A.M.I. Elementary Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume XI Number 1 October 1983

# Levels of Silence

*Marianne White Dunlap*

What a precious gift we give to children when we bring to their consciousness the value of silence in their lives! As Montessorians we are called to present the quality of silence as part of our classroom work. Its value in our own personal lives can help us to realize the value it can have for children too. Preoccupation with academics and the class management aspects of our day can easily cause us to overlook the necessity of contemplation, reflection and quiet leisure for the full growth and development of the human spirit.

What is silence? Is it more than the absence of sound or noise, more than the inhibition of movement? In a deeper sense, it can be an active state of being. It can be an acute sense of awareness; a zeroing in, so to speak. How can we nurture this richer kind of silence in both our lives and in the lives of the children we work with each day? How we answer this question can determine the quality of our lives and the quality of the life of each child we encounter.

First among Dr. Montessori's classification of silences is the silence of the pure listener, the silence of deep interest. We observe this kind in our classrooms when we see children listening silently as they are presented with new information or are internalizing some fresh insight. They become completely absorbed while watching a lesson or working with a piece of material. "Listening" to the material requires the skill of concentration which can only come during an active silence. This inner discipline is necessary for the child's development. Dr. Montessori stated, "The more the capacity to concentrate is developed, the more often the profound tranquility in work is achieved, then the clearer will be the manifestation of discipline within the child." We are all continually finding ways in the classroom to nurture this ability to concentrate. One way is through an awareness of the value of silence.

In our adult lives this first kind of silence reaches a deeper awareness. We all know that we can become more aware of life by allowing ourselves to be totally focused on the present moment. We have all talked to people whose attention is obviously not on what we are saying. We have also experienced being the person who is distracted, who is finding it hard to concentrate. If we are blessed, we know people whose ability to listen makes us feel wonderful, as they hang onto every word we say. Their total attention shows that they are truly interested in what [illegible] sharing. The silence of the pure listener is a deeper reality. This person has developed the ability to totally encounter that which is in view. S/he is fun to be around because s/he is so totally aware of life. Silence for active listening allows a place for the "other" to enter and to beome one with us. Silence at this level requires that we really share. Its ultimate goal is one of a feeling of community with the "other".

In the classroom the time we spend in observation is time spent in active silence. To observe at this level we must relate to to the children with a total giving of ourselves. Our absolute presence to the child in front of us fosters an opening up of ourselves so that "another" can enter. Silence in this sense becomes a synonym for communication.

Silences made for active listening are quite different from silences created for internal reflection. This second kind of silence requires that one be alone with one's thoughts. With nothing to distract or hinder, reflective silence promotes random thinking. When random

thinking is done for prolonged periods of time, superficial thoughts give way to "root" feelings. These feelings rise to the surface of our consciousness like oxygen in water. They are set free from our unconsciousness. This kind of silence enables us to encounter ourselves on a deeper level than otherwise is possible in our busy lives. It gives us an opportunity to use our sense of intuition, to relax, to regain our equilibrium and to gain fresh insights. We have all realized the value of this kind of silence for clear thinking and creativity.

Silences experienced in reflection for creativity are quite different from the silence created during meditation where one strives for order in one's universe. The former kind has an element of struggle (creative tension). The latter seeks to eliminate tension for a feeling of bliss and contentment so that one can momentarily escape reality. This distancing or detaching oneself can bring on a feeling of tranquillity and clarity that only this kind of focused silence can create.

These last two kinds of silence can also be nurtured in a Montessori classroom. Children come to realize and appreciate these silences in their lives and actively work to develop them. They can be introduced to silence on different levels. They can grow to enjoy it and to seek it out when they work and when they wish to be alone.

The origin of Dr. Montessori's exercise of silence came as a result of a challenge she gave to a group of children. While holding a silent infant she remarked, "None of you could do so well." To her surprise, their interest was sparked and the challenge met. An intense desire was kindled to reproduce and experience the silence of the baby. Very young children can learn to control themselves so that the voice is silent. Only those who are the strongest can do it. Everyone wants to show how strong s/he is!

In the primary class the lessons for self-control begin. Dynamic and interesting presentations foster pure listening for information. Short discussions and sharings help the children to learn to wait their turn to talk and to give the other the courtesy of listening. Self-centeredness and rudeness give way to patience and an ability to let the other have his/her turn.

On the elementary level it is expected that children will be able to demonstrate this first level of silence. Control to make appropriate silences is necessary for the practical life of the school day. Walking to the gym or auditorium or to any other place in the building need not be a concern. Everyone is able to move throughout the school without disturbing others. An awareness that this is necessary and desirable is fostered during lessons of grace and courtesy.

A second level of silence can only be introduced after much practice with the first level. The music corner offers opportunity for quiet contemplation with earphones and a selection of classical or eastern music. Secluded nooks, where one can go to be alone, are desirable spaces too. Access to the outdoor environment where one can go alone to cut flowers, collect leaves or write a poem can be encouraged. It's not always necessary to be accompanied by a friend. This relaxed, reflective work we consider to be second level.

Being able to keep your body still and to relax muscles requires more self control and a stronger will than just keeping the voice still. A mat for yoga as an integral part of the classroom has given the children in my room a welcomed change of pace from their other work. A set of cards for simple stretching exercises and a set for some traditional yoga positions are available. The children, one or two at a time, use this area for physical and mental relaxation. With the deep breathing postures they can practice this third level of silence; the beginnings of deep meditation. How wonderful it is to be able to go to that place, deep within us, where there are no words, only feelings!!

All this work can lead the children to a fourth level; one that will be reached particularly if it is fostered in their home life. In prayer we encounter ourselves and our Reality in a special way. It is here where peace can be felt from our innermost being. Our school is secular and religion in a formal sense is not taught except from a historical and geographical point of reference. Yet, in our work of meeting the needs of each individual child, it sometimes becomes necessary to allow for the expression of this level of silence also.

This notion, that silence can have different layers of difficulty, as do the other works in the classroom, evolved as a result of observing and working with the children. They have a great desire to work at each level. There is also a great willingness to work at the skills required for attaining each level. There developed a desire to work in silence during the day.

It started one morning when a six year

old whispered into my ear, "Did you hear that 'natural' silence just a minute ago?" The morning had been a particularly calm one and there had been a moment when no one was talking or moving about, a moment she recognized as special and desirable. She shared her observation at a class meeting and a lively discussion ensued. It became a point of consciousness that silences happen at times when they are not planned for or willed. They are a natural part of each day, to be enjoyed in a fleeting moment.

The children asked for a period of silence duing their work time the next day. They decided to create, to extend and to savor a silence. And so we all agreed that from 10:30 to 10:40 we would all work in silence. When the ten minutes were over, no one noticed. The silence was broken only much later when someone started whispering to someone else.

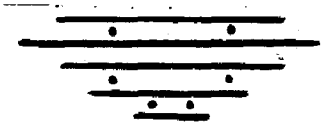
One morning, after the first "silences", the class as a whole "heard" a silence and stopped to hold it in suspension. It was a sign to me that they not only were becoming aware of silence in their lives but that they were beginning to value it as part of their day. On days when we experienced these silences the atmosphere in the room was noticeably calmer and more peaceful.

As the children became more skilled and their desire for silence heightened, longer periods of time were put aside for its enjoyment. They began to request "mornings of silence". If the majority agree, then we spend delightful periods of time supressing giggles and struggling to communicate with each other with hand signs and bits of paper and pencil. At the end of the morning the tables are scattered with all the notes written during the silence - relics of important questions and comments too urgent to be left unshared with fellow classmates. The children express an appreciation for such times. "I really did a lot of work! It's easier to memorize when it's silent."

One day a sign that read, "I wish to work in silence" was taped to the back of a child's chair. We all very willingly respected it, for we knew that one day we might want the option to work in silence too.

We still have those days of organized chaos and days when it's not so organized, too. But everyone knows there's a time and a place for silence in our lives also. We can enjoy all kinds of days realizing that we have only to feel the need to choose silence in its turn.

Silence is meant to be enjoyed. We can learn in its warmth and intimacy. We can seek it out when we wish rest or relaxation. As adults we see its necessity in our process of becoming actualized. In silence we give time to the person we are. We focus and reflect, we struggle and create, we relax and energize. This deeper experience of silence is possible for the children too, if they have been prepared for it through its different levels and uses in their daily lives.



# ALUMNI NEWS

Let's try out this idea. Send in news about yourself or an alumna/us to share with us.

# From the Executive Committee . . .

Dear Friends,

Upon returning from an inspiring two weeks in Kentucky, the summer slipped into the "~~Back to~~ School" advertisements. And hence it became time to compile our first newsletter for this 1983-1984 school year. The response in entries for our first issue was outstanding. All commitments were answered so that as the editor my work was tremendously facilitated.

I'm looking forward to this next year. My expectations for the newsletter are grand. This is only due to all of you, your support, and your contributions. The word about our organization is spreading. The numbers of members has already exceeded last year's figures. We are a growing and viable asset to each other in our work in "following the child."

This year is a first for an AMI-EAA sponsored regional workshop. We will have two this year. Upon evaluation, we hope to continue in the future. We have also initiated the beginnings of research. Members have expressed interest in investigating the role of testing and computers in our classrooms.

We hold a wealth of information and experience. Let's share our worth to aid each child in our classrooms.

Maryse

# Coming Events

The following are workshops which are being presented by AMI-EAA. We can be excited about this work of our organization. Spread the word.

| WORKSHOP LEADER | DATE | REGION | CONTACT |
|---|---|---|---|
| Margaret Stephenson | October 29 & 30 | San Francisco, CA | Phyllis Pottish-Lewis |
| Margaret Stephenson | February 4 | Atlanta, GA | Janice DeBra |

## FUNDRAISING IDEAS

Many of us have had to raise money for a class project/ trip. Have you? What ideas do you have to share — successes as well as failures? Please send your ideas to the Newsletter.

## THOUGHTS ON DRAMA

How do you use drama in your class? What preparations do you make prior to the performance? Do you have any tips or discussion regarding drama? Please send your ideas to the Newsletter.

## *Classified Ads*

### *Positions Available*

*ATLANTA, GEORGIA*
*We are accepting applications/inquiries from AMI teachers for Fall, 1984 and Fall, 1985 (will sponsor). Please specify level of interest:*
*PRIMARY*
*LOWER OR UPPER ELEMENTARY*
*"URBKINDER"*
*Contact: Phil Gang, Northwoods Montessori School*
*3330 Chestnut Dr., Doraville, Ga. 30340,*
*or phone (440) 457-7261*

*AMI Elementary position/1984-1985 1) AMI Director/Directress; 2) AMI Washington D.C. elementary trainee to sponsor. Edwardsville (Illinois) Montessori School, a non-profit corporation since 1971 with good community and university relations and self-perpetuating board. The 6-12 class established 1975, fed by four preschool classes in two locations. Supportive experienced AMI staff and administration. Well equipped facility, excellent library, professional enrichment encouraged. Salary negotiable. Thirty minutes from St. Louis. Reply to Mary Beth McGivern; Head Directress; 4401 Highway 162; Granite City, Illinois, 62040; or call school: (618) 931-2508 or home (618) 656-3615.*

*VIRGIN ISLANDS MONTESSORI SCHOOL, AMI, established 1965, 3 preschool, 2 six to nine, one nine to twelve class. Experienced 6-9 and 9-12 directresses needed for immediate placement. Established classes, excellent benefits. Send resume and references to Shournagh McWeeney, V.I. Montessori School, Vessup Bay, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. 00802.*

*WILL SPONSOR CANDIDATE FOR ELEMENTARY TRAINING*
*Established Montessori school located in Southern California beach community is seeking directress or director for existing class of 25 children. The age range is from 5 through 8 years and the children are well prepared for advancement in the elementary work. Health plan available, excellent facilities, apparatus, and material making equipment. Salary commensurate with experience and ability. Please contact Gail Burch at Child Space Montessori School, 1740 Manhattan Beach Boulevard, Manhattan Beach, California 90266, (213) 374-1804.*

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Enclosed is the AMI-EAA Directory of Membership.

This issue is missing a few entries due to the misplacement of some originals at the print shop. We should look forward to their publication in the next issue of the Newsletter.

# REPORT ON THE 1983 AMI-EAA ANNUAL WORKSHOP

The 1983 AMI-EAA annual workshop was held at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky from June 26 to July 1. All who came had an enriching experience. For those who didn't or couldn't come, notes from our four featured speakers will be printed in this year's newsletter. A detailed summary of the opening meeting is included in this report, while the summarized minutes of the business meeting will follow in the next newsletter.

Registration opened at noon on Sunday, June 26. Nine of us were able to participate from 3 to 5 PM in a workshop on psycho-synthesis, subtitled "Montessori for Adults", led by Martha Blazer, a Kentucky primary teacher. We were taken through a set of meditations, called 'guided imagery' which helped us to look at our real selves, our ideal teacher self, and our own worst teacher self. In looking at these images we thought about several questions, one of which I'll end with: How can you convert the energy of negative feelings (fear, anger, anxiety, etc.) into a more satisfactory experience?

At 5:30 a wonderful home-made picnic was provided for us, catered by a former Montessori teacher turned health-food store owner.

At about 7 PM Kathy Bihl, our workshop coordinator, opened the organizational meeting by welcoming us and introducing the Kentucky group: Alan Wallace, Kevin O'Loughlin, Joanne Simpson, and Elizabeth Farrar, who shared the work of organizing the workshop with Kathy. Next Phyllis Pottish-Lewis, our chairperson, opened the introductions. We each shared a little about ourselves. Phyllis called roll by classes. After that Kathy Bihl gave us scheduling details. Then we heard reports from the executive committee as follows:

CHAIR REPORT from Phyllis Pottish-Lewis

The Executive Committee met for an organizational meeting in March 1983. The chair also met with the workshop coordinator. Phyllis listed the following accomplishments for the past year:

1. A proposal was made to the AMI Continuing Education Committee that our refresher course workshops be accepted to fulfill the refresher course requirement for AMI elementary teachers. This proposal passed the committee and is now with the AMI Board.
2. Our relationship to the elementary training courses has been strengthened. In the summer of 1982 Maryse and Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite visited Signor Grazzini in Bergamo. Mary Hayes from the course in Ireland has been contacted and has shown interest in what we are doing.
3. Phyllis, as our chair, sent a letter to all administators of AMI-EAA teachers and AMI schools stating how important our workshops are and that it is the administrator's job to send their elementary teachers to the workshop.

NEWSLETTER COORDINATOR'S REPORT from Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite

Maryse talked about the new format of the newsletter and its quality. The format gives it a professional touch. It is our professional bulletin. This year, 1982-83, we had three good newsletters, because we contributed to it.

Maryse passed out the newsletter contribution form and explained a change in procedure. Now instead of being sent first to the area representative, articles are to be sent directly to the newsletter coordinator: Maryse Lepoutre- Postlewaite, 120 Robideaux, Aptos, Calif. 95003. Articles and other items for the newsletter are to be sent in camera-ready form. This means clean type (use a new ribbon), single-spaced, and proof-read.

Maryse needs volunteers to do typing. Sometimes short items need to be cobined and re-typed.

In 1982-83 20% of the membership contributed to the newsletter. Everyone is encouraged to make a contribution.

The newsletter is a resource and a vehicle for sharing. Aspects to be included in the newsletter are:

- Dialogue: a question posed in one newsletter with responses in the next
- Coming Events
- Regional Reports
- News from the Executive Committee

MATERIALS COORDINATOR'S REPORT from Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite

Tom has gone through 11 file boxes of materials and past newsletters. Several things were observed. For many items the author is unknown. After being contacted, some authors do not want their items re-printed. Some items are not reproducable due to poor copy. The Executive Committee felt a need for guidelines for dealing with the reproduction and distribution of materials and articles. In liason with trainers the following guiding questions were brought out:

Is the material an aide to the child, a distraction, or something the child should create?

Is the material a teacher resource?

At this point the materials have been divided into three catagories:

1. An Historical Archive
2. Reprintable Material
3. Materials to peruse at workshops

Eight folders of materials were made available at the Workshop to be checked for authors.

Further, the materials coordinator would like to create a liason with the Training Courses for access to materials presented in the courses.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT REPORT from Alan Temple

The process of research and development previously has not been dealt with. This process is just now being set up. Alan has talked with other EAA members and with trainers, Liz Hall, Fahmida Malik, and Margaret Stephenson on the subject. This is an area we need to be very careful with. Currently there are two areas that need to be considered:

1. Testing
2. Computers in the Classroom

We are looking for researchers for Computers in the Montessori classroom.

The AMI Pedagogical Committee is setting up a vehicle for the review of new materials. The EAA would like to be used as a testing ground for materials under review. This would not affect the current sharing format of the EAA workshops.

REPORT from the PAST CHAIR: Jean K. Miller

For years Jean carried the whole burden of organizing the elementary workshop from year to year and printing the newsletter. In the early years the workshops were vast xerox parties and material making sessions. One year they made materials for a school that had burned. Since then there has been much reflection on the quantity of material to make. A classroom that is like a supermarket causes a short attention span. We need to be careful not to make material that the children should make just because we like the process ourselves. Two years ago the title of our workshop at Devil's Thumb Ranch in Colorado was : "Less is More." We have moved to a more philosophical stage as an organization.

Now we need to develop strong AMI centers. How can we be sure that Montessori is happening according to the original vision? Think about the whole. Please think about the following questions:

1. How can we support the AMI movement?
2. How can we support AMI elementary?
3. What do we want as goals for the AMI movement?
4. What needs our support?
5. What specific things can we do to meet those goals?

Currently several things are are happening to further AMI elementary. A temporary training course has started in Toronto. Phil Gang has been accepted for trainer training. Two people are doing lecturer training: Jean Miller in Music and Phyllis Pottish-Lewis in Biology. A trainer deals with the whole course; a lecturer deals with a specific subject.

With the past chair's report Phyllis closed the meeting by asking for volunteers to count ballots from the election and asking the regions to choose new representatives.

The ballots were counted. Tom and Maryse were elected to continue their positions for a three year term.

What follows is an overview of our conference activities.

Monday morning June 27, Mary Jo Hogan, an AMI elementary teacher who is working on her M. Ed. degree with a focus on children's literature, shared her approach to literature in the Montessori classroom. She focused on poetry, fairy tales, and biography. Look for detailed notes on this talk in this or a later newsletter.

After lunch Mary Kane, a local story-telling artist, shared several stories with us, and gave us many pointers on story telling. She also gave us a superb set of references for folk tales.

Later in the afternoon we had sharing from conference participants. Alan and Sandy Wescott shared what they have done with the concept of "Animal Stories." They have created folders in which they have placed single page, easy reading texts for the various needs of the animal, habitat, food, reproduction, etc. At the top of each text vocabulary words are listed. On the back page of the folder are a set of questions to be answered. The point of the questions is to help the child think, "What do I need to know about animals?" The Wescotts also shared their simplification of the experiment commands.

Frank Vincent shared his experience with the book, Drawing on the Right Side of the Brain by Betty Edwards. He highly recommends that one do exactly as she says in her book. It really helped Frank. The

text also talks about how art develops in the child. Drawing is a way of seeing and letting the hand draw what the eye sees.

Peter Hanson shared what he does to facilitate "going out". See outline enclosed. Peter stressed that we need to show children how to be polite yet assertive on the phone. Acting it out is a good way to practise.

John Rodi shared his 9-12 class money-making project, a school store. This was used as a vehicle for economic learning.

At our evening session the subject was standardized testing. Alan Temple opened the meeting with the question of whether the group would eventually want to recommend a particular test and the need to look at the goals for testing.

Phil Gang went on to share the history of our relationship with the Psychological Corporation that produces the Stanford Achievement Test. Phil stated that testing is a tool to make parents feel at ease with what we're doing. He then introduced Bob Wathen, the regional manager for Psychological Corporation.

Bob Wathen showed us the new edition of the Stanford Achievement Test. He talked about setting up norms and the possibility of setting up norms for Montessori Schools across the country. Each participant was given a packet of information and a complete set of the tests to take home to examine.

One of the thoughts that came out about why we would want to test was to establish credibility beyond our local areas.

Tuesday morning Marianne Moore, an AMI trainer, talked about Cosmic Education and the importance of tales in cosmic education. It was a joy to listen to her reiterate what we all should know so well.

Her talk was followed by a panel discussion. A few thoughts that came out in the panel discussion follow:

In coping with social relationships we must be honest and open. Problems should be dealt with "before the sun sets."

We need to foster non-competition and peer-teaching.

We need to give the opportunity for stewardship to the children: recycling is a good way.

Humans are becoming more and more interdependent. We need one another. One class in addition to the U.S. pledge of allegiance does the U.N. pledge of allegiance to the world.

The great lessons should be done in the first week of school.

Tuesday afternoon Loyal Jones, a Berea college professor who collects jokes and stories, regaled us with Appalachian tales. In particular he talked about the Jack tales.

He gave us the following pointers about telling stories: Learn the elements of the main character and the elements of the story. Know the characters. It's not necessary to tell a story verbatim each time. In essence you describe the story. Ballads, on the other hand, because they are rhyming poetry, must be memorized.

The second part of Tuesday afternoon was a showing and discussion of computers by Alan Temple, Frank Vincent, and Alan Wallace. Alan Temple introduced the session with a short talk on the reasons for putting the computer in the Montessori classroom. He stated that the computer age is here and that it's not a question of whether but how and what to do with the computer. Computer literacy will be mandatory by the time our students reach college. Ignoring the computer would promote a certain illiteracy. The computer can be used to tap creativity and imagination.

Currently computers are used in schools in 3 ways;

a. computer-aided instruction
b. computer programming
c. used as tool for data storage and word processing

Alan Temple feels that programming is what we're interested in. Alan recommended the following book: MIND STORMS: CHILDREN, COMPUTERS, AND POWERFUL IDEAS by Seymour Papert.

After the general introduction Alan Temple talked about the use of the Logo language on the Apple computer. Frank Vincent talked about the Commodore which is very inexpensive. Alan Wallace showed the use of the Atari. Participants were then able to work on the computers.

Tuesday evening we held part I of the Business Meeting of the AMI-EAA. Jean Miller led this part of the meeting which was concerned with AMI-USA. A summary of the whole business meeting is given separately from this report.

Wednesday morning Kathy Carter, an AMI elementary teacher from San Francisco, told us about the work she has done this past year on poetry and meter using her literature background and the chapter titled "Meter" in Maria Montessori's book, THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY MATERIAL. A full summary will be given separately.

Wednesday afternoon part of the group went to an archaeological dig site north of Lexington.

Wednesday evening John Bodi showed the migration charts to those of us from Bergamo. Then Phil Gang led us to a group challenge which asked us to move all the people from one side of a "brick" wall 6 feet high to the other without touching it. You couldn't go under or around it, only over it. It took 45 minutes, but we did it. Maryse and Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite, and Phyllis Pottish-Lewis then gave us several lesser challenges. It was interesting to see how we worked out the problem of cooperation.

Thursday morning Bill Farmen, a psychologist married to Carla Caudill, an AMI primary and elementary teacher, spoke to us on "The Child's Perspective of Death" or "Where Do You Go When You Die." He covered this topic from 3 perspectives. First he discussed the development of the child's understanding of death. Second he talked about explaining death to children. Finally he talked about how theology helps us cope with death. After his talk he sub-divided the group according to religious perspective to discuss how a particular belief system helps one cope with death. In getting back together we shared the perspectives of the groups.

This presentation will be sent complete to the newsletter by Carla Caudill.

Thursday afternoon Mary Heiman, Elizabeth Farrar's mother, showed us a simple method of making paper. Carolyn Whitesel, a paper artist from Lexington, showed us the numerous things that can be done with paper. She described book-binding, ways to decorate paper, paper cuts, paper masks and shadow puppets.

Later in the afternoon, the group split into 6-9, 9-12 groups to discuss practicalities of the classroom. Separate reports will come from those groups.

Thursday evening was devoted to fun: a video of HMS Pinafore from one school, volleyball, and a 50's dance.

Friday morning was Part II of the Business Meeting, see Business Meeting Report. After lunch things began to break up. A group of 22 of us went caving with 3 experienced cavers to a well-mapped but unimproved cave. It was quite an experience as we slogged through mud, and crept through flat spaces. At one point we needed rope assistance to safely pass a sink hole. It was more of a challenge than many of us expected. In the end most people were glad they went. We arrived back too late for dinner so we went out for pizza.

Another group of people went to Shakertown at Pleasant Hill before leaving on Saturday.

All in all it was an exciting week. It is such an encouraging stimulus to get together with such an excellent group of people with a basic unity of purpose. With that unity we have such power.

Respectfully submitted,

Martha F. Bicknell

Martha F. Bicknell

# TESTING: WHAT DO WE WANT AS MONTESSORIANS?

D. Alan Temple
Frank A. Vincent

The Montessori environment for the elementary child is primarily a learning environment. What testing does occur is a self-testing, or a testing built into the developmental structure of the didactic materials. As Montessori teachers, we use many types of information to evaluate the progress of each individual child.

First, we use parents. Interviews and parent-teacher conferences provide much insight and information about the child's learning style. A parent's observations of a child's interaction in many real life situations provide concrete evidence of practical knowledge.

Second, our observation of a child on a daily basis -- in work, planning, cooperation, etc. -- provides us with first hand information about the child in a more academic setting. We observe the best moments and the worst. We observe times that we have structured a situation and times that the child has taken the responsibility. We observe the child expressing knowledge and thought to a group.

Third, by having a child for at least three years, we see the growth and development as the child matures. We have many tools for the evaluation of our children. If we want to evaluate our program, we can bring in a consultant, and we can go observe classes of our peers.

So, what role should standardized testing have in our environments? According to Roger T. Lennon, writing for the Test Department of Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the most common functions of standardized tests are these:

> "1. Tests provide measures of status in particular skills or content areas for a pupil, a class, or a school. They reveal where the learner or group is at a given time, and thus provide a clue as to the level at which instruction must be pitched....
>
> 2. Tests provide measures of growth, development, or progress toward desirable educational goals (assuming these tests are given to the child each year).
>
> 3. Tests provide measures of differential status, revealing areas of relative strength and weakness....
>
> 4. Tests provide analytical or diagnostic information....
>
> 5. Tests provide inventories of skills which serve both as checks on progress and guides to further instruction.
>
> 6. Tests are one source of data essential for continuing evaluation of the adequacy of the total instructional program.

"Well over 200 million standardized tests are given to school children each year. At least 75% are achievement tests. The Psychological Corporation states, "Achievement test are designed to measure the extent to which pupils have 'achieved' or mastered the skills and knowledge which are the goals of the schools' instructional program.... Since the achievement tests are so closely related to curriculum, the publisher will build his tests to reflect what is typically being taught in classrooms around the country."

It would appear that the major reasons given for achievement testing are at odds with the basic Montessori philosophy. Yet, I would guess, the majority of 6-9 teachers and almost all 9-12 teachers do some type of achievement testing. Why do we do it?

(over)

Perhaps the most succinct statement is this letter from Frank Vincent, which I here include in its entirety:

"Pursuant to our phone conversation, I would like to present my views on testing in Montessori schools based on my experience with tests and my work on the subject of testing. We use a very specific model that gives us information at each level we feel appropriate for our goals as Montessorians.

"I look at testing in three levels:

Achievement
Learning Abilities
Sensory Acuity

"These levels are hierarchical in order. First, as we know, the foundation of learning is sensorial. Learning demands sensorial development. Lower quantity or quality of sensory input weakens learning.

"Next, we develop learning abilities based on our integration and memory of the sensory input. These are refined and expanded according to experience, and these are the skills affected by methodology.

"Finally, the achievement level is the quantity of traditional educational information we can bring to consciousness and abstract with paper and pencil. Much of this is a test of memory, and it presents a very narrow perspective on a child's ability.

"Using this simple hierarchical testing model, we can better use tests and test results. If we want to know how our children would do in a traditional school, then we use the achievement test. It gives a kind of narrow curriculum comparison, and these tests are easily understood by traditional educators. They are not however predictive of future success, nor can they be used well for remedial purposes. Because of the narrowness of the cognitive processes these tests tap, and because they are the result of earlier processes, we must be more careful than traditional educators in the value we place on the results.

"If we want to compare the effectiveness of educational programs on cognitive processes, we need a broader based testing. Learning abilities testing provides this comparison according to a nationwide norm. It is also used for remedial activities placement, and it is an excellent predictor of success going out or coming into Montessori schools. Because of the breadth of the test, it can be used as a common denominator between different learning environments, and it can point to areas that need improvement in either program.

"Tests for sensory acuity and developmental level further define sensory perception on an individual level and point to some specific and general needs for developmental progress. Results from these tests affect all 'higher level' testing because these are the foundations of learning. Because this testing is a measure of each child's individual development, comparisons of scores between schools are not appropriate.

"This model is not a limiting perspective. By design it can clarify our understanding of a child and provide specific directions to help if the need arises.

"Intelligent use of test results is least practiced in the art of testing. Let us use testing not as a yardstick, but as another window to view the unfolding of the child.

Sincerely, Frank A. Vincent"

# EAA's INVOLVEMENT IN TESTING

D. Alan Temple,
Research and Development Chairman

For many years the topic of testing has been raised at the annual conference. For the last two years a group of EAA members has been looking into working with the Stanford achievement test. It is now possible for EAA to organize a testing procedure that would allow us to be considered as a "school district". There seem to be many benefits, but also some substantial concerns. I have summarized these for your information.

There follows a summary of the possible procedure for distributing tests as a school district. Most importantly, I have enclosed a questionnaire. Please fill it out and return it by November 15th. We will need to meet with the Stanford people by the end of November if we are to set up the procedure for this year; therefore, we will need an initial expression of interest by the above time.

Information from the questionnaire will be compiled. This will direct future discussions and will determine if a need exists for EAA to aid its members in testing.

## SUMMARY OF POINTS MADE CONCERNING CREATION OF A DISTRICT

### Reasons for Achievement Tests

Those already giving achievement tests gave these justifications: exposing children to the process of testing, reassuring parents and children, providing records for transfer, evaluating strengths and weaknesses of the Montessori curriculum, and predicting results of a change to public school. The Stanford Achievement Test is the test most often given by Montessori elementary teachers.

### Benefits of Creating a District

Each school may order exactly the number of tests needed, rather than the minimum of 30 per level, thus paying for only the tests needed. Each school will receive the minimum scoring plan chosen by EAA but can elect to receive more detailed scoring at additional cost. The collection of information could help to establish a national Montessori norm if this is our desire.

### Concerns Expressed

Many schools hand score the tests so that they can see what questions the children missed. Machine scoring would end this. Stanford claims that hand scoring leads to more "teaching to the test".

Some see the concept of national Montessori norms leading to a competition between schools and a change in curriculum in order to "beat the norms". (The fact is, there will always be as many schools below the Montessori norm as above it.) Teachers worry that results will lead to accountability concepts in hiring. Some have asked who will have access to the national norms and for what purpose.

(over)

Procedure for EAA as a District

1. Each school would order directly from Stanford.
2. Each school would pay the per-pupil charge for the test and scoring, plus a percent of the District fee ($385 per year divided by the number of schools participating).
3. Tests would be shipped and given within a two-week time frame in order to be accurately comparable.
4. Tests would be returned to Stanford for scoring.
5. The school would be sent a student profile for each student and a school summary.
6. Data would be compiled from all schools, and a summary would be sent to AMI-EAA. It would <u>not</u> be available to the public. EAA would <u>not</u> receive information on individual schools or students.
7. The first year or two would be needed to establish a baseline for norms.
8. In future years EAA could elect to delete "unfair questions".

TESTING QUESTIONNAIRE

(Please fill out as much as you can on both sides. Write additional comments if you wish. Mail to: Alan Temple, 2856 9th St., Boulder, CO 80302 before Nov. 15.)

Your Name _____ Name of School _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Who decides what tests are given (teacher, board, etc.) _____

What achievement test(s) do you give? _____

What month? _____ To what ages? _____

Were the tests __ machine scored __ hand scored? Why? _____

_____

The results are shared with __ teachers __ board __ parents __ children

__ other schools when child transfers.

Please rate in order of importance what results you use, or would use:

(1=highest, 5=lowest, 0=information not wanted)

__ Raw Score __ Grade Level __ Percentile __ Graphic Summary __ Stanine

__ National Norms __National Montessori Norms __ Class Composite __ Content Summary

__ Other (specify) _____

Why do you give achievement tests? _____

_____

_____

Do we want to test our children according to a national norm? __ yes __ no

Do we want to establish a Montessori national norm? __ yes __ no

Do we want to compare our children's achievements with __ other Montessori schools

__ other private schools __ public schools __ none?

Do we want to compare our curriculum with __ other Montessori schools

__ other private schools __ public schools __ none?

If our children do well, what, in your opinion, might this show? _____

_____

_____

If our children do not do well, what, in your opinion, might this show? _____

_____

_____

How will the results affect our implementation of the Montessori program? _____

_____

_____

_____

(over)

Should EAA become a "school district" in order to distribute achievement tests?

