



July/August 2010

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South African Montessori Association

Message from the President:

Dear Montessorians

With the soccer World Cup behind us, and the third term well underway, I feel that I should welcome you all back to the world of ‘normality’. Perhaps as adults, we also need to get back into our prepared environments and ‘normalise’ ourselves to our work again after such a break!

I have been in Cleveland, Ohio for the past 4 weeks taking the ‘Orientation to Adolescence’ training with David Khan through NAMTA (North American Montessori Teachers Association). I have had the privilege of lectures and practical experience with a wide range of highly experienced Montessorians and the course work has taken us through all of Montessori’s planes of development. It is interesting to hear some of the trainer’s speak of their conversations with Mario Montessori! Being steeped in the philosophy for the past month has really helped me to see the proverbial wood for the trees, and I urge you all to go back to your texts and read a meaningful chapter.

I have submitted something for each plane of development from my training, and cannot wait to return and share more with you all. I know that many of you who attended the Sesfikile Conference were so inspired by the presentations and the idea of continuing into Primary, and I hope that with the article on the adolescent you will consider moving into the third plane as well - it is truly a very special age group!

Larry and Pat Schaefer welcomed me to their home in Minnesota over the 4th of July weekend, and asked me to please extend a special greeting to the Montessorians of South Africa who made their ‘trip of a lifetime’ so special. You will always have a place in their hearts, and the fondness with which they speak of their time with you all is very touching. It was moving for me to hear them speak of the grace and courtesy extended by our members – and I was so proud for each and every one of you and your kindness and hospitality.

In essence, I have found through my interactions with Montessorians from all over the world that we are all striving to give the best we can to the children placed in our care. We all belong to Montessori associations, go to meetings in our regions, attend conferences to inspire and energise us and look at ways of improving what we offer all of the time. My challenge to you this month is to reflect on what you can change in your school on a social, emotional and spiritual level. What can you do that will make a difference (in the most Montessori way possible) to meet the needs of the children in your environments. This is not as easy as buying a new set of Montessori sensorial materials that instantly brighten a room and look great. This is about looking inward to yourselves and reflecting on *your* cosmic task so that you can recognise and attend to the needs of the child. Once again, I urge you back to your Montessori books! Read what Montessori says about the work of the child and the work of man (The Secret of Childhood) or read the first four chapters of the Absorbent Mind. This reflection reading will definitely inspire you.

Wishing you a month of happy Montessori reading

Heidi van Staden
SAMA President

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Montessori for Children with Hearing Impairments

Petra von Oehsen; a Montessori Directress with her own preschool and trainer from Windhoek who has worked extensively with children with hearing impairments and shares some of her ideas with us.

The Association for **C**hildren with **L**anguage, **S**peech and **H**earing Impairments, CLaSH, was founded in 1989 and is an officially registered Namibian welfare organisation. CLaSH plays a unique role in Namibia's civil society in two fundamental ways: They are the only provider of pre-school education designed especially for deaf children and the only NGO in Namibia representing and working with children with language speech and hearing impairments.

About 5 years ago we began to change the pre-school classroom into a Montessori environment. In co-operation with teachers who are specialized in deaf education we developed a programme and materials which follow the Montessori approach and cater for the special needs of deaf or hard of hearing children.

Montessori understood education as a help to life. Deaf or hard of hearing children have to be prepared for life just like all other children.

They can either be integrated in a classroom together with hearing children or they can have their own classroom. There are numerous benefits for a deaf child to be in a Montessori environment:

- **Vertical Grouping**
Due to the vertical age grouping (one class for 3-6 years, then 6-9yrs etc) in a Montessori classroom all children work at different levels and do different exercises. So a deaf child doing a specific exercise, e.g. learning how to clean hearing aids, would just blend in.
- **Individual Presentations**
Almost all exercises are done on an individual basis. So it would be absolutely normal for a deaf child to have his or her single lessons in sign language.
- **Silent Presentations**
All first presentations of the educational materials are done in silence. The child watches while the directress shows exactly how something is done. Then it is the child's turn to repeat the activity. Only at a later stage the language is introduced, i.e. speech for the hearing children and sign language for the deaf children.
- **Sensorial Education**
Children explore their world through their senses. From birth myriads of sensorial impressions enter the child's mind. The sensorial materials designed by Dr. Montessori assist the child to learn to compare and discriminate between these different impressions and classify and categorize what is around them. Montessori developed her sensorial materials after she thoroughly had studied the works of the two French physicians and educationists Jean Itard and Edouard Seguin. Itard is regarded as founder of special education. Both, Itard and Seguin did research in the field of educating deaf mutes. If one sense is not functioning properly they others have to compensate. Deaf children rely especially on their sight and on their hands. The sensorial materials assist any child to bring order into all the sensorial impressions, but they are vitally important for a deaf or hard of hearing child.
- **Practical Life Exercises (especially important at pre-school age)**
Homes are usually designed for adult needs and the children a seldom encouraged to participate in daily life activities. Dr. Montessori observed that children had most fun when their play developed **early life skills**, and they felt most carefree when they were given the **means** and the **freedom** to care for themselves. Based on these observations she designed the exercises of Practical Life. They are everyday simple activities, which are performed by adults daily in order to maintain their environment and which aid a child's holistic development. Children who play and work with these practical life activities develop a good sense of order, concentration, gross and fine motor skills, social skills, self-esteem, they become independent and their intellect develops.
- **Montessori Peace Curriculum**
Besides assisting the child to adapt to his or her own culture Maria Montessori also believed that it is very important that children learn about other cultures. By looking at both, the common needs of people as well as their differences in language, clothing, art etc. we send the message that it is OK to be different. We celebrate cultural diversity.
- **Respect**
In a Montessori classroom we facilitate the development of self-respect. Quite important here in Namibia, where deaf people have to cope with prejudices of others. We assist the development of self respect, respect for others with all their differences and for our environment.



