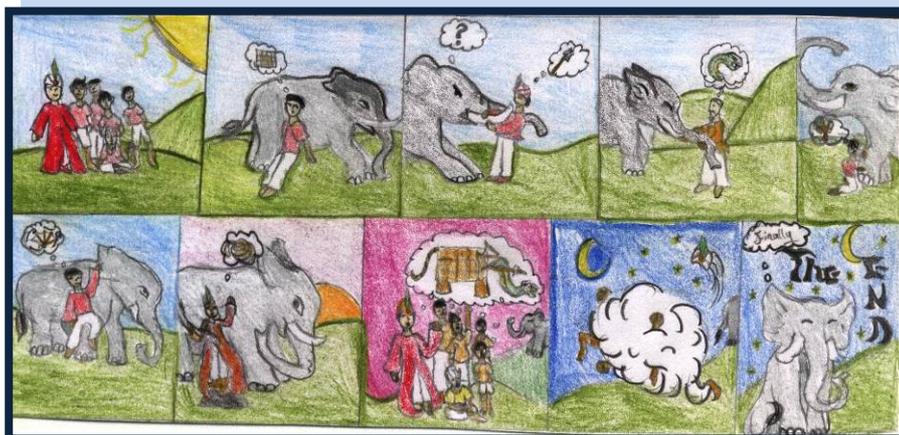


Illustration by Ashleigh Britz, 13 years old, Port Elizabeth Montessori School

"The exercises of practical life are formative activities. They involve inspiration, repetition, and concentration on precise details"
Paula Polk Lillard

Regional Meetings

KZN: Oceanview

Held on the 31st May 2009, members enjoyed a talk on Movement by Susanne Van Niekerk. It was a very successful meeting and Oceanview would like to thank all members that attended.

Western Cape: Stepping Stones

Gayle & Jacky represented Exco on the 7th June. Anne Cawood was the guest speaker and she shared her knowledge on the topic "Children Need Boundaries".

Gauteng North & South: Maria Montessori House

Members from Pretoria & Johannesburg joined together on the 7th June. Anne O'Regan who is the Principal of Maria Montessori House hosted a talk on "Embracing Movement & Whole Brain Learning in a Montessori Classroom"

I would like to thank all the host school for their support & all members for attending the meetings!

Sumaya.
Host School Representative.

Host Schools

Hi from your neighbouring country, NAMIBIA (the beautiful, exotic, tranquil, scenic, Namibia). Do you recall Terra Incognita Island (Lindsay's presentation of the Imaginary Island, Conference 2008)? Well, Namibia has 4 craters, the world's largest meteorite, islands off the coast, one of the most desolate coast lines (oh the stories one can tell about this coast), the world's largest sand dunes, the oldest desert as well as the second largest canyon in the world, there is also a famous arch called Bogenfells and then there's still Etosha Pan, not to speak of our desert elephants one can observe in the real wild (no fences) hear their tummies churning at night, putting your car into reverse at the speed of lighting as one charges you (with your dear wife shouting hold on I need to take a photo!!!!).

Windhoek, the capital city, is located in the heart of Namibia. This is where you will find our Montessori school by the curious name of Little Penguins. (Penguins actually frequent our coast). The school building is located in an old house built in 1952 with a few rooms added on in later years. The school comprises of two sections. A toddlers section (the Waddle Ducks) accommodating children from the age of 18 months to 3 years. They then move over to our pre-primary section and stay with us until they enter Grade one, usually at the age of 6 turning 7. The staff comprises of 11 members, most of whom are second career Moms.



Currently 92 children attend our school from diverse cultures including 10 different nationalities. During the years we have been privileged to give Montessori education to children from as far a field as Russia, Belize, New Zealand, Australia, Nepal, India, Sweden, Finland, Norway, Netherlands, Italy, Denmark, Germany, Britain, France, America, Cuba, Spain, Austria, Colombia, Nicaragua, Lebanon, Somalia, Yemen, Sudan, Angolan, Zimbabwe, Kenya and Eritrea. (A highlight, as regards foreign pupils, was a four year old Swedish little girl who attended a Montessori school in Sweden. She walked into our school, looked around then spied the Practical Life area, sat down and starting working).

