Observation
The Key to Unlocking the Child’s Potential

A NAMTA Conference
Golden, CO
November 5–8, 2015

Honoring Hilla Patell
From the Montessori point of view, the purpose of observation could be thought of as the cornerstone of our work. It is the indispensable part which makes our work come alive and become meaningful. It is a tool which enables us to follow the child’s spontaneous manifestations not with the aim of studying the psychology of the child, but in order to refine our own thinking and understanding so as to be able to give the life of the child the help that it has the right to receive. ...

In order to be objective we should not allow our perception to become clouded by personal preferences and prejudices, nor by personal expectations. It is a real struggle when one is trying to be objective not to allow past experiences to overshadow the observation of the moment ... A useful practical discipline for oneself while observing is to keep awareness in the present—this simple but effective technique allows us to gather the necessary information without judging, assuming, labeling situations or individuals or reacting to situations.

—Hilla Patell, AMI Trainer Emeritus, Phoenix, Arizona, 1989
An Italian proverb states, “To him that watches, everything is revealed.” Our work with children is not a teaching method but rather a method that is based on deep and sustained observation. Dr. Montessori’s most profound discoveries were based on her scientific observations of children as they freely interacted with their environment in a meaningful way. Many discoveries and inventions that are attributed to genius actually germinate through observation coupled with patience and accurate interpretation. This conference will examine the nature and importance of observation across the planes of development. Montessori trainers Molly O’Shaughnessy, Greg MacDonald, Hilla Patell, Karey Lontz, and AMI Montessori Orientation to Adolescent Studies presenter Linda Davis will explore the unique observation practices from birth to adolescence. They will consider the tools that support observation, obstacles to effective observation, guidelines for creating focused observations, and how to use observation notes for planning, evaluating, and guiding the children’s development across the planes.

**Thursday, November 5, 2015**

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.  
Registration

**Friday, November 6, 2015**

8:00 – 9:00 a.m.  
Registration

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.  
The Observation Artist  
*Molly O’Shaughnessy*

10:00 – 10:30 a.m.  
Break
Psychological Characteristics of the Planes that Create the Context for Observation
Karey Lontz, Molly O’Shaughnessy, Greg MacDonald, and Linda Davis

Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Breakouts (choose one workshop for both Friday and Saturday)

A. Observations: From the Abstract to the Concrete (Part I)
Molly O’Shaughnessy

Becoming an “observation artist” requires operating from both a spiritual and scientific mindset. This two-part series will delve into the scientific and practical aspects of observing. It will include the following:

- The Examination of the Main Features of the Four Stages of Normalization as Observed by Dr. Montessori
- View the Stages through DVD Clips
- Learn Observation Codes
- How to Create Work Curves to Understand Each Child’s True Interest

B. Becoming a Scientific Observer: Part I
Greg MacDonald

Let us define our purpose as “to support the self-construction of every child in our care.” Maria Montessori proposed that the Montessori adult should observe scientifically to fulfill this purpose. This two-day sequence of presentations will provide deepened insight into the process of self-construction. Techniques and strategies will be offered to enhance the ability of Montessori elementary guides in becoming scientific observers.

- The Many Facets of Self-Construction
- Observation: Learning from Naturalists (*Hugo de Vries*)
- Observation: Learning from Educators and Psychologists
- Observation and the Scientific Method
- Observation: Techniques for the Montessori Prepared Environment
C. What Are We Observing and How? (Part I)
Linda Davis

This breakout includes video clips, small group discussions, and handouts on characteristics and valorization.
- Individual Development (Interpreting Behavior in Terms Characteristics)
- Development as a Group Member (Concrete Signs of Valorization)
- The Environment

D. Observation: A Practice That Must Be Practiced (Part I)
Karey Lontz

Observation is a natural tendency for all human beings. It is an innate ability, yet it must be practiced in order to develop its potential. In the first part of this series we will:
- Explore Montessori’s Use of Observation in Understanding Human Development
- Use Discussion to Examine How Observation Is a Human Necessity
- Define Scientific Observation: The Benefits and the Obstacles to Its Practice
- View Observation Videos to Dispel Common Misconceptions about Young Children

Saturday, November 7, 2015

9:00 – 10:00 a.m.
Interview with Hilla Patell on the History of Observation
Molly O’Shaughnessy

10:00 – 10:20 a.m.
Question and Answer Session
Hilla Patell

10:20 – 11:00 a.m.
Break

11:00 – 11:40 a.m.
Observation: The Road Home
Molly O’Shaughnessy
Saturday, November 7, 2015, continued

11:40 a.m. – Noon
Presentation Honoring Hilla Patell

Noon – 1:30 p.m.
Lunch

1:30 – 4:30 p.m.
Breakouts continue from Friday

A. Observation: From the Abstract to the Concrete (Part II)
Molly O’Shaughnessy
- How to Plan Based on Your Observations
- Establishing Systems for Record Keeping
- Errors and Their Corrections – Friendliness with Error

B. Becoming a Scientific Observer: Part II
Greg MacDonald
- Introducing Work Curves for the Montessori Elementary
- Observation Codes and Records
- The Observation Process for Work Curves
- Creating Work Curves for Montessori Elementary Children
- Observation and Work Curve Analysis

C. Who Is Observing? (Part II)
Linda Davis
This breakout will include observation exercises and small group discussions.
- Individual Teacher (objectivity; personal growth)
- As a Team of Adults (working together for the students)
- The Adolescent Themselves (role of metacognition)

D. Observation: A Practice That Must Be Practiced (Part II)
Karey Lontz
- Identify Our Own Needs in Order to Understand and Help Children Satisfy Theirs
- Learn How to Keep an Observation Photo Journal
- Discuss and Practice How to Interact and Observe
- Using Observation in the Prepared Environment: Lesson Planning and Record Keeping
Observation: The Key to Unlocking the Child’s Potential

Sunday, November 8, 2015

9:00 – 10:30 a.m.