The Montessori Method of education has proven that it works for over a century. It works for any child in any culture at any age.

The Importance of Montessori Philosophy

Heidi van Staden who is presently attending the Adolescent Orientation Course in Cleveland Ohio has sent us the following article. We apologise for its length and American spelling, but felt it worth reading.

As Heidi says, "This comes from one of THE MOST inspiring men I have ever met. He is one of the lecturers on the Adolescent Orientation Course that I am taking, and teaches at the Hershey Montessori Farm School. This is part of a talk he gave us and has given us permission to use it."

Economy by James Webster

Planting potatoes is a fine example of what I seek in an exercise of school Economy. I do not call this work "the Micro-Economy," which to me seems to imply both that the work is a small stream, child-sized, too safe from the beautiful and stormy seas of the adult world of commerce, and that this work is limited to planning, production, exchange, and analysis. I see real value in this kind of work; it is, too be sure, part of our planting of potatoes. But I have not seen fully rise from this pattern alone the kind of engagement and vitalization that Montessori predicts. I do not think today and here in the US that pocket money is significant to students. They have so much, that money and real need remain abstractions.

I use the broader term Economy, which I believe comes closer to describing Montessori's hope that these will be "**exercises in utilized virtues.**" The word "Economy" comes from an ancient Greek word meaning "management of a household;" the word oikas, house, underlies, as well, our word ecology, the study of our house. Economy, until it began in the 20th century to be used to describe a region's system of production and exchange, once more commonly meant the careful management of resources, the orderly, functional arrangement of parts, or even God's management of and activity in the world. It keeps as synonyms the virtues of thrift, prudence, and providence.

We were planting last year's potatoes, now soft and sprouting. We had taken what was left from the cold cellar, after selling them, scrubbed and red in brown bags, after the "best mashed potatoes ever" beneath our pork barbecue or in pot pies at community gatherings. Skye and Bronte sat in the sun in the hay and pared them into pieces and we talked about how many potatoes are in a potato. They untarped the tiller, filled the tank which we had run to dry in the fall so as to save the cylinders, and she started right up. In the wake of the tines we harvested a crop of rocks. With some we filled abandoned groundhog holes, so cows, horses, and farmers wouldn't break their legs. With some we shored the bank of a stream so when cattle drank there it would be less muddy and our soil would not wash away to silt up trouty pools downstream. We talked about how close to plant them, how many we could weed, how many we could mound, how many we could dig, how many we could eat, we could sell, we could give, we would need to save to plant again in a year's time. We talked of the Incans and in our planting became them. We talked of the Irish and mourned their loss. We talked of the mysterious, untimely failure of the soil to provide. We talked of ceremonies that blessed the fields. We talked about the potato beetles asleep two feet down that were glad of our planting. We shoveled compost, black and sweet (formerly turkey feathers, grain bags, rotten hay, potato skins, worms, rain, sunshine, bits of death and life) and closed the earth.

In our meeting that night I thanked these girls for their sincerity of purpose. I told them that the root of the word sincerity is Ceres, Roman Goddess of Fertility. We talked of women in ancient fields to whom they were now tied through this act of planting, saying that the responsibility for bringing forth fruit, and the recreation of life is passing to them in real way. The next day, we planted more potatoes, and as other groups finished other chores, instead of gathering for tea and chatter, they all, everyone, came down to us, and took up hoes and shovels. And in the work was a tenderness and pleasure that moved me. It is important to me that things are planted well and mindfully. I would rather do something myself than have it done just to be done. It is my romantic notion that this work had been done better than I could do it, for it was done with a communal and innocent joy.

I think that a central aspect this curriculum should encourage is the sense that the students now, through their work, take up the adult human task of fulfilling basic human needs, and in that become part of the greater society of all humankind: it should lead them to see themselves as just then becoming adults who have been given the right and responsibility to carry life forward. This, I have seen, engenders the sort of vitality through which the student, as Montessori described, becomes "an energy." It is like the connection made by elementary students to the purpose and body of the cosmos through the Great Lessons. When they see it all moving outward and themselves at the edge of it, their eyes shine with starlight. And we see it with them and we know we have done our work. And so it is here, they are becoming men and women who are now and who were then and who will be, and who are at the outer edge of society rising from the natural world. This is a realization of truth and purpose through exercises in economy. And to be the ones who pass this to them into their hands and hearts is an honor well worth all the strife their care entails at other junctures.

