



National Newsletter

August 2009

Southern African Montessori Association

Inside This Issue:

- Message from the President
- Message from the Outgoing President
- The New EXCO and why they love Montessori
- Conference Feedback
- An Idea for Spiritual Preparation
- Spring: Ideas for SAFE Indoor Plants
- Parent Education: Sex Education
- For your Bookshelf
- Evaluating Montessori
- Members' Page: Gumbooting at Knysna
- Mindstretch Workshop Advert
- Marketing / Employment Wanted / Vacancies
- Training
- SAMA Products
- SAMA Contacts

SAMA OFFICE:

Tel: 041-581 2874
 Fax: 086 561 8774
 Postal Address: PO Box 5505,
 Walmer, Port Elizabeth, 6065
 Cell number: **072 609 5979**
 e-mail: admin@samontessori.org.za

Website:
www.samontessori.org.za



Please note that in an effort to become more paperless we have a new fax-to-email number. Please use the following number:
086 561 8774

CORRECTION : The June newsletter inadvertently advertised that the 'July' newsletter would contain conference feedback. This should have read 'August', as there are no newsletters published in July or December.

Message from the President:

Welcome to a new SAMA year! It has been a busy time back at school after the excitement of the Cape Town conference. A huge thank you to the Cape Town conference committee who organised and hosted a fantastic conference. Their energy was contagious, and I am sure that those of you who attended really got the sense of 'SIBANYE' – by coming together, we were one!

In this newsletter, we bring you some feedback from the conference. Our key-note speakers, Berhane Dory and Barbara Isaacs reminded us of the importance of observation in our daily work, and challenged some of the methods that we may be using. They spoke on the meaning of 'following the child' in the context of inclusive practice across all planes of development. Again, some thought provoking information – and some interesting ideas on helping children to manage their own learning. We all get too caught up in the 'stuff' that the children produce and because we are not observing enough, miss the wonderful insights into the REAL learning that is happening.

The management training workshops after the conference were extremely well received. Alan Clarke was inspirational and sent most of us scurrying back to our schools full of hope and ideas!

From the work of the 2007-2009 Exco, the 'Guidelines for Setting up a Montessori School' were presented. This was a huge task, and thanks must go especially to Sam Streak, who did much of the research and all of the collating and compiling work. This document will now go onto the SAMA website as a service to the public. Even if you already have a school, it is worth a look through – you may find some areas of your setup that would benefit from some attention.

With spring in the air, I wish you all the best for the weeks ahead. Enjoy spending more time outdoors with the children, enjoy walking outside with bare feet again, enjoy the sun as the days get longer and ... enjoy this August newsletter!

Heidi van Staden

DISCLAIMER:
 Following a number of complaints from the public in Durban regarding an organisation called Montessori South Africa and/or Montessori for the Disabled, which has been using SAMA's name to recruit staff and students onto their program, SAMA placed a disclaimer in the Phoenix Sun, Phoenix Tabloid and Coastal Weekly informing the public that these organisations are neither affiliated to SAMA, nor is SAMA recruiting staff for these organisations.

Message from Outgoing President - Sam Streak

(I am well aware of my limitations with regard to holding emotions together and delivering 'goodbye' speeches and so decided to publish this message in the newsletter rather than delivering it in Cape Town.)

It is with very mixed emotions – and more sadness than anything else – that I am choosing to step down as SAMA president after two years of service in that role and to step down from the SAMA Exco on which I have been involved in some way or another since almost the inception of SAMA.

My work for SAMA has become a large and sometimes all encompassing part of my life and I have learnt so much from everyone involved in the association. While it will be wonderful to have some free time to spend with my family and friends who have been sorely neglected for the past two years, I will certainly miss the SAMA part of my life. Although I will remain on as a trustee, the day to day involvement comes to an end. At this point it would be most appropriate to thank my family and friends for their patience and support over the past few years...when it wasn't SAMA, it was School and when it wasn't School it was training and and and...you all know how it goes!

I would also like to particularly like to thank my own school community – the staff who have always supported me and stood in for me many a time when SAMA has taken precedence; my upper primary classes over the past two years who have just done what they needed to and to the parents who have been incredibly supportive and positive.

One of the biggest challenges in leading an organisation such as SAMA is trying to balance the needs of all the members. It is not only about keeping members happy but about keeping members informed, inspired and engaged with what is happening around them. We run such a risk of isolating ourselves in our Montessori world and this is perhaps the thing to watch the most. We have an enormous amount to share with the "traditional" education world but we often find this so difficult to do among ourselves, never mind the greater community. Equally we have a lot to learn from others too – outside of the Montessori world.