__ yes __ no

If yes, should we use __ Stanford __ other achievement tests (specify) _____

__ other kind of test (specify) _____

If no, should EAA collect and/or distribute any type of testing data to facilitate sharing of testing information between teachers and/or schools? __ yes __ no

If yes, what type of information would you like shared? _____

_____

_____

Are you interested in having Stanford send you information on testing for this spring as part of an EAA pilot? __ yes __ no (This is an expression of interest, not a commitment.)

If yes, please list approximate numbers of children you would have at each grade level:

____ K, ____ 1, ____ 2, ____ 3, ____ 4, ____ 5, ____ 6

If no, would you be interested in future years? __ yes __ no __ need more information

__ opposed to the idea __ other (explain) _____

_____

_____

Would you be interested in serving on a testing committee to explore testing and its implications for Montessori elementary schools? __ yes __ no (Please include your name and address if this is a different person in your school than the one filling out the questionnaire.)

Any other comments or concerns may be written here:

# CALENDAR STORIES

The stories about the etymologies of our names for the months of the year can be written on cards with the name of the month on the back. The children in my class use them in the same way they use the "Who Am I" stories for mythology. Also, they are an interesting facet in the study of the histories of various civilizations. The story of the development of the calendar is a fascinating one that goes well back into pre-historic times.
Most cultures had calendars divided into twelve time units based on the lunar cycle. The early Roman calendar was a lunar calendar. The Julian calendar instituted during the time of Julius Caesar changed the civil calendar from the lunar cycle to one based on the solar year. In 1582 Pope Gregory ordered that a New Style calendar be adopted outmoding the Julian Calendar. It wasn't until 1751 that the "New Style" calendar was adopted by Great Britain and her American colonies.

The Babylonians developed a calendar that had to be adjusted by adding an extra month three times in an eight year cycle. When the royal astronomers noticed that the calendar had run out of step with the seasons they would declare an intercalary (added) month. However, even these measures couldn't keep the Babylonian calendar accurate.

The Egyptians developed the first completely solar based calendar. Egyptian astronomers noted that the Dog Star, Sirius, appeared just above the eastern horizon after a several month period of absence, and that this reappearance coincided with the annual flooding of the Nile River. They used this event to calculate their 365 day calendar of 12 months with 30 days and a 5 day dividend. However, since they did not account for the extra $\frac{1}{4}$ of a day every year their calendar slowly slid out of step. The earliest known date of the Egyptian calendar is 4236 B.C., according to J.H. Breasted, a famous Egyptologist.

The Romans apparently took their calendar from the Greeks, although their mythology states that Romulus, the first ruler of Rome, gave them their first calendar. The Early calendar had only ten months with a total of 304 days. The other 61 days, which fell in mid-winter, were apparently ignored by the Romans. The names of the ten months were: Martius, Aprilis, Maius, Junius, Quintilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, December. By the time of Julius Caesar (died 44 B.C.) the calendar was off by about three months. He employed the Astronomer Sosigenes to find a way to fix the calendar. The resulting Julian calendar was used for 1500 years. The Julian calendar actually had 11 minutes and 14 seconds more than the solar year. By 1582 it was ten days in advance of the solar year. Pope Gregory the XIII declared that ten days were to be dropped from the year 1582 by making the day that would have been October 5, 1582 become October 15. To correct the error in the Julian Calendar it was decreed that February would acquire an extra day in century years that could be divided by 400, but not in other century years. The Gregorian or New Style calendar is so accurate that there is only a difference of about 26.3 seconds between the calendar and solar year.

Sources: The World Book, vol. 3

Encyclopedia Brittanica, vol. 4

## JANUARY

The first month of the year is named for Janus, a Roman god. Janus was the god of doors and gates. A person symbolically passes through a door when entering something new; for this reason Janus became the god of beginnings. Janus is usually represented by two faces: one looking forward, the other backward.

## FEBRUARY

This is the second and shortest month of the year. According to legends Romulus did not include it when he made the first Roman calendar, which had only ten months. Its name comes from a Latin word which means to purify. The Romans purified themselves in this month to prepare for the new year, which began in March according to their calendar.

## MARCH

This is the third month of the year. It was the first month of the ancient Roman calendar. Its name honors Mars, the Roman god of war.

## APRIL

This is the fourth month of the year. Its name comes from a Latin word which means to open. This month was the second month on the ancient Roman calendar, but it was moved to fourth place when Julius Caesar established the Julian calendar in 46B.C.

## MAY

This is the fifth month of on our modern calendar, but it was the third month on the ancient Roman calendar. Julius Caesar changed the calendar to begin with January. This month, many believe is named after Maia, the Roman goddess of spring.

## JUNE

This month is now the sixth of our calendar. It is named for Juno, the Roman goddess of marriage. This manth was dedicated to the young men of Rome.

JULY

This is now the seventh month of the year though it was the fifth month of the ancient Roman Calendar. The Romans called this month Quintilis, which means fifth. Julius Caesar was born during this month. When he adjusted the calendar he renamed this month in honor of himself.

AUGUST

Now the eighth month it was the sixth month of the old Roman calendar. It was called Sextilis, which means sixth. The Romans renamed the month to honor the Emperor Augustus.

SEPTEMBER

This is the ninth month although it was the seventh month of the old Roman calendar. Its name comes from the Latin word which means seven.

OCTOBER

The name for this month comes from a Latin word which means eight. This month was the eighth month of the Roman calendar before Julius Caesar changed the calendar and moved this month into tenth place.

NOVEMBER

The name for this month comes from the Latin word for nine. In the early Roman calendar this was the ninth month. It is now the elenth month of the year due to the change by Julius Caesar from a lunar to a solar calendar.

DECEMBER

This was the tenth month of the early Roman calendar. They honored Saturn, the god of harvest, in this month with a festival called Saturnalia. The name for this month comes from a Latin word which means ten. It is now the twelfth and last month of the year.

We thank Kathy Carter for submitting this timely information.

"WHERE DO YOU GO WHEN YOU DIE?"

William Farmen, M. Div., Ph.D.
AMI-EAA Conference, 1983

My topic is entitled "Where do you go when you die?" subtitled, "You, the child and death". I would like to read a quotation from a developmental psychology textbook by Clara Schuster and Shirley Ashburn that sets the stage for my paper:

> An individual's concept of death is the major organizer of his personality. No other concept has the integrating force embodied in this single macroconcept. Into this one complex concept are integrated one's concept of past, present, and future—the cognitive, social, spiritual and physical domains. The uniqueness of man, human dignity, and, in fact, the value and meaning of life itself are all bound up in one's conception of death. (p. 447)

Part I

I would first like to approach this topic from the perspective of developmental psychology, using two key concepts from the writings of Piaget: conservation and animism. Piaget held that children develop more and more complex conservations, in which the constancies discovered by reason dominate over the ever-changing experience of perception.

The first major conservation of the very young child is that of the object concept—that objects are separate and independent of the child's perceptions. Then comes the conservation of identity during the nursey school period—that is, the Tootsie Roll remains the same Tootsie Roll regardless of its shape. Then, there are the complex conservations of the elementary school period, which include quantity, number, length, weight and volume.

According to David Elkind, in his book The Child and Society, the child, in his search for what is permanent in a world of flux, makes what appears to be a big mistake. In addition to object, identity, quantity, weight and volume, the child also conserves personhood. The child places the lives of friends and relatives right in there with all the other invariant entities and properties. This mistake, of course, creates a major cognitive problem for the child when a relative dies and disappears from his world. The child is faced with the problem of reconciling his conservation of personhood with the obvious disappearance of the loved one. Organized religion, as pointed out by Elkind, has a ready-made solution for this problem. The deceased person is with God, who is the ultimate conservation transcending time , space, and physicality.

Another point made by Elkind is that the child's conservation of personhood contrasts sharply with all other conservations, in that other conservations are "first transient and only later become permanent", where as in the case of personhood "the child begins by assuming that life is everlasting and is shocked when he finds out it is transient." (p. 237)

This notion leads directly to Piaget's other concept: psychological animism. Animism involves the young child's attributing psychological characteristics such as consciousness, feelings, and motives to physical objects and events. Piaget held that initially the child believes all entities are alive whether they move or not. Later, the child comes to believe that only things that move are alive, like trucks and clocks. The still older child attributes life only to those objects that can move on their own, like the sun and the moon. Finally, the child comes to believe that only animals and maybe plants are alive.

The point that I want to make here is that the child differentiates the nonliving from the living, and not the other way around. Living is the primary category, and nonliving is the derivitive or secondary category. Once these two categories are differentiated the child is faced with the additional problem as to how they are to be related. It is my hypothesis that the child starts out thinking, as in the case of Pinocchio,that the nonliving can be transformed into the living, but fails to consider the obverse until faced with the facticity of death.

Of all the things the child believes he can rely on in a world of change, the continued living of loved ones probably seems to him the most secure; their possible demise forces him to consider the meaning of death. It is to the child's understanding of death that I now want to turn.

To us adults, the idea of death may seem quite obvious, but actually it is very complex. Robert Kastenbaum has explored the complex relationship between the child's thoughts about death and more general cognitive development. Specifically he has attempted to summarize some of the concepts and understanding a child must have in order to be able to say "I will die" and know what he is talking about. Kastenbaum identifies eight concepts or understandings:

(1) "I am an individual with a life of my own, a personal existence." [Differentiation of self from the other]

(2) "I belong to a class of beings one of whose attributes is to be mortal [as well as alive]." (Death is universal)

(3) "Using...logical deduction, I must arrive at the conclusion that my personal death is certain." (Deductive reasoning)

(4) "There are many possible causes of my death and these causes might operate in many different combinations; although I might evade or escape one particular cause, I cannot evade all causes." (death is certain)

(5) "My death will occur in the future; I mean a time-to-live that has not yet elapsed." (concept of future time)

(6) "ButI do not know when in the future my death will occur. The event is certain; the timing is uncertain." (concepts of possibility and necessity)

(7) "Death is a final event. My life ceases. This means that I will never again experience, think, or act, at least as a human being on this earth." (concepts of limits and permanence)

(8) "Accordingly, death is the ultimate separation of myself from the world." (death is total) (p. 93)

Death is certain, universal, final, and total; yet, its when, where and how are not knowable in advance.

Given the complexity of the concept of death, I would next like to summarize some empirical generalizations about how the child attempts to solve the cognitive problems resulting from his or her encounter with the facticity of death.

These generalizations are drawn from the research of Marla Nagy and from reviews by David Elkind and Robert Kastenbaum. I think that they must be considered very tentative.

The child from three to five years has a limited understanding of fortuitous or accidental events, future and past time, and the difference between living and nonliving; consequently, death is often viewed as continuous with life. Life and death may be considered alternate states, like being awake and being asleep or coming and going. Similarily, death may be considered a matter of degree (more or less dead, as in more or less hungry or tired). The child may also not see death as universal—only sick or old people die.

From ages six to nine, with concrete operational thought, the child is capable of understanding death as final, inevitable, universal and total; but may in fact because of his desire to conserve personhood, believe it is more or less reversible (not final) and not necessarily universal (only old people die). A major limitation with the child's understanding of death at this age, is that death is understood as external or extrinsic, something that happens to one from without. Death is like an external force that can get you. Death may also be personified (the Boogeyman). It is something like deep water to stay away from (if you're good, it won't happen to you).

Finally, from nine to twelve years, with developing formal operational thought, death is understood as intrinsic to life—that it is a necessary, inevitable and final outcome of life. Death means that your heart stops, your blood does not circulate, and you do not breathe. I think it is when the child fully accepts this facticity of death—when he, so to speak, conserves death—that the problem of where do you go when you die becomes most acute.

Once the child begins to understand that death is real, final, universal, and certain, the next important empirical question is: how does he or she respond to it emotionally. This question takes us from cognitive to affective psychology.

Earl Grollman, a rabbi, has worked extensively with bereaved children and has summarized some of their reactions to the death of significant others in his book Concerning Death: A Practical Guide for the Living. Here are some of his observations condensed from a more extensive analysis and slightly modified:

Denial: "I don't belive it. It didn't happen. It is just a dream. Daddy will come back. He will! He will!"

Bodily distress: "I have a tightness in my throat!" "I can't breathe!" "I have no appetite at all." "I can't sleep."

Hostile reactions: "How could Daddy do this to me?" The child feels deserted, abandoned and angry. Or, "It's the doctors' fault." "Mother didn't take proper care of him, that's why he died."

Replacement: "Uncle Ben, do you love me, really love me?"

Assumption of mannerism of deceased" "Do I look like Daddy?"

Idolization: "How dare you say something against Daddy! He was perfect."

Anxiety: "I feel like Daddy when he died. I have a pain in my chest."

Panic: "Who will take care of me now?" "Suppose something happens to Mommy?"

Guilt: Since the child is naturally egocentric and has a limited understanding of cause/effect, he may feel responsible for the death.

Depression: The child may feel helpless and loose hope. (pp. 75-76)

If Margaret Mahler is correct in her study of the process of separation/individuation, the child is capable of mourning by the age of three. How the child mourns, I think, will be determined by the child's understandings—how he

or she recognizes life and death, and how he or she comes to answer the question, "What is the meaning of life and death?" And, needless to say, this is a question he or she can struggle with throughout the lifespan, as Erik Erikson has brought home to us in his study of the later stages of the human life cycle.

Before turning to the next section of my paper I would like to summarize a few of the things Kubler-Ross has said about the child's fear of death. According to Kubler-Ross, the toddler, if he or she is sick or hospitalized, fears primarily separation from the parents. It is the fear of abandonment. The three to five year old adds the fear of mutilation to the fear of separation. By this age they have seen the bodies of animals killed on the highway. Later, a child may fear death as punishment or as some external force that can overpower him (as I have already indicated). Kubler-Ross describes her own fear of death as follows:

> If I am forced to conceive of my own death, I can only imagine myself being killed. I cannot conceive of my own death except as somebody or something coming and destroying me.

This, of course, is what theologians for centuries have called the fear of God.

Part II

Next, I would like to turn to explaining death to children. I want to acknowledge extensive use of Linda' Vogel's excellent book Helping a Child Understand Death in organizing this section of my paper and providing me with specific ideas and examples for helping the child. I have also gotten much help from Janette Klopfenstein's superb book Tell Me About Death, Mommy, and, of course, Earl Grollman's many writings on the topic.

First of all, Vogel identifies five guidelines when talking to a child about death:

a) Be accepting--any question honestly asked deserves a serious answer.
b) Be honest--only give answers you can believe yourself.
c) Be straightforward--answer questions as simply and directly as possible.
d) Don't lecture or moralize.
e) Say 'I don't know' when you don't. (Chpt. 4)

In talking to children about death, esepcially when a death occurs, Linda Vogel identifies five basic principles:

1. Know what you believe.
2. Begin where the child is.
3. Meet individual needs.
4. Confront reality.
5. Share hope. (Chp. 5)

I will take up each of these principles in turn, adding my own understanding to each of them.

First, know what you believe about living and dying and be able to articulate your beliefs. In my own relating to suffering and dying hospital patients, I find it extremely important to have my own beliefs and values clarified, so that I don't confuse them with those of the patients I am ministering to. To really understand the beliefs and values of others, I must try to know my own. I think this is extremely important when working with children.

Second, begin where the child is. Learn how the child conceives what happened, what is happening, or what might happen as well as what the child feels

about these thoughts and memories. Questions like "What happened?" or "What do you think will happen?" or "What are your ideas or opinions?" will get at the child's conceptions. Questions like "How do you feel?" or "What are you most concerned about?" , of course, get at the child's feelings. It is important to use honest, direct, and open-ended questions, if one is to learn about the child's reality.

Third, meeting the child's needs involves a willingness to accept and validate the child's feelings. The most common feelings that children of all ages (including adults) have concerning death are anxiety, guilt, anger, lonliness, and confusion. The teacher, or parent, can help the child understand these feelings by listening, reflecting back what is heard, clarifying when the child is confused, and asking pertinent questions when the child appears to be overlooking important information or data. Also, the parent or teacher can check back with the child to see if he or she really understands the child. Examples of checking back would be: "So you get really scared when you think that maybe your mother will die too, and there will be no one to take care of you"; or, "So you are angry at God, because he is unfairly punishing yourbrother with leukemia."

Janette Klopfenstein , in her book Tell Me About Death, Mommy, points out the importance of working with a child's feelings where she states:

> He needs parents who will first of all help him identify his feelings before he can begin expressing himself. If our child seems overly anxious about being alone, about going to sleep, or about being separated from us, we can try to get him to share by opening the conversation. We can ask, 'Is something frightening you?' or 'Does something worry you before you go to sleep?' or 'What do you think might happen if we go away?' (p. 27)

Fourth, confront reality. The child needs factual explanations commensurate with his level of understanding. For example, "Grandmother's body was very old and worn out, and she could not live here with us on earth any longer. When we get very old we all must die." Or, "Cousin Ron had a very rare disease. It made him sicker and sicker until he died. Doctors have not yet been able to find a cure for this disease, but we hope they will in the future." Or. "A man drank alcohol, and he lost control of his car and ran into your classmate and killed him." Or, "John was in a very serious accident, and the doctors were not able to repair his injuries."

The nature of death itself can be explained in straightforward, technical terms--the heart is stopped;there is no breathing; the body is cold; the person can't smell, touch, see, hear, feel, taste, think, etc. The body will never be alive again.The corresponding expressions of grief can be described for what they are--sadness, because one will not see or talk to the deceased again here on earth and because the deceased is missed very much. "We loved them, and we miss them. Death makes us sad. It is okay to cry. We all, someday, must die."

One other aspect of confronting reality is well-stated by Klopfenstein. She states:

> The best and most natural way I found to talk about death with a child is to talk about life. As we share with our child how much we value life and appreciate the experiences we enjoy, we can also mention that life does not last forever. We can

> begin to use phrases like 'life on earth' or 'the time we have on earth' to help our child understand that we conceive of life here as something that ends. We can share our belief that this time is given to use to use productively, to serve others and to enjoy. If we see life here as transient--the 'now' of eternity--we can give our children both an appreciation for the value of life and an understanding that this part will end. (p. 29)

Earl Grollman has written a beautiful little book entitled Talking About Death for Both Parent and Child that deals with the importance of confronting reality truthfully.

Last, share hope. As Vogel has pointed out, the hope we share must be our own, and it must be compatible with the child's belief system. For me, there is a dialectical relationship between confronting the reality of death and suffering on one hand and faith and hope the other. Faith and hope and love makes confronting reality possible. Confronting reality deepens faith and hope and love.

Ultimately, I think that one's hope, as well as one's faith, is dependent upon a tradition , and the community nurtured by that tradition--a community that embodies the tradition and keeps it relevant.

Part III

Last, I would like to explore this same topic within the framework of a theology. Here I want to make clear that I have two very strong biases; one is that everyone has a bias with respect to this topic, and the other is that I seek to start from the Judao-Christian tradition or perspective. Maria Montessori had a very profound understanding of this tradition, or perspective, and she wrote about it in The Child in the Church. (She also demonstrated an appreciation for other theistic perspectives, as evidenced in her work with the Theosophists in India.) Following is my understanding of the Judao-Christian perspective as it relates to living and dying.

First, and most basic, I believe that life is a gift--implying the existence of a giver of life. All life comes from God. We are not autonomous or self-sufficient. The receipt of our life as a gift reflects God's love for us.

Second, as pointed out by Stanley Hauerwas, who has influenced much of my thinking, death considered by itself is paradoxical. Death makes life precious; it makes all that we love precious; however, at the same time, it destroys the very life that it makes precious. In the words of Dr. Hauerwas, "It becomes the enemy of its own creation as it negates all it has taught us to love." Death is paradoxically tragic because the gift God gives is so good.

Third , from a Judao-Christian perspective, the relationship between life and death must be considered under two quite distinct conditons; one of sin, under Adam, and the other of grace, through Christ. Under condtions of sin, where humans disobediently claim self-sufficiency and autonomy, the relationship between life and death reflects man's love for himself, and it (death) is experienced as a theft. Death robs humans of self-sufficency and autonomy. It separates the person from body, community, and ultimately from the giver of the gift of life.

In contrast, under conditions of grace, the relationship between life and death once again reflects God's love for us. John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that he give his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life." (NIV)

Through the life and work, death and ressurection of Jesus Christ, all humankind has a renewed opportunity to know God's love and live life as a gift,in obedience to the giver. Death is robbed of its sting. It still separates humans from their autonomy and self-sufficiency (and their body and community), but not from the eternal presence of God the giver and sustainer of all of life.

Fourth, the gift of eternal life in Christ makes life precious in a new and radical way. C.S. Lewis, in his book Mere Christianity put this far better that I can:

> Again, Christianity asserts that every individual human being is going to live forever, and this must be either true or false. Now there are a good many things which would not be worth bothering about if I were going to live only seventy years, but which I had better bother about very seriously if I am going to live forever. Perhaps my bad temper or my jealousy are gradually getting worse--so gradually that the increase in seventy years will not be very noticeable. But it might be absolute hell in a million years; in fact, if Christianity is true, Hell is the precisely correct technical term for what it would be. And immortality makes this other difference, which, by the by, has a connection with the differences between totalitarianism and democracy. If individuals live only seventy years, then a state, or a nation, or a civilization, which may last a thousand years, is more important than an individual. But if Christianity is true, then the individual not only is more important, but incomparably more important, for he is everlasting and the life of a state or a civilization, compared with his, is only a moment. (p. 33)

I think that Maria Montessori would have agreed with C.S. Lewis. She reflected this theology in both her life and her writing. She called it respect for God in the child. She also viewed life as a gift of God. She spoke of the central part of man, his soul, as being created directly by God. She also held that the child belongs to God and to to us, and that the child exists for God and not for us.

In reading Maria Montessori's book, The Child in the Church, I also found it interesting that she understood the discovery of the laws of child development as simply the discovery of the spirit and wisdom of God operating in the child; and that she believed the child's nature represented God himself summoning adults to assist the child.

In conclusion, putting it very succinctly, I think that there exists in the Montessori tradition a broad theistic world view that can provide a basis for assisting the child find meaning for living while facing truthfully the reality of death. And, this tradition can provide a framework for confronting death both honestly and hopefully in the classroom.

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Children's Literature by Mary Jo Hogan

Notes by Gladys Strauss*

Children's Literature is traditionally divided into various categories. Mary Jo discussed the categories of poetry, fairy tales, and biography.

## Poetry

The long term goal of the study of poetry is to provide a habit of reading and enjoying literature. Children have a difficult time selecting poems they like from books. Therefore, poetry is best presented in the classroom as separate pieces. This box of individual poems mounted on separate cards should include your favorite poems. It should include some short poems as well as longer ones, and some with language orientation and other areas of the curriculum.

It is very important that the children learn that poetry doesn't have to rhyme. It Doesn't Always Have to Rhyme - Eve Merriam. The story of Anastasia Crupnick illustrates this very well. Anastasia was to write a poem for an assignment which was supposed to rhyme. She succeeded in writing a very fine poem, but when she turned it in she got an F because it didn't rhyme. To console her her father told her "There are different levels of writing poetry and your teacher hasn't reached your level yet".

Three poetic elements that appeal to children are rhyme, rhythm, and sound. The elements of surprise and difference appeal to children. Humorous poems also appeal to them. Children's interest in poetry reaches its peek in fourth grade. Their interest declines because teachers give less emphasis to it and the selections they choose are inappropriate. The choice of poem and the way of presenting it are important. Children younger than 9 years are not strong enough to select poetry by brousing, so poems should be selected for them. Poems should be chosen with certain elements in mind--rhythm, rhyme, meter, mood and figurative elements. Poetry should be read aloud. The children can read to each other in pairs. You Read to Me, I'll Read to You by John Ciardy discusses children and adults reading together. One should consider age, background, and previous experience in selecting poetry. Two kinds of poems that appeal to children are nonsence poems such as "Eletelephony" and story poems such as "In the Middle of the Night" by Eileen Fisher. This is a great poem to read to the children. You should read to the children

*Adapted from lecture notes taken at AMI-EAA conference, Berea College, Berea, Kentucky, June 27, 1983.

everyday. The children should also have a silent sustained reading period of 30 to 40 minutes each day. Select 20 to 40 books from the library and give a short introduction to each book for the children. If you expect the children to read you must have good books for them to read. Don't expect them to read the same 200 books all year round. A good way to familiarize the children with the various categories of books is to make a chart listing the various categories: Fairy Tale, Fantasy, Natural Science, Science Fiction, Poetry, Sports, and Biography. Then provide an envelope with the names of the books in the classroom that have been read to them, so they can place the names on the chart under the correct listing. The children can also make a chart of their own to keep track of their own reading. If they are reading only fantasy it will be pointed out to them on their chart.

Poetry can be an avenue for bringing drama into your classroom. The children first select poems to read aloud to the other children and later they choose one to act out. This can be done in the style of interpretive reading or as poetry charades. Another method of dramatizing poetry is to have a group of children select a poem, memorize it, and act it out as they recite it. This can also be done with fairy tales and other forms of literature.

Have the children do their own illustrations of poems. Mount the illustrations on separate cards. Then they can read the poems and find the matching illustrations. You may also have a set of poems with matching illustrations. Children enjoy reading poems and matching them to illustrations.

A way to help the children to memorize poetry is to mimeograph a poem so each child has his own copy. Then have each child read the poem starting with the better readers.

The children can save poems and make their own anthologies. This is a great handwriting exercise.

Keep a poem in your pocket. Provide the children with a folder with four pockets on it. They can then hand copy their favorite poems and put them in a pocket.

A great book to build a poetry curriculum on is Knock at a Star by X.J. Kennedy & Dorothy M. Kennedy. This book includes ideas such as what's inside a poem, kinds of poems, ten steps for getting poetry going in your classroom, a word to adults, and suggestions to teachers.

The end result of a poetry program is to have the children write their own poetry. However, before you have children write poetry give them a few years of reading poems. Begin writing poetry as a group. Give them a structure and then build on it as a group. It is bad to force the writing of poetry. Later the children may want to make a book with their favorite poems and illustrations.

Fairy Tales

Elementary age children like the sad, happy, violent part of fairy tales. Older children can get a historical appreciation of fairy tales. Charles Perrault wrote Tales of Mother Goose in French. It consisted of eight fairy tales. When it was published in 1697 it was not intended for children. In the original writing two morals were given for each story. Cinderella was one of these first fairy tales written not in English but in French. It has been found in at least twenty six different ethnic backgrounds. Ashes symbolize the lowly background. In 1823 the Grimm Brothers came along in Germany. They were interested in the German language. They went to the stories to understand the language. Elderly ladies told the stories. The Grimm Brothers did not write them, but they collected them. They were not written for children either. They were translated into English in 1823. In England in 1859 Joseph Jacobs decided to collect several folktales. These were written with children in mind. In Norway two zoologists Asbjornsen and Moe collected fairy tales of Norway in East of the Sun and West of the Moon in 1859. This collection includes "Three Billy Goats Gruff". These fairy tales have trolls, northwind, and polar bears. The children will appreciate fairy tales better if they understand more of the historical background.

An exercise that will help acquaint the children with different fairy tales is to provide a folder with three sets of cards. The first set has the title, the second set has a picture, and the third set has the story. The children put out the cards and match them. The front cover of the folder tells the origin of a particular set of fairy tales. Hopefully the children will read others and add to the set. After some work with fairy tales the children will ask if there are any American fairy tales. This will lead to a study of folk tales. Tall tales such as Paul Bunyan, Johnny Appleseed, and Daniel Boone were stories told around the fire when our country was new. American folk lore and legends should be searched out. Get books from the library such as Great American Folk Heroes by Lewy Olfson. Richard Chase collected The Jack Tales from the Appalachian area. The original American folk tales were ones told by the Indians. Myths were told to explain why things came to be such as Why the North Star Stands Still by William R. Palmer. Another kind of Indian tale was animal tales. Cherokee Animal Tales was edited by George F. Scheer. Black tales were collected by William J. Faulkner in The Days When the Animals Talked. An interesting fact about American Indian tales is that things come in fours rather than the customary threes. The children may want to research the reason for this. Folk tales can be grouped by any number of themes. Don't automatically pass by the picture book section for the six to twelve year olds.

Other books of interest to children include:

The Happy Prince by Oscar Wilde
The Light Prince by George Mc Donald
The Little Princess
Many Moons
The Wonderful O

The Thirteen Clocks
Castles and Dragons

Some of the best books in Children's Literature are in the category of fantasy.

Alice in Wonderland
Peter Pan
The Borrowers
The Green Knowe Books
Tom's Midnight Garden
Maurice Sendak's books.

There are many animal stories in the fantasy category.

Peter Rabbit
Just So Stories
Wind in the Willows
Rabbit Hill
Charlotte's Web
Watership Down

Some personified toy stories include:

Pinnochio
Winnie the Pooh
Hitty

Humerous fantasy stories are:

Mary Poppins
Push Cart War
Dr. Seuss

Books that create controvery are:

Charlie and the Chocolate Factory
Jmangi (a picture book that is not for younger children)
Ben's Dream (also a picture book not for younger childre)
Shirley It Is Time to Get Out of the Bath - John Burmingham
(There are 2 or 3 Shirley books)

There are many things that can be done with maps. The children can map the origins of the heroes of the tall tales. They can plot the journeys of pioneers such as the Little House on the Prairie stories.

Biography

The problem with biography is the poor quality of biographies written for children. Some examples of really good biographies are:

Invincible Louisa by Cornelia Meigs and Carry On, Mr. Bowditch by Jean Lee Latham.

What to do about bad biographies is covered in the enclosed article entitled "What Do We Do About Bad Biographies?" by J. Carr summarized here.

1. Encourage children to read more autobiography and less biography.

   The Upstairs Room - Johanna Reiss
   The Endless Steppe - Esther Houtzig
   My Japan - Hiroko Nakamoto
   Childtimes - Elaine Greenfield and Lesni J. Little

2. Promote books that focus on a short, but significant period in someone's life.

   The Boy Who Loved Music - David and Joe Lasker
   Three Days at Gettysburg - Henry J. Hunt

3. Avoid watered-down, talking-down biographies for younger children.

4. Dig out biographical material in the nonfiction.

   The Upstairs Room - Johanna Reiss
   Flying to the Moon and Other Strange Places - Michael Collins
   A Home, A Farm, and A Family - Carl Larsson
   (These books are art books that are also biographical.)
   As I Saw It: Women Who Lived the American Adventure - Cheryl Hoople
   Museum People - Peggy Thomson
   Plane Talk: Aviators and Astronaut's Own Stories edited by Carl Oliver
   To Be a Slave - Julius Lester
   Diary of an Early American Boy - Eric Sloane
   The Sea Dragon - George Sanderlin
   Escape to Freedom - a play about Frederick Douglas written by Ossie Davis
   Where Was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May? - Jean Fritz

# What Do We Do About Bad Biographies?

## by Jo Carr

ACCORDING TO Philip Guedalla, biography is ". . . a region that is bounded on the north by history, on the south by fiction, on the east by obituary, and on the west by tedium."[1]

If this is true, then in the region of children's biography, we must add more points to the compass. On the northwest, hagiography: George with his little hatchet and Honest Abe gazing into the coals. On the northeast, didacticism: Helen Keller obscured by "mists of adulation." On the southwest, oversimplification: Einstein and his theory of relativity reduced to the third-grade reading level. On the southeast, propaganda: Crispus Attucks, a black hero of convenience. And, from all directions, sentimentality, unwarranted fictionalization, lack of solid documentation, and distortion of history.

Are these views of children's biography too deprecatory? Not according to most of those who have written articles on this subject. As Margery Fisher puts it: "It is in the sadly drab shelves of so-called biographical material for the middle years that a change is long overdue. Between the ages of eight and 12, how much energy, curiosity, and good will is going to waste."[2]

What can we do about bad biographies?

First, we can cultivate nimble dexterity in working around rotten biographies already on the shelves. Then, we can cultivate equally nimble wits in keeping such books off the shelves.