Planting potatoes is just one exercise. I do not think that one needs to be on a farm to have such an experience, but I think it is easier to find the work there. I do not think there is an equivalent experience away from the farm of guiding a young man as he takes up a knife and places upon his soul the act of taking a turkey's life. There is nothing like that color of red to let you know that you are alive, that your heart beats and you have taken that life so that it may continue to do so. Our students are shaken by such harvest, but it is something that most would not miss. It is a sacramental moment.

My first understanding of the importance of this connection was brought to me when my son called from the Hershey Farm School. It was late. He had been sitting in the glowing dark, at the edge of cold and warmth, with his friends and sugar master Jim, making syrup, distilling gold from the night and snow. He was so happy, so full, that his feelings poured into me and filled me. It makes me cry, even now. It was not that it was a commodity that he had made, it was that it was alchemy that he had performed. He had done business with the cosmos in the name of Adam and Eve.

My daughter loves that Jim as well. She who sleeps until we wake her was happy to wake in the dark on a Saturday to go with a friend or two and Jim to the Farmers Market. She does always feel obliged to help; it is in her nature. But she went not through obligation, but because that once shy girl loved meeting people and giving to them beautiful things they had made. She loved that people sought out their table. She made friends with strangers and so with the world. Never once in reminiscing has she mentioned the money she handled or the setting of prices. I am sure she better learned to count out change well. I like that she needed to count it exactly so as to be completely fair. Knowing that she had done this allowed her to meet the eyes of those before her, which to me is a higher skill, derived though an "exercise in utilized virtue."

I think it should not be missed that at the heart of each of these lessons is Jim Ewert-Krocker, farm manager at Hershey. It is clear that adolescents are joined to each other through a strange and undeniable force; they are, as well, and as surely, joined by another force to those adults who are ready to give them love, forgiveness, trust against all prior evidence, who hold clear and high expectations, who laugh, who work and play hard, who know things, who love creation, whose respect is worth something. I consider the adult the most important material in an adolescent program. It is not easy being worked with so roughly, being weighed and shaken. It wears your corners smoother. And that, of course, is not all bad.

We have found that when we set up economic endeavors, we need not try to make them limited and manageable for students, for it seems better to make them adult-sized, and sometimes larger. We do the work beside them, so that the students may witness and emulate adults giving fully of themselves, so that they may take up the work beside us as adults and become our comrades. We have found the larger the challenge and the more real to us as adults, the greater the students wish to join the work. They want to be tested. We cut, split, and stacked twelve cords of wood. It was a joyful experience for every one of us, despite the scratches and the poison ivy. It was like raising a barn. Just the sight of it there warmed us. I remember it as a dance. I remain glad to have been a part.

When they are ready, with time and experience, they absolutely love taking up the work entirely from us. And we love to give it to them fully. It is at those moments, when you take this large responsibility and pass it with trust, with a nod and a smile, that they know that they have changed.

"The Teacher... must have a kind of faith that the child will reveal himself through work"
(Montessori, M (1967, p 276) [The Absorbent Mind](#). New York: Dell Publishing Co., Inc.

Role of the Adult in the Adolescent Environment

Notes taken from a lecture given by: Laurie Ewert-Krocker

1. A MATERIAL IN THE ENVIRONMENT

The adult is the material in a way. The adolescent's task is to become an adult – which is what you are. They are therefore studying you.

- A model of adult behaviour – they are looking for this.
- A source of information about adult culture
- An example of embodied values
- A model of language use

2. A MEDIUM FOR PROCESSING EMOTIONS AND IDEAS

- a mirror to *reflect back* what the adolescent is thinking or doing – not judging or rationalising
- a listener
- a comforting shoulder
- a testing ground for new ideas and behaviours – the adolescent needs consistency from the adult

3. A FACILITATOR

- Opens up avenues of experiences and ideas
- Challenges habits of thinking; sharpens analytical skills – we need to help them move beyond their first immediate response to a situation; they WANT to be challenged.
- Invites adolescent to try new activities, consider options
- Mediates difficult, painful, unresolved conflict situations – they want as far as possible to do this for themselves, but the adult still needs to be there to guide when necessary.

4. A PROTECTOR

- Maintains the global view of safety in the environment
- Provides the boundaries of safe, healthy activity
- Decides when outside help is needed – know when to find professional help, and don't try to be the professional

5. A PARTNER IN LEARNING

- Offers side by side demonstrations. Larry Schafer says that it's a dance you do with the children – let them feel as much a part of the learning process as possible
- Functions as a co-learner – we should not be standing in front of a class pumping the child with fact upon fact instead of engaging the child and make him instrumental in his learning

- Respects independence of student but is available for help when it's truly needed

6. AN OBSERVER

- Observes engagement
- Observes skill needs and strengths – decide where we need to give instruction on skills – e.g. how to use a lab equipment, how to engage with a visitor to the school etc.
- Observes what causes anxiety or concern – communicate observations with all the other staff members
- Observes nature of relationships and interactions
- Watches for signs of risky behaviour
- Watches for areas of passion and interest so that these can be woven into learning areas
- Responds instead of reacts. We need to reflect on our work every day. Give yourself permission for timeout when you are not making the connection. Renew and refresh yourself so that you can give your best

