

THE MONTESSORI REVIEW

News from the Montessori Teacher Education Graduate Program at Oklahoma City University

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2013-14 PUBLICATIONS COMMITTEE



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Editor, Montessori Life (AMS)

*Happy Easter
for the month of
April!*



WINTER SCENE

Roads leading into OCU campus were covered in glistening snow in February. The Bass School of Music, located next to Petree College of Arts and Sciences, is pictured on the right amidst the crisp, cool air of winter. This photo was posted on the Bass School of Music's Facebook fan page.



GRADUATE OPEN HOUSE: ROUND TWO

Spring is the perfect time to renew our energy and efforts in welcoming students into the Montessori program for the next academic term. Program members met with prospective students at the spring Graduate Open House on March 13th. Books and materials were on display, including the black pyramid and red sphere from Montessori's oral grammar lessons, pictured on the right.



PHOTO FLASHBACKS

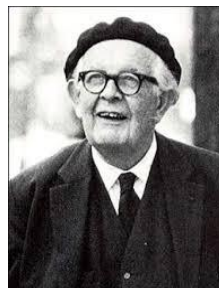
Photographs below from left to right show graduates from 2012 with director Charlotte Wood-Wilson and the class of 2013.



MONTESSORI QUOTABLES

"The child is a body which grows, and a soul which develops – these two forms, physiological and psychic, have one eternal font, life itself." – **The Montessori Method**

"She must then be more of a psychologist than a teacher, and this shows the importance of a scientific preparation..."
– **The Montessori Method**

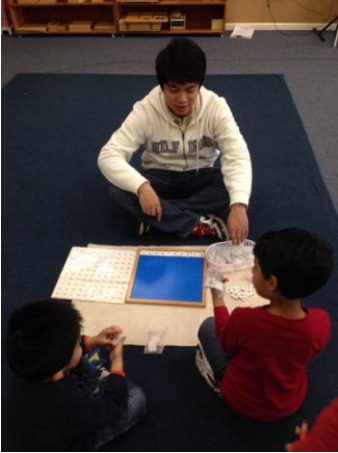


"The principle goal of education is to create men who are capable of doing new things, not simply of repeating what other generations have done – men who are creative, inventive and discoverers."

Jean Piaget
1896-1980



Above: Assisting a child with word-building in the language area.



Above: Demonstrating the hundred board lesson in the math area.

MULTI-TALENTED TEACHER INSPIRES STUDENTS IN SAN FRANCISCO

Alumni Feature: Min Xu, M.Ed. '12

By Ankie Yip

When alumnus, Min Xu, entered the Montessori Teacher Education program at OCU, he also brought his talent for music with him. "I was tutoring piano lessons with children of 3-6 years of age in China five years ago. It feels great to teach and see them grow." Min is currently a lead teacher at Main Street Montessori on the west coast, and strongly credits his intern experience at St. Mary's Montessori Preschool in Guthrie, OK for invaluable advice and great memories. "Special thanks to Ms. Robin and Ms. Becky. I learned how to communicate with a child using appropriate words and tone. Since the role of a teacher is more like an observer in a Montessori environment, it is important to know when to and how to talk to a child." He also developed leadership skills. "By observing the lead teachers, I was able to understand there was so much to do to organize a classroom." Min's workplace encompasses a diverse population, and he teaches mandarin Chinese circle twice a week. "There are 36 children from various backgrounds such as China, South Korea, India, and Europe. The interesting moments are seeing children learn Chinese and Spanish during cultural circle time." Min certainly remembers practicing circle times at St. Guthrie's. "I was able to learn to lead a circle by watching teachers' demonstrations, which were very impressive." In addition to practical experience, another memory of Min's was being able to participate in a very detailed and helpful discussion about the purpose of Montessori's number rods led by former program director, Bee Pape. "That was the last lesson Bee Pape showed to us, thus very precious and meaningful." Early childhood is a very significant period in life, and as Min recalls, "I remember and appreciate teachers who patiently gave lessons and explained things to me... A good start will benefit the rest of life." As his final comment, he credits the program for shaping his professional career. "OCU has the best teachings in Montessori education. This one-year program will bring you a lifetime of treasures for your career in the future."



Above: Leading a musical session.

FEBRUARY LESSONS: Creativity on high gear!

TICKLED PINK, RED & MORE

Photos by Yi Jiang, Intern at Westminster School



Homeroom displays reflected amazing art work accomplished by children.

Above: Cutting and pasting continued to promote eye-hand coordination.

Right: Precision is an ongoing essential skill developed in pin punching.