Before any of this, however, we must decide what we expect biography to do for children. Patrick Groff, in two articles he has written on the subject, demolishes biography as inspiration-to-the-young.[3] For one thing, as he points out, it doesn't work. Jean Fritz hammers the nail in the coffin: not only does such uplifting biography fail to inspire children, it also distorts history and breeds cynicism. And, most unforgivably and all too often, it is boring. Nobody likes to be preached at, children no more than the rest of us.

In only one particular might we modify what Groff and Fritz have said about biography as personal inspiration to the young. Although there is certainly no defense for presenting public figures as "human saints," there is a place for "identification" as a child reads about a kindred spirit. Any child who stores stuffed birds in the refrigerator, for instance, might delight in reading Barbara Brenner's biography of Audubon, but this is a 10-year-old "oddball" joyfully discovering another oddball of 40. Identification, "Yes"; emulation, "No."

If emulation, then, is not a sensible reason for reading biography, what is? The answer is obvious: for the enjoyment and understanding of history. Most children read biography to find out what it was like to live "long ago." Good biographies tell them exactly what it was like. It is only when biographies are not readable and history is distorted that we must figure out "how not to do it." Here are some directions we might want to follow—directions leading toward historical awareness and away from hagiography, sentimentality, oversimplification, and didacticism.

**Encourage children to read more autobiography and less biography.** In discovering the past, either for schoolwork or for pleasure, a child reading an autobiography will be walking around in the skin of someone who lived in another place at another time. For example:

Johanna Reiss compels the reader to come with her when she enters *The Upstairs Room*, where she and her sister spent two years in hiding during World War II.

Hiroko Nakamoto, in her autobiography called *My Japan, 1930–1951* (McGraw Hill, 1970), shares with the reader her anguish after the bombing of Hiroshima.

Eloise Greenfield, her mother, and her grandmother, all remember—in *Childtimes*—what it was like when they

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were children. It is almost as if they were reminiscing together on the front porch, "Did I ever tell you about the time . . .?" Since we all want to give children an enriching exposure to minorities, what a privilege to share these memories, to feel the love and solidarity that carries from one generation to another. The truth about this fine black family is 10 times more inspiring than the fabricated idealization of Crispus Attucks, about whom we actually know next to nothing.

Margery Fisher maintains that the use of authentic social detail is the biographer's most important tool. In these three autobiographies—*The Upstairs Room, My Japan,* and *Childtimes*—social detail, by the very nature of the first-person account, makes past life as real as life today.

**Promote books that focus on a short, but significant, period in someone's life.** Often a chronological account, from childhood to death, must omit social details that children love. At least this is true if the book is not to be as long as *War and Peace.*

In writing and illustrating *The Boy Who Loved Music,* for instance, David and Joe Lasker have revealed fascinating bathing rituals in the Austrian castle of Esterhaza, along with Haydn's musical protest in his *Farewell* Symphony of 1772. This is a short book, covering only a few weeks in the composer's life. In a cradle-to-the-grave biography, such delightful detail would have been out of the question.

We now have quite a few of these sharply focused, miniature excursions into biography: Lindbergh flying solo across the Atlantic, Benjamin West learning from the Indians how to mix colors for his paints, Robert E. Lee struggling against defeat in *Three Days at Gettysburg.*

**Avoid watered-down, talking-down biographies for younger children.** In simplifying the life of a public figure, biographers are often forced to leave out facts that are essential for a balanced portrait. The result: distortion by omission, just as unfortunate as distortion by commission. It should come as no surprise, for instance, that history will inevitably be distorted when a biographer labors to give third graders some understanding of FDR's efforts to pull the United States out of the depression or to explain Jefferson's wisdom in drafting the Declaration of Independence. How could a child of that age be expected to understand such complex ideas and issues?

Even the less complicated exploits of Benjamin Franklin can be distorted in oversimplified accounts. One author rattles off Franklin's accomplishments—including the famous stove—without any explanation of how they worked or why they were important. Even Franklin's "Rules of Behavior" have been drastically abridged. Still another author covers 60 years of his life in six pages! Ben Franklin himself would turn over in his grave if he, or his ghost, could read these books.

Unfortunately, there is really only one way to determine how flagrantly omissions have distorted a biographical portrait: read many accounts of the same life, including an adult biography, as ably demonstrated by Margery Fisher in *Matters of Fact.* This exercise is so revealing that third- and fourth-grade teachers who presently assign biographies should be persuaded to try it.

Apart from distorting history, writers of simplified biographies frequently talk down to children, in sentences that sound like the most boring of all easy readers: "Let's start libraries and hospitals. Let's clear the streets and put up lights. Let's work together to fight fires. . . ." Such choppy writing, combined with the adulatory tone that characterizes biographies for beginning readers, does an injustice to the person who is the subject of the book. It also does an injustice to readers, for that matter.

The point is that there is no necessity for young children to read biography at all. Why not let them wait until they have enough historical background to understand the true significance of these events and the men who inspired them?

**Dig out biographical material in the nonfiction.** This may be the most productive way to resist rotten biographies. Admittedly, discovering these books may be a slippery process, since books are classified quite differently in various libraries. (*The Upstairs Room,* for instance, can be found in the 940s in some libraries, in fiction in others, and in biography in others.) But the accuracy of these biographies, concerned as they are more with the person's working life than with childhood "stories" about curing a pet dog or buying a bun in Philadelphia, justifies extra effort. Besides, hunting for them can be absorbing, as children might agree if they were set loose on a biographical treasure hunt.

Consider the following examples:

Michael Collins, in *Flying to the Moon and Other Strange Places,* describes his extraordinary journey through space. This book is classified in the 629s.

> The feeling was less like flying than like being alone in a boat on the ocean at night. Stars above, pure black below. At dawn, light filled my windows so quickly that my eyes hurt. Almost immediately, the stars disappeared and the moon reappeared. I knew from my clock that the earth was about to reappear, and right on schedule it popped into view, rising like a blue and white jewel over the desolate lunar horizon.[4]

Polly Brooks and Nancy Walworth in their fine histories of Rome, the Middle Ages, and the Renaissance, have also placed public figures as the dramatic center of events. In *The World Awakes,* for instance, we find Lorenzo de Medici and Leonardo da Vinci "awakening" the Renaissance world of Italy. The classification number is 940.21.

William Kurelek, in *A Prairie Boy's Winter,* tells a great deal about himself as he describes his boyhood in Saskatchewan. He also gives us a book of outstanding graphic beauty. The classification number is 917.1.

Carl Larsson has also created three books of graphic distinction: *A Home, A Farm,* and *A Family.* These books are shelved, logically enough, in 759.85, but despite some uneven text, they are obviously enriching as biographies as well as art books.

As a matter of fact, we can reap very special benefits from reading biographical writing found in the nonfiction. Some of these books may give us a valuable glimpse into the lives of ordinary people. Marilyn Jurich, commenting on the lamentable quality of biographies for children, pleads for more biographies about not-so-famous people who have led interesting lives in one way or another.[5] Fortunately, we can find some of these people at home in the nonfiction. *As I Saw It: Women Who Lived the American Adventure* by Cheryl Hoople is a notable example, as are *Museum People* by Peggy Thomson, and *Plane Talk: Aviators' and Astronauts' Own Stories* edited by Carl Oliver. And, certainly, many of us have been moved by the searing accounts of the slaves in Julius Lester's *To Be a Slave.* Anyone exploring the nonfiction shelves might be surprised at how many ordinary people, just as interesting as these, are waiting to be discovered.

Following is another bonus to be derived from reading biography in the nonfiction. Here, we have the privilege of experiencing the unfolding of events, just as they happened, recorded in the journals and diaries, and eyewitness accounts of people who were there. Eric Sloane, after finding a diary of a farm boy, Noah Blake, from the year 1805, has illustrated—in scrupulous detail—the events described in words. The book, *Diary of an Early American Boy,* can be found classified under 630 in many libraries. This classification, perhaps logical but nevertheless absurd, effectively removes the book from circulation.

George Sanderlin has allowed Francis Drake and his shipmates to tell, in their own words, the story of their journeys. This account, in *The Sea Dragon,* is one of several eyewitness histories compiled by Sanderlin. A number of other historians have done

the same: Joseph Martin, Phillip Viereck, Cheryl Hoople, Henry S. Commager and Richard B. Morris, Robert Meredith and E. Brooks Smith, to name a few. John Anthony Scott once edited "*The Living History Library*, now unfortunately defunct, to which Milton Meltzer was a contributor. Honest books like these can be a most refreshing antidote to sickly fictionalization in story biographies.

**Do not lean on biography.** Once we have reminded ourselves that the purpose of biography is not to edify children, we can find other, less troublesome, ways to discover the past.

We can move most directly to biographical fiction, of course, as Denise Wilms has pointed out in her article on biography. Happily oblivious to the scholarly restrictions shackling a biographer, we can share a cloud with Eleanor of Aquitaine as she waits in heaven for Henry to arrive from "down below" . . . or kibbitz a chess game between Ben Franklin and a French lady in her bath!

But if—as we have determined—our goal is simply to explain and enliven history, we can joyfully promote all historical fiction, not just biographical fiction. Here the child's natural desire for a good story need not twist historical fact as it so often does when a biographer puts imaginary dialogue into the mouths of real people. Fortunately, historical fiction needs no promotion. It has always been deservedly popular with children and adults alike.

What about straight history? We run into difficulties here. We in the schools have been guilty of not-so-benign neglect. C. Walter Hodges, Gerald Johnson, Alfred Duggan—and all the other fine writers of history—deserve to be read more than they are. Without any question, a lively history book can be a stimulating and honest alternative to undocumented biography.

These, then, have been some suggestions for working around problems already sitting on biography shelves.

What about buying better biographies? Is it possible to find biographies that are both well documented and still a pleasure to read? Before deciding, we need to examine fairly critically, not only the reviewing of children's biographies, but also the intellectual climate surrounding their writing and publishing.

In her analysis of American history textbooks, *America Revised*, Frances FitzGerald makes an observation about history texts that might apply to biography writing as well: "Today, texts are written backwards or inside out, as it were, beginning with public demand and ending with the historian."[6]

Trade publishers also seem to be working backwards and inside out, as they manufacture new biographies. They have been quick to recognize the need for biographies about blacks, about women, about the Founding Fathers on the occasion of the Bicentennial, about sports figures appealing to reluctant readers, about. . . . Since the bandwagon is rolling, we can hardly blame publishers for jumping on board. They are in business to make money, after all.

Patrick Groff, in his article "Biography: the Bad or the Bountiful?" documents the extent to which biographers have responded to the lure of the market. He describes a practice that many of us have long suspected: the "borrowing" of material from an adult biography to construct one for children. Armed with scissors and rubber cement, almost anybody—according to Groff—can produce a juvenile version of an adult biography. His evidence reveals that some have already done so.

A reputable biographer, of course, would be aghast at this practice of "cutting and pasting" what is supposed to be original work. Jane Yolen describes, by way of contrast, how inspiration moves a real writer:

> Elizabeth Gray Vining, a novelist of note, has written that one day the figure of William Penn came up and tapped her on the shoulder. After that, she had to write his biography. . . .
> When I wrote the biography *Friend*, I was tapped in just that way by the fiery mystic George Fox. After spending more than a year with Fox, walking the length and breadth of 17th-century England with him, I became a member of the Religious Society of Friends.
> I am not suggesting that any biographer of Lao-Tse become a Taoist or an author who writes about the Marquis de Sade become a practicing sadist. What I am saying is that when you are writing a biography, you should make a strong commitment to your subject.[7]

If we want to uphold the highest standards of selection, books like these—written by authors who have responded, with enthusiasm and skill, to the tap on their shoulders—should probably be the only biographies we select. But how do we identify these biographies among all the made-to-order stuff that floods the market? Unfortunately, discriminating selection is not always as simple as it should be.

Reviews are the obvious selection tools, but reviewers have failed in the past to be sufficiently hard-boiled in their evaluation of biography. "Compromise" has seemed to dictate the same uncritical standards in reviewing as it has in publishing. Here it is instructive to contrast the reviewing of science books with the reviewing of biography; to recognize the impact of specialized reviewing, not only in what is bought for libraries, but also in what publishers think they can get away with. As has been pointed out in the article on science writing, children's book editors have become sensitive to the reviews of professional scientists in *Appraisal* and *Science Books and Films*. This is not surprising. How can any editor afford to risk having a science book disemboweled by a hawk-eyed, predatory scientist?

Perhaps we need hawk-eyed, predatory historians. Perhaps we need more reviews of biographies like the recent review of a history book about the making of the Constitution. Garry Wills, a historian who has won an award for an adult book on Jefferson and the Declaration of Independence, reviewed a children's history book for the *Washington Post Book World* and crucified it. Two reviews of the same book in library journals, written, of course, by nonhistorians, picked up neither the "warmed-over scholarship" nor the abundance of errors pointed out by the historian. The book may not actually be as weak as Wills maintains, but his professional judgment obviously adds valuable perspective in considering this book for purchase. The *New York Times* often uses specialists in the adult field to review children's books—Tom Wicker reviewing the book by Paxton Davis on Robert E. Lee, for instance. But, unfortunately, there are relatively few biographies reviewed in the *Times* during the course of the year.

So what would happen, one wonders not altogether facetiously, if Barbara Tuchman or Leon Edel were to review children's biographies? Or, what would Catherine Drinker Bowen have said if she had read *Sam Adams, the Boy Who Become the Father of the American Revolution*, a "life-story" for children in grades two to four?

But this kind of speculation is nonproductive. Until historians give us the benefit of their knowledge, we must depend on standard review sources. What we need from them is more painstaking reviewing, more time and thought spent before arriving at a judgment. It shouldn't be too much to ask a reviewer to check the facts in a juvenile biography against a reputable adult source, as well as to compare that book to other children's biographies. Unfortunately, evidence suggests that not all reviewers do this. It can be especially revealing, as well as discouraging, to read a review of a particular biography after you have read three or four different versions of that same person's life.

Here is an example of one error, among many errors unnoticed by the reviewer, in a biography of Benjamin Banneker. The biographer gives highly romantic significance to the fact that Banneker never married because the girl he loved killed herself. The adult biography, with impressive documentation, states simply that he was a bachelor all his life and that there is no evidence of a love interest at all. Not

only does the juvenile biographer invent scenes on the basis of what must be flimsy evidence—and, of course, there is no bibliography or list of sources to check the evidence—he also omits other facts and significant events. Yet, a review in one of the most reputable library journals said, of this biography, that it was "well-researched" and admirable in every way.

Quite apart from the distressing fact that children may be swallowing misinformation in biographies, this kind of inadequate reviewing inevitably sends a message to publishers that accuracy is not important. Editors do respond to demands that are made on them. If reviewers would dig in their heels, they could possibly stimulate the publication of good biographies just as science reviewers have successfully set a higher standard of expectation in science books.

Under the present circumstances, however, librarians have no choice but to read, critically, as many reviews as possible to determine which reviewers and which journals are most reliable, or—rather—least unreliable. In deciding whether to buy a particular biography, they should probably be guided by the most negative comments. If, for instance, a review suggests that a book about Socrates might be stimulating reading for eight-year-olds . . . or if the words "fictionalized" or "story-biography" appear even parenthetically . . . or if no mention is made of the qualifications of the author or sources of information . . . then why not reject the book? Librarians do have the power of the purse, after all. Only by exercising that power can they—and reviewers—convince publishers that good books mean good business.

In her article on biography, Denise Wilms says that we should "take stock" and demand the best. Yes, we should take stock, thoroughly and realistically, but at the same time we should recognize hopeful signs when we see them. Although most of the current biographies would appall Barbara Tuchman, enough fine books are also appearing to brighten the prospects for the future. For instance:

Selected illustrators have been drawing and painting their autobiographies. Erik Blegvad and Margot Zemach, as a start, have given us a taste of pleasures in store as other illustrators continue to interpret their lives with paint and brush.

Some biographies focus on scientists and their work in the laboratory and in the field. Although these simply written accounts give readers little feeling for what the scientists were like as people, the importance and excitement of their discoveries come through without distortion.

Some new collective biographies, much neglected in school libraries, portray individuals—musicians, civil rights leaders, reformers, spies, whoever—in accounts so short that there is no need for unwarranted fictionalization. An abbreviated biography might also appeal to a child who would be discouraged by 100 or 200 pages of solid print in a longer book.

Another refreshing approach to biography is *Escape to Freedom*, a play about Frederick Douglass, written by Ossie Davis. Why hasn't this been done more often, one wonders?

Above all, there is Jean Fritz. Her lively biographical writing has blown like a fresh breeze across the children's book world. She sticks to the facts, but she ignites them with such a spark that they illuminate ordinary events. She especially loves to include little-known—but authentic—details to enhance the day-to-day life of the past: Paul Revere writing in his day book, "This is my book for me to —" and never finishing the sentence because he was, as always, in too much of a hurry; John Hancock practicing his signature over and over again to make it as imposing as possible; Patrick Henry imitating a mockingbird imitating a jay. An example of her writing from *Where Was Patrick Henry on the 29th of May?* reveals her light, sure touch:

> Patrick Henry stood up and pushed his glasses back on his head which was what he did when he was ready to use his fighting words. . . .
>
> "I know not what course others may take but as for me . . ." Patrick dropped his arms, threw back his body and strained against his imaginary chains until the tendons of his neck stood out like whipcords and the chains seemed to break. Then he raised his right hand in which he held an ivory letter opener. "As for me," he cried, "give me liberty or give me death!" And he plunged the letter opener in such a way it looked as if he were plunging it into his heart.
>
> The crowd went wild with excitement. One man, leaning over the balcony, was so aroused that he forgot where he was and spit tobacco juice into the audience below. Another man jumped down from the window ledge and declared that when he died, he wanted to be buried on the very spot that Patrick Henry had delivered those words. (And so he was, 25 years later.)[8]

As this selection vividly illustrates, fabricated dialogue and inaccurate fictionalization are not at all necessary for a lively interpretation of history.

So, all in all, the future for children's biography looks less hopeless than we might have feared. In terms of Philip Guedalla's dreary geography with which we began this exploration, Jean Fritz has changed the face of the map. Other writers are doing the same. In the future, the boundaries of new biographies could be quite different from those described by Guedalla: To the north, scholarship; to the south, humor; to the west, well-documented detail; and to the east, pleasure.

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# Parent Education : Home Responsibilities of the Child

As elementary teachers,we find that home responsibilities can be developed most effectively during the ages 6 - 12.

What follows is the summary of a lecture prepared by the Counseling and Guidance Department, College of Education, University of Arizona. The complete text of the lecture is contained in the Teacher Guide for Maintaing Sanity in the Classroom by Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D. , Bernice Grunwald, and Floy Pepper ( Harper and Row, 1971).

In today's changing society, children can be challenged to become "working partners" with parents and teachers. Challenges such as this one can be met in many ways: Mutual respect, sharing of opinions, acceptance of decisions, cooperative setting of goals, standards, or limitations, and permitting certain rights and privileges.

Assuming responsibilities can enhance the individual interpersonally andintrapersonally. As the child learns the benefits of order resulting from cooperation, he begins to view himself as an individual who is capable of making a contribution to others. Growth in this area is best acquired developmentally, whereby the child becomes useful and needed at an early age, with the expectation of becoming more self-reliant and independent as time passes.

The adult's personal experiences and situation may lead him to find many ways in which a child can contribute. Sometimes parents and teachers, aware of the need for giving children responsibility, are stymied at knowing what to do and what to expect. The following is intended to meet this need.

The list, prepared by parents and teachers, is CUMULATIVE. As the child advances in age or grade he can continue to maintain past responsibilities as well as assuming new ones. The list is meant to suggest possibilities and is only a starting point subject to the situation and creativity of the adults. Children may be able to accomplish tasks at ages above or below those suggested.

In training for these responsibilities, it may be wiser to proceed gradually. First, establish a relationship, and then through friendly discussions, the adult and the child together may determine the manner in which the child can become a contributing member.

Before assigning duties, it would be helpful to keep some of the following principles in mind.

1. Children have rights as well as responsibilities. If these rights are arbitrarily or impulsively withdrawn by the adult, the child may feel dominated or revengeful and will resist any efforts to elicit his cooperation.

2. Children should be consulted about the jobs that need to be done. After they have helped identify the work, then they must help set the standards for work, and be involved in the evaluation of the completed job.

3. Allow the children choices in which jobs they would like to do. (Not doing anything is not one of the choices). They must then follow through with their choice or experience the consequences.

4. Allow the consequences to follow logically from the uncompleted job. Do not discuss beforehand what will happen if someone does not fulfill the committment.

5. Place appropriate time limits on when a task should be completed. If the child participates in setting these time limits, he will be more willing to meet them.

6. Vary the tasks to do. Children become easily bored with the same thing. They like the challenge of a new or unusual job.

7. Use common sense in the number of tasks expected of each child. He may stage a "sitdown" strike if he feels used.

8. Remember you are a model of "order" to the child. Do not expect an orderliness or cleanliness from them that you do not expect of yourself.

9. Examine your own standards. Perhaps you are a perfectionist about your house or classroom, feel uncomfortable if things are slightly out of order, or are concerned about what others will think. Learn to accept the house or classroom as a place of work and communication for the members, and not as a reflection of your own personal worth.

10. Never do anything for a child that he can do for himself.

Examples of jobs which children may do at home follow. We have selected three or four examples from each age mentioned, although as many as twenty-eight suggestions were sited for some ages.

TWO-YEAR OLDS:

1. Place napkins, plates, and silverware on the table. The silver is on, but not correctly at first.

2. Given a choice of two foods for breakfast. Making a choice helps children learn simple decision-making.

3. Carrying boxed or canned goods from grocery sacks to the proper shelf. Putting some things away on a lower shelf.

FOUR-YEAR OLDS:

1. Help with grocery shopping and compile a grocery list.

2. Help make beds and vaccuum.

3. Spreading butter on sandwiches.

4. Tell parent his destination before going out to play.

FIVE -YEAR OLDS:

1. Making own sandwich or simple breakfast and cleaning up afterwards.
2. Making bed and cleaning room.
3. Answer the telephone and begin to dial the phone for use.
4. Paying for small purchases.

SIX -YEAR OLDS:

1. Choose own clothing for the day according to the weather.
2. Cook simple food. (Hot dogs, boiled egg, toast)
3. Hang up own clothes in the closet.
4. Clean out the inside of the car.

SEVEN-YEAR OLDS:

1. Oil and care for bike and lock it when unused.
2. Take phone messages and write it down.
3. Get self up in the morning and to bed at night on her own.
4. Do simple ironing; iron flat pieces.

EIGHT AND NINE-YEAR OLDS:

1. Help rearrange furniture. Help plan the layout.
2. Shop for and select own clothing and shoes with parent.
3. Sew buttons.
4. Begin to read recipes and cook for the family.

NINE AND TEN-YEAR OLDS:

1. Buying groceries using a list and comparative shopping.
2. Preparing pasteries from box mixes.
3. Preparing a family meal.
4. Sewing, knitting or weaving (even using a sewing machine).

ELEVEN AND TWELVE-YEAR OLDS:

1. Put siblings to bed and dress them.

2. Clean oven and stove.

3. Responsible for a paper route.

4. Checking and adding oil to the car.

5. Able to schedule himself ample time for studies.

JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS:

1. Able to determine how late he should stay up during the week.

2. Complete responsibility for preparing family meals.

3. Realistic acceptance of capabilities and limitations.

4. Responsibility for one's decisions.

If you would like the complete list of suggested chores for children of various ages, send a business size self-addressed stamped envelope to:

AL AND SANDY WESTCOTT
950 MULLANPHY RD.
FLORISSANT, MO 63031

# "Going Out" Policies

In order to provide children in a Montessori elementary classroom with increasing responsibilities for their "Going Out" experiences, we feel it is necessary to have cooperation and permission from the parents. The following is a copy of our "Going Out" policies for the 6 to 9 and 9 to 12 classes and the permission form that we require from the parents.

Debby and Alan Semple
Mountain Shadows
Montessori School
Boulder, Colorado

## 6 to 9 CLASS
## GOING OUT EXPERIENCES

"Going out" experiences are extensions of the child's classroom work which involve leaving the classroom. Children of this age have a need to explore their world beyond the immediate home or classroom environment. The purpose of these outings is to allow children to use and apply skills and knowledge gained in the classroom. Going out experiences may range from walking trips on or near the school grounds to planned car trips to a museum. Some outings may be impromptu, occuring spontaneously during the course of a day, and others would be planned and arranged for in advance. Some trips may involve only a couple of children going to a pet store or other business; others may involve a larger group going on a hike or to a museum.

On the Mountain Shadows Emergency Information Form, permission for all field trips was given with your signature. Some parents have indicated that they would like to have been notified of certain field trips in advance.

In order for your child to participate in a variety of "going out" experiences, and in order to help clarify those types of outings for you, as a parent, we ask that you read, fill out, and return the following form with your signature. Check the column that indicates the type of notification that you would require in order for your child to participate in any outings.

6 to 9 CLASS

"GOING OUT" NOTIFICATION FORM

| OK without notification | OK with notification (note sent home or phone call) | OK with signed written permission |
|---|---|---|

OUTINGS WITHOUT AN ADULT

1. Exploring the school grounds (collections or walks made in the woods or along the stream)

OUTINGS WITH AN ADULT (with a staff member, school parent, or both)

1. Walking trips
2. Bus trips within Boulder
3. Car trips:
   a. local trip
   b. trip to area closely surrounding Boulder
   c. trip to Denver-Metro area
   d. other extended trip outside of Boulder (all-day trip)

[We <u>will</u> provide seatbelts for all children during car trips. Do you <u>require</u> that your child be in a seatbelt for any car trip?]

☐ Yes

Comments: _____

_____

_____

Date _____ Signature _____

# 9 to 12 Class

## "GOING OUT"

The Montessori 9-12 class is purposely limited as a physical environment. At age 12, in junior high, the child will be given, and/or will take, a great deal of responsibility for him/herself. Needs will arise for staying alone, traveling alone, and being responsible in a group. The 9-12 class carefully prepares the child for these experiences - the "going out".

The term "going out" is usually applied to the activity of the child leaving school in small groups without the accompaniment of an adult. This responsibility is built up to in a series of steps.

In the 6-9 class, field trips are usually organized and planned by the teacher or assistant, with the child's help. The purposes are set, the trip scouted, and finally the field trip takes place.

In the 9-12 class, children begin to take more responsibility. Trips generally are arranged by the children. Ideas are turned into experiences only after planning, calling, and organizing are completed. The children usually do all the scheduling. Trips generally are not scouted or are scouted by the children. In this way, they learn to become responsible for making the best of an experience at the time of the trip. In most cases, only a portion of the class will go on a trip. They will share the results with the whole class.

At some point, the presence of the adult not only becomes unnecessary, but hinders the process. The children are ready to handle some of the trips themselves. Transportation may play a key role in this.

Following is an example of the different levels. Suppose special paint is needed for a project. An inventory of supplies needed is made by the children. They call stores and check products and prices. A decision is made. Depending on the children, the adult might: 1. drive the children to the store and accompany them in; help them find the product; let them pay for the purchase. 2. drive them to the store, go in but remain at the door until the chilren have completed the purchase. 3. drive them to the store and remain in the car. 4. allow the children to take the RTD bus from school to the store and return. Steps 1, 2, and 3 emphasize increasing responsibility for all the aspects of the purchase. Step 4 adds the responsibility for transportation and it is crucial for the completion of the "going out" experience. In this case, a child who can be trusted (one who has gone as part of a group before) is placed in charge. Extra money is given for emergencies. All children are to behave responsibly while accomplishing their task. Children who find it difficult to behave properly with an adult will not be sent out without an adult. "Going out" is a privilege that is earned.

Once the child has gone to the store or to the library in such a group, he/she may be ready for the highest level -- going on a field trip. Usually this means going to a museum, going to interview someone, seeing a special place, etc. The children must plan their trip and carefully follow these steps:

1. They must have researched some subject to determine, and limit, what they want.
2. They must have exhausted the classroom resources.
3. They must have researched outside sources to determine if they can get what they want and where.
4. They must make a list of questions, outline the purpose, etc.
5. They must acquire any needed supplies and resources.
6. They must call and make an appointment for a time that fits the class schedule and the person involved.
7. They must plan how to get there and back.
8. They must consider issues of safety involved in the trip and have contingencies.
9. They must choose an appropriate group.
10. They must notify the office, parents, etc.
11. During the trip, they must gather information, take notes, etc.
12. After they return, they must complete the project.
13. A report to the class is made, including the logistics of the trip.
14. An evaluation of the trip is made by the class and teacher.
15. Recommendations are made to the class as a whole to improve the next trip.

Not all children will attain the ability to handle the "going out". Nine or ten year olds are usually not ready to lead a trip. Most are able to go as part of a group, but some may not yet be able to handle this.

The decision to allow the child to go out is made carefully by the teacher. But we feel it is important that we also have the support of the parents. If you do not feel comfortable with any of the levels, you need to discuss this with your child first, and then with the teacher.

Following are some examples of the "going out" experience that students of Mountain Shadows have completed in past years.

A. Walking Trips
   - following the stream to look for stream life
   - collecting seeds
   - economics survey in the neighborhood
   - walking to store

B. Impromptu Car Trips
   - computer store
   - grocery store
   - collect geology samples nearby

C. Planned Bus Trips Without Adults
   - library
   - C.U. museum
   - art store
   - interview

D. Planned Car Trip
   - oil well east of Longmont
   - museums in Denver
   - collect biology samples in mountains

"GOING OUT" PERMISSION

## 9 to 12 Class

Please indicate your requirements for notification of "going out" by initialing the appropriate boxes by each section.

* * * * * * * * * * * * *

| | OK without permission | child must call | child must get written permission in advance |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leave school grounds walking | | | |
| 1. With adult | | | |
| 2. Without adult | | | |
| a) stream | | | |
| b) neighborhood | | | |
| c) crossing major streets | | | |
| Leave school grounds by bus | | | |
| 1. With adult | | | |
| 2. Without adult | | | |
| a) #3 bus only | | | |
| b) #3 bus + reasonable walk | | | |
| c) change buses | | | |
| Leave school by car | | | |
| a) local trip with small group | | | |
| b) trip to areas closely surrounding Boulder | | | |
| c) longer trip to areas outside Boulder | | | |
| d) Denver metro area | | | |

Parent's signature _____ date _____

# Ten Questions and Answers on Computers in the Montessori Elementary Classroom

By Alan S. Wallace

1. Are computers consistent with Montessori philosophy?

   Computer work can allow for freedom within a structure having basic rules and control of errors. Children can work individually or in small groups and progress at their own rates. More experienced children can help others.

2. Isn't it bad for children to be encouraged to spend more time in front of a TV set?

   The relatively short duration of exposure to a TV screen in the classroom has proven to have no harmful effects, in my experience. A high resolution monitor in place of a TV set will eliminate the possibility of eye strain. Children who have computers at home tend to use them more and watch TV less. One child in my class has a computer with built in monitor at home, but no TV!

3. How can I keep the computer from detracting from the Montessori curriculum, and what guidelines are necessary in the classroom?

   I have found that by having an out-of-the-way place for the computer, limiting use, and structuring time, the problem is minimized. A special computer room, sign-up sheets, and the requirement that regular classroom work be current will keep the computer from over-shadowing the Montessori curriculum. Some less-motivated children will work harder to make sure that they get their computer time. A converted closet or a screened-off corner of the classroom can provide privacy. Children, however, love to learn from observation of other children's computer work.

4. Shouldn't I wait for the prices to come down?

   Prices have already come down. The Atari 800 that was purchased for my class in June, 1982, cost over $900, and can be bought for $200 to $300 today. The Commodore 64, that less than one year ago cost $600, now costs less than $200. The prices of optional hardware (disk drives, printers, etc.) and software (programs) have fallen also. Prices will continue to fall and capabilities will improve, but meanwhile, your students will be missing out on learning these skills at their most sensitive periods.

5. Can I really learn to use a computer well enough to teach my class?

   Learning computer programming is like learning a foreign language. You can spend years learning to master it, or you can learn enough to get by and use it. I learned enough in a few dozen hours over a summer to introduce the computer to my class. There are several of my students (with computers at home) who far surpass my knowledge of computers. I use them as helpers for their classmates, freeing me for other work in the classroom.

6. What kinds of things should be done with a computer in a Montessori elementary class?

Children should learn to program, preferably in the LOGO or PILOT computer language. BASIC is difficult and frustrating for most children to learn. I would recommend buying a computer that uses LOGO, the best computing language for children. Its structure allow the children to learn about geometry and physics as well as computing. Do not worry about other software availability. The computer will be too busy in the classroom to use for business applications, and children rapidly are bored with the typical "electronic flashcard" programs.