This leads me to my final plea – connect with the Montessorians around you, share with them and encourage relationships that build connections rather than destroy. With regard to SAMA: Speak positively and criticise constructively. Make sure your voice is heard but bear in mind that the SAMA Exco deserves to be treated with dignity and respect. And be prepared to step up to the plate. Too often we hear about all the things SAMA should be doing, could be doing and what we are not doing. But we need people to help do the work. The SAMA Exco are volunteers – all of whom either teach, train, run schools or run Montessori organisations on a full time or part time basis and some of us do all of those things! SAMA can only help everyone take the first steps on the path but we need everyone to do their part on the journey to make it all work.

Archbishop Desmond Tutu said the following, "One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole world. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity."

Nowhere is Ubuntu more relevant and 'right' than in the Montessori world.

I wish Heidi and the new Exco the very best for the future. May the foundation that has been laid in SAMA over the past seven years support you well in your efforts to continue with the work on behalf of every Montessorian in Southern Africa.

I sincerely hope to not disappear from everyone's lives – please feel free to keep in touch! You can reach me now on the following email address: sam@pemontessori.co.za

With much appreciation

Sam Streak

The New EXCO... and what they love about Montessori



Heidi van Staden
(President)

What really inspires me is they way that I see the philosophy changing the lives of the many students that I work with. I love the way that the spiritual preparation of the Directress speaks to all of us - regardless of our culture or background. I love the way that Montessori children have a reputation for always asking questions, and being able to express themselves. I grew up in a Montessori house hold, and it really is just how I live my life."



Ina Smith
(Ordinary Member)

I came into Montessori by chance. As a registered nurse I had a clinic attached to a Montessori school and gradually became involved in the school. One night, about 23h00 I realized I was on my way to Italy to do the 6 - 9 course, leaving my husband and two young children at home. I have never looked back and believe my own children as well as my school children benefited greatly from this. It is then also the school children that carried me through a very difficult past 2 years because they are children with no pretences and say and ask things as they come to mind. This helped me talk about my situation openly with nothing to hide. I just love it. Mrs. Oppenheimer was my Mentor and sponsor and I will always be grateful to her for the opportunity.

Sumaya Tar Mahomed
(General Secretary)

Just as it is stated in E.M Standing's book: "The young explorer is never idle, because he is looking in the world to find himself - reflected in a mirror with a thousand facets" Montessori has given me the opportunity to stay as the young explorer through the years. I look forward to my days with the children and hope that I give them inspiration and motivation to keep on exploring till they find themselves.



Charl du Toit
(Ordinary Member)

In Maria Montessori's own words: "It is true that we cannot make a genius. We can only give to each child the chance to fulfill his potential possibilities." While I was in a traditional school, I tried to make the children into geniuses, now the children give to me a life fulfilled by showing me their possibilities. It is wonderful to see the seeds planted growing through the years.



Nolen Clarke
(Ordinary Member)

Montessori the keys to the universe for today, tomorrow and for the future.



Lana Player
(Ordinary Member)

I love Montessori because I love the way that all children are seen, heard and understood for who they are and are celebrated for their contribution that they make to our lives as Directresses no matter what!

A photo and message from Laurelee Parr will be included in the next issue of the newsletter.

Conference Feedback

The overwhelming majority of delegates were so grateful and inspired by the conference and several people commented on the calm, peaceful atmosphere.

There are always people who love the bags and those that didn't love them! Those who loved the venue and those who didn't. I have tried to keep the bigger picture things in mind when compiling this feedback as it can be quite disheartening to hear about the things you had absolutely no control over!

There were many more thanks as well as some other suggestions for topics etc which will be passed onto the 2010 conference committee.

Thank you once again to everyone who was involved in the conference.

Warm Regards

Sam Streak



Some of the more general comments and suggestions (taken from feedback forms and emails sent through):

- Five days was very little to sacrifice in the holidays. I was very privileged to be here and to share this with my staff.
- People like all of you make me feel part of the whole again. Thank you.
- Please ask members to submit their written objections and questions for the AGM in advance so that other members are not subjected to endless questions and speeches from frustrated members. (We did in fact ask for this).
- Excellent Conference!
- I didn't like having to choose – there were times when I wanted to go to all three talks.
- Keynote speakers leaving so suddenly left us with an “unfinished” feeling.
- More open discussion sessions and have them earlier in the day.
- I would like to thank everyone for their hard work. It was a wonderful, motivating conference and we really appreciate all the work.
- It would be nice to have a place where people could put their business cards and to have a platform where new schools can become known.
- The whole conference has been very inspiring, insightful and informative. There are a lot of Montessorians that I would have liked to have seen here.
- Benefited enormously from the whole conference especially the last few days of management training which were completely relevant to me and I don't feel like I am completely alone sailing the ship.
- The fellowship for me was great and has made me feel recharged. Thank you sincerely.
- Great management training – Alan Clarke should present to everyone!
- Those introducing the speakers should introduce themselves too.
- We constantly ask parents to be on time and yet delegates were disrespectful in being tardy.
- Delegates often disturbed others by using their cellphones during presentations.
- I would like to add a massive thanks to the SAMA Exco for all the hard work they have put in over the years, to Sam especially. Thanks to the outgoing people and good luck to the newly elected!
- A big thank you to all the people who helped put this conference together.
- How about inviting the Minister of Education and other officials? (I did in fact invite the Minister of Education, Head of the ECD Maria Louise Samuels and officials from the Western Cape Education Department – none responded at all).
- How do you thank the main speakers at the closing ceremony if they have already left?
- Need more on the adolescent and primary levels.
- Several commented on the poor audio visual quality in the main hall which is something to bear in mind for 2010