7. AN ANCHOR – the adult in this age group needs to have fundamental stability and common sense!

- Someone who emanates consistency and stability
- Someone who cultivates trust and is reliable
- Someone who models honesty
- Someone who knows himself and has a clear sense of identity
- Someone who believes in each adolescent on an individual basis – you need to love them in their struggle. Admit that they have a bad day, week, year but that you will be there for them to connect with as they need you
- Someone who knows and cares about them personally

Montessori says, “The teachers should have the greatest respect for the young personality, realising that in the soul of the adolescent, great values are hidden, and that in the minds of these boys and girls there lies all our hope of future progress and the judgement of ourselves and our time. The intimate vocation of MAN is the secret of the adolescent.” (*From Childhood to Adolescence*)

Laurie Ewert-Krocker is Head Teacher at Hershey Montessori adolescent program on the farm, Huntsburg, Ohio. She holds AMI diplomas at both the Primary and Elementary levels, a B.A. in English from John Carroll University (OH), and an M.A. in English from the University of Washington. Ms. Ewert-Krocker was the founding head teacher of the Hershey farm program.

Heidi van Staden

The Montessori Prepared Environment

Condensed from a lecture given by: Jenny Höglund

There are three components of the Prepared Environment:

- Social environment
- Physical environment
- Adult

The environment needs to allow for spontaneous exploration. The child is free to make experiences. The materials are not for the teacher to use to teach. They should be seen as developmental materials. They require direct and indirect preparation. They also bring to light what is already in the subconscious.

The children free to work with materials, internalise what they are doing and go off with the knowledge in their minds. They are the path to abstraction. Reason and understanding cannot be placed under memory as they are far more important. Rote learning is not what we want.

Freedom to choose is also a learning curve. We all need to learn WHAT to choose, and will sometimes make a bad choice. This is how we learn. We must allow the child to struggle – but not desert them. In ‘What You Should Know About Your Child,’ Montessori writes about freedom and discipline being a harmonious whole.

The prepared environment includes not only the inside and outside, but also remember the social environment. Mixed ages groups are a vital part of the Montessori Method. Minimum age range is three years and the number of children is vital. More children offer more social choices and better chance of finding a ‘match’ – a ‘friend’ who they can connect with. The level of work drops with too few children. Montessori felt that mixed ages are more important than mixed genders. Older children can present to younger children and are role models for the younger children. In turn the older children learn patience and empathy.

The role of the teacher is different in a Montessori environment. We need to connect with the inner teacher of the child. We need to prepare ourselves for this. We need to recognise and respect the ‘child who is not yet there.’ We must be in service of the complete human being. Teachers are to be like oxygen. Invisible yet there when needed! They are there to inspire. They are a link between the child and what he wants to know. We want the attention to be on the material, not the teacher. Keep the flame of interest fed. We always need to protect the working child and protect his concentration.

Allowing the child to explore is very important. Let them make mistakes. Let them mess. Allow for ‘Mr. Error’ to be present. Keep a ‘friendly attitude’ towards error.

We need to OBSERVE. We need to know the *when and how* of introducing new materials. We must remember that we are aiding development. When in doubt ask yourself, “is this serving the child’s best interests?”

Montessori reminds us of the two most obvious of the deadly sins - anger and pride, and urges us to get rid of them. This is part of our spiritual preparation process.

The child needs work. Watch for the spark in the child’s eye that indicates he is engaged.

In conclusion, I add one last aim; to create a joyful community. There is an old song by Whitney Houston that starts with,

“I believe the children are our are future
Teach them well and let them lead the way
Show them all the beauty they possess inside
Give them a sense of pride to make it easier
Let the children's laughter remind us how we used to be”



Let us remember that in our work as well.

Jenny Höglund is an Auxiliary Trainer in the AMI Training of Trainers Programme at the Elementary level. She is in her sixth year of assisting Baiba Krumins Grazzini in Bergamo, Italy, at the International Centre for Montessori Studies. She earned her AMI Elementary diploma at the Ohio Montessori Training Institute and her AMI Primary diploma at the Washington Montessori Institute. She has worked with Montessori adolescents in Sweden from ages 12-15. She intends to specialize in adolescent teacher preparation as she prepares to be a fully vested AMI Elementary Trainer.

Heidi van Staden

Psychological Characteristics of Children during the First Three Years of Life

Condensed from a lecture given by: Alyssa Conklin-Moore

The First Sub-plane: 0-3 years

The infant-toddler between the ages of birth and three is known as the Spiritual Embryo. This is the time in the child's life where he is forming his personality. At this age, the child needs to be loved and accepted. We want the child to have been longed for and loved by the family.

There are two psychological legs of this infant-toddler:

1. Trust in the world.

This forms most optimally during the first two months of life when all of their needs are being met in a consistent and loving way. Their needs should also be anticipated so that there is as little anxiety as possible.

2. Trust in self happens from about 8 weeks until about the end of the first year. The child realizes what they are capable of. They are creating their own faculties. This is a time of incredible acquisition for them. The child is a sponge, absorbing his environment through his senses. Remember that it was Aristotle who said, "There is nothing in the intellect that was not first in the senses." For example, our mouths are our first source of information. (Even in-utero, babies are sensorially aware.)