7. How reliable are computers?

The computer will need repairs, eventually. "Consumer Reports" found that over half of the computers owners in their survey said, needed repairs in the first year. Minimum repair prices run about $40 in the Lexington, Kentucky, area. Repairs on common brands shouldn't take more than a few days, if there is a local repair facility.

8. What kind of computer should I get, and what will it cost?

I would recommend that a common brand be purchased (Apple, Atari, Commodore, TRS, etc.). The computer should have a full typewriter style keyboard, at least 48K of RAM memory (necessary for LOGO) and a color TV or monitor (needed for color graphics). A disk drive speeds up loading and enables children to keep their work easily, but a cassette recorder will suffice and keep the final cost down. A printer is nice but will add over $200 to the final cost. Expect to pay from $300 to over $3000 for a system, depending on brand, features, and options. Buy from someone who can help with problems that develop.

9. How can I learn more about computers?

The September issue of "Consumer Reports" has an in-depth article to get you started. Talk to other teachers, parents, or friends who have a computer. Read Mind-Storms, by Seymour Papert, about the LOGO computing language.

10. How can I discuss computers with other Montessorians?

I hope that this newsletter can be used as a forum for an exchange between us. I encourage other elementary teachers with computer experience to share their views in future articles.

A.M.I. Elementary Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume XI Number 2 January 1984

# Recipe For A Student Play

*Dan Stead*

I began telling stories when I taught at Alcuin Montessori in Chicago in 1974. Over the years, I have discovered how useful storytelling can be in the environment, but it was only last year here at the Montessori Children's House in Lansing, Michigan that I learned how storytelling can generate a student play.

It is no secret that young children love plays, and that most especially they love producing and acting in them. But until last year, helping Montessori children put together a play long enough and complex enough to involve the entire class seemed an impossible task. That we managed to do it, and to do it rather artfully and efficiently without mindbending mess, storms of temper, and a royal budget still amazes me!

The Greek myths are excellent material. The dramatic potential of many of the myths is evident not only in the presentation of the central characters, but also in the conflicts that motivate them. The myths as universal dramas embodying profound truths appeal to the children precisely because they sense the human depth of these stories; they are irresistibly drawn to them.

The road leading to the play itself is a long one, but easily travelled. If you choose one of the Greek myths, choose a myth that has many varied episodes. Each of these episodes can be broken down into smaller units, if the time allotted for storytelling is short. In my case, storytelling takes up five or ten minutes of the day's schedule.

At the end of most school days, I tell one of a cycle of stories that revolve around a mythical hero or heroine. Someone suggested that I tell the story of Perseus. His story is a long one and it took me months to complete. Slowly it dawned on me that this story offered all the ingredients for a good play.

What was especially attractive about Perseus was the horrific but powerful climax — Perseus, armed with his gifts, swoops down and cuts off the head of the evil-eyed Medusa. The expectation of that attack works like a silent motor to drive the play. Furthermore, the play is loaded with wonderful characters: Perseus, who seeks to satisfy his honor by returning from his harrowing quest, Medusa's head in hand; Perseus's mother, Danae, spurned by her father because of his fear that her son would live to kill him, and eventually finding herself sought after by the wicked King Polydictes; gods and goddesses; the fierce Gorgons; pleasure-loving Hyperboreans; a sea monster; talking oak trees; a flaming oracle; gift-bearers; a nobleman; and plenty of soldiers. When we added up all the possible characters, we had no difficulty whatever locating the thirty-four we needed to give each child a role.

It was evident that the ten episodes that comprised the narration could be neatly translated into ten dramatic scenes. The first five scenes led directly to the climax; the remaining five tied together loose strands of plot until at last in scene ten, Perseus fulfilled the oracle's prophecy, married his sweetheart Princess Andromeda, and watched benignly as Athena carried the noxious head of Medusa up to Mt. Olympus and emblazoned it onto Zeus's magnificent shield. There is a logic to the story; that logic found its way into the play.

Although I told the story, the children wrote the play. Our method of working on the script was simple. For each of the ten scenes, a writing group of three to four children was organized to develop a script; the focus was just that one scene alone. I tried to organize the groups in a way that those children more willing to write, and in some cases more talented as writers could act as catalysts. In fact, that is just what happened. Some reluctant children found themselves swept up into the excitement of re-experiencing the story as they sought to develop a clear narrative.

One child in each group was chosen as the scribe responsible for writing down the story as recalled. Typically, one child's memories of the story would trigger memories in the others, and a flood of material would issue — so much so that a few scribes were overwhelmed with detail. When a group got bogged down and could not agree on the best possible course, they met with me and through a process of question and answer hammered out the form. But this was necessary only twice. For the most part, the children sailed along briskly on the winds of recollection.

I should mention that with the exception of one writing team, all the children chose to write straight narrative without dialogue. Because the children chose to exclude the dialogue, we decided to use narrators. At first the plan was that the children would simply respond to the text as it was read to the audience. But an interesting thing happened. During the course of rehearsing, we began to add dialogue whenever it seemed to be crucial to do so. It became obvious that the play was flat without the leaven of dialogue. Once

again in response to my queries, the children came up with appropriate dialogue. An example might serve. One day I asked a student, "If the evil King Polydictes was abashed at not having received a present from Perseus at his birthday banquet, what would he say to Perseus?" The child playing Polydictes thought for a moment and shouted, "I want the head of Medusa!!!" I would jot that down and it entered the script as a line of dialogue. In this way we added several pages of dialogue to the script.

Play rehearsals were conducted over a period of two weeks. For the first week, I reserved only the afternoon for play rehearsals, but during the second week, we worked on the scenes both morning and afternoon. On average, each scene was rehearsed with barebones props for fifteen to thirty minutes. Essentially, all the rough blocking, or staging, was completed the first week, and during the second week we added details, or 'bits of business' with an eye toward refining speech, stage movement and the overall visual appeal of the characters in their settings. At times it was necessary to make some changes in the script. Most often these changes were suggested by the students who realized as they worked on the play that something said or done was illogical, or inconsistent. It was fascinating to watch the children engage in spontaneous self-editing. Without exception, each change made the play more dramatically coherent.

While rehearsals were moving ahead, my aide and a parent volunteer helped scenery crews paint cardboard sections cut from furniture boxes. The cut-outs became throne rooms, a cave, Mt. Olympus, oak trees, rocks, etc. The children had no difficulty painting these large surfaces; they handled the brushes with care and precision.

(Unfortunately, most of the major design ideas for the sets came from me and my aide, but next year I plan to begin the play project much earlier and give the children a real chance to participate in designing the sets.)

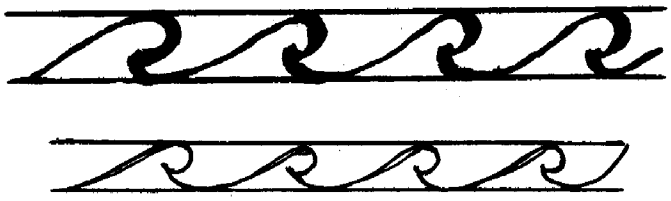
Besides the cardboard obtained from the local furniture shop, we used leftover latex paint resurrected from damp suburban basements, as well as cloth remnants begged from obliging mothers. Found objects were put to use: broom handles served as spear rods; an old grey-black tarp spread over lackluster pillows became Medusa's island haven; a brass pot equipped with cardboard flames worked as the Oracle of Delphi; a small bleacher unit gave us a stairway to Mt. Olympus; triangles of colored cloth waved as pennants from the top of the sports arena. It was exciting to invent new, even bizarre uses for familiar objects; it was vaguely anarchic!

About half of our costumes were quite simple and we made them at school. Other more complex costumes were made at home with the children and the parents working together. In a letter to the parents, I asked that if possible all the costumes should remain in school for future use; if they saw fit to donate the costumes we would have a rich stock. All the parents complied and we have a set of costumes waiting to be filled by new characters in new plays as yet unwritten.

At our dress rehearsal everything came together. The sets looked magnificent, and the children sensing their importance wore their costumes to best effect. I was amazed to discover that our play ran over 45 minutes. Each set of five scenes took approximately 15 minutes to run. It was necessary to include a 15 minute intermission during which we set up the last five scenes.

To make sure that the parents didn't lose a whit of sense, to make sure that they understood everything that was happening on stage (a section of the gym), I decided to include the entire script in the playbill. On opening night we sold each playbill for one dollar. The money made covered the printing expenses.

With all the work invested, I knew that we had to preserve the play. I asked a friend if he would video tape our production. He did. As a result, we have started a video library. This September we will all sit down with big bowls of popcorn to see Perseus. When it is over, we will clap for our labor, and enjoy the sweet realization of a large effort made in common.



# ALUMNI NEWS

Rejoice with us as we welcome our new baby son:

Geoffrey Alan Temple
born October 12, 1983

Geoffrey became a part of our family on
November 18th when he was five weeks old.

Alan and Debby Temple

Martha and Frank Vincent
with Brian and Carr

are pleased to announce
the birth of

Paul Robert Vincent
November 10, 1983

The Lord has smiled on us again.

*The AMI-EAA Newsletter is a publication for members of AMI-EAA. It is intended to be a resource and a vehicle for sharing our experiences and ideas. The contents of this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of AMI-EAA or AMI.*

# Elections of AMI-EAA

The Executive Committee of AMI-EAA hereby nominates:

Phyllis Pottish-Lewis for the position of Chairperson for the term of June 1984 to May 1987.

Any other nominations for the position of Chairperson need to be submitted for publication by March 5th. Please send nominations to Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite, Publication Editor, 120 Robideaux, Aptos, CA 95003.

As members of AMI-EAA it is our responsibility to vote for our officers within our election process. The ballots will be sent out in the April Newsletter. Then you need to send in your ballot to Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite, Publication Editor by May 15, 1984. These ballots will then be counted at our annual conference.

# News from the Regions

## San Francisco Area News:

Our last two scheduled monthly meetings were cancelled due to storms which brought heavy rains and high winds resulting in power outages. We hope that three is truly a charm and that we might enjoy the sun streaming into Kathy Carter's delightful home in early January. At this next meeting, we will be given a review and discuss Kathy's presentation of poetry and metrics. Agenda topics for the future include music and foreign songs, and dissections.

## Chicago Area News:

Fourteen elementary people from the area met at Alcuin Montessori School in River Forest on Friday, November 11 for an informal discussion and get acquainted session. Marianne Dunlap hosted the meeting.

Several issues surfaced during the discussion – the merits of testing, how to help children with spelling, and when and if homework should be given.

Before adjourning for lunch at a local restaurant we agreed to meet again one Saturday in January at Near North Montessori for further discussion and support. Maureen Peifer agreed to host and plan this meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Maureen Peifer

# Coming Events

There will be our second AMI-EAA Workshop entitled: The Interface Between the Primary and Elementary Montessori Environments given by Miss Margaret Stephenson. It will be held in Atlanta, Georgia on February 4th and 5th. For more information contact Janice DeBra. (Address in Directory)

The 3rd Annual Summer Institute will be held at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, Illinois (near Chicago) from July 23rd to the 27th. For more information contact Paula Polk-Lillard, 1300 Waukegan Rd. Lake Forest, Ill. 60045

# BOOKS — BOOKS — BOOKS

*from Kevin O'Loughlin*

*Oak and Company*

Written by Richard Maybe
Illustrated by Clare Roberts
Greenwillow Book, New York
A division of William Morrow & Co., Inc.
105 Madision Ave. N.Y., N.Y. 10016

Copyright 1983
$9.50

This delightfully illustrated book follows an oak tree and its company of plants and animals from its beginning as an acorn to its death 282 years later. The twenty-two pages of text and pictures contain a wealth of detailed information that is presented with an art that pales only in comparison with the reality that has inspired this book.

*The Wonderful World of Mathematics*

Lancelot Hogben
Doubleday & Co., Inc.
Garden City, N.Y.

95 pages
$4.95

This book contains all the background information that you need for the lessons on the history of mathematics. It traces the development of mathematics as a science from its beginning and shows how that beginning was related to "the fundamental needs." It illustrates man's tendency to explore and improve his environment with math throughout history. The ninety-five pages are filled with fascinating illustrations and the text is written in a lively and entertaining style.

## Pictures Give Us A Spark

In the past, many of you may have taken snap shots during our annual conferences. We would like copies of any of the various activities . . . crossing a 6-foot wall, tidepool walks, riding on horseback, playing volleyball, blindfold "exercises", etc. . . . which portray the flavor of our annual conference. We would like to use these pictures to spark up a brochure for our organization to be used to extend our membership. Please send pictures to Alan Temple. (Address in Directory)

## *Classified Ads*

### *Positions Available*

*ALCUIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL, established 1961. Five primary — all extended day; four elementary. Montessorian as fulltime Director. Parent-Board, not-for-profit. Desire one AMI trained Elementary teacher, Chicago area suburb Stable, experienced faculty. Contact Shirley Mallot, Alcuin Montessori School, 7970 Washington, River Forest, Il. (312) 366-1882.*

*VIRGIN ISLANDS MONTESSORI SCHOOL, AMI, established 1965, 3 preschool, 2 six to nine, one nine to twelve class. Experienced 6-9 and 9-12 directresses needed for immediate placement. Established classes, excellent benefits. Send resume and references to Shournagh McWeeney, V.I. Montessori School, Vessup Bay, St. Thomas, U.S.V.I. 00802.*

### *Sponsors for Training*

*ALCUIN MONTESSORI SCHOOL, established 1961. Five primary — all extended day; four elementary. Montessorian as fulltime Director. Parent-Board, not-for-profit. Desire to sponsor a student for AMI elementary training for 1984-85. Chicago area suburb Stable, experienced faculty. Contact Shirley Mallot, Alcuin Montessori School, 7970 Washington, River Forest, Il. (312) 336-1882.*

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Volume XI Number 2 January 1984



OVER

Late Editions and Update of the Directory

*** Computer Questionnaire ***
Please complete and send by February 27th.

# CLOSING WORDS

At the close of our Geography Workshop given to us by Ms. Fahmida Malik last year at Berea College, Kentucky Ms. Malik read to us these inspiring words from Mr. Mario Montessori. We are tremendously grateful to be able to publish this closing in this AMI-EAA Newsletter.

"What is important, according to me, is what Dr Montessori said. We are not here to uphold the name of Dr. Montessori and to create something vague which needs gratitude for her.... But.... what she tried to do and what she tried to transmit:

TO SERVE THE SPIRIT OF THE CHILD.

TO SERVE THE SOUL OF THIS NEW BEING THAT COMES TO BE A JUST SOUL AND AN ILLUMINATED SOUL.

And to bring them to exact knowledge. This gratitude that every human being ought to have for God and for the other human beings.
And to show this fact, this real fact, that we are not Germans and Dutch and Italians, enemies of each other, we are human beings who are working each one for ourselves, it is true, but part of our work is contributing to the work, to the life of everybody else, no matter how distant we are from each other.

Everyone of us, the teachers of today, are preparing the men of tomorrow. You may prepare a child in Holland and he may exercise his life.... in India, or in Australia, or in China.

We eat the bread here, yes, but by that we give work to people who are in Argentina. The same if we take an orange or a banana.... They work producing bananas and we eat them. So they are working for us and we are working for them. We are necessary for them and they are necessary for us. We are (like) particles of blood inside a big circulation of blood which is humanity. And <u>this</u> is what we must make the people realize. Not the old glories....

What must be realised is the words of Christ in our lives.... charity and appreciation.... Certainly, if one gives you a slap you should turn the other cheek. Because a slap in comparison to all that is done to you, for you, is just a moment.... the part which ought to be emphasised is not that he has given me a slap, but, why has he given me a slap? What has brought this human being to do so? There must be a cause. That means somewhere or other there has been a lack of charity. As Dr Montessori said: 'if the child does something to your class, look around in his life and see where the mistake has been made.... don't slap him back, don't punish him but remove those causes that make him such as he is.'

That is the part which we ought to cultivate in man. We ought to cultivate it.... when he is forming. Not wait until he has acquired that terrible mental territory which almost only a war can break....
Dr. Montessori said: 'it is useless for you to try to make a United Nations; it is useless for you to try to join together that which cannot be joined.... the road to peace is through the child'.
You cannot change the ideas of certain people. You cannot make of a Hindu a real Christian, never - if you take him when he is big. But during the formative time.... if they have this preparation, even if they grow in a Hindu community they have the understanding and the tolerance for all the other people.

That is the part. And I will tell you as closing the words of Dr. Montessori:
'Give to the child the world!
'Give humanity to the child and give God, above all.'
Then you will have served the new soul that has come into the world. And no matter

what happens in this age, if you do that, do not get discouraged! There is a continous rain of souls that come into the world. New souls. They are fresh and they are full of love. And those that exist today, no matter how wrong in their ideas, or how bad they are, or how powerful, they disappear.... just like the reptiles in evolution that were obstacles.... are no longer there.... And if we prepare the ground, if we prepare the soul then there will be that explosion of new spiritual genes that will make a new kind of humanity.'"

Mr. Mario Montessori
from Arnhem Lectures
17 December 1955

SUMMARY OF THE TESTING QUESTIONNAIRE

Twenty-two responses were received representing 18 schools. All replies indicated that achievement tests are currently being given at some levels in the school. Most test all children every year. Most people indicated they give tests to aid the children in the skill of test taking and to reassure parents. People generally felt the test was useful in determining the child's progress on covering the required public school curriculum.

Views differed widely on information needed and on how the test results were used. Surprisingly only one-fourth share the results with the children (who have spent a week taking the test and whose responsibility it is to cover the curriculum.)

Three-fourths felt we should become a district yet many seemed inflexible about the implications (machine scoring, cost, time of year, sharing results.) Most saw not only little need but great danger in creating national Montessori norms. One said, "If we give the test primarily to develop test taking skills and to evaluate how well the children are covering the curriculum that is required then there is no need for Montessori norms." And many said, "Montessori norms will cause 'teaching to the test' and this will alter Montessori programs nationwide."

Lastly, distribution of the tests is a problem because EAA is primarily a teachers' organization. What people want are professional recommendations by knowledgeable Montessorians about taking tests and about the tests available so they in turn can make recommendations to their schools.

The results are being studied by the Executive committee and a list of recommendations will be forthcoming. After discussions with Stanford, it has been determined that any kind if collective effort will not be possible for this year. You should, therefore, make your own plans for achievement testing.

*A summary of the responses to the individual questions has been compiled and is listed below, written on a questionnaire. In questions requiring written responses, the responses were interpreted and grouped by type.*

Who decides what tests are given (teacher, board, etc.) Teacher 12 Admin 5 Bd 1

What achievement test(s) do you give? Stan. 9 Met 3 Iowa 2 CAT 2 CTBS 1 Step 1

What month? Oct 2 Mar. 5 Apr. 5 May 6 To what ages? All 14 9-12 only 1 Selected (e.g. 9 and 12) 3

Were the tests 2 machine scored 14 hand scored? Why? 8 9 So can see results 6 Time 3 Easier 1 Reliability 1

The results are shared with 13 teachers 4 board 15 parents 6 children 16 other schools when child transfers.

Please rate in order of importance what results you use, or would use:

(1=highest, 5=lowest, 0=information not wanted) Number of highest ratings first / lowest second

1/6 Raw Score 6/9 Grade Level 4/0 Percentile 2/2 Graphic Summary 2/0 Stanine

3/1 National Norms 3/2 National Montessori Norms 0/1 Class Composite 3/2 Content Summary

__ Other (specify) 3 listed Montessori norms not wanted

Why do you give achievement tests? learning how to take tests 12; reassure parents 11; for transfer records 7; to evaluate Montessori program 6; to check progress of required curriculum 5; so we are seen as "real" 2 diagnostic 1

Do we want to test our children according to a national norm? 13 yes 4 no

Do we want to establish a Montessori national norm? 9 yes 6 no

Do we want to compare our children's achievements with 12 other Montessori schools
13 other private schools 13 public schools 3 none?

Do we want to compare our curriculum with 12 other Montessori schools
10 other private schools 10 public schools 5 none?

If our children do well, what, in your opinion, might this show? We cover required curriculum 11; Children can transfer to trad. format 6; Children can take tests 4; Montessori works 4; We have altered program on controlled enrollment 4

If our children do not do well, what, in your opinion, might this show? Children don't know how to take tests 9; missing aspects of required curriculum 7; teacher not doing job 6; Montessori is deficient 3; test not relevant 3

How will the results affect our implementation of the Montessori program? Will help us evaluate how well required curriculum has been covered 9; Confidence - reassures children, parents, board 6; may cause negative impact, e.g. teaching to the test 5; assist child in transfer 1

Should EAA become a "school district" in order to distribute achievement tests?
13 yes 5 no

If yes, should we use 8 Stanford (4 already use Stanford) __ other achievement tests (specify) _____
3 other kind of test (specify) test that measures Montessori goals better

If no, should EAA collect and/or distribute any type of testing data to facilitate sharing of testing information between teachers and/or schools? 8 yes 0 no

If yes, what type of information would you like shared? most - no answer. Others - varied. People want to know different kinds of tests for different purposes, one for achievement, one for diagnostic, etc.

Are you interested in having Stanford send you information on testing for this spring as part of an EAA pilot? 15 yes 0 no (This is an expression of interest, not a commitment.)

If yes, please list approximate numbers of children you would have at each grade level:
___ K, ___ 1, ___ 2, ___ 3, ___ 4, ___ 5, ___ 6 total all schools 617

If no, would you be interested in future years? 2 yes 0 no __ need more information
__ opposed to the idea __ other (explain) _____

Would you be interested in serving on a testing committee to explore testing and its implications for Montessori elementary schools? __ yes __ no (Please include your name and address if this is a different person in your school than the one filling out the questionnaire.)

Any other comments or concerns may be written here:

AMI Elementary Alumni Association

382 63RD STREET, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94618
(415) 654-6090

Dear Members,

The AMI-EAA Board decided that for efficiency's sake it would be better to publish the financial statement in the newsletter instead of presenting it at the annual meeting. This was decided on for two reasons: first to allow people time to review it and secondly to alleviate new members having to review an old statement. We all realize how precious our time is at these gatherings and if this helps to save that time it is certainly worth it.

It was also agreed that the fiscal year should be changed from June 1 through May 31 to August 1 through July 31. The majority of fiscal activity is during May and June, so with the old dates, much of the information regarding the conference and workshop is not yet complete.

Along with the above change comes another for the same reason of protecting our valuable time at the conference. We intend to publish the annual report with the last newsletter or else under separate cover. We are hoping these changes will aid in better utilization of our time together.

Attached to this is a Statement of Revenues and Expenses for June 1, 1983 to July 31, 1983. Also for your perusal are the revenue reports of both the annual conference and the annual refresher course. If you have any questions regarding these please feel free to contact me directly.

I hope you are all enjoying a successful year.

Phyllis

AMI Elementary Alumni Association
382 63RD STREET. OAKLAND. CALIFORNIA 94618
(415) 654-6090

# Statement of Revenues and Expenses

June 1, 1983 to July 31, 1983

## REVENUES

| | |
|---|---|
| previous balance | $8110.31 |
| membership | 1920.00 |
| refresher course | 5571.50 |
| conference | 8939.50 |
| Total Revenues | $24541.31 |

## EXPENSES

| | |
|---|---|
| refresher course | $4896.28 |
| conference | 6887.26 |
| printing | 97.51 |
| postage | 160.00 |
| telephone | 73.64 |
| accounting | 100.00 |
| Total Expenses | $12214.69 |
| BALANCE | $12326.62 |

## ASSETS

| | |
|---|---|
| cash in checking | $8096.52 |
| cash in savings | 4223.99 |
| petty cash | 6.11 |
| Total Assets | $12326.62 |

AMI Elementary Alumni Association
382 63RD STREET, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94618
(415) 654-6090

Annual Conference - Berea, Kentucky June 26-July 2, 1983

Financial Report

| | |
|---|---|
| INCOME | $8939.50 |
| EXPENSES | |
| room and board | $3373.25 |
| child care | 181.40 |
| coffee breaks | 200.00 |
| duplicating at Berea | 88.71 |
| audio visual | 6.50 |
| conference fee | 249.90 |
| travel | 1690.50 |
| expenses for Berea artisans | 160.00 |
| catered dinner | 150.00 |
| miscellaneous printing | 12.62 |
| miscellaneous materials | 35.28 |
| beverages | 146.58 |
| folders | 28.35 |
| workshop announcement | 100.17 |
| 10% to AMI/USA (of tuitions) | 464.00 |
| | $6887.26 |
| SURPLUS | $2052.24 |

AMI Elementary Alumni Association
382 63RD STREET, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA 94618
(415) 654-6090

Annual Refresher Course - Berea, Kentucky June 19-24, 1983

Financial Report

| | |
|---|---|
| INCOME | $5571.50 |
| EXPENSES | |
| room and board | 1786.70 |
| honorarium | 1000.00 |
| bus for going-out | 175.62 |
| conference fee | 122.40 |
| travel expenses | 1071.50 |
| geologist | 50.00 |
| beverages | 26.16 |
| folders | 28.35 |
| miscellaneous materials | 39.76 |
| workshop announcement | 100.17 |
| miscellaneous printing and postage | 12.60 |
| coffee break | 120.00 |
| 10% to AMI/USA (of tuitions) | 363.00 |
| | $4896.28 |
| SURPLUS | $ 675.22 |

Street Poems - Robert Froman
Paul's Revere's Ride - Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
Knock at a Star - X. J. Kennedy & Dorothy M. Kennedy
It Doesn't Always Have to Rhyme - Eve Merriam
Poems - Rachel Field
See My Lovely Poison Ivy - Lilian Moore
Near the Window Tree - Karla Kuskin
Something Special - Beatrice Schenk de Regniers
You Come Too - Robert Frost
The Dream Keeper - Langston Hughes
The Star in the Pail - David McCord
If I Were a Cricket - Kazue Mizumura
Where the Sidewalk Ends - Shel Silverstein
Reflections on a Gift of Watermelon Pickle - Dunning, Jueders & Smith
You Read to Me, I'll Read to You - John Ciardi
In the Middle of the Night - Aileen Fisher
A Visit to William Blake's Inn - Nancy Willard

**********

Dr. Beaumont and the Man with the Hole in His Stomach - Sam & Beryl Epstein
Invincible Louisa ✗ Cornelia Meigs
Tituba of Salem Village ✗ Ann Petry
Carry On, Mr. Bowditch ✗ Jean Lee Latham
My Japan - Hiroko Nakamoto
The Upstairs Room - Johanna Reiss
The Endless Steppe - Esther Hautzig
Self-Portrait - Margot Zemach
The Boy Who Loved Music - David Lasker
A Prarie Boy's Winter - William Kurelek
A Home - Carl Larsson
Long Journey Home - Julius Lester
Tales Our Settlers Told - Joseph & Edith Raskin
A Gathering of Days - Joan Blos
Diary of an Early American Boy - Eric Sloane
A Proud Taste for Scarlet and Miniver - E. L. Konigsburg
Escape to Freedom - Ossie Davis
Will You Sign Here, John Hancock? - Jean Fritz

from Mary Jo Hogan
Conference 1983

Perrault's Complete Fairy Tales - ill- Heath Robinson, tr - A. E. Johnson

Household Tales by the Brothers Grimm - Dover Publications

The Complete Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales - Avenel Books

East of the Sun and West of the Moon - Asbjornsen & Moe

English Folk and Fairy Tales - Joseph Jacobs

Great American Folk Heroes - Lewy Olfson

The Jack Tales - Richard Chase

The Days When the Animals Talked - William J. Faulkner

Why the North Star Stands Still - William R. Palmer

Cherokee Animal Tales - ed George F. Scheer

Children & Books - Zena Sutherland, Dianne L. Monson, May Hill Arbuthnot
Sixth Edition

Scott, Foresman and Company, Glenview, Illinois

Teaching Elementary Language Arts - A Literature Approach

Betty Coody & David Nelson — Wadsworth Publishing Company
Belmont, California

# Home-Made Percussion

After learning about different types of musical instruments, our 6-9 class began a project of constructing our own "community" percussion instruments. The idea is to make instruments that can be used by groups of people in a festival-like atmosphere. Our project culminated in an "elementary classes field day" in a large park, where we shared our instruments with the other junior classes in our school. We also involved some of the primary children at school, who were fascinated with the shaking and the beating and the dancing going on outside during the last few warm spring afternoons of the school year. An evening family picnic in the schoolyard was another scene for dragging out the drums et al.

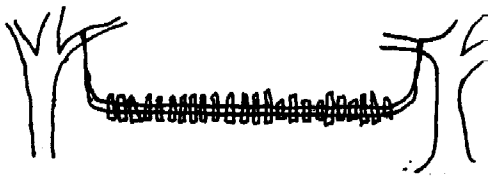
The process of constructing the instruments was as rewarding as the music which was made with them later. It was that time of year when everyone, especially the teacher, wants to be outside as much as possible. So out we went with saws, sandpaper, paints, etc. Parents sent tools to school, including two extra-long sawhorses which were invaluable to our group woodworking situation.

I did all the shopping for materials, though I think the children could be involved in that aspect too. I listed the several types of instruments and the children signed up to work on one type. We had enough jobs that most children could work on more than one. There was a tremendous amount of cooperative energy employed in getting all jobs completed. We made: six drums, a 76-bar hanging marimba, six sets of clavés (rhythm sticks) and ten or twelve shakers. A description of each follows.

DRUMS

These are made from large white plastic kegs with fitted lids. Designs are painted on with acrylic paints. The drums are partially filled with water and can be tuned to different pitches depending on the amount of water. Beaters are made from rubber 'grommet link bushings' which have a tapered hole through them and can be nicely fitted with 3/8" doweling; no glue is necessary due to the tapered hole.

MARIMBA



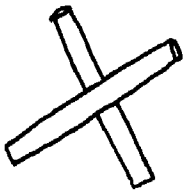
This is a non-tuned marimba without a support frame, so it must tie onto trees or fence-posts in order to be played.

MARIMBA,cont.

The bars were made of four types of wood (mahogany, redwood, hemlock, fir) as an experiment. All four woods were suitable but the mahogany had the clearest tones. The boards were 1X2s, cut to random lengths ranging from about six-twelve inches. They were also strung randomly, based on aesthetics of appearance. Each bar has to be drilled in each end. (To save time, I did the drilling (150 holes, mind you) outside the classroom on a drill press after the children marked the spot to be drilled.) Each bar is then sanded and oiled. The bars are strung onto two nylon ropes with knots separating each bar. This step takes much longer than you think, two children working at a time. After some initial problems with tangling ropes, the children invented an ingenious and efficient way of stringing them - I'll leave it to you and yours to do the same! Our marimba was about 20 feet long when finished. We made enough mallets for 10 people to play at once. The mallet heads were wooden drawer-pulls from a cabinet-makers' shop, glued onto 1/4" dowels.

CLAVÉS

These are sticks held in the hand and tapped, one against the other. They are made from hardwood doweling, 3/4" or 1" diameter. We used oak and walnut and varied the lengths a bit to achieve different tones. Measure, cut, sand, oil - a simple process.



SHAKERS

Made from lidded containers, metal or plastic, brought to school by the children and filled with sand, beans or grains. The lids are glued on and the shakers are decorated with paints.

--Irene Holt
Northwest Montessori School
Seattle, WA.

Lael M. Sheahan

# Relief in ink and metal

ALL AGES CAN ENJOY printmaking activities from a simple glue line relief print to an aluminum foil relief which gives the impression of metal embossing. These projects can be geared to all levels of elementary children.

**The Glue Line Relief Print**

The basic glue-line on cardboard print is a simple technique. It requires two work sessions because the glue must dry before inking can be done. For best results, the glue should dry overnight. White glue becomes transparent when it is dry.

***Lines should be bold and simple. Inspiration may come from field trips or an active imagination.***

This project can be a good follow-up to a field trip such as a visit to the zoo or may be used in conjunction with a special class unit. Subject matter may be inspired by these, or it can be a spontaneous idea from the student, as was the glue line relief self portrait by ten-year-old Colin McCarty (illustration 2). His drawing was guided by checking his proportions in a full length mirror. Portraying himself upside down is characteristic of his self-confidence and sense of humor.

For this project use a smooth-surfaced cardboard or tagboard for the printing plate. Sizes from 9" × 12" to 12" × 18" are suggested. Other necessary materials are white glue in plastic containers with nozzles, water soluble ink, in various colors as well as black, one brayer for applying ink, and an optional brayer for applying pressure to the paper receiving the print. An inking surface can be a tray, piece of glass, tempered masonite newsprint, or colored tissue paper. The inking surface should be cut a little larger than the cardboard.