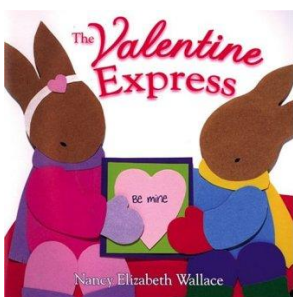
SPELLBOUND

Photos by Ankie Yip, Intern at Casady School

Right: A heart-themed matching activity in the Language Area gave children the opportunity to further develop one-to-one correspondence skills (matching) and visual muscle memory (motor imagery) through constant letter symbol recognition. There are a variety of fun ways to teach literacy.



Left: This Valentine-themed activity board for two players often called to children's interests, and promoted social interaction. It was productive, engaging, and purposeful. It's great to see young children learning to take turns, cooperating, establishing order, and given some healthy space to practice problem-solving, decision-making skills.



Valentine's and winter-themed children's literature filled the shelves, including the publication featured on the left, at Casady School's Green Area (language).

*Author/Illustrator: Nancy Elizabeth Wallace
Publisher: Marshall Cavendish (2008)*

Right: A banner drawn by children was put on display in the Primary Division at Casady School for the 100th Day Celebration on Feb. 11th!



Research Article and Special Guest Interview featuring **Maureen Harris, B.Mus., M.Ed., AMS**

By Ankie Yip

Music can touch the heart, lift the soul and feed the intellect. The cognitive and psychological benefits of music training with specialized materials are endless. I was fortunate to have interviewed an expert in the field, Maureen Harris. An award-winning consultant, university lecturer, and Principal/Executive Director of a Montessori school based in London, Ontario (Canada), Ms. Harris' work has been vital to Montessori music research spanning Africa, Europe, Asia, and North America. Most recent volunteer contributions include positions with the American Montessori Society (AMS), National Association for Early Years Curriculum (NAEYC), and Canadian Association for Montessori Teachers (CAMT) from whom she received the 2010 Outstanding Contribution in the Field of Early Childhood Music Education. In 2009, Ms. Harris was the recipient of the Canadian Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Early Childhood Education.

Montessori Review (MR): Thank you again for joining us, Maureen. You wrote two very insightful research articles published in *Montessori Life* (AMS) back in 2005 and 2008 that explored the effects of music on the brain in early childhood. Why is music training important for development?

Maureen Harris (MH): In the first years the young brain rapidly builds the complex networks of brain structure and function necessary for mature thought processes to take place. This is the time when the intelligence and the psychic faculties are being formed, when the foundation of the child's personality is being laid. Early experiences have a decisive impact on the architecture of the brain and the nature and extent of future capacities. While genes influence some of this, positive social interactions and stimulating experiences are crucial. It is the interconnections among the brain cells that have the most importance to further growth and development. These neuronal connections multiply through stimulating experiences during a child's early years, and are necessary for further development of the neural networks needed in later processing. Exposure to stimulation such as sight, sound, touch, taste, and smell lead to growth and development of motor, emotional, behavioral, cognitive and social functioning. Studies have concluded that young children exposed to music or receiving music instruction had the ability to detect pitch variations in both music and language better than those children who had not learned music.

MR: Music is often framed as a completely separate field of learning. However, there are so many "cross-functional" tendencies, or transferrable skills, between musical learning and other subject areas in a classroom. How can we relate music and movement to Montessori, specifically?

MH: The Montessori child is very accustomed to movement through work. One only needs to observe the child at work in the many Montessori daily exercises of rolling and unrolling a small rug, setting the table, or silently carrying a bell upright with extended arms to see that all exercises engage the whole body while perfecting one movement after another. Creative movement and music is an enjoyable way for young children to develop these physical skills while using their imaginations to expressively communicate through body movements. All the senses are engaged when children explore and discover different aspects of movement, and these activities can be used to enhance most areas of learning. The Montessori environment is arranged to accommodate the natural functions of childhood learning through the freedom of movement and activity. The wide array of music and movement opportunities for the child supports this style of learning. Educators can encourage overall healthy growth activities for young children by developing an enriched and challenging environment.

MR: In the year 2000, you created the *Montessori Mozarts* program, a uniquely organized step-by-step music learning process with materials. How can it be integrated with the Montessori Method, and what types of musical concepts are introduced to children at the early childhood level?

MH: This music approach was designed for the non-music educator. It consists of a prepared musical environment, containing materials and activities that stimulate the curiosity of the children, allowing them to learn through discovery. Ideally, children will attend the program for a full three years. Initially, the child is introduced to a repertoire of songs, which are the basis for rhythmic exercises involving motor skills. Lessons are sequenced to teach concepts of pitch, dynamics, duration, timbre, and form. They accent the positive while refining the young child's listening, vocal, fine motor and gross motor skills. Musical concepts are taught at the child's learning level and emphasis is placed on accuracy of basic skills to provide a solid foundation for further musical growth. As times and ideas advance, many educators and parents are considering the kind of education needed to become responsible and productive members of a global society. Such rich opportunities must include the arts.