The child is blessed with the power of the **absorbent mind**. He learns without effort. They arrive into our midst without a filter. What we give them is what they build from. We should hope and strive to give them the very best.

This child is learning to **communicate** during this time. Casual conversations are important. Songs, cards, objects etc. are great, but much of the 0-3 child's language is developed through incidental learning. Instead of simply saying 'dog', we may say, 'this is a Golden Labrador Retriever.'

The infant is egocentric. They are entirely dependent on others for their care. Life is immediate for them. They want their needs met. They are not interested in the needs of others. They feel that the world is there for them. They are pure in response and action.

The child in this sub-plane is attaining coordinated **movement**. Look into the Montessori materials available for the child at this age.



The Montessori steps.

The child from birth to three displays a strong need for order. Their best growth happens when their lives are stable and ordered. During class time, a ritual can be created for snack time. Each toddler can be given little 'jobs' that need to be done. For example putting out a place mat, or putting a cup at each place. The idea is that they OWN the activity and this provides the energy for keeping it going.

The overall goal of this little one is **self-construction**.

The child craves exposure to the outside world.

Good role models need to be present for these children. Mom and Dad are the first and most important role models and then the adult in the environment with the infant toddlers becomes the next most important role model.

The child innately desires work.

There is a story of a toddler of 2 years, when given the little rake and wheel barrow, rejected the rake, and instead carried the leaves one at a time to the wheelbarrow, and became so absorbed in his work that he spent a full 10 minutes carrying single leaves to the barrow! This child was building concentration and just as importantly, constructing his character.

Give these toddlers collaborative work – shared work and projects. For example, planting and setting the table for snack. They will use maximum effort. They work at their work unlike the adult that works to get the job over and done with. This work is also building musculature, but there is a huge internal element of achievement when they can say, 'Look! I can pull my friend in the wagon. Look what I can do.'

The child is capable and independence is genuinely supported

The adult needs to reflect here if the work provided is meeting their needs. They are moving towards independence, and so the work should strive to provide every opportunity to be as independent as possible. We should be conscious of when we intervene with these little ones, and not jump in when they start to struggle. The child will grow and learn and construct himself by overcoming the obstacles.

Alyssa Conklin-Moore is a full-time mother and a former Assistants to Infancy teacher at Hershey Montessori School in Concord Township, Ohio. She received her B.A. in Anthropology and Psychology from Oberlin College, her master's in education from Cleveland State University, her AMI Primary diploma from the Ohio Montessori Training Institute, and her AMI Assistants to Infancy diploma from The Montessori Institute in Denver, Colorado.

Heidi van Staden

News from the Trustees

It has not just been the World Cup that brought excitement to the month of June, as we have also had some changes on the SAMA Trust.

For personal reasons, both Sam and Lorraine tendered their resignation from the SAMA Trust (and in Sam's case as the NAISA representative) with effect from the end of June 2010. We thank them both for their service to SAMA.

Special mention must be made again of Sam and her determined commitment to SAMA since its inception. As Montessorians, we have all benefitted from Sam's tireless work and vision and we will continue to lead SAMA with the vision and passion that she has inspired. We wish her well in her new ventures.

The resignations have left a vacancy for a trustee, and the Trustees have approached Jacky Price of Blue Moon Montessori in Cape Town to join the board until the next AGM (and hopefully beyond!). Jacky has previously served on Exco and is currently the co-opted member in charge of the newsletter.

Susanne has been recalled to Exco as acting Treasurer until the next AGM as this post was not filled at the AGM this year. Wildner and Company (the SAMA accountants) have taken over the monthly processing of the SAMA accounts as of 1 June 2010.

Sharon Caldwell (previous Exco member) has taken over from Sam as the SAMA NAISA representative and will keep us informed of all developments on that front.

Thank you all for your willingness to serve our members.

You will have also received notification from Irmgard that the SAMA postal address has changed to PO Box Postal Address: PO Box 5338, Walmer, Port Elizabeth, 6065

This has been as a result of a re-shuffle in the SAMA administration. The SAMA office has also moved and currently has no landline. Our application with Telkom is in process and we will advise the new landline telephone number as soon as this has been installed. We apologise for the inconvenience in the meantime and would request that you make contact with Irmgard via email (admin@samontessori.org.za) or via sms (072 609 5979) and she will contact you.

So, as you can see, it is not just the country that needs a period of 'normalisation', but SAMA too!

On behalf of the trustees, I would like to extend thanks to Irmgard for her professionalism you all for your continued support of SAMA, and we look forward to a fruitful and successful term ahead.