--An Idea for Spiritual Preparation--

Look for One Piece of Beauty Each Day and Share It

Looking for beauty forces you to step back from a false rush of whatever is keeping you busy and take a breath. And then, crucially, take the time to share that moment with a loved one, even if it's just an SMS to say, 'The sun shining through the trees this morning reminded me of that walk on our honeymoon.' You are happier and a little less stressed. Your environment is better protected because you're paying more attention to it and you've shared that goodness with someone else. So much of the damage we do is through ignorance and lost focus. You may not be able to keep your finger on the pulse of deforestation in the Congo but you absolutely can notice the world immediately around you.

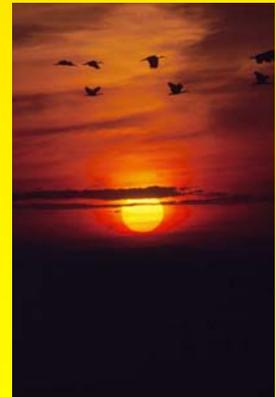


'Enjoy yourself. It's later than you think.'

Chinese proverb

From: Going Green : 365 Ways to Change Our World

Submitted by: Heidi van Staden



“The interruption of cycles of activity produces certain inner conditions in the mind of the child which deprive him of self-confidence and neutralise his ability to finish what he has started. When a child is continuously interrupted while fulfilling cycles of activity, the child is gradually losing the courage, the constancy and the determination necessary for achievement.

In later years, he is charged with unsteadiness, want of determination or lack of perseverance. These defects are taken as characteristics of certain children. The fact is they are not so. They are the consequence of interruptions of the child's normal cycles of activity in earlier years.”

Maria Montessori; What you Should Know about your Child
Chapter 13, The Key to Mental Health and Growth

With spring around the corner, and the possibility of getting out into the garden and doing some gardening with the children draws near, don't forget to 'green' your indoor spaces!

Some ideas for SAFE indoor plants

From: Education Management in Early Childhood Development

- African Violet (*Saintpaulia ionantha*)
- Aluminium Plant (*Pilea cadierei*)
- Begonia (*Begonia seperflorens*)
- Boston Fern (*Nephrolepis exaltata*)
- Coleus (*Coleus blumei*)
- Dracaena (*Dracaena fragrans*)
- Hen-and-chicken (*Sepervivum tectorum*)
- Wax plant (*Hoya carnosa*)
- Christmas cactus (*Zygocactus truncactus*)
- Peperomia (*Paperomia obtusifolia*)
- Prayer plant (*Maranta leuconeura*)
- Rubber plant (*Ficus elastica*)
- Sensitive plant (*Mimosa pudica*)
- Spider plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)
- Swedish ivy (*Plectranthus australis*)
- Wandering Jew (*Tradescantia fluminensis*)
- Weeping fig (*Ficus benjamina*)
- Schefflera (*Brassaia actinophylla*)



Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'"
~Robin Williams~



Submitted by: Heidi van Staden

DON'T FORGET ARBOR WEEK – FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER!
See the June newsletter for some useful links.

With the start of Spring comes a number of Environmental Days which may provide some lovely opportunities for activities with the children to create Environmental Awareness and involve them in these events.

September		
1	Tuesday	Arbor Day
1-7	Tuesday – Monday	National Arbour Week
4	Friday	Casual Day
8	Tuesday	International Literacy Day
16	Wednesday	Intl. Day for the Preservation of the Ozone Layer
15-20	Tuesday - Sunday	National Cleanup Week
18	Friday	World Water Monitoring Day
19	Saturday	International Coastal Cleanup
21	Monday	World Gratitude Day
21	Monday	International Day of Peace
22	Tuesday	World Carfree Day
24	Thursday	Heritage Day
27	Sunday	World Tourism Day



A TOPIC FOR PARENT EDUCATION...
from Sam Streak, Port Elizabeth Montessori School

At the beginning of August, at the recommendation of a parent in my school, I was invited to appear on Radio Algoa (the Eastern Cape station) to talk about sex education for young children (aged 2 to 5 years old). At first I was terrified at the thought – especially given it was a live, call-in show. However, ever eager for an opportunity to promote Montessori Education I agreed to go on the show. And in the end it was really good to be able to share information about Montessori (the DJ had attended Children’s Workshop in Cape Town as a youngster so he gave us a bit of extra promotional time!) and to help inform parents on this delicate and difficult subject.