*Aluminum foil relief. Caribou on tundra by Jennifer Wu, age 6. This project followed a study of the plants and animals of the Tundra Region in Geography. 10" × 16".*

It is best to have the children make a preliminary drawing. For young children the drawing could be limited to one large design, such as one animal. They should be encouraged to fill the entire cardboard space with the design. Lines should be bold and simple. Explain that the pencil line is much thinner than the glue line will be. Students must leave enough space between lines to avoid smearing the glue.

Once the preliminary drawing has been penciled on the cardboard, the child traces the pencil line with glue. It is difficult to manage a steady flow of glue, so lines will vary. Allow the glue to dry thoroughly.

For the second work session, set aside a table protected with newspaper for inking and printing. Make sure the children wear a painting shirt to protect their clothing. Have the children stand while printing so that they are able to apply pressure during the inking process.

Apply a ribbon of ink onto the inking surface. Roll with the brayer until the ink is tacky. Apply the ink to the cardboard plate with pressure. Be sure to roll in both directions so that all parts of the plate are inked thoroughly. Ink the areas of the plate background as well as the glue lines.

Carefully press the newsprint or colored tissue paper over the plate. Remember to cut the paper a little larger than the plate for ease of handling. Apply pressure with a dry brayer or the palm of your hand.

Remove the paper and your print is completed. Have the children try several to get different effects. Experiment with different colors of ink.

All art projects should be experi-

*Glue line relief print. Self portrait by Colin McCarty, age 10. (He is standing on his head.) 12" × 18".*

mented with first by the teacher to discover the best way to do the project and variations. Your enthusiasm will be contagious! You might demonstrate the inking procedure to the children using white tissue paper so they can see the ink being absorbed by the paper and can observe the areas needing more pressure.

**The Aluminum Foil Relief**

The glue line relief project can be built upon to create an impression of metal sheeting using an aluminum foil relief technique. This can be done with a young child's simple design or with an older child's more detailed drawing.

***Foil relief prints look like metal. Patina softens and highlights them.***

The materials include heavy duty household aluminum foil, blunt-point pencils such as the big ones used in some kindergartens, a soft rubber brayer or inking roller, gold patina such as Treasure Gold or Rub 'n Buff, black water soluble printing ink, and newsprint or oil cloth to protect the work table.

Follow the steps outlined for the glue line relief. Upon completing the last ink print, while the plate is still wet with ink, cover the plate with foil slightly larger than the cardboard, making sure the shiny surface of the foil is up. Stretch the foil over the plate, applying pressure with a brayer or using your palms. Get the foil to stretch before overlapping the excess and securing it to the back of the cardboard with tape. The wet ink helps to stabilize the foil so it will not shift during the next step.

Use the blunt pencil, taking care not to puncture the foil, and apply pressure along both sides of the glue lines. This emphasizes the lines.

Details can be added to the relief by indenting the foil to create textures and patterns. Stars can be added to a sky, grass to a landscape, hair to people and mammals, etc. Designs and geometric shapes also can be added.

When the new detailed design is complete, you may want to print from it. Follow the same procedure as with the glue line relief.

While the ink is moist, use a cotton or flannel cloth or paper towel to clean and shine the raised surface. At first, a moist cloth will work, but finish with a dry one. The indentations should retain some of the ink.

You can stop here or you can highlight your aluminum foil relief by applying a patina to some of the raised surfaces. Be careful not to overdo it. Remember, this is to highlight, not to color. Use a cloth as a tool to apply the patina. Remove excess with cloth or a paper towel dampened with turpentine. Use turpentine to clean finger tips too. (Note: If a turpentine soluble patina agent is used, restrict it to older children and heed safety precautions).

This project can be used successfully with all ages. Variations can be added to suit the interest level and coordination of the children as well as available time. The results are rewarding!

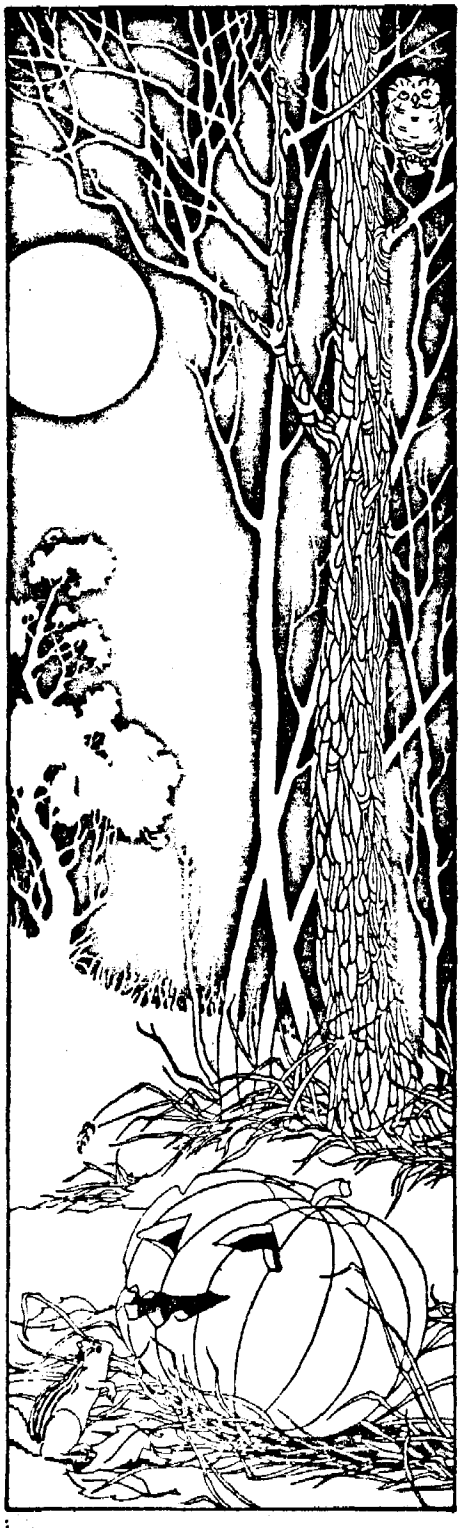
*Lael M. Sheahan is a teacher in the Montessori Children's House and School, Dallas, Texas. Photographs are by Molly Shelton.*

# COMMENTS

**On black cats, turkeys, reindeer and rabbits . . .** Holiday activities have been a contentious issue in art education for a good many years. For a long, long time, the use of stereotypic witches, pilgrims, Christmas trees, Valentine hearts, Easter eggs and their complementary animal forms as the primary images in holiday art projects has sent art teachers into a frenzy. And a classroom teacher who is caught using such visual clichés by the local art education authority can count on receiving a reprimand. Worse yet is that neither the art or classroom teacher has given much thought to what has become dogma in the practice of art education: that holiday art projects have very little aesthetic merit and therefore should be discouraged.

It is most curious that art teachers show a reluctance to exploit the natural excitement and interest children have for holidays. They are ideal motivational sources for creative expression. Whether the holiday is a myth-ridden Halloween or a meaningful religious celebration, it is a momentous occasion for children, and one that pleads for expression. Unfortunately, time and commercial influences have produced powerful visual stereotypes for these events, and the use of such trite symbols doesn't do much to encourage creativity. Consequently, there is little one could recommend their use for in art activities. However, we must take care in ignoring holiday seasons on the basis of this simple rationale.

Holidays are by their nature a special expression — a celebration — of a meaningful event. They come into existence because people have a need to dramatically express their strong feelings about particular times, occurrences or people. The very concept of holidays demands that they be given extraordinary attention, and to ignore them, especially when they are tightly stitched into the fabric of our society, is not only inconsistent with what art education is about, but simply impossible to do. You can be assured that if art teachers and classroom teachers don't support children's need to creatively express their holiday feelings, then the trite traditional and commercialized visual stereotypes will continue to dominate in their art work.



So then, the issue of holiday art activities is more correctly centered on how to effectively utilize children's natural holiday enthusiasm rather than how to suppress it. Teachers should give more effort to helping children understand the significance of given holidays and what determines their particular visual qualities; they need to show children how other artists at other times and places visualized holidays; they need to help children combine meanings, feelings and symbols into unique creative forms of expression; and they need to help children understand and use art in its most powerful role — as a means of uniquely expressing one's innermost feelings about times, events, or people that are an important part of one's life. Indeed, black cats and witches, or Christmas trees and reindeer, may provide a very limited and ineffectual visual vocabulary for expressing meanings and feelings, but when you are eight years old and your excitement about a special day is ignored by your teachers, they are all you have.

**In this issue . . .** A number of articles are presented that directly support the first *big day* of the new school year — Halloween! Enjoy the magic of transformation through mask making or the wonderful humor of a scarecrow. And if you do a special activity to commemorate Halloween, be sure to photograph the process and results, write a short article about it, and send them to *School Arts* to share with your teaching colleagues in other parts of the country. And if you would like a little assistance in developing this or any other article, send for our writer's guide at: School Arts, 4715 Parkoaks Drive, Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70816. I look forward to hearing from you.

Editor

COMPUTER QUESTIONNAIRE

Do you currently use a computer in your classroom? __Yes __No
Age range of class_____

If yes: Number of computers_____ Brand_____
Language(s)_____ Original reason for getting the computer_____
Used for __programming (what?_____)
__typing __software (what?_____)
__used by office (for what?_____)
__other_____

If no: (check all appropriate) _expect to get one (when?_____)
__would like one __too expensive __don't know how to use one
__don't know what to do with one __don't want one __feel it is inappropriate for a Montessori classroom because _____

_____

Name _____ Address _____
Information willing to share _____
Information would like to see _____

_____

*We are soliciting articles, comments, suggestions, etc. for the Spring Newsletter regarding the use or non-use of computers in Montessori elementary classes. Please return this card (with articles if you have them) by February 27, 1984.*

Johnnie Denton

# Recreational Reading at Home

While many parents are anxious to participate in educating their children to become literate in the fullest sense, they may not know how to help their children become better readers. When such parents ask what kind of "homework" they can do with their children, I always suggest (1) that they tell stories or read good children's literature nightly and (2) that they allow themselves the luxury of reading silently in the afternoon or evening, so that their children can see them engaged in that activity. (We do a real service to children when we show them that we really value our literacy.) In addition, parents can implement a simple recreational reading program for their children at home. Such a program is not solely the property of the local public library, nor need it be for the summer months only.

Of course, "recreational reading" takes place in our classrooms during the school year, since a good deal of the reading of non-fiction in Montessori classes is done with the spirit of adventure, and there is also time for enjoying fiction at school. After all, we want our children to do more than merely decode and comprehend a text. We want them to realize what a fantastic gift reading is and also to desire to open and enjoy that gift regularly.

The following information is that which I give to parents who wish to help their children become better and more avid readers.

## Suggestions for conducting a recreational reading program in the home

1. Your child should select his own books to read. (Most children choose books because of the topic, the picture on the cover, or the interest aroused by a part of the book which has been read aloud to them.) If your child always chooses books on a particular subject, allow him to do so!
2. The child should decide if the book is easy enough to read. In recreational reading, there should be no more than five difficult words per one-hundred running words, since this is reading for fun, and there should be few obstacles with the print. Remember that the librarian can direct your child to the proper areas of the library for "easy reading," different genres of literature, and specific topics.
3. You should provide 10 to 15 minutes each day for recreational reading, or more time if your child requests it.
4. There are various ways to read recreationally. Your child should choose how he wishes to read each day. Consider the following possibilities:
    a. The child reads alone silently or out loud.
    b. The child reads aloud to an adult.
    c. The child reads in unison with an adult.
    d. The child and adult take turns reading.
    e. The adult reads to the child, and the child then reads the same material on his own.
    f. The child reads along with a taped book. (Tapes and records of many good books are available at the library.)
5. If your child stumbles on a word while reading aloud, it is better to simply pronounce it than to tell him to "sound out" the

word. If, while reading alone, your child encounters a difficult word and comes to you for help, you might teach him to skip over the word and finish reading the sentence. If the sentence makes sense, then your help is not really needed. The emphasis should be on enjoyment and on the message. There is plenty of opportunity for instruction in accurate reading during school hours.

6. Sharing is a vital aspect of recreational reading in the home. However, it should be informal. One of the most effective ways of encouraging a child to discuss his book is to ask, "Will you tell me about the story you read? I'd like to learn about it from you."

Listed below are other general questions you can ask that apply to most books.

a. What did you like best? Why?
b. What was your favorite character? Why?
c. Did you dislike any character? Why?
d. Did you learn something from the story? What?

7. Your child may also wish to draw a picture inspired by the story or create a mobile for his room.

8. A reading log is helpful, because your child will feel a sense of accomplishment if he records what he has read. The log can be kept daily with the following headings:

| Date | Title | Author | Pages Read |
|---|---|---|---|

The quantity of material read is of no real significance, but some children wish to see how many pages they have read.

9. Recreational reading is considered to be one of the most effective means of building a positive attitude towards reading. By taking your child to the library often and following the simple procedure outlined above, you can help your child become fascinated with books and develop a life-long interest in learning through them.

"GOING OUT" - INDIVIDUAL AND SMALL GROUP FIELD TRIPS

I. I find these trips helpful to children in that they:

A. give the children a sense of liberation, even within the classroom, to know that the world outside is available to them and that with the proper preparation they can independently use the resources of their community;

B. motivate children to do preparatory research, especially those children who "know the ropes" of the prepared environment and have a greater need to be on their own.

II. I help prepare the children for going out by:

A. taking them for an orientation walk around the neighborhood during the first week of school, pointing out the businesses that have welcomed student interviewers;

B. posting on the bulletin board notices of coming events at planetariums, museums, etc.;

C. encouraging children to make "going out" trips to buy things they want for the classroom, e.g., materials for a new experiment,

D. explaining in a group meeting that in order to go out, one must;

1. do some research to get background information and write it up,

2. write several questions to ask,

3. arrange transportation if the site is within walking or

bussing distance,

4. call the place and ask when a visit is possible,

5. report back to the class after the trip.

III. After the children have done the preparatory work I use our classroom representative (formerly called "room mother") to contact parents to chaperone the trip.

IV. When the chaperones arrive in the class, I absolve them of any educational responsiblity except for that of the safe and timely return of the children. The children bring their written questions and their notebooks to record what they learn.

V. Upon their return, the children use the next convenient group time to report back to their classmates. They need to be shown:

A. how to stand;

B. how to speak to a group;

C. how to sensitively critique the reports of others.

VI. Similar preparation is helpful for a "coming in" trip, e.g., when a child wants to bring in a pet or invite an adult to make a presentation to the class.

- Peter Hanson

June 24, 1983

# PLANNING FOR A WEEK OF "GOING OUT"

The conclusion of each year for the elementary children of our school is a week long trip designed to compliment and extend the curriculum. Both the 9-12 and 12-15 classes (about 50 children) go to southern Illinois for a full week of work (7 days) at the Koster archaeological site in Kampsville, a project run by Northwestern University. The Children and staff dig under the direction of Northwestern students and teachers. In addition they work on daily craft activities of the paleo-Indians of the area such as construction of fishing nets, flint knapping, and building of shelters. The classes travel to the site by Amtrak from Chicago.

The 6-9 classes (currently 65 children) spend five days at Pleasant Valley Farm, a combination nature center, farm, and camping facility about 1½ hours outside Chicago. You will find copies of a typical packet sent to parents including a letter, permission form, suggested clothing list, and schedule of activities. We have taken this trip for the past ten years in 6-9, so most of the kinks have been worked out.

There are several important factors to consider in planning such a week. There must be a great deal of preparation with both the children and their parents. Generally the 6 year olds and their parents are the most anxious as it is often their first time away from each other. I keep a class photo album with many pictures of the various farm activities to show the new members of our class. We then have many detailed group discussions beginning about a month in advance of the trip with our "senior" members leading the group and answering questions. The adults refer to upcoming farm experiences often during group lesson work so that the information is constantly in the air.

Parents may be prepared in much the same way as the children. In addition to the packet, sent out, there is a class pot luck supper where questions concerning the trip are answered both by staff and some of our "experienced" parents. Be sure to emphasize how to help a child pack for the trip. By the time the children are in their third year, most of the parents anticipate the week as a sort of mini-vacation for themselves. Don't under estimate that as a selling point for some of your parents!

From an administrative point of view fees for the trip should ideally be built into the tuition. This emphasizes that this and all trips are not optional but an essential part of the curriculum. Our current cost is approximately $70.00 per child for this trip including bus transportation. (The 9-12 trip is about $250.00 per child). We have a standing reservation at the farm, but 3-6 months in advance should be the minimum amount of time to reserve a facility.

Pleasant Valley offers a complex of adjoining cabins with bunk beds as well as a dining hall. The children bring sleeping bags and a limited amount of clothing (see list). We have tried camping one night out of the four we were away, but it was very difficult due to the large numbers of children. I would suggest a group of no more than 20-25 would be easier to work with for camping. In addition (as for many activities) you should be an experienced camper yourself.

As for meals, each day one cabin is responsible for setting the table and washing dishes. The meals are prepared by the farm's cook, who has been very cooperative about our demands for whole grain breads and fresh fruits and vegetables in the menu. The children have supplemented meals with fresh-baked bread, sprouts they have grown and granola as well as preparation of an eveving snack.

A final point to consider in planning such a week is staff preparation. We generally meet with the farm staff 4 to 6 weeks in advance at the farm to decide on activities, determine the availability of their staff (usually 1 person plus from our staff for each major activity), and we usually bring microscopes, nets, eye droppers and books for pond study, while the farm provides materials for an activity like candle-making.

With careful planning, this week has become a real focal point for our class. The children grow so much - stretching their spirits and their limbs! It is well worth the work involved.

Maureen Peifer

submitted by Lael Sheahan

OBSERVING A MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM

In preparation for your visit to the elementary classroom, it is important to realize some differences between the preschool and elementary environments.

The most obvious to you will be the amount of movement and conversation. While the preschool child is developing within himself, the elementary child is developing his social self. Socialization is important. Solving problems, however simple they appear to an adult, are necessary and important experiences for any child. Social interaction and communication are important skills to be acquired with peers in the elementary class.

You will also notice that children are encouraged to work together. Group activities are important for the child at the elementary level. In preschool, the children usually choose to work alone - for that suits their needs at that time of their development.

There is a community in the elementary classroom. Children make friends. They sense that there are some people who help them while there are other children that need their help. Learning and helping are reciprocal.

The elementary child, interested in his peers, experiences many varied personalities which helps him discover himself. He sees which of his actions are appreciated or accepted and which are not. In the three years in the classroom he experiences a number of roles - being the youngest, the middle and the oldest, to mention only a few!

As an observer, enter the room and get comfortable. No doubt, the first impression will be movement and conversation. Tune in to a conversation. Listen to it for awhile. Notice if the conversation leaves the subject of work at hand and the direction in which it flows. What are their interests? Listen long enough for the conversation or activity to return to the work at hand. Sometimes you'll find a child working when another child asks a question - how to spell a word, what's 5x9, etc. Notice if the conversation changes to that topic. How does it affect you, as an adult from a traditional background, that they are changing topics midstream, that they are enjoying what they are doing?

Pick a group of children working together and follow them. Which one suggested the activity? Did this person organize and lead the activity or was it a democratic group? Were the children of similar ages or mixed? Did others approach them and get drawn into their interests?

Observe children of different ages. Notice the differences in the length of their work periods and their periods of concentration.

If any problems arise, observe how the children solve them. Notice that the activities of Practical Life are no longer lined up on the shelf. They are now activities of daily life, necessary in maintaining the environment, caring for the birds, rabbits, etc.

# TELEVISION AND THE CHILD

TV is a powerful learning tool. But TV is watching, not living. Children who watch a lot of TV are missing out on activities that are important for physical, social, and cognitive growth. Children need time to day-dream, to create, to learn through doing, to practice and to discover a new way.

TV viewing has had a dramatic effect on children and the family. TV is often used as a babysitter and is often allowed to occupy hours that might otherwise be spent in communication between family members. In addition, TV is in many ways robbing children of their childhood. They are no longer protected from the harsh realities of the adult world. Instead they are being forced to view the silliest fantasies and the grimmest realities in the same light. It is hard to imagine that children can gain anything possitive from what is offered by TV without the judgement, guidance, and support of a responsible adult.

Many studies have concluded that viewing violence causes aggressive behavior in children. In one study, elementary children who were asked to identify which classmates pushed, shoved and fought more consistently named children who watched the most violent shows.

Viewing TV violence also gives children a distorted view of the world. On TV, crime and violence occur ten times more often than in real life. Studies have shown that junior high school children who are heavy TV watchers are more likely to be anxious and insecure, to view the world and people as mean, and to feel the need to constantly protect themselves.

The ability of TV to influence the behavior of children in positive ways is also being studied. Although the results are not clear cut, it is apparent that even small children can learn helpfulness and kindness from TV. Cooperation, sharing, expressing of empathy are harder to document. Some researchers feel that helping and other behaviors than can, like violence, be shown in physical, graphical ways on TV, are easier to influence than behaviors that must be demonstrated by talk rather than by action. Most studies also show that pro-social themes have a much greater effect on children ages 8-10 than on younger children.

A 1978 analysis of a week's ads on network children's programming showed that 82% of the ads were food — mostly candy, sugar-coated cereals, sweets, snack foods, and fast foods. While some studies support the claim that requests for non-nutritional products increase in relation to TV advertising and TV watching, others do not. Studies do show, however, that children's beliefs about the nutritive value of foods are shaped by advertising.

The overall concern with children's TV advertising is that commercials create a materialistic consumer mentality in children. Parents can help their children under eight years of age by explaining what ads are trying to do. For older children, a parent's consumer behavior is what really counts.

Through play children test their self-sufficiency; through play they practice the skills and imitate the behaviors they observe in the adult world; through play they learn how it feels to be productive, creative, and proud.

Children's play is rich and imaginative as the raw materials and props that inspire or support it. Long before toy stores existed, children used adult-world things in their play. Even today most toys are nothing more than miniatures of adult settings and props.

For modern day kids real things still hold a special attraction. Listed below are some ideas for gifts that are more than toys.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Stapler | Set of magic markers | Flashlight |
| Magnifying glass | Magnet | Belt money dispenser |
| Gyroscope | Compass | Set of mirrors |
| Tape label maker | Diary | Paper/carbon paper |
| Index cards | Ink pad and stamps | Scotch tape |
| Calendar | Radio | Walkie-talkie |
| Tape measure | Prism | Kaleidoscope |
| Globe | Stethoscope | Calligraphy set |
| Woodworking tools | Paper clips | Balancing scale with weights |
| Receipt book | Colored pens | Envelopes |
| Steno pad | Construction paper | Poster paint |
| Watercolors | Crayons | Stick-on stars |
| Yarn | Scissors | Painting paper |
| Stickers of all kinds | Cotton balls | Paint brushes |
| Pipe cleaners | Cardboard | Glitter |

How to control your child's TV viewing:

1. Set time limits. Some parents allow one hour a day during the week, two hours on weekends; others allow no TV during the week. Some allow children to select a certain number of programs per week.

2. Allow your child to make reasonable choices of programs within the time limits you've chosen, but be sure you know what s/he's watching. Don't just let them flip the switch to "see what's on."

3. Don't let children turn on the TV before the program comes on. Insist that they turn it off when it's over. If they get involved in another activity while watching, turn off the television set.

4. Never leave the TV on as background to anything -- homework, meals, conversation, reading, play.

5. Watch TV with your child and discuss what's on. You'll both find it enlightening.

6. Start teaching your child to watch TV critically. The recently published book, Teaching Television (Dial Press, $10.95) has plenty of good ideas.

7. Have only one TV in the house to encourage family viewing. Don't let the kids have TVs in their rooms.

8. Plan activities for your children so that when they say, "There is nothing to do but watch TV," you've got some alternatives.

9. After you've set limits, don't waver. Children will accept them only if you are firm.

Another enlightening book on the effects of television is Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television. The arguments put forth are sound and interestingly enough deal with not only physical damages but metaphysical harms as well.

Excerpts from "Parent's Magazine" , June 1981
This is submitted to us by John Bodi.

Questions For Parents To Consider Prior to a Parent Night

submitted by Nancy Diaz

1. How long has your child been in a Montessori classroom?

2. How many hours have you spent observing a Montessori classroom?

3. Please list Montessori-related materials you have read and previous Montessori parent education meetings you have attended.

4. Do you see the family as the primary educator? How do you see the role of the school?

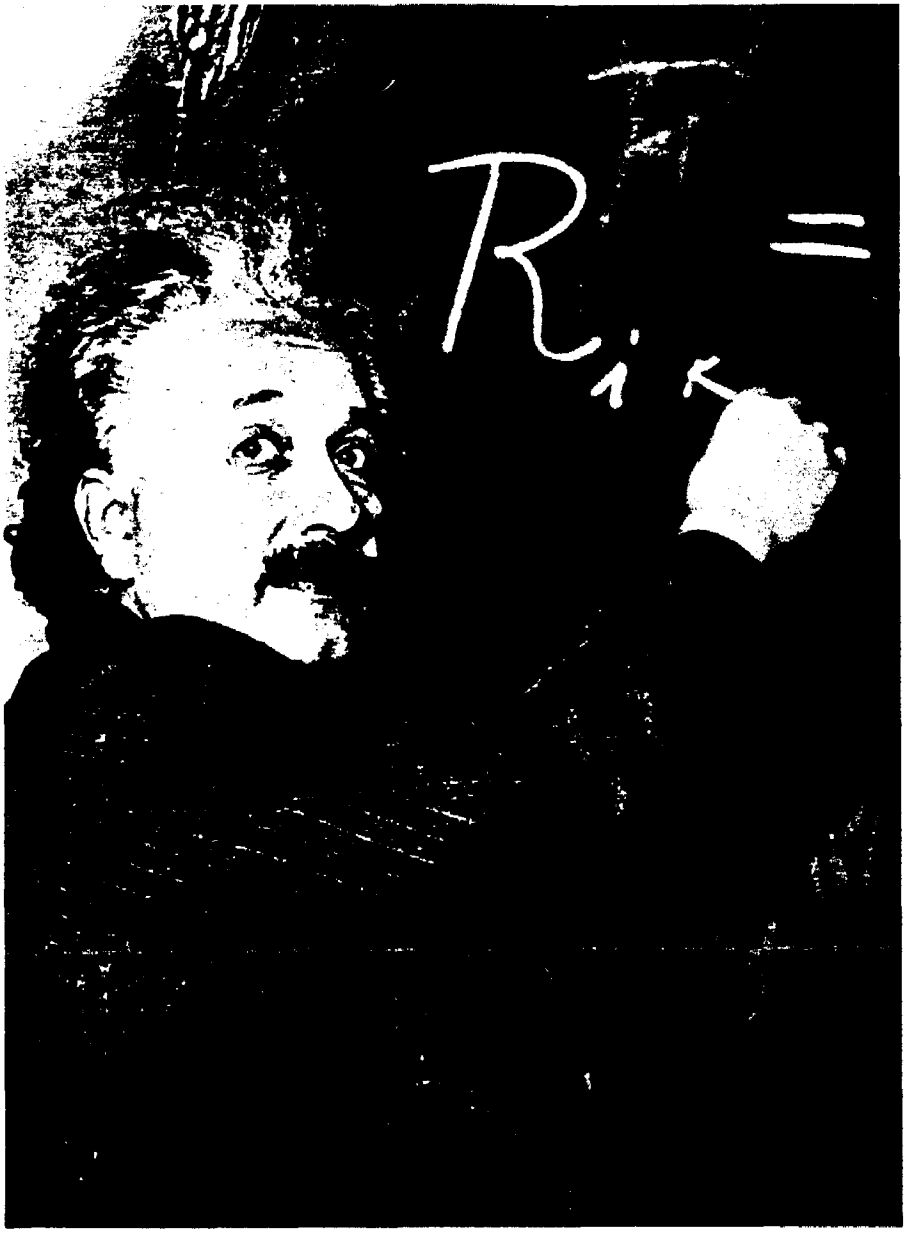
5. Do you understand how free choice within limits builds a child's self-confidence? The Montessori environment is often criticized as being too rigid or too free. Can you think of examples from your child's classroom that prove that neither case is true?

6. What are the physical and psychic needs of the child?

7. What are the innate tendencies which help man fulfill his needs? Can you think of examples from your own life where these tendencies are manifest?

8. Can you give an example of a sensitive period you have witnessed in your child's behavior and explain how it was expressed?

9. What are the four areas of a Montessori primary classroom and how do they help the child construct himself?



Mathematical genius Albert Einstein gave us theory of relativity, which led to atom-smashing.

INTRODUCTION TO MATHEMATICS

# THE NUMBERS GAME

By Graham Berry

Primitive people probably started to count by using their fingers and toes. The use of pebbles for counting marked a major advance.

In Czechoslovakia, a 30,000-year-old wolf bone was found with 55 notches in it. The notches are in groups of five, and in rows, one of 25 notches and the other of 30. This record obviously counted something.

Mathematics came much later, when the Greeks added to arithmetic the dimensions of logic and proof. Math is now a very powerful tool, enabling us to understand nature better and to put its laws to work for our benefit.

With math, we can resolve family budget problems, design nuclear reactors, aircraft, cities and computers, formulate foods and medicines, land men on the moon, and do research to uncover nature's secrets. Math even enables people to understand subjects like relativity.

It also beautifully describes natural phenomena like the flow of electrons around an atom's nucleus, the design of snowflakes and metal crystals, the spiral head of a daisy, the synchronous movements of the sun and its family of planets and moons, and the expansion of the universe.

Nature's laws naturally fall into equations, like Albert Einstein's famous $E=mc^2$—energy equals a quantity of matter (mass) multiplied by the speed of light squared. The equation not only describes the interchangeability of matter and energy, but also tells us that there is an enormous amount of energy in a small amount of matter.

Mathematics is the underpinning of nature. No wonder, then, that some philosophers have said God is a mathematician.

Fortunately, the principles of mathematics are not difficult to understand when one sees how the subject has built up over the centuries. Some math is utterly self-evident, like: "The whole is equal to the sum of its parts."

Mathematics is also a bevy of shortcut languages that are much more precise than any verbal language. Numbers don't change meanings as words are apt to do. Moreover, math is an international language whose symbols and techniques are the same around the world.

New mathematical tools develop as needed. Calculus was invented by Sir Isaac Newton, who used it to formulate the law of universal gravitation. The FORTRAN and COBOL languages were developed to communicate with computers when they came along.

Mathematics also provides yardsticks, like the metric system, as desired. When astronomy outgrew miles and kilometers, the light-year yardstick was created to measure great distances; one light-year is not quite six trillion miles. With the invention of microscopes, the angstrom arrived; one angstrom equals one 10-billionth of a meter.

Some of the geniuses who created mathematics often considered it an art form. Indeed, mathematics permeates visual art as perspective, music in tones and harmony. The found-

# A Lifetime Learning minicourse

ing mathematical geniuses include Thales, Plato, Pythagoras, Euclid, Galileo, Descartes, Newton, Leibniz and Einstein. Some were also outstanding philosophers, revealing the close tie between mathematics and philosophy through logic.

This is the golden age of mathematics. Computers are processing billions of bits of information with unbelievable speed. Early in this century students could master most of the subject. Today, a top mathematician can be expected to know only about a tenth of it.

The productivity will continue as long as there is a demand from science, technology, and mathematicians themselves.

### ARITHMETIC

There were no words for numbers at first. For "six" a person had to show six fingers or six pebbles. Very inconvenient.

Eventually, people needed to measure land, to figure taxes. This encouraged development of more flexible systems and ways to keep permanent records.

Early civilizations devised devious systems of numbers and recorded them on clay tablets or stone. The Mayan number system began with dots: one dot for number one, two for number two, etc., up to five, which was a dash. Six was a dot over the dash: seven, two dots over the dash, etc. Ten was two horizontal dashes.

Addition and subtraction were the first arithmetic processes. Multiplication evolved from addition, division from subtraction. These processes were accelerated by the abacus, which is still in use. Square root reaches back to Babylonian times.

The ancient Mesopotamians used a base system of 60, compared with ours of only 10. Although eventually abandoned because of its unwieldiness, the 60-base system still lives in our scale of time: 60 seconds to the minute, 60 minutes to the hour.

Letters became popular symbols for Greek numerals. Romans combined letters for their numbers. Imagine having to do multiplication with Roman numerals: MDCLIII times CDLXXIV! Specially trained Roman slaves did this work and generally won freedom after a few years of the mathematical torture.

Greeks and Hindus used a base-10 system for their arithmetic, and the latter are credited with giving us symbols that eventually became the numbers 1 through 9.