Susanne van Niekerk

BOOK LIST for building self esteem...Celia Coburn

<u>TITLE</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>	<u>PUBLISHER</u>
Assertion Training - How to be who you really are!	Shan Rees & Graham Roderick	Routledge Publishing
The Six Pillars of self-esteem	Nathaniel Branden	Bantam Publishing
Enhancing self-esteem	Ranjit Malhi & Robert Reasoner	Self-Esteem Seminars
Breaking the chain of low self-esteem	Marilyn Sorensen	Wolf Publishing
Self-esteem	Matthew McKay & Patrick Fanning	New Harbinger Publications
Self-esteem for women	Lynda Field	Element Books
The power of self-esteem	Nathaniel Branden	Bantam Publishing
Self-esteem at work	Nathaniel Branden	Bantam Publishing
Work and Worth	Tony Humphreys	Newleaf Publishing
Positively Fearless	Vera Peiffer	Thorsons Publishing
How to raise your self-esteem	Nathaniel Branden	Bantam Books
Emotional Intelligence	Daniel Goleman	Bloomsbury
The Assertive Advantage	National Press Publications	National Press Publications
Developing Self-Esteem	Connie Palladino	Crisp Publications, Inc
Assertion Training How to be who you really are	Rees, Shan & Graham Roderick S	
Assertive Discipline for parents	Canter Lee, Canter Marlene	
Developing Positive Assertiveness	Sam R. Lloyd	Crisp Publications, Inc
<u>WEBSITES</u>		
www.self-esteem-international.org www.self-esteem-rise.org www.self-esteem.org www.SEAL.org.uk		

Members Pages

Regional Meeting: Western Cape

This took place on the 29 May at Auburn House. Feedback of the conference was given to interested members with a strong sense of the importance of Montessori primary education as a growing necessity. Again it was reiterated that we do not work in a vacuum and the sharing of ideas is vital to keeping Montessori relevant and alive.

An idea that grew out of the discussions that took place was:

Setting up of meetings between schools in close proximity to one another, to share readings and discussions to create deeper understanding and better practice of Montessori principles.

It was suggested that when schools close for children, yet staff stay on for preparation, that we set aside part of this preparation time to meet with other Montessori educators to discuss preselected writings of Maria Montessori to enrich our practices in our environments. These readings can be photocopied and given to staff prior to the set date. This would be seen as continued "spiritual preparations of the directress". Networking amongst school is a valuable resource that we cannot afford to overlook.

Bread Recipe for Under Threes



Wash hands, put on apron.

1 cup flour
1 tsp active dry yeast in 1/4 cup very warm water
1/2 cup warm water

Prepare the yeast first - so that it has grown/bubbled before the child starts mixing.

Pre-measure all the ingredients first- I have the flour in a sifter with a lid (Tupperware).

Child mixes the flour, yeast and water with wooden spoon.

Tip onto floured surface to knead.

Put in loaf tin to rise for about 20 min.

Bake.

Eat!

TIP: Make sure you put the yeast in the fridge once container is open - or it is zapped and is no longer active.

The over-two-ish children have been making bread every day ... they someone to help with sifting and kneading! Otherwise they seem to have gotten the hang of it easily.

Each loaf is different depending on the amount of not very accurately measured flour and water - but it is always edible. We have also added sultanas and you could try spices etc. The children eat it hot from the oven and although the adults would like lashings of butter and jam - the children are quite content!

Used with permission from: Online Montessori Aotearoa New Zealand Under three's group and sent to us from Lindsay van den Berg

In Preparation of ourselves as teachers, we are fraught with traps and tricks in thinking that one can familiarise oneself with the equipment and hence be a 'Montessori directress', a teacher or carer of young children.

To really understand the task at hand and the commitment one makes to being an "educator" of young people" one needs to follow the astounding example of Maria Montessori. She has not mapped out a step by step course for us to follow but urges the real understanding of how a child learns and why.

Maria Montessori after studying French doctors Itard and Seguin was so inspired by their work and findings and having successfully implemented their efforts and ideas with mentally challenged children, she withdrew from this work and continued to reflect and still study further their writings (she translated their texts into Italian to gain deeper insight). Maria Montessori was now itching to practice what she had seen and understood of these educational methods on "normal" children. The rest you know is history. Maria Montessori continually kept updating and refining her understanding of how children learn and how best to serve them.

The message that is clear here; is to continue with the deep and meaningful research and understanding of children and what Maria Montessori truly meant to impart to us as facilitators of children's whole development ourselves?

Do we recognise the depth we need to go to, to bring about the best opportunities for the young child in all spheres of their development? Or do we go the easy route and just give them labels or resolve ourselves of any real responsibility of our chosen task. This is a life long learning experience.

Source of reference is taken from: *The Montessori Principles and Practice*. E.P Culver, MA

Jacky

Montessori philosophy at home – By Cané Lake

Do you find yourself using Montessori sayings at home with your partner/family?

- “An orderly environment leads to an orderly mind” – when the place looks a mess.
- “This lives here!” – when something hasn’t been replaced, such as car keys, jackets, stationery.
- “This kitchen towel is for hands, and this one is for dishes” – and you’ve colour coded them to make it easier (and they still don’t remember!).

Instead of saying, “Please pass me the box”, you say, “Please pass me the large, dark red, isosceles triangle box”.

Does your family/partner say, “Don’t use your Montessori terminology on me!” or “Don’t speak to me like one of your school children!”

Even my classroom song works at home:

*Flush the loo, flush the loo
I do not want to smell your poo
One, two, three, one, two, three
I do not want to see your wee*

Whose child is this?

