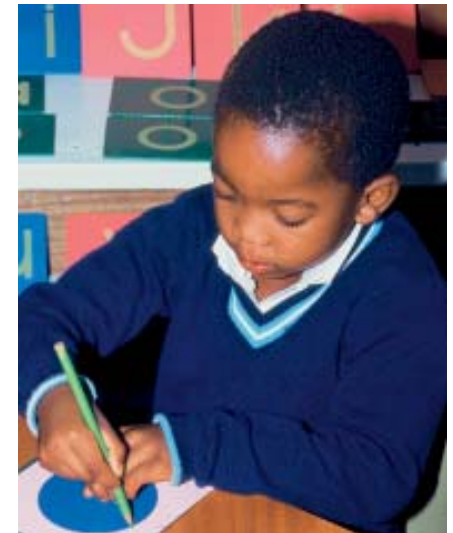


Montessori Special Education II: A Contemporary Assessment



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Westin Atlanta North at Perimeter,
Atlanta, GA January 22-25, 2009

◆ Montessori Special Education II: A Contemporary Assessment ◆



A sequel to NAMTA's highly praised special education conference last year in Austin, TX, this year's conference will focus on realistic best practices that address the range of learning differences encountered in a Montessori school. The contributions of various specialists are viewed in an interdisciplinary light, as a *whole-school* approach to problem solving and referral around a student's individual needs. Montessori-trained specialists and outside experts familiar with Montessori will present diverse options for Montessori schools, including full integration of the indoor and outdoor environments, in finding real solutions for children with special needs.



Thursday, January 22
7:00-8:00 p.m. ◆ Registration

Friday, January 23

8:00-9:00 a.m. ◆ Registration

9:00-9:45 a.m. ◆ **Montessori Special Education and Nature's Playground**

Nimal Vaz

A Montessori leader in both nature education and special education, Nimal Vaz will discuss how nature can promote sensory integration, balance, visual training, motor coordination, etc. By providing opportunities to judge distances and heights, exercise the muscles and senses, engage in social play and climbing, an outdoor environment in a natural setting imparts competence not only in physical development but in reading, writing, and mathematics—all the academic areas.

9:45-10:15 a.m. ◆ Break

10:15-Noon ◆ **Sensory Integration: Designing the Outdoor Environment to Meet Special Needs**

Robin Moore and Nilda Cosco

Outdoor environments can be designed to accommodate a wide variety of special needs; the more diverse the environment, the broader the range of needs it can serve. Drawing on interdisciplinary aspects of the garden—practical life, sciences, and geography—the Montessori guide can find many different levels of physical and intellectual engagement for typically developing children alongside those with special needs.

Noon-1:30 p.m. ◆ Lunch

Saturday, January 24

1:30-4:30 p.m. ◆ Workshops (Choose one):

A. Joyful Engagement: A Lens for the Montessori Guide

Paula Leigh-Doyle

On occasion, a guide may question whether a child is feeling successful and joyfully engaged, physically, academically, and socially. She searches for a balance between the Montessori ideal of independent engagement and the degree of adult support that any given child might need. This workshop offers one practical lens for a whole-school dialogue about how much we might allow for the transformative normalizing outcomes of a Primary environment; how much engagement will come from the interest-driven collaborative community of the elementary; and to what degree we should examine supplementary or other supportive learning environments that might provide the optimal conditions for the child's engagement.

B. Tutoring without Crutches: Extra Support and Inclusion for the Older Montessori Child with Learning Differences

Barbara Kahn and Anita Koenig

Often Montessori schools retain upper elementary and middle school students who need special tutoring for both undiagnosed and diagnosed learning difficulties. If the goal of these older level classrooms is to create independent workers, learning interventions must also work toward this goal. Ms. Kahn and Ms. Koenig discuss how tutors can support the child's development of independence rooted in confidence and competence, as opposed to self-conscious behaviors that lead toward more dependence on teacher supervision.

C. Observation, Evaluation, and Intervention in the Primary Classroom

Charlene Trochta and Nimal Vaz

Between ages three and six, young children enter the period of conscious construction of their personalities, a dynamic period of change and growth, and the foundation for adult life. Montessori's prepared environment, a scientific learning laboratory, enables us to distinguish between early signs of learning disorders and individual learning differences. Drawing on their many years of experience, Ms. Vaz and Ms. Trochta will provide teachers with basic insights and techniques for observing, evaluating, and providing effective intervention within the Primary classroom.