We will try our best to host bi-annual SIG meetings, bearing in mind Luderitz is 900 km from Windhoek and Walvis Bay is close to 400 km away.

So if ever you are passing through our beautiful country give us a call. We enjoy receiving 'family'.

Sophia van Zyl



SAMA Regional Meetings 2008/2009

Western Cape Deepa	Eastern/Southern Cape Sam	Gauteng South Anne	Gauteng North Heidi	KZN Rose & Lucy
7 th June 08		7 th June 08	n/a	31 st May 08
2 nd August 08	16 th August 08	6 th Sept 08	2 nd Aug 08	23 rd Aug 08
25 th Oct 08	15 Nov 08	1 st Nov 08	18 th Oct	18 th October
Heads Of School Breakfast 8 th Nov 08	Heads of School Breakfast 15 Nov 08	Heads Of School Breakfast 8 th Nov 08	Heads Of School Breakfast 6 th Dec 08	Heads Of School Breakfast 22 Nov 08
7 th Feb 2009	21 Feb 2009	14 th Mar 2009	7 th Mar 2009	7 th Mar 2009

Practical Life for teachers... RSVP for SAMA regional meetings for obvious reasons...please...

Members Page

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

Cell phone etiquette.

Does anyone have a ruling about cell phones? All I know is that they have insidiously become an extension of our body parts!

I have in the past been very firm about use of cell phones by parents when dropping their children or collecting from school. I patiently explain the importance of this time to a child and a loving way to communicate their child's importance to them is to not make use of the phone at these precious times. I was saddened recently whilst visiting a school to observe a father sitting in the book corner with his son, reading a story, when he answered a call and proceeded to have a conversation. His son eventually gave up and walked away. I need not spell out the message imparted between father and child here.

This is a constant battle and each year one has to inform new parents of the why's of a no phone policy. I ask that parents do not use their phone at dropping and collecting times of their children, all part of bringing grace and courtesies from the school into the home.

Jacky



normalisati on

Storage of
garden
implements

"Such experience is not just play. It is work he must do in order to grow up."

Maria Montessori

To alleviate the problem of painting easels building up with layers of hard paint and looking unsightly; have a damp face cloth available which allows the children to wipe the easel clean after use.



The plumbing section of the hardware store is an Aladdin's cave of useful materials!

There are two little
magic words
That opens any door
with ease
One little word is thanks.
The other little word is
please.

Focus for July issue: Normalisation and Self-discipline
Deadline for submissions: 20 July

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

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If you would like to advertise in
the SAMA Newsletter, please
send the relevant information
through to

admin@samontessori.org

Vacancies

Centurion Montessori has a position available for a
3 - 6 Montessori Directress. To start October 2008 or
January 2009. Please contact Zinita on **(012) 653-
4177, 083 453 1115** or e-mail:

montessori@caw.co.za

The Field and Study Montessori Pre-School
requires a mature, dedicated and experienced
Montessori Directress. Please contact Julia On
083 6006833 or e mail your CV to:

nebula@global.co.za

Swirl Art Centre needs Montessori staff to work
part-time flexi hours. Arts, crafts, music, coffee shop,
reception; training given; own transport.

Eastgate area, R40/hr neg. Please send your CV to
Claire: swirl@vodamail.co.za

Montessori Minds, Edenvale. Montessori
Directress required to start immediately in a 3-6
year old classroom environment. Contact Robyn
083 968 8596 / 011-452 9753

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

Training



TWO-DAY MOVEMENT TRAINING WORKSHOPS

- * Neuro-educational development lecture
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 - * Categories of Movement
- * Preparing the child for Learning Readiness
 - * Nutrition and Supplementation
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 - * Outdoor Movement Programme
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Upcoming workshops:

CAPE TOWN: 9 and 10 August 2008

GAUTENG: 23 and 24 August 2008

KZN (Durban): 6 and 7 September 2008

SWAZILAND: 13 and 14 September 2008

Please contact **Susanne van Niekerk** on 082 900
3192 or susannev@mweb.co.za for bookings and
further information.