Author Unknown

“Whose child is this?” I asked one day
Seeing a little one out at play
“Mine,” said the parent with a tender smile
“Mine to keep a little while
To bathe his hands and comb his hair
To tell him what he is to wear
To prepare him that he may always be good
And each day do the things he should”

“Whose child is this?” I asked again
As the door opened and someone came in
“Mine,” said the teacher with the same tender smile
“Mine to keep just for a little while
To teach him how to be gentle and kind
To train and direct his dear little mind
To help him live by every rule
And get the best he can from school”

“Whose child is this?” I asked once more
Just as the little one entered the door
“Ours,” said the parents and teachers as they smiled
And each took the hand of the little child
“Ours to love and train together
Ours this blessed task forever.”

Greenwood Montessori

Do not underestimate a toddlers mind

One of my little Toddlers brought a stuffed Dinosaur to the class and I decided to go and use this opportunity to explain a bit about the past present, future, time line as well as discussing these interesting animals that used to exist. We looked at books and pictures and during our discussion I was trying to explain to the children that dinosaurs lived a long, long time ago before mommy, daddy and even granny and granddad. One of the little ones started waving her arms frantically and with a strong determined voice piped up that I was wrong and they are alive and live in her T.V. How can one argue against that!!!

From Jeannette Walder (Toddler class)
Greenwood Montessori

A snippet on observation

I looked through the class door at the warm candlelight within the room and quietly entered. The smiling directress asked me if I would like to observe for a moment. I noticed a really small boy on the floor working with blocks and beads. I stood watching him fascinated and remember clearly the numerals written on a piece of paper. He was pushing, changing, shifting, taking away beads and replacing them with other beads. The directress came up behind me. I could feel her presence and turned around. She put her fingers top her lips gesturing silence and brought me a chair. I watched as he counted the blocks and the beads to reach his answer. He looked at his work, quietly packed it all away and was gone. I later heard that he had started his sum the day before and had come in early to school to complete it. I had just witnessed a child in a deep sensitive phase. He has long forgotten his work on that cold winter’s day but I will never forget that magical wonder.

From Inqie Lormann (pre-school class 2) Greenwood Montessori

A directress plants the seeds of knowledge, sprinkles them with love, and patiently nurtures their growth to produce tomorrow’s dreams.

From Robyn Luyt (pre-school class 1) Greenwood Montessori

World Cup Soccer

I am sure nothing more could be discussed or written about this most awesome event. However whilst in Namibia during the holidays, I saw how in the Children's House in Windhoek they too had the map of South Africa with the stadiums marked and flags of competing countries. Fortunately for them they were still in school during this event and could follow the teams as they fell out and those who made it to the end. In chatting to a mom she said each evening she made a dish of a competing country for her children to sample. What a way to get children to try different dishes!

I know as a resident of Cape Town how we were caught up in the "gees" of the event and the efforts by so many to positively participate in the action! The children returned to school with a very solid insight into the events that took place around the country and can now identify those flags that were flown.

Jacky



Blue Moon's
'soccer day'



Ayoba: One Country- Many Cultures

Wow! The world cup has come and gone. It has been a truly amazing experience. As a Montessori teacher trainer, the World cup presented me with the refreshing opportunity to experience first hand, once again the truly amazing spirit and mind of the young child that Maria Montessori so aptly described in her works over a century ago.

The world cup in our country, presented teachers with authentic teaching of the world, countries, nations, flags and cultures. And, it created the opportunity for learning that aroused such intense interest that it "engaged the child's whole personality." Children, had exposure and immersion into the streams of countries, people, flags and cultures that stormed our shores these past few weeks.

I was given a hands-on demonstration of this total engagement of the young child or what Montessori suggested about transfer of knowledge when, I was ordering food at a restaurant, and a friend's 4 year old grandson (who is attending a Montessori pre-school) quite accurately pointed out the flag that belonged to each country on the menu! And then, he went further to name the key soccer players in each country! Ayoba!

With widened eyes, I prowled Montessori pre-schools in my neighbourhood to see if I could hunt out any hint of "world-cup activity." What awaited me was amazing- The pre-school environment was ablaze with the spirit of the first Soccer World cup to be ever held on South African soil. A birds-eye view into one pre-school classroom presented pre-schoolers chanting Kosi Sikelela (SA's national anthem and of course WAKA WAKA (song chosen for the opening of the world cup by artist Shakira). Another classroom was visibly abuzz with young agile bodies' a-swing with the Diski dance. Yet another group of pre-schoolers on the fan walk in Cape Town were introducing passer-by's to the flags of the nations on the flag poles.

One teacher told me about her toddler who came home crying "mummy, put on TV - I wanna watch the world pup."

The sprit of "The nations -, or rather the world was everywhere to see, feel and hear in young and old alike.

Above the sounds of our home grown Vuvuzela, the country resounded with the National anthems of the soccer teams countries, the songs in foreign tongues that accompany soccer fans. This, together with the resounding beat of the Argentinean drums in tune to

"Ole... Ole ole, ole.....accompanied by fans shrouded in their countries flags or its colours from head to toe, cannot but leave an indelible mark on the memory of the young child and of course every South African on home soil during this time.

Right here on home- grown turf, we had the opportunity to experience first hand, "One country- many cultures."