Negative numbers came into use about A.D. 1200 to denote business losses, but were employed much earlier by the Hindus and Chinese. Negatives now have many uses, like describing temperatures below zero.

The symbols +, −, × and ÷ are relatively new. The plus is shorthand for the Latin *et* (and). The minus sign may derive from a bar medieval traders used to mark weight differences in products. The multiplication sign, known in the 1600s, is based on the Saint Andrew's Cross, whose arms intersect obliquely and on which, according to legend, Saint Andrew met martyrdom. The division sign probably is a combination of the colon and the fraction bar.

The earliest mechanically printed arithmetic book, *Treviso Arithmetic*, was published in Treviso, Italy, in 1478. It was on business arithmetic.

The equal sign (=) was invented by Robert Recorde in 1557 because, he explained, "noe 2 thynges can be moare equalle" than two parallel lines.

Although fractions have been in vogue since the days of ancient Egypt and Greece, more than 2,000 years passed before people discovered the more convenient way of handling them—with decimals. Decimals were in use in business transactions in the late 1400s.

Logarithms were created by Scotsman John Napier (1550-1617) to speed calculations by using powers of 10. Ten times 10 is $10^2$ (squared). Thus $10^2 \times 10^4$ equals $10^6$ or one million.

### GEOMETRY

Geo means earth, soil. Metry is from the Greek for measurement. Babylonians and Egyptians used simple geometry to measure land and the latter used it to build pyramids. That was arithmetic.

The artistic, clear-thinking Greeks elevated geometry to mathematics. Thales (about 624–548 B.C.) was the first to see geometric shapes as shapes rather than as plots of land. He was a fine example of an active retiree, resigning from his prosperous olive oil business to lay the groundwork for the mathematics of geometry. He and other Greeks clarified two processes vital to the progress of mathematics: abstraction and proof.

Looking at a triangle as a shape rather than as a piece of pie is abstraction. Proof, the celebration of pure reason, can begin with a simple example:

1. Two straight lines can cross each other only once.
2. Line AB and line CD are straight lines.
3. Therefore lines AB and CD can cross each other only once.

To doubly prove their point, the Greeks used a technique that they called *reductio ad absurdum*. In this case the logic was reversed to show that the opposite of what

*continued*

Computers, an increasingly valuable tool, use a binary system consisting of one and zero.

had been proved would be absurd.

Thales described the first five geometric propositions. One states that a circle's diameter bisects the circle into equal halves. That's easy to see. Another is not so obvious: Any angle inscribed within a semicircle is a right angle (90 degrees).

A mathematician believed to have studied with Thales was Pythagoras (about 572-501 B.C.), whose great contribution was to prove the theorem that the square of the long side (hypotenuse) of a right-angle triangle is equal to the sum of the squares of the other two sides. Useful in science, its great down-to-earth value is that its principle is used by builders today to make certain that rooms are laid out in perfect rectangles.

Pythagoras also discovered the mathematics underlying the musical scale. Pluck a taut string and it produces a note. Then pluck an equally taut string that is twice as long, and its note will be one octave lower than the first. Pythagoras also worked out the mathematical relationship of the notes in an octave.

Another brilliant lover of proof was Euclid (about 300 B.C.), whose masterly 13-chapter *Elements* summarized most of the mathematical knowledge of his time. *Elements* is said to have had a greater circulation than any book except the Bible.

Insofar as it can be done, all branches of modern mathematics are organized on the Greek system of abstraction and proof.

## ALGEBRA

Algebra, a technique for solving problems with unknown numbers, didn't develop as fast as geometry.

Egyptians may have used it 3,600 years ago, and Plato described verbal problems in about 300 B.C. But the algebraic knowledge of the Greeks wasn't brought together until about 200 B.C. in *Arthmetica* by Diophantus of Alexandria, the "father of algebra." His own major contributions to the discipline were not surpassed for more than 1,000 years.

The name algebra comes from the Arabic *al-jabr*, "bringing together" into equations. It's a most appropriate name, for the sought, unknown number is put into an equation, usually as an x, with the known numbers. An equation is a handy device involving two equal mathematical quantities that are separated by an equal sign. In the equation, the knowns and unknowns can be simplified and manipulated mathematically to obtain the value of the unknown.

Greek mathematican Pythagoras of 500 B.C. proved theorems we still use.

*Equations with more than one unknown* were known in Egypt, Greece and India. Here is a problem with two unknowns:

A man spent $31 for candy for gifts, paying $5 for each three-pound box and $2 for each one-pound box. How many of each did he buy?

The answers will be an even and an odd number because only an even and odd will give the uneven answer of 31. The odd number is 5x, representing the $5 box, and 2y the even-number $2 box. This gives the equation 5x plus 2y equals 31. Substituting odd numbers for x gives three sets of answers: 1 and 13; 3 and 8; 5 and 3. Converting the figures to dollar values to prove it gives, respectively: $5 + $26 = $31; $15 + $16 = $31; $25 + $6 = $31.

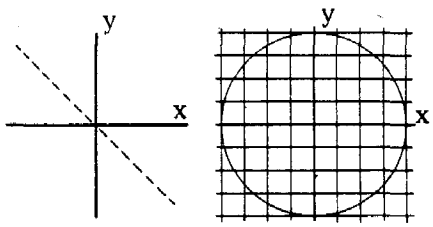
Algebra's easy equations, involving no higher power than x itself, are called linear (one-dimensional) equations. Equations using $x^2$ are called quadratic (for squared number) equations. Equations with $x^3$ are called cubics, etc.

## ANALYTIC GEOMETRY

This branch of mathematics combines the powers of algebra, geometry and arithmetic. Some groundwork was laid by the Greeks, but analytic geometry really was created independently by two French geniuses at about the same time. They are philosopher-mathematician René Descartes (1597-1650) and mathematician Pierre de Fermat (1601-1665).

Descartes discusses analytic geometry in his *La Géométrie*, published in 1637. That section of the book, merely an appendage, is described by British philosopher John Stuart Mill as "the greatest single step ever made in the progress of the exact sciences."

The key lies in that two numbers can determine a position on a graph that has a horizontal line crossed by a vertical line. The vertical line is the y axis and the horizontal line is the x axis. One number can represent a distance above or below the horizontal (x) axis and the other number a distance to the right or left of the y axis.




straight line $x + y = 0$

circle $x^2 + y^2 = 16$

Analytic geometry makes it possible to convert any equation into a geometric shape and vice versa. Descartes went beyond quadratics (squaring) to cubics and even higher degrees, establishing that equations for each class produce new designs of curves, hummocks, figure eights, and so on.

## TRIGONOMETRY

Trigonometry, the science of triangles, is one of the oldest branches of mathematics. Babylonians used it some 4,500 years ago in surveying, navigation and astronomy.

A large part of trigonometry is based on the mathematical relationship among the three sides and three angles of a triangle. These relationships make it possible, if at least one side and any two of the triangle's other five elements are known, to quickly find the values of the remaining elements; this involves the ratios of the pairs of the sides to each other. There are six ratios—trigonometric functions—concerning the triangle's sides, the principal ones being the sine and cosine.

The idea in trigonometry is to convert a problem into one or more triangles, preferably right-angle triangles. For example, to measure a tree's height, make the tree trunk one line of an imaginary triangle. Walk, say, 75 feet from the trunk; this 75 feet

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is the base line of your triangle. The juncture of those two lines forms a right triangle, provided the tree trunk is about vertical and the ground is level. Now you have two of the three elements you need—one angle (90 degrees) and the triangle's base (75 feet).

The third element needed for the answer can be the angle created at the juncture of the base line and the hypotenuse. The hypotenuse is an imaginary line linking the tree top and the end of the base line, 75 feet from the tree.

To get that angle, you'll need a sighting along the hypotenuse with a transit or clinometer. The angle is 53 degrees. Now, by calculation or from a trigonometric table, you will find that the tree is 100 feet high.

French algebraist Francis Viète (1540–1603) advanced trigonometry by perceiving that trigonometric ratios could be used to solve an algebraic equation.

Later, Jean Baptiste Fourier (1768–1830) advanced the use of the angle to form curves that could be analyzed algebraically, resulting in the "sine wave" vital in analyzing waves in electronics and other contemporary sciences. This gives scientists a way to measure a cause by its effect.

### CALCULUS

By 1600, people could count and measure about everything that didn't move. However, for the better understanding of nature, which is never static, there was a growing need to measure motion and change.

The Greeks had tried to do it 2,000 years earlier by considering motion as a bundle of points and time as a collection of instances. Later mathematicians added some insight into the problem.

By the 1660s, calculus' time had come. It was invented about the same time and independently by two geniuses, Britain's Isaac Newton (1642–1727) and Germany's Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646–1716).

Calculus (the Latin word for pebble) describes change, motion, space—not by counting and measuring, but by dealing with relationships. Calculus introduced into mathematics the principle of the motion picture. It breaks down motion into a series of still pictures so that it can be observed, frame by frame, and the speed and acceleration can be calculated at any specific instant.

Calculus deals with variables like changes in temperature, pressure, combustion, size and speed, and in growth and decay. It is invaluable in engineering, and in guiding spacecraft to distant planets. With it, one can plot on graphs the distance covered by airplanes at varying speeds.

Calculus enabled Newton to discover and describe universal gravitation. In reply to praise of his great works, Newton said: "If I have seen further . . . it is by standing upon the shoulders of giants."

The first new mathematical processes since the laws of simple arithmetic were invoked by calculus. They are *differentiation* and *integration*. Like addition and subtraction, they are the reverse of each other. Differential calculus finds the rate of the change in the speed of a cannon shell. Integration finds the speed of the shell when the rate of change of the speed is known.

### LAWS OF CHANCE

After the fundamentals of arithmetic, geometry, algebra, trigonometry and calculus come the specialized branches of mathematics. Here are examples.

From studies of gambling problems, French mathematicians Blaise Pascal (1623–1662) and Fermat originated in the mid-1600s the mathematics of chance. Out of it came the laws of probability. These laws require large numbers to prove out. Flip a coin a million times and it will probably come up half heads and half tails.

The answer is the same as the coin toss as to whether the new baby will be a boy or girl. Even if the first three babies are girls, the chance that the fourth will be a boy remains 50–50.

Probability is based on two laws, *both-and* and *either-or*. The former is used to calculate the probability of two events happening, and the latter to calculate the probability of one or the other of two events happening. For example, while the chance of heads turning up on one flip of a coin is ½, the chance of it happening twice in succession is ½ times ½, or ¼.

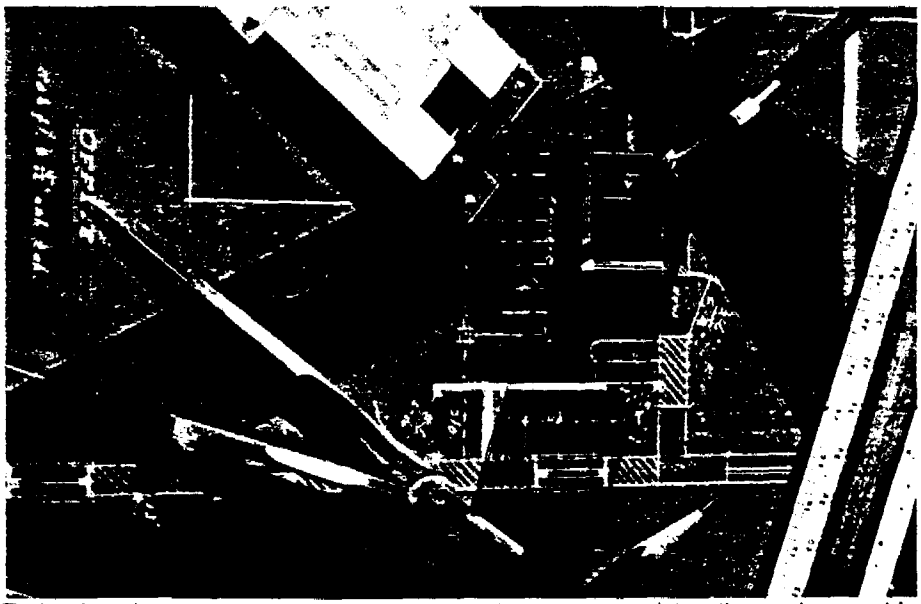
The odds of getting certain bridge or poker hands have been computed: nine honors in 13 cards—104 to 1; 13 cards all of one suit—nearly 159 billion to 1; a royal flush—nearly 650,000 to 1; a straight—254 to 1.

Probability theory is used by insurance companies in drawing up actuarial tables, by geneticists in forecasting the probable characteristics of offspring, and in random sampling for reliability testing of products.

### RELATIVITY

Karl Friedrich Gauss (1777–1855) entered the mathematical picture before he was three years old by pointing out an error his father had made in making out a payroll. At 24, Gauss invented the method of least squares, which is indispensable today in estimating the value of any-

continued



Tools of mathematics—triangles, rulers, slide rules—are essential to the modern world.

Chances of winning or losing at the gaming table are linked to laws of probability.

thing that is determined from a large number of measurements, like a set of experimental observations.

Gauss, who called mathematics the "queen of the sciences," saw the possibility of the curvature of space, pointing the way toward Einstein's epochal Theory of Relativity.

A student of Gauss, Bernard Riemann (1826–1866), expanded the idea of curved space, and out of it came non-Euclidean geometry. It postulated that the shortest distance between two points is not necessarily a straight line, but in fact is a curved line in a curved space. This is why airliners often fly the polar route between the United States and Europe.

Riemann's findings also provided background for the great discoveries of Albert Einstein (1879–1955), who, like Newton, saw further because he "stood upon the shoulders of giants."

He provided an astounding new concept of the universe and its forces: Out of his work came the landmark equation $E=mc^2$, and the determination that velocities and other measurements are relative to the speed of light, which is a constant velocity. Einstein refined Newtonian mechanics and postulated that gravity is the bending of space. To our three-dimensional universe he added a fourth: time.

Einstein's momentous findings in physics and cosmology were accomplished through mathematics.

## CONTEMPORARY MATH

Techniques are continually being developed to make better use of mathematics. Symbolic logic makes it possible to classify, analyze and clarify the thinking involved in all branches of mathematics.

Group theory and set theory are helpful in unifying the different branches of mathematics and in making the many mathematical tools interchangeable.

In addition, set theory is widely used in schools to give children an introduction to mathematical relationships and logic.

A set is merely a name for a group of things: Ten cows, five pigs, four goats are one set; they are all farm animals. Each kind of farm animal is another set.

The enormous massing of statistics available today makes statistical analysis a potent technique. By analyzing large groups of numbers, a statistician can show trends.

A comparatively new tool invented by America's John von Neumann (1903–1957) is game theory. Combining logic and mathematics, it maximizes strategies to win in a business deal, in a diplomatic exchange, or in a battle.

## LIGHTER SIDE

Math has its less serious but still puzzling moments:

1. Here are four 5s arranged to equal 100: $(5+5)\times(5+5)=10\times10=100$. Can you arrange four 8s to equal 100?

2. Everyone has two parents, four grandparents, eight great-grandparents, 16 great-great-grandparents, etc. On this basis, shouldn't the earth's population have been larger in the past than it is today?

3. Four brown cows and three white ones give the same amount of milk in five days as three brown cows and five white ones in four days. Which are better milk producers, the brown or white cows?

## ANSWERS

1. $\frac{8}{0.8}\times\frac{8}{0.8}=100$

2. The earth's population in the past was smaller because many parents had parents in common, and even more had grandparents in common.

3. To express the problem in an equation, let's put a day's production of milk from each type of cow in different color containers. Milk from each brown cow will go into a brown bucket (B) and from each white cow into a white bucket (W). Then you have the equation: $5(4+3W)=4(3B+5W)$, or $20B+15W=12B+20W$. Transposing: $20B-12B=20W-15W$, or $8B=5W$. The white cows give more milk.

## LEARNING MORE

Courses in mathematics are available from primary grades through university graduate levels.

Don't frown on lower-grade math. First-graders are now using equations to solve for unknowns. Students today get binary arithmetic (for computers), set theory, probability, algebra and trigonometry before entering college. Calculus is taught in many high schools.

You can enjoy the "golden age of math" in selected classes and with good books:

*Life Science Library Mathematics* by David Bergamini and the editors of *Life* (Time, Inc.)

*Popular Mathematics* by Dennis Miller (Coward-McCann, Inc.)

*The Mathematical Experience* by Philip J. Davis and Hersh (Birkhäuser)

*History of Mathematics* by Carl B. Boyer (John Wiley & Sons, Inc.). □

Want to learn more about mathematics? Your Association offers a free booklet for individual or group use that contains a reprint of the minicourse plus a reading list and supplemental material. For group use, specify number (20 maximum). Discussion leader's guide is also available. Write to: Institute of Lifetime Learning, 1909 K Street N.W., Washington, D.C. 20049. Allow six weeks for delivery.

# Classified Gnomenclature

## Material:

Cards with various parts of gnomes distinguished in red to isolate the difficulty.
e.g cap, beard
felt boots

## Age: 4½ to adult

## Presentation:

### Level I

(as a vocabulary activity for Children's House)
Use the standard 3 period lesson.
"This is the cap."
"Show me the cap."
"What is this?"

## Note: It is always best to have a real gnome and introduce the material at the end of the lesson.

## Presentation

### Level II:

(lower elementary)
The children may wish to draw their own gnomes and write definitions.

### Level III:

Needs of Gnomes

### Level IV:

Time Line of Gnomes

## References:

Gnomes by Poortvliet & Huygen

developed by Maureen Perfer

A.M.I. Elementary Alumni Association Newsletter

Volume XI Number 3 April 1984

# Help For An Emotionally Disturbed Child

*Claus-Dieter Kaul*

Gustaf was born as a child of an unmarried woman, who was not able to raise her child. Therefore she gave Gustaf to a hospital when he was 14 months old and he is still living in this hospital. After some months there was a retardation in his development, especially the retardation of his speech and emotional disturbances became more aggravating.

When Gustaf was six he was placed in a regular school. There was no one who could deal with his problems; he just had to function in a class with 35 pupils, getting no love and feedback from his teacher. Gustaf was not able to use his normal intelligence. His concentration became worse and his only possibility to catch the attention of his teacher was through playing the clown and doing other silly things. So he always got bad marks and awful reports, which made him a handicapped boy. After being in this school for five years, repeating each class, the school administration tried to send him to a school for handicapped children, although he had a normal intelligence. This was when the administration of the hospital came to our school (Montessori school) and asked for an admission.

At first an educator from the hospital came with Gustaf to visit our school. For one day they stayed in my class (15 pupils between 11 and 15 years old—some of them with normal intelligence but emotionally disturbed, some of them mentally retarded, some of them with speech problems, and two physically handicapped). When Gustaf entered the classroom he was totally surprised because he had never seen a classroom looking like a living room, with materials on the shelves and pupils not only sitting at their desks, but going around, laying on carpets on the floor, or sitting at a huge round table having a discussion. During the time from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., Gustaf went from one pupil to another just looking at what they were working with and being surprised that most of them were working on different subjects. When the morning was over Gustaf said with tears in his eyes, "I never want to go back to my old school. I want to stay here forever because everything is wonderful."

So the educator from the hospital and I had a conference with Gustaf's teacher and we decided that he should change schools immediately. When Gustaf came into my class his knowledge was very little, his speech was still retarded. Gustaf continued his misbehavior. During the lessons he jumped around; he was screaming all the time, and he would leave the classroom. When he was working he could stay with his work intently for only 15 minutes.

After some time I realized that Gustaf had mainly negative contacts with the pupils in the classroom because they thought he had an exceptional position. So we had a discussion with the class about Gustaf's special situation; living in a hospital and having all these negative experiences from the other school. I asked the children to have sympathy and to give Gustaf a chance. I reminded them of their own difficult situations when they came to our school and that they also were given enough time to integrate themselves into the new society and that each of them found his own individual work-rhythm and worked on it in his own way.

There was a very important room where Gustaf used to go to all the time, the teacher's room, where he met all kinds of adults: the administrator, assistants, other teachers, and the "school grandmother," who had to accompany a physically handicapped girl. All those people he watched very intently. In this room he built his family he never had before; the administrator played the roll of the mother, I was the father, other teachers were his aunts and uncles and there was even a grandmother for him.

Within this "family" Gustaf became interested in all kinds of "Exercises of Practical Life:" boiling coffee, laying the table, serving food, helping the superintendent with her work with P.E., in the garden, and so on. For six months Gustaf was polarized only on these exercises. After this time Gustaf seemed to have satisfied his needs for practical life exercises. Then he discovered all the other materials in the classroom for language, mathematics, geometry, cosmic education, etc. Over and over again he wanted lessons to learn how to use the different materials.

In the same way that Maria Montessori could observe little children in the Children's House working for a long time with full concentration, you could see Gustaf with the Montessori material for hours with total concentration. Every time, he was enthusiastic when he discovered a new mathematical formula. Suddenly he realized how easy it was to calculate, even with huge numbers. Using the language material he realized that it was not so difficult to make up good sentences or even stories. In cosmic education he

started to work on big projects, very often together with other children who were totally surprised to see what was going on with Gustaf. He became a model for a really "good worker." Gustaf was fascinated with how much structure there is in the Montessori material and that he became able to decide his steps of learning independently, control his work by himself, and become more and more successful.

When he was at the end of the seventh school year, Gustaf had already made up so much leeway that he was on the same level of the public school curriculum for his age. He no longer had any emotional disturbances. He seemed to be normalized now. The other teachers were already missing Gustaf in the teachers' room. Sometimes he went in there when he had a break, just to say "hi" or to ask a teacher if he needed an aid in his classroom. Gustaf visited a primary class for some hours, giving lessons to the children and helping the teacher. When visitors came to our school, Gustaf was very proud when the administrator came in our classroom and asked him to explain the Montessori materials.

Gustaf had really fallen in love with our school; he even wanted to stay during the afternoon, even though school ends at 1 p.m. He was cleaning the shelves and the material, helping in the garden or in the office. He just wanted to be together with those people he loved as long as possible.

And soon this became a big problem: He alienated himself more and more from his group in the hospital which was usually indemnifying him as his family. The boys and girls in his group laughed at him and made him angry by saying that he was in a pre-school where he was just playing with playthings. Gustaf felt himself unwell in this situation, especially as he knew that those statements were not true. So he became very aggressive within his group. Immediately we had a conference with him and the educator of his group in the hospital. We decided that he should stay in the school during the afternoon only twice a week. Gustaf insisted that all the children from his group make a trip to our school, and see that in a Montessori school children learn mathematics, geometry, language, etc. also. So Gustaf invited his group to visit our school during an afternoon. For this Gustaf worked out a report about the life and work of Maria Montessori.

When his group came to our school he started with his report and he talked about the most important principles of the Montessori pedagogy. Then he showed them the environment and asked each of them to choose one material they wanted to know something about. He started to give lessons and after some time all of those suspicious boys and girls were working on all the different subjects with great concentration and they realized that the work Gustaf was talking about all the time was actually real school work, even more interesting than what they were used to in their public schools. Two hours later we had to stop this work because the group had to go home. His fellows were so enthusiastic about this that they envied Gustaf for being in such a wonderful school. After this visit the social contact within the group became better, and so Gustaf was able to solve his problems totally by himself.

With all his experiences and impressions Gustaf made during five years of "Montessori school life," he made up all of his deficits and developed himself into an independent and responsible person. This year Gustaf will finish school and start a job as a male horse nurse.

With this example I wanted to show that it is possible to make up missing sensitive periods in a period of development, which is much later than usual, if there is a very good prepared and well-devised environment.

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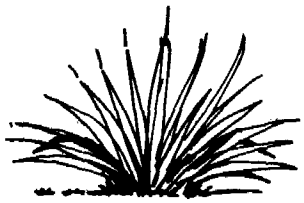
Claus-Dieter Kaul presently works with mentally retarded children between the ages of 14 and 18 years old at Montessori-Schulen der Aktion Sonnenschein in Munich, West Germany. He took his Primary training in Frankfurt, Germany in 1973. He took his Elementary training at the Washington Montessori Institute (AMI) in 1982.



## Special Interest

I am interested in some good information about the creation-evolution debate. If anyone has come across objective scientific information about both these perspectives, please send it to me: Frank A. Vincent Rounds Montessori School Box 8245 Wichita, KS 67208.

## ALUMNI NEWS

CONGRATULATIONS TO
Kathy Carter and William Brunner
married
Friday, the 24th of February
San Francisco, California

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Maryse and Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite
joyously announce the birth of their son,
DUSTIN LUCIEN L. POSTLEWAITE
born
January 18, 1984

o o o o o o o

*The AMI-EAA Newsletter is a publication for members of AMI-EAA. It is intended to be a resource and a vehicle for sharing our experiences and ideas. The contents of this Newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of AMI-EAA or AMI.*

# From the Executive Committee

Ballots are enclosed with this issue of the April Newsletter. This year we cast our vote upon the position of Chairperson. Please be sure to send in your ballot to the Publication Editor, Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite. (See Director for address.) Ballots must be mailed by May 15th. They will be opened and counted at our annual conference in Oregon. Please remember to mark your envelope "ballot enclosed" to facilitate the sorting of this mail.

## BOOKS — BOOKS — BOOKS

*from Mary Jo Hogan*

*The Read-Aloud Handbook.* Jim Trelease. Penguin Books, 1982, 223 pages, $5.95 paperback.

This is an how-to-do-it for parents and teachers on how, when, and even why to read aloud to chldren. The chapters are Why Read Aloud?, When to Begin Read-Aloud, The Stages of Read-Aloud, The Do's and Don'ts of Read-Aloud, What Makes a Good Read-Aloud, Home and Public Libraries, Television, Sustained Silent Reading, and a long list of suggested books for different age groupings. It would be difficult to browse through this book and still turn your back on reading aloud to your child. The chapter on SSR, sustained silent reading, is especially of interest to teachers. SSR is enjoying a big push in teacher training institutions these days. It is a limited period of reading for the child during which time he chooses the reading material and has no strings attached—no reports, no records, just pleasure. The teacher also participates by reading something of her/his own choosing. This book should be introduced to parents at parent meetings and made available to them through each school library.

*Be a Perfect Person in Just Three Days.* Stephen Manes. Clarion Press, 1982, 76 pages, $8.95.

This is a good book to read aloud to a class over a period of three days. It's the story of young Milo and an obscure book he comes across in the library on how to become a perfect person in three days. He follows the directions even though they are unusual, demanding, and, to the reader, quite humorous.

*Words: A Book about the Origins of Everyday Words and Phrases.* Jane Sarnoff and Reynold Ruffins. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1981, 64 pages.

This book gives little histories of words, grouped by the following categories: history of the English language, the family, clothes, transport, names, parts of the body, money, food, the 50 states, reading and writing, monsters, and mystery. Many of these are the topics we tend to dwell on in the classroom, so they fit right in to existing areas of concentration. Good illustrations, short explanations, and interesting selections of words make what could be an uninteresting topic quite fun.

*Castles and Dragons: Read-to-Yourself Fairy Tales for Boys and Girls.* Compiled by the Child Study Association of America. Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1958, 299 pages.

There are eighteen fairy tales in this collection, some of which offer a refreshing change from the ordinary. "The Half-Pint Jinni" tells of a jinni only four inches tall whose wishes come only half true. "The King of the Hares" tells of a rabbit who has been changed into a human by a spell from an evil fairy. "Ashputtel" is the English version of Cinderella in which the step-sisters cut off their heels and toes and drop telltale blood behind them. The book ends with "Two of Everything," a Japanese tale in which a couple come upon a magic pot which doubles everything which is dropped into it. The idea is wonderful, until the wife falls in and is duplicated.

# News About Our Refresher Course and Annual Conference

At this time you should have received the information and applications for the Mathematics Refresher Course with Kay Baker and our Annual Conference. You should mark your calendar and submit these applications early. Both the Mathematics Refresher Course and the Annual Conference should be a time of enhancing and appreciating our work with the children. These have been stimulating in the past as you know if you have attended. We have all benefited tremendously from the past refresher courses and conferences. Hope to see many of you in Oregon.

## *Classified Ads*

### *Positions Available*

MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY TEACHER needed in Sept. '84 for ages 6-9. Send resume or call Montessori School of Lakewood, 5925 W. 1st Ave., Lakewood, Co. 80226 (303 232-7030. Lakewood is a western suburb of Denver approximately 20 minutes from downtown.

ELEMENTARY TEACHER needed for 6-9 class. AMI certified program in D.C. Public School. All children have excellent Primary preparation. Classroom well equipped. Junior program is 4 years old. Excellent salary and benefits, opportunity to work with middle & lower income children. Contact: P. Nussbaum, 925 Perry Pl., N.E., Washington, D.C. 20017. (202) 529-0418.

AMI ELEMENTARY TEACHER for fall '84 6-9 class, Spokane Public Schools. Washington State certification necessary. Good salary & benefits. Fully equipped classroom. Active parent advocate group. University city & cultural center. Summer & winter sports. Good place to live. Interested persons send resume promptly to: Connie Blair, 2926 E. 11th, Spokane, WA 99202. (509) 535-4566.

CHEBOYGAN, MICHIGAN needs an elementary certified director/directress for 6-9 Montessori class. Public school certification preferred. Salary $14,572-$25,939 with full fringe benefits for the 1984-1985 school year. Contact Tom Cavanaugh, Cheboygan Junior High, Cheboygan, MI 49721

NEW MONTESSORI SCHOOL, Brownsville, Texas is looking for gentle, loving junior guide to join our Christian based staff. NMS has an atmosphere of family commitment & involvement. Try us if you like warm winters, bicultural border life and sharing in growth of yourself and school. Our AMI Jr. guide will work part time with new Jr. Guide. Special opportunity for quality internship training under experienced guide. Call and see what great adventures await you in the land of sunshine. NMS, 204 Boca Chica, Brownsville, Texas 78520 (512) 542-7576 or evenings (512) 831-3884.

DIRECTOR/DIRECTRESS, 6-9 class; fall, 1984. Community school in urban setting; strong parent participation and community spirit. Opportunity to work with diverse population. Milwaukee has large Montessori community. Send resume to Highland Community School, 2004 West Highland, Milwaukee, WI 53233.

AMI ELEMENTARY TEACHER needed for new elementary 6-9 class opening in Fall of 1984. Supportive administration (all AMI trained) & enthusiastic parents. Class will be small to start; teacher will have an assistant and ample budget for materials. Salary is negotiable—based on education and experience. School has 3 campuses in the Los Angeles area and has a rich ethnic balance. School is AMI certified, privately owned, founded in 1972. Interested applicants send resume and/or phone: Mary Margaret Rosenblatt/Meher Montessori School, 433 N. Atlantic Blvd., Alhambra, CA 91801 (818) 576-0503 or home (818) 500-8567.

CURRENTLY ACCEPTING APPLICATIONS for AMI infant, primary and elementary director/directress. Located at the foothills of the mountains, we have two primary classes (2½-6), two elementary classes (6-12), and an "urban compromise" class (12-14). Our infant program successfully opened last year. Send resume: c/o Sandra Schmidt, Director Montessori Academy of Claremont, P.O. Box 553, Claremont, California 91711 or phone: (714) 621-1603.

SANTA CRUZ MONTESSORI SCHOOL (established 20 years ago) is seeking a qualified Montessori Director/Directress for a small class of 20 children. S.C.M.S. is a non-affiliated school having three 2½-6, two 6-9, and one 9-12. Interested applicants please contact Sue Andre, Administrator S.C.M.S., 6230 Soquel Drive, Aptos, CA 95003 or call (408) 476-1646.

OLD MISSION MONTESSORI SCHOOL, 4070 Mission Avenue, San Luis Rey, CA 92068 (619) 757-3232, invites resumes from teachers with Montessori training for children 6-9 years. An opening is available in September. Salary is negotiable, according to background and experience. The school is a Catholic Montessori school located north of San Diego near Oceanside. It was founded in 1976 and has grown steadily until today there are 165 children, ages 2½ to 12 years. Teachers have A.M.S., A.M.I., or St. Nicholas training. The school offers scholarships and is able to charge minimal tuition because of parent enthusiasm in fund raising.

MONTESSORI CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTER, located at 15207 Los Robles Avenue, Hacienda Heights, California 91756, is in need of one 2-6 level and one 6-12 level teacher for the '84-86 term. Montessori Child Development Center, an AMI school founded in 1974, has a beautiful new building which opened in February, 1979, which is designed to meet all Montessori prepared environment needs, indoors and outdoors for 160 students. Send resume!