In my search for background information, I came across this newsletter and found the information simple and accurate and thought it would be useful for other Montessorians.

From: Angela Hutchison (Parenting Skills Coach, Cape Town)

One of the topics I talk about fairly frequently at schools and in workshops is sexuality and the small child. Sexuality is an emotionally charged topic, one that brings many of our own issues to the fore. Ultimately, though, my guess would be that you want your children to take a healthy approach to their sexuality throughout their lives. And the road to this healthy sexuality starts with how we approach this topic when our children are very small and the messages we send them.

What is sexuality? It is about being male or female, about the beauty of being human, about love and relationships. Being sexual beings is the very reason we exist in the first place. It is the very reason our children exist. It is, first and foremost, an incredible, beautiful, awesome thing.

Often what happens though is that the first message children get about sexuality is negative and bad, it is often about abuse and how people can harm you and how you can harm yourself. Before we embrace the beauty and wonder of being human, we focus on the negative aspects. I am not saying we shouldn’t be realistic about the state of the world, but we should start with the wonder and then state the cautions, rather than the other way around. We also need to ask, if those people in the world who we see as abusers and the people before them were given a healthy view of sexuality when they were little, would the world be a different place?

So some things for you to consider when dealing with your own children around this issue:

Information about sexuality is not one conversation about the birds and the bees that happens when you’re comfortable having it and the child already knows everything you say anyway.....it is a **continuous conversation** that one has throughout a child’s life from the time they are 3 or 4, the same as any other conversation you might have....you give enough information to satisfy the question being asked at that age and you give more and more information as they child is ready for it.

Some of you will be lucky to have children who bluntly ask questions.....and for you remember **honesty** is the best policy always. The minute you lie or tell a child they are not old enough to know the answer, you are messing with the bonds of trust between you and your child. And this is one area where you want trust to reign supreme, so you can help guide your child through what can be difficult territory for them later on.

Some of you will have children who never ask questions.....and for you, no running away and pretending it doesn’t matter to cover the issues...these are children who may have questions in their heads that do not come out of their mouths. Here you need to look for **teachable moments**.....see a pregnant woman, ask the child about that, when you’re in the bath use the opportunity to talk about body parts, when watching television, discuss a kiss.....

Remember **knowledge is power**. If you have information about anything you are far more likely to make a considered decision than if you lack information. Give your children knowledge that they can use when they need to.

When children are engaging with you, remember they do not have your experience of life.....be careful **not to put your spin on it**....their questions come from curiosity, not perversity

Young children will inevitably be found playing “doctor-doctor” with a friend or masturbating themselves, perfectly normal, age-appropriate activities for children between 4 and 6ish. The most important thing in either case, regardless of your feelings and issues that may come to the fore, is to ensure they **do not feel guilty or shamed**, in the knowledge that they are **exploring and understanding themselves and one another**. Here you can gently redirect them, answer questions, discuss one’s own genital stimulation as a private activity

It is the **responsibility of both parents to educate both genders** about sexuality in a natural way, as questions and teachable moments arise

Preferably use the **correct names for body parts**.....yes, it may be easier to use the many names we have come up with.....just check the connotation you are conveying...are you minimising, avoiding, sending a negative perception in the words you use....and do your children at least know the proper terms.

In summary, treat sexuality as you would any other ordinary conversation you would have with a child.....give your children the chance to develop healthy views about their bodies and the nature of being human.

The best books I’ve seen so far on sexuality are Robert H. Harris’s books for different age groups, which you may find useful:

- It’s so Amazing
- It’s Not the Stork
- It’s Perfectly Normal

It is important to discuss this among staff and have a common policy and approach so that there is not confusion and mixed messages are not sent home. This is an example which we can share with you.

Our School’s Policy on this...(From the PE Montessori School)

We believe very strongly that the area of sex education is primarily a parents/family responsibility. We cannot possibly presume to know how each parent would want questions answered and what cultural, religious and social beliefs each family has. If any questions/situations arise at school, we handled them as neutrally and honestly as possible without compromising anyone in the situation. We then inform parents and recommend possible discussions that need to take place at home. We trust that parents will then act on this recommendation.