MR: Thank you again for your invaluable insight on music in early childhood, with a Montessori twist. Do you have concluding thoughts for readers?

MH: The power of music stretches far beyond the interchange with language, math, and reading. Music uniquely enhances higher brain functions. Music is the soul of creativity, promoting individuality, improved self-esteem and social skills. Music is the language of feelings with the power to communicate profound emotions. Music is what makes us unique as human beings.



AMERICAN MONTESSORI SOCIETY
education that transforms lives

Here's a friendly reminder about the conference taking place at the end of this month!

Theme: Unity in Diversity

Date: March 27 – 30, 2014

Location: Hilton Anatole, Dallas, TX

Anna Marquardt, Charlotte Wood-Wilson, and Kathy Carey are presenters at the conference. Be sure to stop by the OCU Montessori program booth. Representatives on hand will have information about OCU's Montessori Teacher Education program. Visit www.amshq.org for more information about the event.

PULITZER PRIZE-WINNING POET TO VISIT OCU

Presented as part of the Thatcher Hoffman Smith Poetry Series

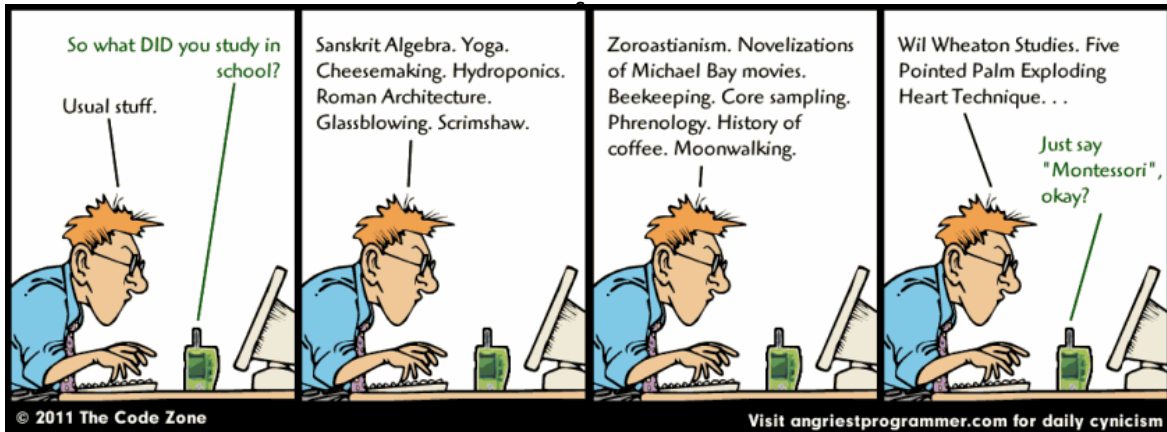


Date: Wednesday, April 2nd

Location: Kerr McGee Auditorium (Meinders School of Business, NW 27th St. & McKinley Ave.)

Join Pulitzer prize-winner recipient and author of three poetry books, **Tracy K. Smith**, as she leads the Connecting Through Poetry workshop, an open mike session, and a special reading presentation. This visit is made possible through the Center for Interpersonal Studies through Film and Literature, the center's director **Dr. Harbour Winn**, and by a grant through the Oklahoma Humanities Council. Dr. Winn is also the Montessori program's instructor for Psychological Bases of Learning and Guiding Young Children. Visit www.okcu.edu/film-lit/ for information.

WHY CHOOSE MONTESSORI? OH, THE POSSIBILITIES...



Dec. 2011 (Comic courtesy of The Code Zone at www.angriestprogrammer.com)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

WELCOME BACK from Spring Break!

Students, check your intern handbooks for final dates and wrap-ups with your examiner and assignments.

As the year winds down, good luck to all graduating! ☺

JOIN US ON APRIL 18th

Intern Project Presentations



This event is an annual showcase of the Montessori students' year-long projects!

Presentations will take place at the Walker Center at OCU, Rm. 151 from 6-8 p.m. Interns are asked to arrive between 5:15-5:30 p.m. to set up. Refreshments will be served. Open to public and free of charge.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

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ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER

This publication serves as a platform for current students and alumni to communicate ideas, share experiences and stay in touch with colleagues. If you have any questions, comments or feedback, please write to us at Montessori@okcu.edu.