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ANNUAL REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP OF AMI-EAA 1983/84
submitted by Phyllis Pottish-Lewis, Chairperson

AMI-EAA has managed to accomplish a great deal again this year. One of the highlights of the year has been the two regional workshops given by Margaret Stephenson in San Francisco and Atlanta. The topic was on the Interface between the Primary and Elementary. Both workshops were well attended along with being extremely inspirational for all who attended. They were so good, in fact, that people are clamoring for more. We will have to see what we can do in that regard.

Another highlight is that the AMI-EAA charter was reviewed and adopted by the AMI/USA Board of Directors, making us an officially, affiliated organization of AMI. This is just in time for our annual charter review and proposed revisions (see Newsletter Editor's report). Isn't that the way of things?

The EAA Board has met as a whole on a number of occasions (July and October 1983, January 1984) in order to conduct business and give direction to the organization (minutes of all board meetings are available at the annual meeting). In fact each time we meet we tend to generate all kinds of work for ourselves. Some of the following projects have been initiated and are in process as a result of these industrious rendezvous:

- the sponsorship packet is being re-evaluated and overhauled. This is a service that we would like to provide for people looking to take the elementary training. Before handing one out, however, we are making sure that it is up to our standards.

- we are diligently working on a brochure for our organization. If you see Alan or Debby Temple snapping pictures of you during our next annual conference, you may wind up in that brochure.

- The one very enormous task, that we have cut out for ourselves though, is the making of a handbook. We thought that it would be in the best interests of the organization to record our policies and how we are run. We feel that we have a group with quality and standards, and to make a handbook will help us to protect that integrity.

- and let us not overlook certainly, the planning of our annual conference and the refresher course. As you all know by now, since you have received the workshop announcement, that these weeks will follow our established tradition of providing quality, interest, challenge, renewal, interaction, reflection, and just plain fun! David Cannon is our very capable workshop coordinator and he is doing a super job. We are grateful for his energy and efficiency.

Another piece of news which I am sure will not trouble any

of you is that the dues for membership in AMI-EAA will remain the same as it has been these past years. $30.00 before August and $40.00 after that.

Another happy announcement is that Marianne Moore has consented to being an additional pedagogue for our organization. Many of you met her while in Berea, Kentucky last year and so you will know what a valuable acquisition this is. She joins our other pedagogues, Margaret Stepheson, Fahmida Malik and Estela Palmieri, to help our group maintain its pedagogical direction and high standards in all that we undertake to do.

I am looking forward to seeing you all in Oregon!

Past Chair Officer's Report - Jean K. Miller

The past chair functions as the historian for the AMI/EAA. When tasks or issues come up that have been dealt with in the past, then the past chair can supply information on work done previously. This provides continuity in the organization, it saves time because the wheel does not have to be re-invented each time and/or it provides a base of information so that new, more intelligent solutions may be found for re-occuring tasks or issues. Philosophically, it is a pleasure to serve in a position that allows one to put into practice the Cosmic Plan - that is, to see that the labor of all that has gone before serves to make life easier and/or better in the present.

REPORT FROM THE PUBLICATION EDITOR
Maryse Lepoutre-Postlewaite

Another year has rolled by so very quickly ... feeling very successful with the outcome of both the newsletters as well as the work of AMI-EAA. In this past year we've heard from many members with articles, book reviews, notes from presentations at our conference in Kentucky, alumni news, and lots more. The input from our membership really is what makes our Newsletter an inspiring one. We need to all keep up the good work. A big thanks to you who submitted items for this past year's newsletters. As in last year at our annual conference there will be a questionnaire to evaluate the Newsletter. If you are not able to attend the conference, your input is still welcomed. Please write to me.

At our annual business meetin which takes place during our conference, I will be presenting the following proposed revisions to our charter: (Underlined portions indicate changes or additions to our present charter.)

IV. Executive Committee
C. Qualifications of members of the Executive Committee
- AMI/USA member
- resident of USA and Territories
- Montessori Elementary teaching experience
- must not be supporting or working for a non-AMI Montessori training course
- member of AMI-EAA for two consecutive years prior to their nomination date, including election year.

D. Election of Officers
- the Executive Committee draws up a slate which is published in the January Newsletter.
- additional nominations are solicited from the membership and must be submitted to the officer in charge of elections in writing at least two weeks prior to the April Newsletter deadline.
- all nominees must meet all qualifications under C. above and must agree to have their name submitted.
- ballots will be sent out in the April Newsletter and must be returned to the officer in charge of elections by May 15th.
- ballots will be opened and counted at the annual meeting.
- the officer in charge of the elections would be the Chairperson except for when the position of Chairperson is up for election in which case the Publication Editor would be in charge of elections.

IX. Revision of this Document
-there will be an annual review of the charter at the annual meeting
-ammendments, additions and deletions become effective upon majority vote of AMI-EAA members present at the annual meeting
-all proposed charter revisions shall be published in the April Newsletter prior to the annual meeting.

# REPORT FROM THE MATERIALS COORDINATOR

Submitted by Tom Lepoutre-Postlewaite

Last year the work of cataloging articles and materials was the primary focus of the Materials Coordinator. This has been continued this year, but with more information. Having recieved copies of the tables of contents of past newsletters, the task became one of sorting out articles and arranging them as listed in the tables of contents. Once this work has been finished we will have a complete record of the newsletter activities of AMI-EAA. This has been the goal: To establish a clear and comprehensive record of the activities of our organization.

To fulfill this goal, records have been kept of last years workshops in the form of keeping files of the materials handed out during those times. More specifically, it is the goal to obtain a copy of the transcripts of presentation of each of the speakers of our workshops and conferences to complete our historical record. Having established such an archive, the question is posed regarding access; thus policies and guidelines are being established.

A second focus of this year has been to open a dialog with our training centers and pedagogues around the topic of materials, especially those which are purchased or handed out at the centers. Specifically, we have been interested in the availability of the history timelines as replacements for those which become worn or damaged from use.

Finally, as begun last year, a copy of each item of the current AMI-EAA materials files will be brought to the 1984 Conference for you to look at, comment on, and identify (there are articles without authors which need to be identified). Once there is identification and approval then the materials may become available for publication.

# REPORT FROM RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

**Alan Temple**

The focus has been on three areas this year -- testing, computers, and an EAA brochure.

Testing: Summary of the Testing Questionnaire

Twenty-two responses were received representing eighteen different schools. All replies indicated that achievement tests are currently being given at some levels in the schools. Most test all children every year. Most people indicated they give achievement tests to aid children in learning how to take tests and to reassure parents. There was a wide variety of responses as to what information was desired from the test. Grade level received the most votes for both the highest and the lowest priority. People generally felt that the test was useful in evaluating the child's progress on covering the required curriculum. From there, views differed widely on how the test results could be used and, in fact, were used. Three-fourths felt we should become a school district, yet most seemed concerned in one way or another about the implications (machine scoring, cost, sharing results, time of year, etc.). Most saw not only little need but great danger in compiling national Montessori norms. ("If we give the test primarily to develop test taking skills and to evaluate how well the children are covering the required curriculum, then there is no need for Montessori norms." "Montessori norms would cause teaching to the test.") Lastly, distribution of the tests through EAA is a problem, because EAA is primarily a teacher organization. What most people want are professional recommendations by knowledgeable Montessorians about test taking and about the tests available.

After the results were analyzed, the following recommendations were made to the executive committee and approved:

Recommendations to EAA

I. That a testing committee be created to
   A. Compile a list of tests currently used
   B. Sort them according to purpose
   C. Rate them listing good and bad points
   D. Write guidelines for choosing tests
   E. Explore ways to share results

II. That EAA distribute the results of the committee's work through the newsletter and as an article that would be available from the Materials Coordinator

III. That EAA recommend to AMI-USA the possibility of buying tests in bulk from schools that need small numbers of tests per grade and that they make available all materials for giving the tests and for hand scoring them.

IV. That EAA, working with the training programs, develop ways to evaluate how the children are progressing on the required curriculum. This might include curriculum guidelines, or samples from other schools. This is so that achievement tests do not become the sole means of evaluating the success or failure in meeting the required curriculum.

(OVER)

V. That EAA formulate and publish a supportive statement to ease pressure from parents, boards, etc. concerning the role of the teacher and child in covering the required curriculum.

The committee would be composed of knowledgeable and interested Montessorians who have experience and who have demonstrated competency in the classroom. Attempts will be made to include specialists in the testing field.

Computers:

A short survey of computer use was included in the Winter newsletter. The results will be compiled in an effort to develop a more complete study approach. Workshops and discussions on the use of computers will be included at the annual conference. The question of the uses of computers is being considered by the training centers and by the AMI Pedagogical Committee.

Many Montessorians are using computers for varied purposes and with varied results. The implications of computers as part of the curriculum are great. Careful considerations need to be given to all aspects of computers and their use by Montessorians well versed in philosophy and implementation. This is a complex issue. What we need first is a dialogue and a clarification of the issues, followed by development of a study.

Brochure:

Deborah Temple is preparing a brochure for AMI-EAA. The brochure will clearly and concisely describe the essence of the organization through a combination of text and photographs. The text will include a history of EAA, its purposes and goals, and its services and activities. The photographs will attempt to depict the variety of events, both educational and recreational, that make EAA's conferences unique. (We still need help in acquiring photographs to use!) This brochure would be made available to training centers to give to new teachers, and to AMI-EAA to distribute, as well as upon request from EAA itself.

Kathy Carter's Poetry Presentation : Berea College
June, 1984

Some of us at the junior level (I hope I'm not the only one.) tend to shy away from the area of poetry in our work with the children. This past summer at Berea, Kathy Carter shared her classroom experiences with us. For me, her presentation was a real treat. It alleviated some of my feelings of inadequacy and inspired me to be bolder about exploring this area with my children this year.

Kathy used material from her junior training course to prepare the poetry work she did during the 1982-83 school year.

Appreciation, analysis, and writing of poetry are preceded by experiences in the Casa. The young child should be exposed to all types of short poetry. Poetry is rooted in oral tradition. Kathy spoke of traveling story tellers of the past who were accompanied by drums. There was the epic deed (long tale) where rhyme and rhythm set the mood. She also mentioned Classical and Realistic poetry.

The children must hear poetry read well. Reading aloud by the children is really interpretive reading which is difficult. It is good to dramatize. Kathy chooses poems that relate to natural subjects the children are familiar with. An example is "The Fog", by Carl Sandburg. For dramatization, the child should have the poem memorized. While one child reads, another thinks of the image that expresses the poem and acts it out. "Wild Horses", by Sandburg is also nice to do this with. The Witches' speech in Act 4, Scene 1 of "MacBeth" is also good for dramatization. "Swallow", by Christina Rosetti would be more difficult to dramatize because it has many interpretations.

At this point, Kathy had us divide into groups of two or three and go through the dramatization process. She told us she had done dramatization with children as young as five or six years.

The junior child wants to know how a poem came to be. Kathy recommended "Early Moon", by Carl Sandburg and "The Poet's Eye", by Arthur Alexander for older children interested in writing poetry.

Kathy spent considerable time on the analysis of poetry. Rhyme can be analyzed. She has the children take copies of poems and read them aloud. "Poetry is an out loud experience." They then identify words at the end of various lines that sound alike, underlining them in the same color. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind" was used to illustrate this. Kathy has the children

analyze many poems in this way before discussing specific rhyme patterns or types with them.

She discussed types of rhyme with us. We looked at masculine rhyme,("Where the Bee Sucks, There Suck I", from Shakespeare's "Tempest") feminine rhyme (first triplet of "Ode to the West Wind") and polysyllabic rhyme (lim ericks). Kathy has envelopes containing cards with examples of each type. The child matches up examples within the envelope. Later he matches between envelopes and makes up his own lists. Still later, lists of rhymes can be used as a resource if the children choose to write their own poems.

After they have worked identifying types of rhyme, you can show the children the standard alphabetical method of identifying the rhyme pattern. Kathy went over couplets, sequential and non-sequential triplets, quatrains and lim ericks.

Poetry can also be analyzed in terms of meter. This is more a science than an art. Tearing a poem apart helped Kathy's children to better understand and feel that poem. She feels this analysis of the measured pulse of a poem should be preceded by much reading aloud of poetry. When children read R.L. Steveson's "The Swing", they have to feel how it moves in threes.

It is in meter that poetry is so aligned with music. Rhythm work in music prepares the child for meter analysis. Kathy mentioned the Name Game where the rhythm of each person's name is clapped (loud on the stressed and soft on the unstressed syllables). She splits the children into groups according to syllable emphasis. After they practice for a bit, Kathy calls them individually with the pattern of their name. When they recognize, they march to the beat.

To analyze meter, the child must be able to both divide words into syllables and to recognize stressed and unstressed syllables. Kathy introduces the various types of feet using card material with the names of specific feet on individual cards. Examples are "iamb-", "trochee-", "dactyl-" and "anapest-". These are matched with two separate sets of cards having examples of each foot. The first set of examples includes symbols for the arrangement of syllable stresses while the second set has the same words, but no stress symbols.

Poems can also be analyzed in terms of the length of the verse. Kathy has a set of card material (terms and definitions to be matched) to familiarize the children with terms such as "pentameter","tetrameter" and "trimeter".

From here the predominant foot-meter can be analyzed. Iambic-pentameter is an example. At this point, the child is naming verses. Again, Kathy has material where a poem verse is matched with an identifying term.

Thanks again Kathy Carter. You might say I'm experimenting with your experimental work of last year. Doubt we'll get much analyzing accomplished this year, but the kids are reading and writing more poetry than ever before. If I could repeat one thing you said last summer it would be "Read aloud". You can't read too many poems to the children. Group discussions and brainstorming have also been very helpful in establishing an atmosphere conducive to writing poetry.

Al Westcott

# DEVELOPMENTAL STAGES OF PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Lilian G. Katz
University of Illinois, Urbana, Illinois

Preschool teachers can generally be counted on to talk about developmental needs and stages when they discuss children (1). It may also be meaningful to think of teachers themselves as having developmental sequences in their professional growth (2).

There may be at least four developmental stages for teachers. Individual teachers may vary greatly in the length of time spent in each of the four stages outlined here and schematized in Figure 1.

STAGE ONE: SURVIVAL During stage one, which may last throughout the first full year of teaching, the teacher's main concern is whether she can survive. This preoccupation with survival may be expressed in questions the teacher asks: "Can I get through the day in one piece? Without losing a child? Can I make it until the end of the week? Until the next vacation? Can I really do this kind of work day after day? Will I be accepted by my colleagues?" Such questions are well expressed in Ryan's enlightening collection of accounts of first year teaching experiences (3).

The first full impact of responsibility for a group of immature but vigorous young children (to say nothing of encounters with their parents) inevitably provokes teachers' anxieties. The discrepancy between anticipated successes and classroom realities intensifies feelings of inadequacy and unpreparedness.

During this period the teacher needs support, understanding, encouragement, reassurance, comfort and guidance. She needs instruction in specific skills and insight into the complex causes of behavior - all of which must be provided on the classroom site. On-site instructors may be senior staff members, advisors, consultants, or program assistants who know the beginning teacher and her teaching situation well. Training must be constantly and readily available. The trainer should have enough time and flexibility to be on call as needed. Schedules of periodic visits that have been arranged in advance cannot be counted on to coincide with crises. Cook and Mack (4) describe the British pattern of on-site training given to teachers by their headmasters (principals). Armington also tells how advisors can meet the needs of these teachers (5).

STAGE TWO: CONSOLIDATION By the end of the first year the teacher has usually decided that she can survive. She is now ready to consolidate the gains made during the first stage and to differentiate tasks and skills to be mastered next. During stage two, teachers usually begin to focus on individual children who pose problems and troublesome situations. The teacher may look for answers to such questions as: "How can I help a shy child? How can I help a child who does not seem to be learning?"

During Stage One, the beginning teacher acquires a case line of information about what young children are like and what to expect of them. By Stage Two, the teacher is beginning to identify individual children whose behavior departs from the pattern of most of the children she knows.

During this stage on-site help continues to be valuable. A trainer can help the teacher by exploring a problem with her. Take the case of a young

teacher from a day-care center who was eager to get help and asked: "How should I deal with a clinging child?" An on-site trainer can observe the teacher and the child at the center and arrive at suggestions and tentative solutions fairly quickly. However, without firsthand knowledge of the child and the context, an extended give-and-take conversation between the teacher and trainer may be the best way for the trainer to help the teacher interpret her experience and move toward a solution of the problem. The trainer might ask the teacher, "What have you done so far? Give examples of some experiences with this child during this week. When you did such and such, how did the child respond?" Other suggestions for helping children are offered by Katz (6).

At this stage, the teacher may find that she needs information about specific children or about children who pose problems. It will be helpful if she has a wide range of resources. Psychologists, social workers, health workers, and other specialists can strengthen the teacher's skills and knowledge at this time. Exchanges of information and ideas with colleagues may help teachers master the developmental tasks of this period. Opportunities to share feelings with other teachers at the same stage of development may reduce some of the inadequacy and the frustration the beginning teacher feels.

STAGE THREE: RENEWAL Often, during the third or fourth year of teaching, the teacher begins to tire of doing the same things. She asks questions about new developments in the field: "Who is doing what? Where? What are some of the new materials, techniques, approaches, and ideas?" Perhaps what the teacher has been doing for each annual crop of children has been adequate for them, but she herself finds the seasonal Valentine cards, Easter bunnies, and pumpkin cutouts no longer interesting. If it is true that a teacher's own interest in the projects and the activities she provides for children contributes to their educational value, then her need for renewal and refreshment should be taken seriously.

During this stage, teachers find it rewarding to meet colleagues from various programs on both formal and informal occasions. Teachers at this developmental stage are particularly receptive to experiences in regional and national conferences and workshops. Teachers at stage three profit from membership in professional associations and participation in their meetings. Teachers are now widening the scope of their reading, scanning, magazines and journals, and viewing films. During this period they may be ready to take a close look at their own classroom teaching through video-tape recording. This is also a time when teachers welcome opportunities to visit other classes, programs, and demonstration projects.

Perhaps it is at this stage that the teachers' center has the greatest potential value (7,8). Teachers' centers are places where teachers can meet to help one another learn or relearn skills, techniques and methods. At these centers, teachers can exchange ideas and organize special workshops. From time to time specialists in curriculum, or child growth, or any other area of concern are invited to the center to meet with teachers.

STAGE FOUR: MATURITY Some teachers may reach maturity, Stage Four, within three years; others need five years or more. The teacher at this stage has come to terms with herself as a teacher. She now has enough perspective to ask deeper and more abstract questions, such as: "What are my historical and philosophical roots? What is the nature of growth and learning? How are educational decisions made? Can schools change societies? Is teaching a profession?" Perhaps she has asked these questions before. But with the experience she now has, the questions represent a more meaningful search for insight, perspective and realism.

Throughout maturity, teachers need an opportunity to participate in conferences and seminars, and perhaps to work toward a degree. Mature teachers wel-

come the chance to read widely and to interact with educators working on many problem areas on many levels. Training sessions and conference events that teachers at Stage Two enjoy may be tiresome to the teacher at Stage Four. Similarly, introspective and searching seminars that teachers at Stage Four enjoy may lead to restlessness and irritability among the beginners at Stage One.

It is useful to think of the growth or preschool teachers (and perhaps other teachers, also) as occuring in stages, linked generally to experience gained over time.

The training needs of teachers change as they gain experience, as they move from one stage to another. The issues dealt with in the traditional social foundations courses do not seem to address themselves to the early survival problems that are critical to the inexperienced teacher. However, for the maturing teacher, those same issues may help deepen her understanding of the total complex environment in which she is trying to be effective.

The location of training should change as the teacher develops. At the beginning of the new teacher's career, training resources must be taken to her so that training can be responsive to the particular (and possibly unique) developmental tasks and working situation she faces in her classroom. As the teacher moves on past the survival stage, training can move to the college campus.

The timing of training should be shifted so that more training is available to the teacher on the job than before it. Teachers say that their preservice education has only a minor influence on what they do day to day in their classrooms. The complaint suggests that strategies acquired before employment may seldom be used under the pressure of the job.

It is often said that experience is the best teacher. To make sure that the beginning teacher has informed and interpreted experience should be one of the major roles of the teacher trainer.

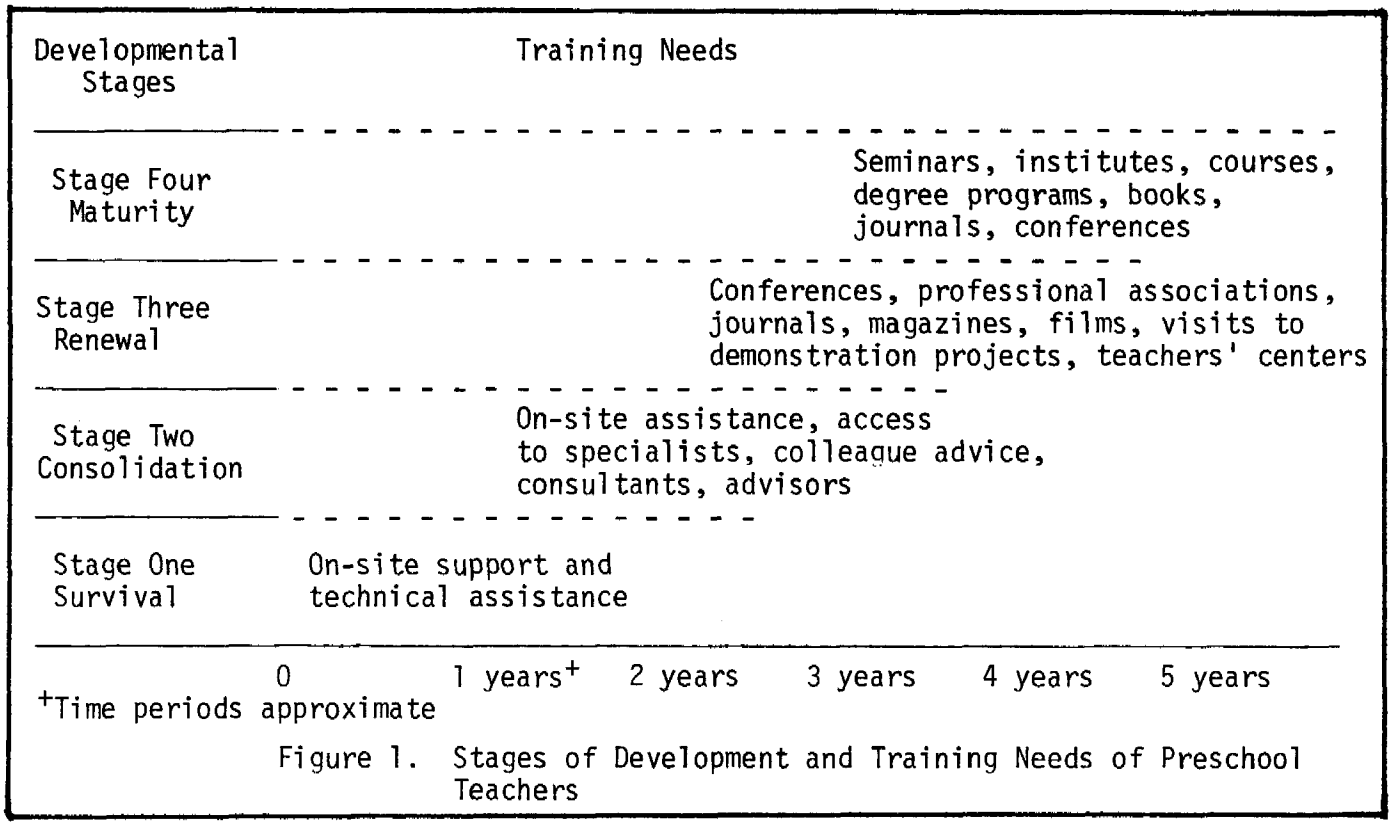


Figure 1. Stages of Development and Training Needs of Preschool Teachers

Notes:

1. Lilian G. Katz and Mary K. Weir. *Help for Preschool Teachers: A Proposal.* Urbana, Illinois: ERIC Clearinghouse on Early Childhood Education, 1969.
2. This paper was produced pursuant to a contract with the Office of Education, United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Contractors undertaking such projects under Governmant sponsorship are encouraged to express freely their professional judgement. Points of view or opinions stated do not, therefore, necessarily represent official government position or policy.
3. Kevin Ross (editor). *Don't Smile until Christmas: Accounts of the First Year of Teaching,* Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1970.
4. Ann Cook and Herbert Mack. *The Head Teacher's Role:* Citation Press, 1971.
5. David Armington. "A Plan for Continuing Growth". Newton, Massachusetts: Educational Development Center (mimeographed, no date).
6. Lilian G. Katz. "Condition with Caution", *Young Children.* In Press.
7. Arlene Silberman. "A Santa's Workshop for Teachers", *American Education,* 7 (December, 1971), 3-8.
8. Stephen K. Bailey. "Teacher's Centers: A British First", *Phi Delta Kappan,* 53 (November, 1971), 146-149.

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The Elementary School Journal
Issue: October 1972
The University of Chicago Press

An 11 page article which deals with this subject more extensively is available from Eric Document Reproduction Services, P.O. Box 190, Arlington, VA 22210. The article is called: Developmental Stages of Preschool Teachers by Lilian G. Katz. Order number is ED057922. Send $3.74 (includes postage).

# OBSERVING AND EVALUATING THE MONTESSORI ELEMENTARY CLASS

by Phil Gang

What are the elements that contribute to a successful Montessori elementary class? How can we foster the development of these elements so as to raise the standard of excellence in our elementary classes? This is the task of the consultant and these are the issues to be addressed.

The Montessori elementary class exists on a number of levels simultaneously. The first level is concerned with task - the basic tenets of academic curricula as in arithmetic, language development, science and the social sciences. This first layer is encircled by a spiritual dimension which adds life and meaning and separates the Montessori school from other insitutions for learning. There are classes that limit themselves to the first layer, and there are some that try to only concentrate on the outer layer. Neither can really call themselves "Montessori" schools, for it takes an understanding that goes beyond the separation of these two approaches to make the education process whole. We are in search of integration.

Prior to entering a class for evaluation the consultant has at his/her disposal a series of informative survey forms which provide some insight into the structure of the school, the background of the students, the background of the teacher(s), the environment, and areas of strengths and weaknesses as seen by the teacher. Although this information may be helpful, the consultant should be both open-minded and unprejudiced as he enters the class.

There are three main areas on which one must focus. These are:

I. The environment and how the students interact with it.

II. Evidence of a continuous unfolding of the cosmic plan.

III. Classroom management - how the teacher and students create an atmosphere of encouragement, responsibility and harmony.

Each area may be further subdivided into smaller increments for analysis and each is recognizably interrelated to the other. Throughout the observation day the consultant must be in a position to evaluate how the class achieves the networking of these areas and define both strong and weak functions.

Upon entering the classroom one most naturally observes the physical environment; the distribution and size of furniture, the placement of materials on shelves/walls, the possibilities for storage of children's work and the general tidiness of the room. This is the first impression. While the primary teacher must prepare an environment that caters to the "senses" of the child by "inviting" her to participate in the activities of the classroom, the elementary environment is more subtle. There needs to be ample desk space for proper writing, balanced with adequate room for floor-work with oversized materials. Special attention must be given to the completeness of the Montessori materials. Is anything missing? If so, why? Are there any non-Montessori materials or teaching aides? If so, why and how are they going to be used? Is there enough wall space to allow for the display of children's work? Do the children have ready access to the supplies they need during the day? Does the physical setting seem as though it promotes or inhibits communication? Notice the amount of teacher made material. Does it clutter the environment or are there just a few examples of things to build on? Are there any primary materials in the class? If so, why? Notice the number of books in the environment. Are there a few "special" books interspersed throughout the subject areas and perhaps one set of encyclopedias; or are there volumes of research materials and countless literature books? Are the geography experiments that make up and

follow the "God Without Hands" available for the children to reproduce?

These questions represent some of the things one might contemplate prior to the first student's arrival in the morning. Without any children in the environment one can glean a substantial amount of information about the operation of the class. As the children begin to arrive it is important to observe how and when they begin to work. Of course this varies significantly from individual to individual but the teacher has set up a mechanism that either promotes independence and decision-making, or at the other extreme, fosters dependence and teacher-centered directives. If the aim of our method is the independence of the intellect then the elementary class has to be a training ground to practice decision-making. Some children will need more help than others in that process and it may be necessary to offer them alternatives. "You make choose to do this or that, but you may not choose to do nothing!" Others may not even be capable of making choices and are at a stage where the teacher might have to suggest more directly. For example, you might say, "Do you remember what we worked on yesterday? Well, lets get to work and do some more of those problems."

As more and more children arrive there is bound do be some differentiation between individual and group work. If the consultant sees a class dominated by individual work, he ought to be asking himself some serious questions. Dr. Montessori explains to us that this is the age of cooperation and collaboration...that the child before the age of six likes to work alone but after six there is strong peer bonding and the need to learn from each other and to belong to the "group". Individual work, while beneficial in some areas, does not foster cooperation. Group work has to be learned. Teachers

have to give lessons on "How to Work Together". Then the children will understand that it is necessary to collaborate in order to be effective. One child can be the reader, another the writer and the third can be the illustrator. In this way the resultant study is stronger than any one of the children could produce on their own.Even in the area of mathematics the children can work together cooperatively. In the memorization exercises they can each have a different multiplication chart and question each other. Respones can be monitored by the student that has the answer chart.

As the morning progresses the flow of activities increases and there is more opportunity for the observer to see how the teacher handles this change. Too often elementary teachers are threatened by a little "organized chaos" but it is a significant part of the matrix for the Montessori elementary class. Lessons should strike the imagination in order to stimulate the interest of the child. This interest is like a little flaming ball of energy that seeks out other energy and together these energies become a bee hive of activity. If anything, the teacher should be available to the students to help them discover the answers to their curiosity. Thwarting these times of excitement by requiring "quiteness" will only result in stiffling the interest. Dr. Montessori, in "To Educate The Human Potential" tells us that it is at this time in the life of the child that we must sow all the seeds of knowledge "under the heat of flaming imagination".

By now we ought to have a good idea of how the teacher "manages" the class. How does she direct the children towards work? Does she use coercion or threats? Does she act as an "enabler" and encourage the children with positive reinforcement? How does she react to a dispute between two children? Does she try to solve the problem for them or does she help them with a dialogue to solve their own

difficulty? In other words does the teacher help the children assume responsibility for their own behavior? We must remember too that this is the age of an awakening moral consciouness and we are therfore able to take advantage of this unique sensitive period by helping the children to understand their own moral responsibility. Role playing, lessons about people who have dedicated their lives for the benefit of humankind and demonstrating our own sense of morality are some ways in which we can help the children along their own path.

When the teacher is involved in a lesson, careful attention must be given by the consultant as to how the rest of the class manages itself. How does the teacher handle discipline problems outside of her lesson? Does she ignore them or does she intervene and hold the resolution for later? How does the teacher handle discipline within the lesson? Do the children pay attention? If they are inattentive does the teacher require them to sit quitely and listen? Oftentimes teachers are so careful of "damaging" the ego of the child that they don't insist on curteous respect. The elementary child is a lot tougher than his primary counterpart and will not melt if we are demanding! As a matter of fact, he will gain more respect if we expect it from him.

The lessons themselves must be exciting. The consultant must ask himself if the teacher is prepared. Does he give enough information to the students to stimulate interest without overpowering them in a lecture format? Does he help them with ideas of what kind of follow-up work is appropriate? Dr. Montessori tells us that the elementary teacher should become a "storyteller of the truth".How does the teacher manifest that skill? Remember, verbal explanations from the teacher do not help the child understand. Reasons, discovered

by themselves lead to understanding and the knowledge becomes a pleasure to the intellect.

What evidence do we find that the class has been exposed to the "great lessons"? Without these door-opening experiences the curriculum is flat and uninspiring. Only with these experiences, repeated periodically, will the children gain an introduction to the cosmic plan and the role of man in society. These lessons lay the groundwork for an understanding of where we have come from, where we are, and where we might go! As we look around the classroom we can see if the materials that are used to introduce these lessons are present in the environment. If they are not, it would certainly be a point of discussion later on.

As the morning time wanes we might observe how the cycle of work has evolved. Was there a period of false fatigue? Are the children permitted to have a snack or eat their lunch when they are hungry? How is the transition period from work to outside recreation or lunch managed? What about the recreation period? Is it supervised or non-supervised? Do the children learn skills or are they left on their own free play? What about the lunch period? Is the same demeanor expected from the children during lunch as would be expected during class time? How is the transition period back to work managed?