For Your Bookshelf
Submitted by Heidi van Staden

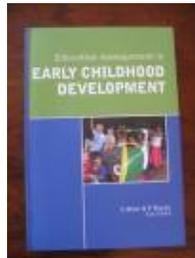
Alan Clarke: The Handbook of School Management

ISBN: 978-0-620-38168-0



C Meier and P Marais: Education Management in Early Childhood Development

ISBN: 978-0-627-02678-2



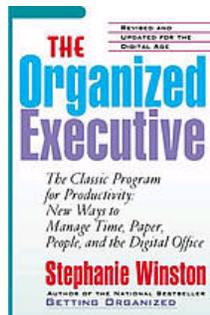
Simon Gear: Going Green, 365 Ways to Change Our World

ISBN: 978-0-143-02593-1



Stephanie Winston: The Organized Executive: The Classic Program for Productivity: New Ways to Manage Time, Paper, People, and the Digital Office

ISBN: 0446676969



"We are bound therefore to make the most conscientious attempts to understand even the smallest effacement of the child's spirit and to establish close rapport with the world of children."

Maria Montessori; The Child in the Family
Chapter 6, My Method in General

Quotes by Maria Montessori...

It is necessary, then, to give the child the possibility of developing according to the laws of his nature, so that he can become strong, and, having become strong, can do even more than we dared hope for him.



How often is the soul of man - especially in childhood - deprived because he is not allowed to come in contact with nature.



If the idea of the universe is presented to the child in the right way, it will do more for him than just arouse his interest, for it will create in him admiration and wonder, a feeling loftier than any interest and more satisfying.

Evaluating Montessori

Why the Results Matter More Than You Think

By Jacqueline Cossentino

<http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2007/01/31/21cossentino.h26.html?levelId=1000&q=evaluating...>

Submitted by Cané Lake

The publication this past fall of research findings indicating significant performance gains for children who learn in Montessori schools has sent waves of interest throughout the educational community (*Science*, Sept. 29, 2006). Educators who care about ambitious school reform should take careful note.

Using a set of excellent proxies for learning—not just achievement—and equally impressive population and implementation controls, psychologists Angeline S. Lillard of the University of Virginia and Nicole M. Else-Quest, then of the University of Wisconsin, have produced, for the first time, scientific evidence that Montessori “works,” and not just for children of privilege. Drawing from a population of inner-city public Montessori school students, the study shows that 5-year-olds in the group outperformed their non-Montessori counterparts in nearly every measure. Findings for 12-year-olds, while not as dramatic, also suggest reliable success rates for Montessori students.

Even more important, the study offers clues to both why Montessori works and what it would take to make it work for large numbers of students. Yet while the study’s impeccable design and stunning results are what prompted the journal *Science* to accept it, critics continue to express doubt about both the reliability of the results (too small a sample) and the efficacy of Montessori as a successful approach to reform (no system can be that good).

In fact, the findings, along with the critiques, recall early reactions to Maria Montessori and the “miracle children” whose reading, writing, self-care, and concentration looked more like those of well-behaved adults than preschool age children. They were the products of Montessori’s new method of educating the young, honed and developed at her first “Children’s House,” whose founding in Rome 100 years ago this month is being celebrated this year. When Montessori later brought the “method” to the United States, there was both awe and disbelief.

Lacking a thorough understanding of the complexities of Montessori’s approach, critics such as the noted Teachers College, Columbia University, professor William Heard Kilpatrick railed against the “fallacies” of self-correcting materials, “outworn and castoff” psychological theory, and a sharp focus on concentration at the supposed expense of social development.

A century later, contemporary psychology has caught up to Montessori’s revolutionary insights (insights gained from close and ongoing child study), and many of the elements of Montessori thought to be “quaint” and “unscientific” not only have been validated by experimental psychology, but also have been absorbed into the educational mainstream. It is now common, for instance, to find child-size furniture, manipulative materials, mixed-age grouping, and differentiated instruction in all manner of American classrooms.

Likewise, new research on brain development, embodied cognition, and motivation provides striking confirmation of Montessori’s claims regarding sensorial learning, attention, and intrinsic vs. extrinsic rewards. Still, the early criticisms were powerful and, for many Americans, compelling enough to discredit both the method and the movement.

Montessori’s early popularity soon faded, and the movement disappeared from the American educational scene. But by 1960, an “Americanized” Montessori approach reappeared, and this time it stuck. Spearheaded by a group of leaders who sought to integrate Montessori into the educational mainstream, Americanized Montessori emphasized social development, including social justice, and appealed directly to a new generation of middle-class, college-educated suburban mothers seeking “the best” for their preschool-age children.

Montessori schools and training centers proliferated throughout the 1960s, and, beginning in the 1970s, public Montessori schools were incorporated into several district desegregation plans. Milwaukee, the site of the Lillard and Else-Quest study, offers one of the oldest and most successful examples of the public magnet model of Montessori. For mainstream reformers, the details associated with the site are what give the most important clues to what is working for these schools and why.

Efforts to achieve ambitious reform—reform that substantially improves teaching and learning and, by extension, achievement—have, so far, yielded spotty and, at times, confounding results. This is especially true when reformers attempt to “scale up” or transport successful initiatives. New York City’s celebrated approach to continuous improvement, first orchestrated by Anthony J. Alvarado, then a community superintendent, yielded impressive results in the school system’s District 2. When the model travelled with Alvarado to San Diego, however, reformers found that good ideas, especially complex ones, don’t necessarily transplant with ease.