9:00-10:00 a.m. ◆ Montessori Education, Neuropsychology, and the Child with Special Needs: Referral and Assessment of School-Aged Children

Steven J. Hughes

This talk reviews characteristics of some common disorders that impact children's emotions, development, or learning, focusing on when and how to refer a child for an outside evaluation, and how to make sense of the results. Who are the key players when a childhood psychological, developmental, or learning disorder may be present? Is a diagnosis a "label" that does more harm than good? Or can it help adults better understand a child's needs? What sorts of issues make the Montessori setting untenable? With the experience of almost fifteen years of work as a pediatric neuropsychologist, Dr. Hughes will shed light on the process of referral and assessment of school-aged children.

10:00-10:15 a.m. ◆ Questions and Answers

Steven J. Hughes

10:45-Noon ◆ Know What Works: A Brief Guide to Effective Interventions for Children with Special Needs

Steven J. Hughes

What is the best way to help a child identified with an emotional, learning, or developmental disorder? What can be done for children with special needs in a Montessori classroom? Are there situations in which Montessori is just not a good "fit"? Based on a review of scientific literature, this presentation describes a number of validated, effective interventions for children with a variety of common childhood disorders, and describes more generally the characteristics of effective interventions. This talk may challenge some deeply held beliefs and confirm some suspicions about some popular but unproven interventions that can potentially do more harm than good.

Noon-1:00 p.m. ◆ Lunch

◆ Montessori Special Education II: A Contemporary Assessment ◆

1:00-1:30 p.m. ◆ **Video Premiere: What Is the Montessori Toddler Community?**

1:30-4:30 p.m. ◆ **Workshops (Choose one):**

D. Dyslexia: Orton-Gillingham Intervention in the Montessori Context

Tara Gilbert

Tara Gilbert introduces the Orton-Gillingham scope and sequence to Montessori classroom teachers so it can be integrated into an overview of phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, reading comprehension, and writing in the context of the Montessori prepared environment.

E. A Montessori Approach to Autism

Michelle Lane

Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) and Intensive Behavior Intervention (IBI) are among the most widely recognized and successful approaches to treatment for children with autism. Ms. Lane will present an overview of Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), including common behavioral problems, anxiety, sensory disorders, and characteristics of communication, play, and social interaction. Then she will discuss how Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) combined with Montessori can help a child on the severe end of the spectrum as well as techniques for supporting children with Asperger Syndrome in an integrated Montessori classroom setting.

F. The Integration of Occupational Therapy and Speech Therapy in the Montessori Environment

Lidewij Honcharik and Saskia de Jong

Academic skills require a solid developmental foundation, one based on well-integrated sensory-motor, communication, and social skills. One way to strengthen this foundation is through play. Play—all play—is important to a child's development and academic success. Learn how to teach parents about a child's developmental milestones and which activities are beneficial in and after school to support academic growth for *all* students. The presenters, a speech therapist and occupational therapist respectively, will share how a successful special needs program can exist within a Montessori environment and how to involve the whole school community for early intervention in the goal of building foundations for academic success for all children.

Sunday, January 25

9:00-10:30 am ◆ **Panel of Conference Speakers Problem Solving in Small Group Discussion with Conference Participants**

◆ Featuring ◆

Nimal Vaz, Director of Training for the AMI Montessori Education Center of Arizona, has been associated with AMI training courses since 1960. From 1972 to 1985, she directed a Montessori classroom for children with developmental problems in one of Arizona's largest hospitals and also served as an examiner and chair of an AMI advisory committee for the AMI special education training in Munich, Germany. In 1987, she founded The Montessori Center School, which is featured in two recent NAMTA videos, *The Child in Nature* and *Nurturing the Spirit*. Ms. Vaz graduated from the University of Ceylon in 1963 with a bachelor's degree in economics and philosophy and received her Montessori primary (3-6) diploma in 1964.



Nilda Cosco is an education specialist at the Natural Learning Initiative, North Carolina State University College of Design. She holds a Ph.D. in landscape architecture and a degree in educational psychology. Her research focuses on the assessment of outdoor environments and the impact of the outdoors on child development.



Robin Moore is professor of landscape architecture and director of the Natural Learning Initiative, North Carolina State University College of Design. Professor Moore is an urban designer and design researcher, specializing in child and family urban environments. Originally from England, he holds degrees in architecture (London University) and city and regional planning (Massachusetts Institute of Technology).



Steven J. Hughes is an assistant professor in the departments of pediatrics and neurology at the University of Minnesota Medical School and director of research and education for The TOVA Company (a publisher of psychological tests). For over a decade, Dr. Hughes has taught the art and science of neuropsychological assessment at the graduate and postgraduate level, and assessed the cognitive skills of children with developmental, learning, behavioral, and medical disorders affecting brain function. He is a frequent guest lecturer for the Montessori Training Center of Minnesota.