During the day does the teacher take an opportunity to meet with the whole class? Group discusssions at the elementary level are an integral part of the experience. It fosters common understanding, provides an opportunity to discuss things relevent to the whole class community, gives students a chance to speak in front of their peers, and can provide a settling-in time for the beginning of the afternoon class or a time for resolution at the end of the day.

One of the most significant aspects of work at the elementary level

is "going out". The tendency to explore at the elementary level manifests itself towards an exploration of society. How then can the children become members of this society if they are not familiar with its functioning. The closed environment of family and school of the first plane of development has now widened to include the whole society outside of school...the working society of human beings. We can see evidence of the teacher's understanding of these principles by listening to conversations and, by chance, observing an outing first hand. If the consultant is not sure that going out is an ongoing experience in the class it must surely be a topic for discussion later on. Then we must emphasize that the need for going out must be stirred up inside the classroom. There should be a sense of insecurity within the confines of the class- a sense of not being able to find the answer that the student is seeking. Some teachers can not conceive of places to go and the consultant should be prepared with a list of possible suggestions.

By the end of the day the consultant can observe the transition to leaving school. Who is responsible for cleaning up? How is the children's work organized? Is it systemized so that the work is readily accessible to the children and to the teacher? Is the outside dismissal consistant with classroom expectations or is it disorganized?

During the day of observation the consultant may have seen the children referring to a posted copy of the public school curriculum. If not, this is a point to discuss with the teacher because it is our responsibility as well as the child's responsibility to maintain and keep up with the minimum standards as designated by the public schools. Another subject to approach is the use of specialty teachers in the environment. If they are used, how are they interfaced with classroom activities? Are they scheduled based on need or on a

systematic routine? How are the children experiencing art lessons as an extension of their work in class? Do other specialty teachers relate their lessons to classroom experience? Does the specialty teacher "take" children out of the environment into a special room or are the activities done within the classroom?

The atmosphere of the post-consultation discussion is the responsibility of the consultant. He or she must establish a non-threatening relationship so that the discussions can be rewarding. Asking the teacher to identify problem areas and soliciting solutions can lead into constructive conversation. The consultant is responsible for sharing both strengths and weaknesses and needs to be skilled in the art of positive communication.

Consultation requires good listening techniques. Eye contact, body language and facial expressions all communicate honesty in a relationship. Without honesty there is little to be gained no matter how perceptive your observations have been or how good your suggestions might be. The teacher has to believe that you are interested and care about her problems. Sensitivity, understanding and compassion are positive attributes for any consultant. At the same time he or she must also be able to explain recommendations from a position of knowledge and experience, and communicate that knowledge and experience during the interview.

# QUESTIONS YOU ASK YOURSELF

*A number of years ago a questionnaire was sent out to members of the elementary association which asked, "What do you ask yourself when your students do not respond favorably to a material you have prepared or a presentation you have given?" The responses were published in The Newsletter. This article is an expansion of that article.*

*Jean K Miller*

When the response to a lesson has been less than enthusiastic, a Montessori teacher has a number of ways to examine the situation. Blaming the students is not one of the options; rather, the teacher looks at the material or information presented, the manner of presentation, the circumstances in which the presentation was made, etc. Some possible questions to ask yourself when preparing materials and lessons and when evaluating after a lesson are as follows:

1. Does the material or presentation fit the psychological characteristics of the children at the second plane of development?

2. How does the material or presentation relate to the way human needs and tendencies are being manifested by the students?

3. Is the material attractive, inviting?

4. Does the lesson give just enough information to arouse the student's interest, strike their imagination and leave their minds in a state of unrest - such that they wish to investigate further, or does it tell so much that there is nothing left for them to discover and they go away from the lesson satiated - with no interest in further investigation?

5. Is the information clearly presented? Does it give clues for further pursuit of the idea?

6. What are the pre-requisites for this material or presentation? Have they been adequately taken care of? Have I properly judged the readiness of the students for this work?

7. Does the material or presentation provide a detail that relates to a 'whole' which is known by the students, or does it provide information that seems to relate to nothing?

8. What is the level of difficulty? Too easy? (boring) Too difficult? (frustrating, sense of failure) Just a little beyond the student's present level of skill, understanding or achievement? (interesting and challenging)

9. How do I feel about this material or lesson? (If I don't like it, they won't either.) How I feel about my material depends on many things:
    - Did I make it myself, or did I get it ready made?
    - Have I practiced with it?
        - Enough to present it with confidence?
        - Enough to satisfy my need to handle it, so I can let the students take over?
    - Was it presented in my course by someone who loved it? Did I catch their feeling for it?

- Does it relate to something for which I developed an affection when I was a child?

Am I, therefore, sufficiently inspiring and enthusiastic?

10. Are my suggestions for follow-up work interesting and challenging or are they the same old things?

11. What was the response, exactly? Who responded to what? How?

12. Is a re-presentation appropriate?

Other general questions:

1. Am I helping the students understand what their responsibilities are? Am I helping them assume responsibility for their own learning?

2. Do I encourage the students to go on to abstraction and memorization with those areas that need to be abstracted or memorized? In the areas that do not require abstraction or memorization, do I invite activity but leave the students free to respond according to their interests?

   *(It is very important to remember that the only things that have to be abstracted or memorized are those things required by the public schools in your geographical area.)*

3. Do I encourage the students to make up their own problems and/or examples and leave them free to amplify to their heart's content, or do I inhibit their activity by telling them to do X number of problems or examples?

4. Am I too predictable?

5. Do the students feel that this is our environment, or does this environment belong to the teacher?

6. Have I stocked the room with too much or too little in the way of material? Too little and there is not enough stimulation, too much and the visual over-stimulation decreases the ability to concentrate and diminishes interest.

7. How do I interact with the students? Am I positive? Do I appreciate and validate their achievements or do I belittle them by pointing out all their little flaws?

8. Do I carry the distresses of my life into the classroom or am I able to leave them at the door?

9. Do I really believe that young people want to progress in positive ways in their own development as a total human being: physically, socially, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually, intellectually?

10. Do I believe in the organizing ability of the human intellect?

11. Do I respect the concentration of the students or are there too many required lessons and interruptions in the day so that concentration and depth of involvement is impossible.

12. Do I respect the amount of time that it really takes to learn something? Anna Maria Maccheroni wrote about this in her book, A True Romance: Dr. Maria Montessori As I Knew Her:

*"In Oxford, 1936, at the Montessori Congress, one of Dr. Montessori's lectures was on this most attractive point. She spoke with a kind of humorous air explaining how schools should be. Free entrance, free ordered activity! Often I have thought about the perpetual teaching in ordinary schools. The teacher's activity dominates. It is well known that it should be the pupil's activity that dominates. And can it be maintained that one* learns *while receiving the teacher's lesson? Does one learn while the teacher is teaching? Surely not. A lesson may be compared to a meal, an intellectual meal. When we take food in our mouths, we do not get at the same moment the actual nourishing of our body. When the teacher is teaching, we get a good meal. Where in the school time table is the time for learning, for assimilating such good food? Lessons follow each other. It is a teaching affair. The learning should, however, take much longer than the teaching." (page 32)*

*"Ordinary schools, as we know, are meant for teaching. The time table is entirely full of the teacher's activity. When and where do the pupils have time to learn?"* This is handled differently in a Montessori class. Dr. Montessori spoke of....."*the 'great' lesson, which can be given only by someone who is master of his subject. It should be followed by an interval of two or three weeks, during which time the pupils have at their disposal books, maps, objects, etc. The teacher is there if anyone wants to ask a question. It is in this way that original work is produced." (page 72)*

13. Have I given presentations in all the necessary areas? Is there work going on in a wide variety of areas? What do I need to do to get more variety going in the class? (Remember to take five minutes every day, at a different time each day, to observe the class, note the activity and then plan accordingly.)

14. What kind of exploring are the children doing? How much exploring are they doing? Is it taking place within the confines of the class or are children engaged in 'Going Out', a most important part of the Montessori elementary program. (It is the fulfullment of the human tendencies which enables the construction of the child to be made at the elementary level.)

In the end, the practice of Montessori teaching is an art in which one endeavors to find a balance between extremes such as:

-providing too many materials or too few materials

-giving too much information or too little information

-giving too much freedom or restricting the children too much

The balance between the extremes is probably different for every class and for every child.

If you think of other questions to ask yourself, or other extremes, please jot them down and send to The Newsletter, 120 Robideaux, Aptos, CA. 95003.

SCHOOL POLICIES

If you should have or plan to have a difficult parent-teacher conference, be sure that at least two people who represent the school (you and someone else) are present. This insures that you have at least one witness in case there are legal complications. You should report only activities which you saw and not offer psychological evaluations of the child's actions. If you need help in dealing with a child and the parents are not able to handle the problem, ask if they know of someone who could help you in this matter. DO NOT ask the parents to see a psychologist or psychiatrist. You do not have the expertise to make this kind of referral. We were sued for these mistakes, and lost. A word to the wise is sufficient.

SPECIAL EDUCATION

For some children who have a hard time spelling, the following technique has worked well. Because spelling is a visual skill, not an auditory skill, children must be able to visualize a word to spell it correctly. To emphasize visualization of the words, ask the child to spell the words from the last letter to the first. Write the letters down as the child spells them, from last letter to first, so that the word is correctly spelled when finally written. The child should not make a habit of spelling this way, but it will force visualization of words. It will <u>not</u> cause a child to reverse words or read and spell backwards. After a period of time the visualization process becomes subconscious and the child spells more correctly.

Children who have difficulty memorizing math facts should practice them with the correct answers <u>out loud</u>. Oral practice at home or in school reinforces the auditory memory which is the way most people memorize their math <u>facts</u>. Slow classical music and random facts practice (rather than all the 5's, etc.) also can help retention.

COMPUTERS

After two years of using computers in my classroom, I have come to several realizations. One is that I am not really teaching computer programming but logical thinking. Another is that it is a very good way to teach creative thinking. We don't use the computer instead of any piece of equipment. Rather, we use it as any special extension of the material would be used.

I recommend any of the various LOGO-type languages as being far superior to BASIC for use with elementary children. A second choice, available only on a few computers, is COMOL (not COBOL, an older language). BASIC does not seem to fit well with the thought processes of children and is difficult to use without a lot of mental travail.

The only software I use that I did not write is a typing tutor program to teach the children touch typing. This is a skill that I think is very well taught by computer. Children need to learn keyboard skill at some time in their life and a good program will take the drudgery out of practice.

I think there is a lot of fear and misunderstanding about computers in Montessori classrooms. It is difficult to make decisions about things we know little about, so I wonder if a workshop or part of the next conference could be devoted to experience, not just judgement, about computing.

Buon Lavoro!

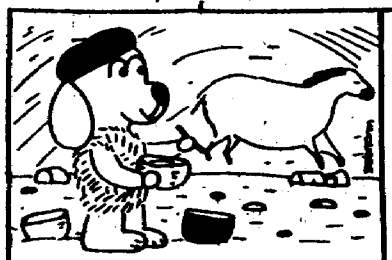
Frank A. Vincent

A Time Line of the Past

# A Communications History



**Story Pictures**
**20,000 B.C.**



Drawings were made on cave walls, antlers and rocks. 1.

**Gestures and grunts**


Early man probably used gestures and grunts since he had no language. 2.

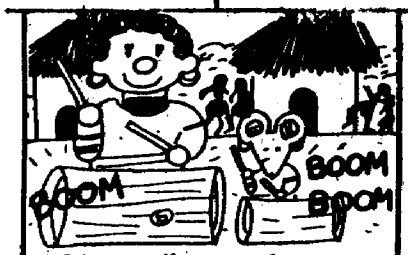
**Sticks and stones**


Counting sticks and stones was an early way to record numbers. 3.

**Smoke signals**

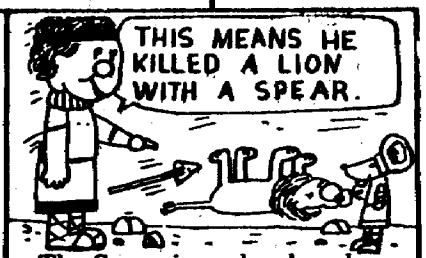

The first signals were probably warnings. Later the puffs became codes. 4.

**Drums**



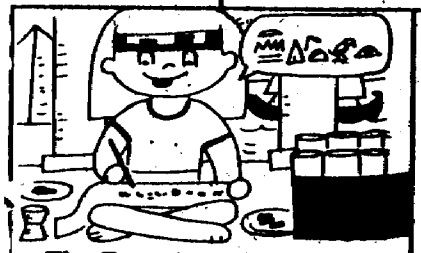

African tribesmen beat out messages that would carry for miles. 5.

**Writing**
**before 3000 B.C.**




The Sumerians developed the first writing using symbols for words. 6.

**Hieroglyphics**
**about 2000 B.C.**

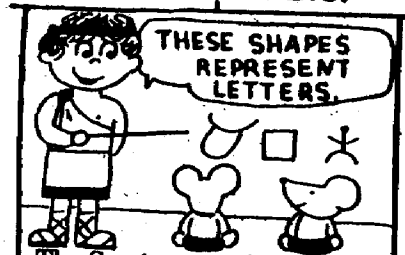


The Egyptians developed a way of writing and, later, made a type of paper from papyrus leaves. 7.

**Libraries**
**about 2000 B.C.**

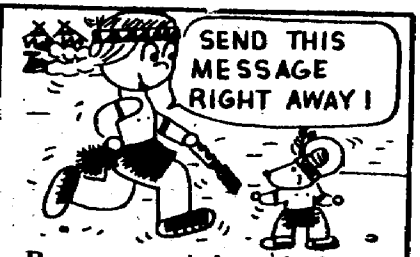

Egyptians started their first libraries by storing scrolls of papyrus. 8.

**Alphabet**
**2000 to 1500 B.C.**



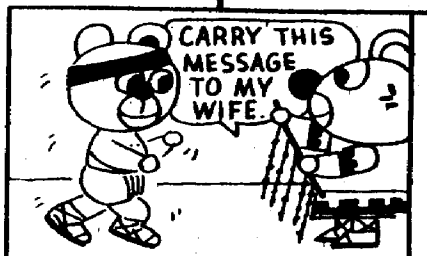

The Semites developed the first alphabet. The Greeks and Romans developed their alphabets later. 9.

**Runners**




Runners carried notched sticks. 10.

**Knots**

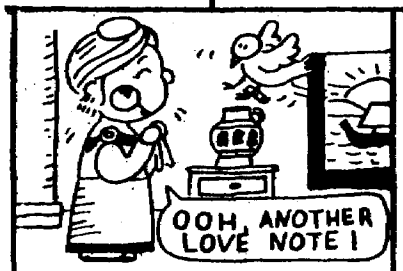



Knots tied in different colored strings were used to send messages. 11.

**Watchtowers**
**300 B.C.**


The Greeks built a series of castlelike watchtowers close enough to send messages. 12.

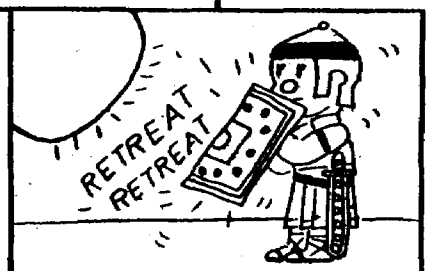
**Carrier Pigeons**




The Greeks used carrier pigeons to carry messages.

13.

**Flashing shields**




Persian soldiers flashed messages by reflecting sunlight off shields.

14.

**Parchment**
**About 250 B.C.**


The Greeks invented parchment, something to write on made from animal skins.

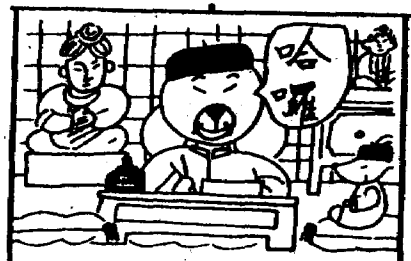
15.

**Newspapers**
**59 B.C.**


The Romans posted a news sheet in a busy place.

16.

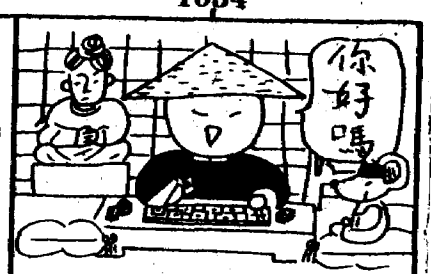
**Paper and ink**
**A.D. 105**




The Chinese invented paper made from wood, and ink.

17.

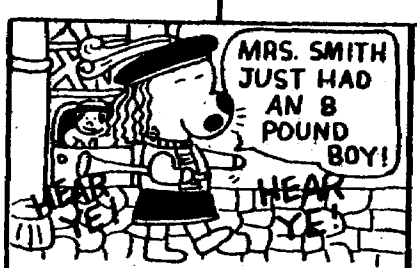
**Movable type**
**1034**




The Chinese invented a way of printing using movable type made of clay.

18.

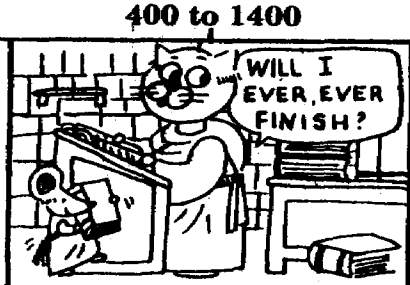
**Town criers**




Town criers strolled through the streets yelling the news.

19.

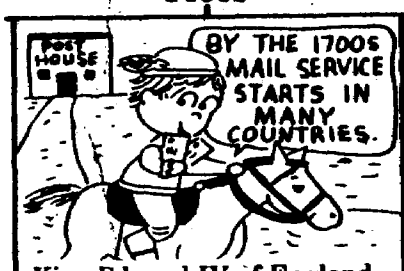
**Scribes**
**400 to 1400**




It took scribes a long time to hand-copy books, so there weren't many books.

20.

**Postal service**
**1400s**




King Edward IV of England set up a series of post houses for passing along mail.

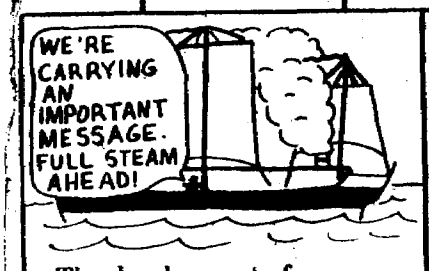
21.

**Movable type**
**1450**


Gutenberg of Germany invented the printing press and movable metal type.

22.

**Steamships and trains**
**1786** **1804**




The development of steamships and locomotives speeded the way messages were carried.

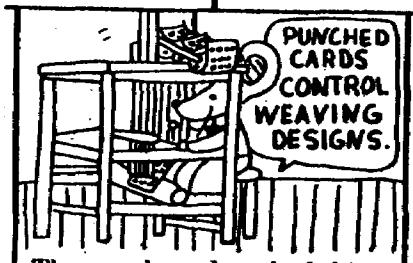
23.

**Semaphores**
**1792**


Movable crossed bars atop towers spelled messages that could be seen for miles.

24.

**Jacquard loom**
**1804**




The punch-card method this loom used later helped develop the computer.

25.

**First permanent photograph, 1826**


Joseph Niepce, a Frenchman, exposed a treated piece of metal for 8 hours.

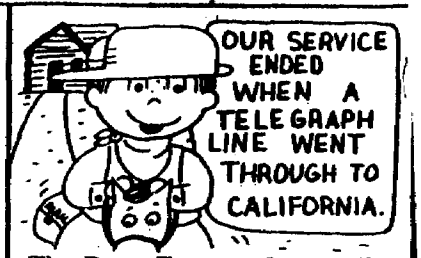
26.

**Telegraph**
**1837**


Samuel Morse developed the Morse code and the first really successful electric telegraph.

27.

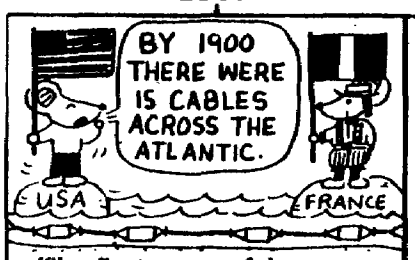
**Pony Express**
**1860**




The Pony Express fast mail service across the United States lasted only about 18 months.

28.

**Trans-Atlantic cable**
**1866**




The first successful trans-Atlantic cable brought fast communication across the ocean.

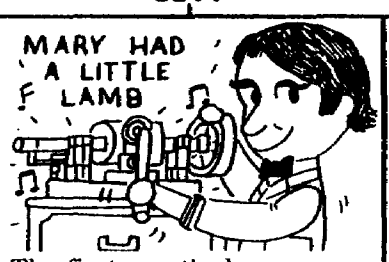
29.

**Typewriter**
**1867**


The keyboard layout of the first practical typewriter was the same as the one used today!

30.

**Phonograph**
**1877**




The first practical phonograph was invented by Thomas Edison.

31.

**Telephone**
**1876**


Alexander Graham Bell, a teacher of the deaf, invented the telephone.

32.

**Linotype**
**1886**


The Linotype, a machine that sets type mechanically, was patented.

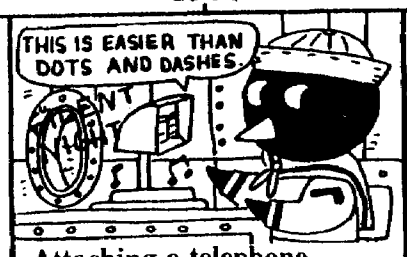
33.

**Wireless telegraph**
**1895**


Guglielmo Marconi developed a successful wireless telegraph that sent messages over the air.

34.

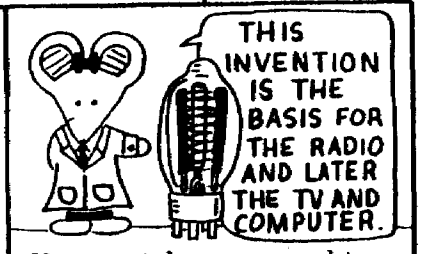
**Voice on the air**
**1900**




Attaching a telephone receiver to a wireless telegraph enabled the human voice to be carried over radio.

35.

**Vacuum tubes developed**
**1907**




Vacuum tubes were used to control electric signals in radio, TV and the first computers.

36.

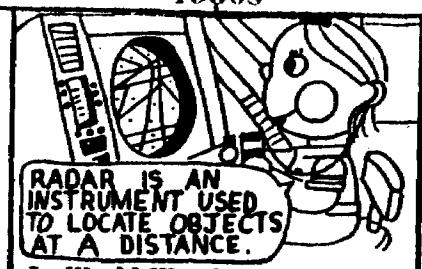
**First practical TV**
**1929**


Vladimir Zworykin developed the first all-electronic TV system. Seven years later, TV broadcasting started. 37.

**Tape recording**
**1930s**

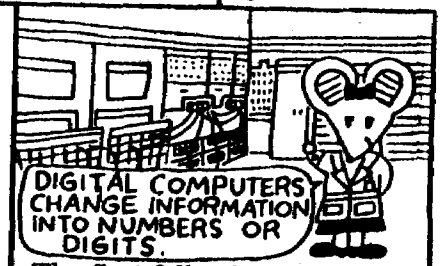

The Germans invented a method of recording on plastic tapes that later replaced many records. 38.

**Radar developed**
**1930s**



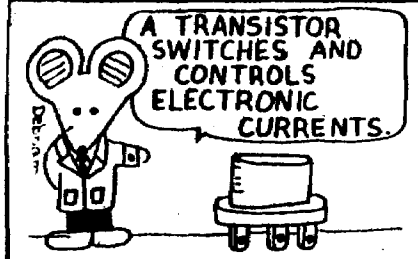

In World War II, radar tracked many enemy planes. It also led to the development of microwave and lasers. 39.

**Computer**
**1946**




The first fully electronic digital computer used 18,000 vacuum tubes and filled a huge room. 40.

**Transistors invented**
**1947**

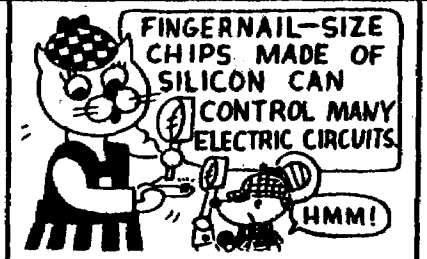



Transistors invented by Bell Labs worked better and used less power than bulky vacuum tubes. 41.

**Cable TV**
**1940s**

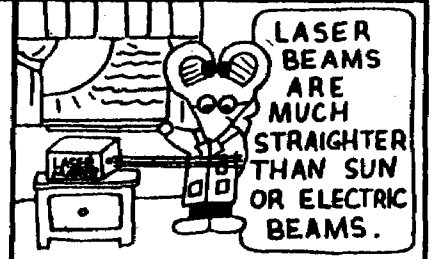

Cable TV began when viewers hooked up sets to cables attached to antennas. 42.

**Chips**
**1959**




The tiny chip with thousands of circuits made communication speedy and cheap. 43.

**Lasers**
**1960**




Lasers are powerful beams of light that can carry many TV and telephone calls at once. 44.

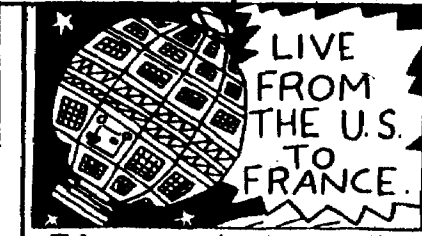
**Copying machines**
**1960**


Xerox Corp. developed a practical copying machine. 45.

**Satellites**
**1960**

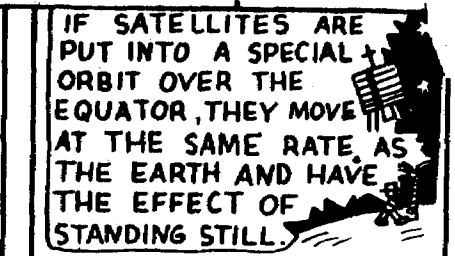

Echo I was the first communications satellite to relay radio signals to earth stations. It was passive, only reflecting signals. 46.

**Telstar satellite**
**1962**




Telstar was the first satellite to relay live TV transmissions across the ocean. It was active, carrying radio and TV equipment. 47.

**Early Bird satellite**
**1965**



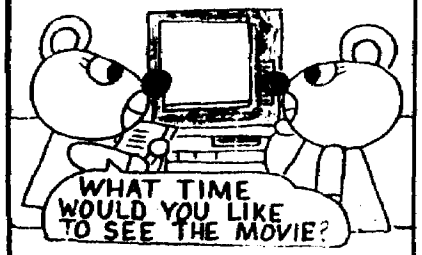

Early Bird was the first commercial satellite to relay TV and phone calls between the U.S. and Europe on a regular basis. 48.

**Fiber optics**
**1970**


Glass or plastic fibers were used to carry laser signals a great distance.

49.

**Videotape recorders**
**1970s**




Cassette videotape recorders enabled TV viewers to tape programs to [illegible].

50.

**Computer revolution**
**1970s**


Computers get smaller, cheaper and more "friendly," or easier to use.

51.

← This workshop was given in November, 1983, in Toronto.

SUITABLE FOR CHILDREN?

Lissa Bubbers teaches a course in Children's Literature at York University. She is completing her dissertation on Ted Hughes, the British poet.

The focus of Lissa's workshop was on children's literature as something imaginative, magical, and very special; something to share with children rather than just teaching them. She first gave us a brief history of children's literature, which is a relatively new invention of three to four hundred years at most.

John Locke, a seventeenth century philosopher is generally credited with inventing children; before this time, children were regarded as subhuman creatures before the age of seven, and small adults thereafter. With the invention of children and a method of bringing them up into adulthood, came the need for children's books.

In the eighteenth century, John Newbery produced the first books for children, designed to delight and instruct. The idea that children could be tricked into education, good behaviour, industry and virtue caught on.

Our needs have changed somewhat, and today we want psychologically healthy children with no neuroses and no sexist attitudes-- and we think that books can teach them that! This is possible to a degree, but it is more important, Lissa feels, that children like and enjoy books.

The Osbourne Collection has a number of old children's books, including the 14th Century translation of Aesop's Fables, horn books- from which children traced their alphabets, and Newbery's, Little Pretty Pocketbooks. Patricia Demer's A Garland from the Golden Age and From Instruction to Delight give examples of 18th and 19th Century literature for children, who read only the Bible and Pilgrim's Progress for generations, and could read and write in Greek and Latin at age ten.

Lissa emphasized that her lecture was not a how-to guide on what to read to children. Instead, she gave us suggestions based on her own personal favourites and those of children she has worked with. She feels strongly that your love of a story transfers to the children. You must choose what you are comfortable with what you really like. If you have reservations about a book, they will show. You must have a personal response to and feeling for the story. It is important, too, to know the children and their needs, in order to avoid frightening certain children, and to know when they are ready for a particular story.

If you are bored with a story, chances are the children will be too. But sometimes they will love a story which bores you or is just, in your opinion, a bad book. Lissa feels these are not sufficient reasons for forbidding the stories. Trust your own instincts, your likes and dislikes, and those of the children with whom you are dealing.

If you like a book, show it to the children and tell them how you feel about it. You never grow out of children's books, just into other realms as well. C. S. Lewis says that if a book is not worth reading at 60, it was not worth reading at 6.

Lissa recommend Bruno Bettelheim's Uses of Enchantment to those interested in fairy tales. He feels fairy tales help children through the difficulties of ego development and help children to grow up psychologically healthy and happy. Lissa feels his thesis is too rigidly Freudian, but interesting if you do not take it too seriously.

She is aware of the Montessori thought regarding fantasy before the age of six, but encouraged teachers not to be too rigid in their direction, and to make choices of stories based on their own feelings and the needs of the children rather than drawing lines and limitations based on age. Fantasy can be a frame of reference for some children, into which they can place their fears and anger and other feelings, and know that they will stay there.

Along with myths and legends, fairy tales are chronologically the oldest literature we have. They are usually about typical characters who become the basis for our own imaginations. These archetypes have transcended the author or teller and the tales themselves have worn soft with time which burns off the extraneous parts of the story. They are the picture language of the soul, and because they often do not make sense and cannot be understood, we have to think about them and try to come to terms with the stories.

While Grimm's tales, which were collected in the 19th Century, are not identified with the teller and are universal, Anderson and others created stories with a moral lesson. It is important to know the background of the story. Traditional stories are always resolved and are just, while literary stories may not end happily. Often in traditional tales, a young and weak person finds sources within himself to do something powerful. The male may seek the beautiful female as a symbol of the feminine characteristics he needs to balance himself and round out his character. Be fair to the story and watch your own aversions, Lissa cautioned. The original tales, in good translations, retain a freshness and vitality unavailable elsewhere.

Do not forget to expand the cultural range as well, into the folktales of the Japanese, Buddist, Israelis, Indians and so forth. With picture books, look for clever, simple stories and different kinds of illustrations that you like. The nutshell libraries of Beatrix Potter, Maurice Sendak and Leonard Baskin are loved by children because of their small size.

Mythology and legends are good story sources for elementary children. Be careful of the versions you choose. Avoid patronizing or condescending tones and cuteness. Children know if stories have been cleaned up because the story looks dismembered and dies. Look for interesting sentence structure and unusual evocative language.

Lissa brought a number of her favorite books along and spoke about them individually. She has compiled a bibliography for us which includes these favorites, as well as some resource material for teachers. This issue will include books she has found useful. Later issues, will have suggestions for Picture Books, Poetry, Nonfiction etc.

submitted by Phoebe Allen


Philippe Aries, Centuries of Childhood
The Hour of our Death
Bruno Bettelheim, The Uses of Enchantment
Elizabeth Cook, The Ordinary and the Fabulous: An Introduction to Myths, Legends and Fairy Tales

F. J. Harvey Darton, Children's Books in England
S. Egoff, Only Connect
The Republic of Childhood
N. Frye, The Uses of Enchantment
Fables of Identity
The Secular Scripture
Edith Fowke, Sally Go Round the Sun
Ring around the Moon
Geoff Fox, Writers, Critics and Children
Virginia Haviland, Children's Literature: Views and Reviews
Rosemary Jackson, Fantasy: The Literature of Subversion
Selma Lanes, Down the Rabbit Hole
The Art of Maurice Sendak
Margaret Meek, The Cool Web
Iona and Peter Opie, Children's Games of Street and Playground
The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren
The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes
Roger Sale, Fairy Tales and After
Lillian Smith, The Unreluctant Years
Nicholas Tucker, Suitable for Children
The Child and the Book: A Psychological and Literary Exploration
John Rowe Townsend, Written for Children
Ursula LeGuin, The Language of the Night: Essays on Fantasy and Science Fiction