Continued...

From previous page...

Seeking to crack the code of ambitious school reform, many researchers have turned their attention to two key variables: capacity and coherence. The new Montessori study offers important insight into both these phenomena, suggesting powerful lessons for reformers.

As researchers such as Harvard University's Richard Elmore and his colleagues in the Consortium for Policy Research in Education have argued, building capacity takes deep and systemwide understanding of the core technologies of teaching and learning. In Montessori schools, this means deep knowledge of what Montessori is (and isn't). And that knowledge comes first and foremost from the training centers that prepare teachers to work in these schools.

Montessori teaching practice is among the most technically complex approaches to instruction ever invented. Doing it well requires teachers to have mastered both the details of developmental theory and the carefully orchestrated sequences and activities that make up the Montessori curriculum. Deploying this vast knowledge base is further supported by ongoing clinical observation, which forms the basis for all interactions with children.

In Milwaukee, public Montessori schools are supported by a rigorous training program that adheres to strict standards based on an interpretation of Montessori education that is both complex and stable. While in most schools the knowledge base for teaching is a moving target—contested, contingent, contextual—in most Montessori schools, and especially in the Milwaukee schools studied, that knowledge base has changed little in the hundred years since it was first developed by Maria Montessori. Critics may charge that such stability amounts to a “stale” or “dogmatic” approach to pedagogy, but the results suggest otherwise. These results should prompt us to look much more closely at the “what” as well as the “how” of capacity.

Coherent reform means improvement efforts that hang together in a systematic and consistent manner. The how, why, and what of education must make sense in practical as well as theoretical ways, which means that improvement plans cannot be grafted together in a random or piecemeal fashion. When the reform involves Montessori, achieving coherence takes leadership that appreciates both the complexity of the Montessori knowledge base and the totality of Montessori as a system.

Central to the Montessori system is a holistic view of the child and his or her participation in a complex world. That Montessori children read early or outperform their peers on standardized tests is, in fact, a by-product of a system that seeks to make the most of natural developmental instincts in children. To emphasize the results, as impressive as they are, over the totality of the system is to miss the most important lesson Montessori has to offer the mainstream.

Montessori leaders must have both the knowledge and the will to do what it takes to ensure a full implementation of the approach. In theory, that means ensuring high-quality teacher preparation and properly prepared classroom environments. In practice—and in an age of high-stakes accountability—it means much more than that.

Ensuring full implementation means protecting the Montessori program from outside intrusion. It means establishing appropriate expectations among key constituents (parents, public officials, teachers). It means trusting the approach for what it is, as opposed to what it might be turned into. It means, perhaps most importantly, taking care not to view Montessori as a quick fix to the outcomes problem, the achievement gap, or any number of educational problems in need of solutions.

In this centenary year of Maria Montessori's work, Angeline S. Lillard and Nicole M. Else-Quest have offered the education community a jewel, both in terms of the scientific quality of their study and the subject under investigation. Those of us who care about educational improvement on a larger scale should regard the many facets of this jewel with deliberateness and respect. As more studies follow, a new knowledge base for schooling can offer desperately needed insight into what successful reform can look like, and how to make it real.

Jacqueline Cossentino is an assistant professor of education policy and leadership at the University of Maryland, in College Park, Md. She is also the head of the Williamsburg (Va.) Montessori School, which serves as the primary site of her ongoing research on Montessori educational culture.

There is no description, no image
in any book that is capable of
replacing the sight of real trees,
and all of the life to be found
around them in a real forest. -
Maria Montessori -



Members' Page

Gumbooting gets grey cells going

The Herald - 2009/08/07
Timothy Twidle GARDEN ROUTE CORRESPONDENT



GET RHYTHM... Led by Kaya Kameni, pupils of the Knysna Montessori School get into the rhythms of the gumboot dance. Picture: TIMOTHY TWIDLE

PUPILS of a Knysna school are dancing to a new rhythm.

The town's Montessori School has introduced gumboot dancing into its cultural studies curriculum because the rhythmic nature and repetitive routine enhance learning skills.

"I saw the gumboot dance performed by a troupe of young men at a church in Knysna in March and was immediately struck by the possibilities of the dance as an adjunct to the syllabus for our lessons in cultural studies," cultural studies head Angelina Mairs said.

She arranged for two troupe members, Kaya Kameni and Peirt Bulu, both 27, to teach gumboot dancing to the pupils. "Initially, the children found the routines quite difficult to follow, but they have improved greatly. We began with the most basic steps and have gradually progressed to more difficult sequences," Kameni said.

