



Operated by MIND

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**From the Academic Director,
Pam Ferguson**

The Basic Building Blocks of Authentic Montessori Programs

On Friday, February 8, 2008, the Teaching Team both attended and presented workshops at a local conference involving Montessori teachers, mostly in the public schools. The key-note speaker was none other than Tim Seldin, who is the president of The Montessori Foundation, an organization in the U.S. which

DATES OF INTEREST

MARCH 13
*Primary Field Trip to HR
MacMillan Space Centre*

MARCH 17-25
*Spring Break & Easter
Holiday*

MARCH 26 Prep Day
Term 3

MARCH 27
School Begins

APRIL 14-18
Parent Observations
APRIL 19
Project Love Gala

APRIL 22
Earth Day

APRIL 28
Pro-D Day



Directress' Professional Development . . .

This Monday, February 25, 2008, the teaching team continued their practicum in Choice Theory. The Basic Training is a week long followed by 30 hours of practicum followed by an Advanced Week with another 30 hours of practicum. Since 2001, the teaching team has been embarking on training and it is wonderful to be able to spend the time engaging in this work together. We were facilitated by Daphne Clifton and David Burke who have been working with our school for the past eight years. The practicum involved role play and analysis of how those role plays relate to choice theory.

What is Choice Theory? It is a theory based on William Glasser's research of Human Cognitive Behaviour and is based on the premise that the brain functions like a thermostat. Our decisions to behave are an outcome of receiving information from people, situations in our 'real life'. This stimuli moves through three filters - our senses, our knowledge, and our distinct values and beliefs. This filtered information is how we arrive at our perceptions. We then use our perceptions and measure them by comparing them to what we hold close to our hearts most dearly which is referred to, in Choice Theory language, as our Quality World. If the information received resonates positively we include it in our Quality picture if it doesn't then we reject it. The resonating is a process of comparing that registers frustration and painful signals or pleasurable signals which are, at any given moment, an instantaneous feeling that is used as an urge to behave.

The process of choice theory involves learning several components. One of these components is that we learn about basic needs – love and belonging, power and respect, freedom and fun. Another component is that we identify our individual quality world and learn to identify others quality worlds. A person's quality world includes those things that are highly important to them such as beliefs, values, relationships and activities. The elements of our individual quality world are a motivating factor in determining what behavioural choices we display at any given moment. We then look at the components of total behaviour – acting, thinking, thinking and physiology (body) and what it looks and feels like when we experience a balance or imbalance in our total behaviour and how all of these components make up what is referred to as our control system loop. The overall loop can be instantaneous but when we learn to self-evaluate we are able to see (usually when something in our life is NOT working) that we need to change our behaviour.

Choice theory is a foundational theory that we can apply that allows us to support ourselves and others in a truly authentic manner. One of the crucial elements is the knowledge that each person can only control their own behaviour and that each person acts or behaves in a way that is the 'best' that they can do with all that they know and all that they have experienced in their life to the present time.

We know that according to current brain research that learning is most effective in an environment where students and teachers relate well. The application of Choice Theory is a very effective way to ensure that relationships are healthy and a priority for students and teachers. We also find that it relates beautifully to Dr. Montessori's principle which is the idea that the development of maturity is a result of self-awareness, self-evaluation and finally the ability to self-monitor and be self-disciplined.

As a parent, I use Choice Theory as well as I can and only my children and close relatives can attest to its efficacy. I will admit that I default every time I 'feel' frustrated and boy does it help me to communicate clearly! As teachers, our students receive the benefit of this process because it allows us to be 'observers' of their behaviour and it gives us a wonderfully empathic framework for teaching them to be self-aware, the first step in learning the ultimate goal of self-discipline. So, thank you to the board and society for your support of all of the teaching team who spent the day refreshing and learning Choice Theory.



From the Preschool/EDK Classroom. . .

"The larger goal of a Montessori education is to bring about a better civilization, and to that end we begin with the child who is making the man. This is the person who will build and maintain that improved civilization, one which will be based on mutual respect between persons. Respect between all elements in a Montessori classroom is built in a variety of ways. The child is required to handle the material and all elements in his environment with respect. He is given the necessary social skills he will need to empower him in his growth to behave respectfully to others. His own self-respect is a key element in independence, the state from which all higher learning can be achieved. The child is taught to respect other children and his teachers. This is important, too, during his self-construction. If he understands the need for mutual respect he will practice it and will be equipped to handle himself under trying circumstances," (Carol Scaratt, Western Montessori Teacher's College).