Tara Gilbert is a Montessori elementary-trained professional with certified Orton-Gillingham training. She has eight years of experience in a Montessori classroom and is currently an independent tutor for Montessori schools as well as a special education teacher at Hirsch Academy in Atlanta.

Lidewij Honcharik is a speech therapist and **Saskia de Jong** is an occupational therapist at Montessori in Redlands (Redlands, CA).

Barbara Kahn has an AMI diploma and is a certified Wilson reading tutor. She has had five years of experience as a tutor and special education teacher at Hershey Montessori School (Concord Twp., OH) and Ruffing Montessori School West (Rocky River, OH) at the adolescent level. She has consistently updated her work through annual attendance at the International Dyslexia Association conferences and multi-sensory language workshops in the Cleveland area.



Anita Koenig has taught in the upper elementary classrooms at Craig Montessori Elementary School (Milwaukee, WI) for the past three years, supporting students with special needs in an inclusion environment. She holds a B.S. in human development and family studies from the University of Wisconsin-Madison as well as cross-categorical special education teacher certification (grades one through eight) from the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center.

Michelle Lane is the founder of the Lane Montessori School for Autism in Toronto, Canada. Previously known as the Toronto Montessori School for Autism, this was the first program to combine Applied Behavior Analysis with the Montessori curriculum. Ms. Lane received a Premier's Award in 2005 for her work, runs her own consulting/training company, and chairs the Program Advisory Committee of the Montessori program at Sheridan College (Toronto). She has a bilingual B.A. in psychology and sociology as well as Montessori 2-6 and 6-9 diplomas. She was trained in behavior therapy by the Ontario government.



Paula Leigh-Doyle holds the AMI primary (3-6) diploma from Sion Hill College, Dublin, Ireland. Her experience includes eight years of teaching at the primary level, three years as director of education and of the disabilities program in a Montessori Head Start model, and eleven years as head of an independent Montessori school, where she implemented early intervention programs for sensory integration and dyslexia remediation. Ms. Leigh-Doyle is currently head of school at Hershey Montessori School, Concord Twp., Ohio.

Charlene S. Trochta was awarded the AMI Primary Diploma with Distinction in 1967 and received her master's degree in early childhood special education in May, 1978, from the University of Hawaii. She has more than thirty-five years of classroom experience with children aged three to six and is director emeritus of Casa Montessori, Austin, Texas, which she founded in 1983.



Hotel

The Westin Atlanta Perimeter North



The Westin Atlanta Perimeter North is less than 30 minutes from downtown Atlanta and its major attractions, including the world's largest aquarium, the new Georgia Aquarium, as well as Atlanta's new retail and entertainment district—Atlantic Station. Situated on a private lake, guests will be sure to enjoy this tranquil retreat from the city.

Room rates: \$129/night

Reservations must be made by January 8th for these special rates to apply!

For reservations call: (770) 395-3900 or visit <http://www.starwoodhotels.com/westin/reservations> and be sure to tell the receptionist you are with the NAMTA conference.

Transportation

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport (ATL) is the closest airport. Estimated taxi fare will be around \$60. Another option is to take the subway from the airport to the medical center station (NS route—red). Once you are there, the hotel shuttle can pick you up for free. The subway fee is only \$1.75.

Register by **January 8** for early registration rates!

NAMTA member tuition fee: \$300 (\$315 after January 8)

Non-member tuition fee: \$360 (\$375 after January 8th)

Tuition fees include Friday and Saturday luncheons. **Choose one:**

Non-Vegetarian Vegetarian

Friday workshops (Choose one):

A. Joyful Engagement (all levels) B. Tutoring (older children)

C. Observation/Evaluation (Primary)

Saturday Workshops (Choose One):

D. Dyslexia E. Autism Spectrum

F. Speech & Occupational Therapy

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You can also register online at www.montessori-namta.org.

Not a NAMTA member? It's more economical to purchase a registration and a membership than it is to pay the non-member rate. Become a NAMTA member today by sending in the membership form along with your registration and enjoy all the benefits of NAMTA membership!

You can also do your membership online at www.montessori-namta.org.

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- ◆ NAMTA Directory \$18 _____
(Not included with membership)
- ◆ NAMTA Online Bibliography* \$10 _____
(Not included w/membership; requires e-mail address)
- ◆ Total Enclosed \$ _____

Return by January 18, 2009, to have your name listed in the member section of *The NAMTA Directory*.

Check here if you do not want your name listed

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- ◆ Three issues of *The NAMTA Journal* per year: Winter, Spring, and Summer.
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Hurry to register with NAMTA and make hotel reservations by **January 8, 2009!**

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