School director Teddy Beyleveld said: "Pupils who have received instruction in gumboot dancing have increased their attention span and listening abilities. Following the commands brings focus and the repetitive sequence of the steps reinforces the discipline of repetition long recognised as a vital part of learning."

Mairs said gumboot dancing also exposed the children to different cultural values.

Bulu said teaching was new to him and Kameni, but they were "really enjoying it and the response of the children has been outstanding".

(Submitted by Cané Lake and used with permission of Knysna Montessori School)

© Original Artist

Reproduction rights obtainable from
www.CartoonStock.com



search ID: hsc3944

**Focus for September 2009 issue:
ELEMENTS OF THE PREPARED
ENVIRONMENT**

Deadline for submissions: 20 September

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 Deirdré via:

admin@samontessori.org.za

from labelling to enabling



effective
non-invasive
drug free
method



mindstretch

Jennifer Southgate BA HED
Director of MindStretch and
certified HANDLE® practitioner.

GET A HANDLE®

on neurodevelopmental differences.

Presenter: Jennifer Southgate

**A 12-hour course that will forever change your strategies
in dealing with learning and behavioural challenges!**

● **This course is for:**

Special education teacher
Early childhood specialist
Classroom teacher
Tutor
Parents
Speech therapist
Psychologist
Paediatrician
Homeopath

● **Advance registration required**

Please visit our website for more information.
Simply register online or download a
registration form to be faxed back to us.

● **Johannesburg**

4 and 5 September 2009, 09h00 to 16h30

Venue

Rosebank Union Church Cnr William Nicol
Drive and St Andrews Road, Hurlingham,
Sandton, Johannesburg.

Price

Pre-registration before 15 August 2009,
R2500.00
Full registration after 15 August 2009,
R2750.00

● **Cape Town**

11 and 12 September 2009, 09h00 to 16h30

Venue

Centre for the Book, 62 Victoria Street, Cape
Town

Price

Pre-registration before 15 August 2009,
R2500.00
Full registration after 15 August 2009,
R2750.00

● **HANDLE® can be used to address:**

ADD/ADHD
Sensory integration dysfunctions
Conduct disorders
Reading & writing difficulties
Autism & autism spectrum disorders
Down syndrome
Acquired brain injury
Trouble with coordination
Dyslexia

● **Please note**

Discounts

20% discount for all current
HANDLE®/Mindstretch clients, including
parents, tutors and facilitators
20% group discount for 3 or more
attendees from the same organization
20% student discount (must show student
ID card at time of registration)

Cancellation policy

There will be no refunds once the course
has commenced

For more information and booking,
please visit our website or phone
Jennifer 083 444 4554

12 CPD points!
awarded on completion of
the seminar

www.mindstretch.co.za

Please note:

- Montessori teachers will still be entitled to the Pre-registration discount even though this date has already passed.
- Delegates at the SAMA Conference in Cape Town received a voucher in the Mindset brochure which entitles you to a further 20% discount.

Marketing

We are importers and distributors of a **COMPLETE RANGE OF MONTESSORI EQUIPMENT**
Excellent high quality equipment.

Phone us for exceptional prices and quality

R & D Marketing

Ron and Doreen Macaulay
082 888 0696 OR (011) 460 0632
e-mail: sales@rdm.co.za
website: www.rdm.co.za

Childrens House

Official Distributors of Nienhuis Montessori Materials
Tel: (021) 788 3160
Fax: (086) 619 5182
Email: childrenshouse@absamail.co.za

Edu Equipment

High quality locally manufactured Montessori
Equipment from Toddler to Primary contact Dougie at
Edu Equipment Port Elizabeth.
Cell 0722116940 Fax 041-3791595 or
eduequipment@telkomsa.net

Employment Wanted

Qualified and experienced
Montessori pre-school
directress seeks employment
in **Durban** area.

I am a dedicated Montessori
directress with **7 years of
experience** (children aged 3-
6). I am available to start
immediately.

Contact: Ms Mariam Ramgobin

Tel: 032-5338117 (H)
Cell: 083 779 8116

E-mail:
mariamramgobin@gmail.com

Vacancies

The Children's Workshop, Cape Town, requires a
qualified & experienced **Primary Directress**
(age 6 - 9) urgently. Please send CV to
childwork@mweb.co.za

Assistant for bilingual class from January 2010. Second
year part time student in training may also apply. Please
email CV to: nici@montessoriathehome.co.za

Montessori Metaphysic Centre in Benoni JHB has 2
vacancies: qualified & experienced
3-6 Montessori directress.