This opportunity has opened the door to the numerous cultural treasures in our own back yards. Our heritage, boasts eleven, no, 12 official languages, each with its own way of living, music, songs, food, customs and stories. In the wave of spirits that the world cup has brought to our doorstep, I hope that we Montessorians can keep the door open always so that our future young Montessorians may imbibe the magic of 'One country, many cultures' as "Within the child lies the fate of the future.

<http://www.peacekids.net/heroes/pages-m/montessori-quotes.htm>.

I will certainly recount with delight and pride to future generations that read in history about Africa's first hosting of the Soccer World Cup ever, that I was present; along with other cultures in my own beloved South Africa, I walked the fan walk, learned new words, shed a tear during the anthems, cheered the goals and cried with the losers!

God bless Africa

PS: "Ayoba" is a slang term used by South Africans to express amazement.

It is derived from other slang terms, like "Ayeye" or "Ayoyoyo." It was originally meant as an approval/appreciation of good dancing, although the exact origins of the phrase are unknown. It is thought to have roots in Johannesburg township culture. It is however, uniquely South African and expresses delight, excitement, agreement and approval. It is also used as a greeting.

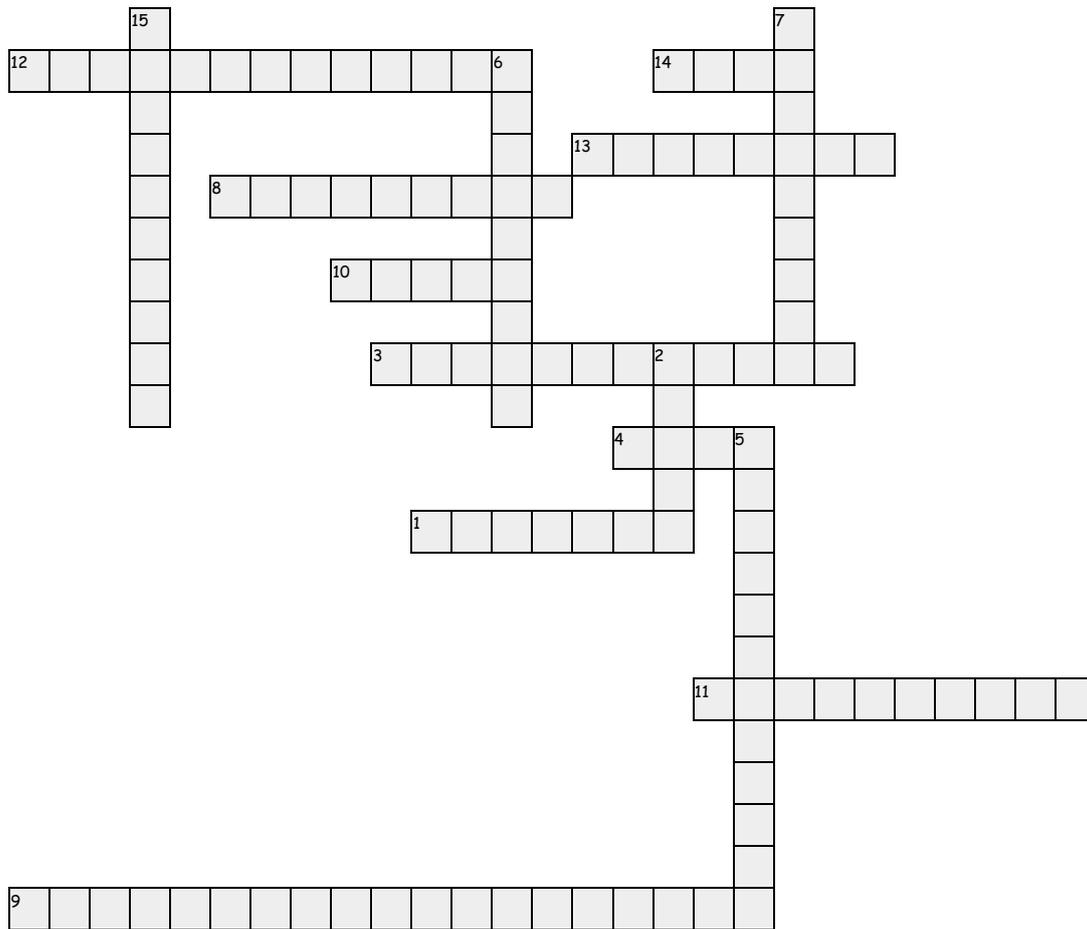
http://wiki.answers.com/Q/What_is_the_meaning_of_%27Ayoba%27

Hawa Tayob

Programme Director

ELF Montessori Teacher Training Organisation Cape Town /SA

Montessori Materials Crossword:



Across:

1. Water on two sides
3. Tie me up well
4. Language enrichment with a country feel
8. Change in colour and number
9. Rough in the higher case
10. Chromatic scale
11. Three dimensional high rise
12. Algebraic formula in a box
13. Associating quantity and symbol
14. Flat squares makes me

Down:

2. Used to identify land of birth
5. Analyzed hand movements
6. My curved sides are solid
7. Visual image of rotational movements
15. Principle of the keystone

Answers in next months newsletter

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Focus for September issue: to be announced
2010 Deadline for submissions: 20 August

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