In our classroom this month we are focusing on personal and community respect and responsibility. What does this look like?

- Speaking to your peers respectfully with clarity and eye contact.
- Allowing everyone to have the opportunity to be heard
- Understanding that we are all equally important
- Taking responsibility for the set up, the implementation and the clean up of your work; this means returning your work in a manner which allows the next student to use it properly
- Helping to maintain the order of the classroom; this means helping a fellow student tidy her work and volunteering to help with overall care and maintenance of the classroom
- Being responsible and truthful regarding any misunderstandings, mishaps with materials or missing materials (i.e.: "Did this piece of beautiful material happen to go home in someone's pocket? If it did, please be responsible and bring it back.")

The Preschool/EDK classroom is the beginning of this life-long development of respectful interactions. Our students learn to give their best effort as part of their workday at school. It is truly amazing to see the process and the "aha" moments come together. It is the joy of teaching!

Jana and Christina

*"The first aim of the prepared environment is, as far as it is possible,
to render the growing child independent of the adult. "*

The Secret of Childhood: Fides Publishers, (1966), p. 267



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Cultural Work in the Primary Classroom

This month in the Primary class we have been working on the culmination of cultural work. Year Three's presented their research papers on Volcanoes complete with four highly decorated angel food 'volcano' cakes. Their oral presentation included a question and answer period in which the Year One and Two children practiced being a respectful audience by asking many questions of the Year Three students. The Year Three students refined the response to any question beyond their technical ken by saying..."Great question, I would

Characteristics of Montessori Education at BBMH

- ♥ The child's inherent desire to learn and perfect his/her skills is nurtured by the stimulating and dynamic Montessori environment.
- ♥ The child develops a lifetime love of learning
- ♥ Each child works at his or her own pace and receives a high degree of individual attention.
- ♥ Student teacher ratios at BBMH are 9:1 in Pre-school/Kindergarten and 18:1 in Elementary.
- ♥ A well structured, prepared environment, with learning materials that are self-correcting.
- ♥ Respect for each other, the self and the environment are taught within a peace
- ♥ curriculum that is multi-cultural and non-denominational.
- ♥ With these opportunities, the child is empowered to fulfill his/her own potential thereby fostering:
 - Independence
 - Self-discipline
 - Self-esteem
 - Self-motivation
- ♥ The child is honoured in this caring, community-minded educational environment where parents are invited to participate.

CALENDAR 2007 2008 * SPRING TERM 2

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| MARCH | 17- 25 | Spring/Easter Break |
| | 26 | Prep Day Term 3 |
| | 27 | School Begins |
| April | 14- 18 | Observations |
| | 19 | Project Love Gala |
| | 22 | Earth Day |
| | 28 | Professional Development Day |
| May | 11 | Mother's Day |
| | 16 | Sign up for Conferences |
| | 19 | Victoria Day |
| | 21- | Intermediate Camp @ Loon Lake |
| | 30 | Student Led Conferences |

like to get back to you when I find out the answer". This skill is an essential one for use in their future careers and one that teaches the students grace while confidently affirming the person who asked the question! Of course, the content knowledge displayed by the researchers was impressive as was the interest level of the other children. It was clearly a highlight for the class as most Friday Journals included the volcano cake as one of their weekly delights.

As is usual, the work with maps is a hands-down winner! In addition the Year one students are continuing their study of history with booklets on time and clock activities. The Year two students have finished their written work on Rocks and Minerals and will begin their cooking experiments to present to the class next week. As you may know, Cathy and I will be away in the final days before Spring Break. I appreciate that this may concern some parents but assure you that the three days will be conducted with confidence by our substitute teachers. On the Thursday, March 13, 2008 the class will be going on a field trip to the Planetarium. We will leave the school at 8:45 am to arrive at the Planetarium for a 9:45 workshop followed by lunch at 11:30, the sky show at 12:00 noon and then a trip to Mars. We will depart for home at 1:45 pm and be back at school for regular dismissal. We will need carpooling volunteers for the trip. Sorry, siblings are not permitted on the day, as volunteers need to be responsible for the students.

Please sign up on the field trip notice for this exciting day!