Montessori student or qualified & experienced 3-6
assistant. salary neg. email CV & photo
admin@montmet.co.za

A Montessori qualified teacher required to spend a few
hours ever day with 20month old baby – everyday after
14:00. Featherbrooke Estate on the West Rand of
Johannesburg. **Contact: Wesley Scott**
wesley@quintessentially.com

High Hopes Montessori in Centurion requires a qualified
3-6 Directress in January 2010. Maturity and experience
essential. Call **012 654 5588** or e-mail
highhopes@telkomsa.net

Centurion Montessori School urgently requires a **Junior
Primary (6-9 years) Directress** to start in January 2010.
Please contact Zinita on (012) 653-4177 or e-mail:
zinita@centurionmontessori.co.za. If you are currently
studying the Primary course you may also apply.

Looking for **6-9 Directress
Jewish Montessori** 2010
email Morahzeesy@theshul.co.za your CV.
Experience and qualifications a must!

Stepping Stones is looking for **2 Directresses** and **2
Assistants**
for January 2010. Please contact Deepa on
021 461 3253 or email deepa@steppingstones.org.za

My Montessori School Vredendal is growing fast and
looking for an Afrikaans speaking, dedicated, positive &
enthusiastic qualified Montessori Directress for classes
18mth – 3 years, & **3 – 6 years**. Our school is situated on
a lovely smallholding between the vineyards 3km outside
Vredendal (300 km from Cape Town). We have various
farm animals & an organic garden. Classes do not exceed
15 children & school has 23 in total. If interested in living
and working in the country please contact Elizna on
0844008044 or via email at
skool@vredendalmontessori.co.za

If you would like to advertise in the SAMA Newsletter, please send
the relevant information through to admin@samontessori.org.za

Training



academy for teacher training
Educating the Human Potential

PRESENTS:

A ONE DAY WORKSHOP: REVISITING THE CULTURAL AREA

Presented by: Heidi van Staden, Principal of the Montessori Academy and College and Trainer at the Academy's Pretoria and Johannesburg Training Centres

Montessori Academy for Teacher Training, Zwavelpoort, Pretoria East
Saturday 10 October 2009
09h00-15h00 (lunch between 12h30 and 13h30)

Workshop Content

- Montessori philosophy:
 - The Cosmic Approach
 - Tendencies of Man

Outcomes

- Participants will develop a deeper understanding of the philosophy that supports the cultural area of a Montessori Preschool.
- Participants will have the opportunity to see presentation of cultural materials.
- Participants will be presented with extensions to the cultural materials.

Who Should Attend?

- Anyone who did their training more than 3 years ago!
- Anyone wishing to expand on their own general knowledge.
- Anyone who has a picture of a polar bear in their Antarctica Continent Folder.

Cost

- Montessori Academy for Teacher Training students and ex-students : R200.00
- Non Academy students, but SAMA individual members : R300.00
- Non Academy and non-SAMA members : R400.00

NB: You do not get further discount if you are an Academy student *and* a SAMA member – but you will get a seat in the front row!

Register

- Ina, Rose or Kgomotso on (012) 996 0855



academy for teacher training
Educating the Human Potential

PRESENTS:

A ONE DAY WORKSHOP: ART IN THE MONTESSORI CLASS (with focus on the 6-9 class)

Presented by: Bretten-Anne Moolman Heath – acclaimed artist and Art teacher at the Port Elizabeth Montessori School

Montessori Academy for Teacher Training, Zwavelpoort, Pretoria East
Wednesday 30 September 2009
09h00-15h00 (lunch between 12h30 and 13h30)

Workshop Content

- The Theory of Art Development in the Young Child
- Practical and Experiential Learning
- Classroom Ideas and Curriculum Content

Outcomes

- Participants will develop a deeper appreciation of Art as a learning area
- Participants will have the opportunity to participate in activities and work that will lead to a better understanding of its place in a Montessori context.
- Participants will be presented with extensions and ideas to implement in their environments.

Who Should Attend?

- Anyone wishing to gain more insight into the art area of their environments.
- Anyone wishing to expand on their own art knowledge.

Cost

- Montessori Academy for Teacher Training students and ex-students : R200.00
- Non Academy students, but SAMA individual members : R300.00
- Non Academy and non-SAMA members : R400.00

NB: You do not get further discount if you are an Academy student *and* a SAMA member – but you will get a seat in the front row!

Register

- Ina, Rose or Kgomotso on (012) 996 0855

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.

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

NATIONAL OFFICE: Eastern Cape admin@samontessori.org.za		
Telephone 041 581 2874, Fax 086 561 8774, Cell number 072 609 5979		
Deirdré Gower	General and Membership Administrator	admin@samontessori.org.za
Heidi van Staden	President	president@samontessori.org.za
Sumaya Tar Mahomed	General Secretary	ably@yebo.co.za
Charl du Toit	Ordinary member	admin@samontessori.org.za
Laurelee Parr	Ordinary Member	admin@samontessori.org.za
Ina Smith	Ordinary Member	admin@samontessori.org.za
Noleen Clarke	Ordinary Member	admin@samontessori.org.za
Lana Player	Ordinary Member	admin@samontessori.org.za