Vacancies

Head teacher

We are an Elementary and Nursery School based in Lagos, Nigeria with a Christian bias. Our Nursery is a fully equipped vertically grouped Montessori school with approximately 74 children and 6 qualified Montessori teachers, while the Elementary section which offers a blend of the Nigerian and British curriculum has about 30 children on roll. The school has a total capacity of about 100 children in the Nursery and 240 in the elementary section. Located in a serene and quiet area, the school occupies spacious grounds of about 3 acres with ample space for outdoor play for the children and is currently planning for inclusion of facilities like a swimming pool & tennis court amongst others.

We are looking for an experienced Head teacher who has worked in an independent mainstream school setting with a minimum of 3 years management experience preferably with a Montessori qualification for 2 ½ through 6 years. As the position will be to assist in the growth of the school in future, you will need to have a strong focus providing staff with a supportive working environment.

If you are looking for a new challenge and opportunity to work in West Africa, to develop this futuristic school, have lots of ideas and believe in helping children to maximise their potential through individualized teaching & differentiation – then this could be the post for you!

You will be responsible for the smooth running of the school, some of your responsibilities will include:

- To achieve and maintain high standards of instruction
- To review curriculum as necessary and ensure proper implementation of the same.
- To effectively lead and manage the staff team, participate in staff recruitment and manage staff retention
- To effectively manage the budget and occupancy levels to ensure the school is profitable
- To ensure all policies are implemented and adhered to at all times
- To Implement an effective parent involvement programme

You will need to have the following qualifications, training and experience:

- A minimum of Bachelors degree in any discipline with a PDGE in Primary education or, a Bachelor's degree in Education from a recognised university.
- Evidence of continued professional development
- Excellent knowledge and understanding of what elementary aged children need to know
- Excellent organisational skills with the ability to work to targets and deadlines
- Good time management skills
- Excellent communication & organisational skills
- Strong people management skills with the ability to lead and motivate a staff team
- Package: Excellent pay, with a furnished apartment , official car and driver + benefits

Contact: Matilda Obokhai 0768824040
e-mail: mat.tunde@yahoo.com
69 Villa Toulouse
Eagle Trace Estate
Dainfern Valley
Fourways.

Available SAMA Products:

- **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.
- **SAMA Parents Handbook** – a full colour, beautiful publication, useful to parents as an introduction to Montessori Education. This booklet covers basic Montessori philosophy and is the ideal starting point for parent education. These handbooks are available to SAMA School Members only at R25 per copy. For orders of 30 or more, additional postage will be added.
- **SAMA Centenary Scrapbook.** A beautiful full colour compilation of Southern African Centenary and 100 steps Stories and photos. Cost R250 per book plus R25 package and postage.

For more details contact: admin@samontessori.org.za

Audio Recordings of the SAMA Conference are now available

Most of the presentations for the 3 days of conference were recorded as MP3 files and are available on one CD for only R150 incl. postage.

Although the recordings were not done professionally (i.e. they are not edited), the sound quality is good and almost all of the talks contain the essence of what the speakers referred to. It is an excellent reference to go with the CD of speakers notes given to all conference delegates.

Please note that the audio CD will play off all computers but only certain CD players (ones that can accommodate MP3 files).

To order, you need to make your payment of R150 into the SAMA bank account, send your proof of payment through to Deirdre in the admin office (admin@samontessori.org.za or fax 041 5812874).

Orders close on the 31st July 2008. All orders will then be dispatched by 5th August 2008.

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