Whole School Policy for Observation and Documentation

Break-Out Discussions with Conference Speakers

Golden, Colorado

NAMTA’s Featured Conference Guest

Hilla Patell is a board member and Montessori pedagogue at the Maria Montessori Institute. The holder of an AMI 3–6 diploma, and the AMI primary trainers certificate, Mrs. Patell joined the training staff of the Maria Montessori Training Organization in London in 1962 and co-directed the course with Miss Muriel Dwyer and later accepted the appointment as director of training, which she held until 1989. Mrs. Patell is an AMI examiner and has travelled extensively conducting oral examinations at AMI affiliated training centers on all four continents where AMI is active. She has been a board member of the World Education Fellowship and the International Women’s Council.
Conference Speakers

Linda Davis joined the Seton Montessori Institute Elementary in Illinois as the teacher education program coordinator with a primary focus on elementary. Linda Davis completed her first Montessori teacher training in 1971 and has worked in Montessori environments with students aging in ranges 3–6, 6–9, 9–12, and 12–15.

Karey M. Lontz is the associate director for The Montessori Institute in Denver. She holds AMI diplomas for the 0–3 and 3–6 levels. She has a bachelor’s degree in advertising from The University of Georgia and a master’s in education from Loyola University. She has been working in the Montessori community since 1998 and has Montessori teaching and administration experience in private schools, early head start, and AMI teacher training. She is qualified as an AMI examiner and international trainer.

Greg MacDonald is the director of elementary training at the Montessori Institute of San Diego. Greg has 19 years of broad experience as a public school elementary teacher, AMI primary and elementary teacher, and principal of both traditional and Montessori schools. He has been training AMI elementary teachers for over 20 years. Greg has worked with adult students since 1993 in the United States, Canada, Italy, Japan, Switzerland, Germany, and Mexico.

Molly O’Shaughnessy is the executive director and director of primary training at the Montessori Center of Minnesota. She earned her AMI primary diploma from Montessori Center in 1976 and holds an M.Ed from Loyola University, Maryland. Since 1996 she has provided strategic leadership for the Montessori Center of Minnesota, serving as the director of training and executive director as well as community faculty for Metropolitan State University and adjunct faculty for St. Catherine’s University in St. Paul. Molly serves on the boards of AMI and NAMTA and is a long-time member of the AMI trainers group.
Observation: The Key to Unlocking the Child’s Potential

Hotel

Denver Marriott West
1717 Denver West Boulevard
Golden, Colorado 80401
Reservations: 303-279-9100

Denver Marriott West, Golden, CO, is conveniently located near Colorado Mills Mall, and is surrounded by views of the Rocky Mountains. Guestrooms offer luxurious bedding and flexible work spaces with ergonomic chairs. On-site amenities include a fitness center, indoor and seasonal outdoor pool, and complimentary wireless Internet in public areas and guest rooms.

Reserve your room by **Thursday, October 15, 2015** to receive the conference rate of $95 per night.

Transportation

The closest airport to the Denver Marriott West is Denver International Airport (DEN), approximately 35 miles southwest.

Transportation options from the airport to the hotel include:

- **Super Shuttle**: Fee is $45 USD one way and reservations are required. To reserve your space call 1-800-258-3826 or visit [http://www.supershuttle.com/Locations/DenverDEN](http://www.supershuttle.com/Locations/DenverDEN)
- **Taxi**: Fare is approximately $90 USD one way.

Driving directions: Take I-70 West to Exit 263. Exit right from the off ramp at the light. Then left at the first light. The hotel is then on the left.

Additional transportation and driving directions may be found at this link: [http://www.marriott.com/hotels/maps/travel/denwe-denver-marriott-west/](http://www.marriott.com/hotels/maps/travel/denwe-denver-marriott-west/)
A NAMTA Conference in Golden, CO

Registration

Register by October 22 for early registration rates!

NAMTA member tuition fee:  ❑ $300 (❑ $315 after October 22)
Non-member tuition fee: ❑ $360 (❑ $375 after October 22)

Tuition fees include Saturday and Sunday luncheons. Choose one:
❑ Non-Vegetarian       ❑ Vegetarian

Choose one workshop for both Friday and Saturday:
❑ A. Observation: From the Abstract to the Concrete
❑ B. Becoming the Scientific Observer
❑ C. What Are We Observing and How? / Who Is Observing?
❑ D. Observation: A Practice That Must Be Practiced

Name: _________________________________________________________
Phone : _________________________ Email: _________________________
Address: _______________________________________________________
City:_____________________State/Province: _______ Postal Code: ______
Country: ___________ Name of Your School: ________________________

Payment options:
❑ Check or money order enclosed
  Must be payable in U.S. currency and drawn on a U.S. bank.
❑ Visa; ❑ MasterCard; ❑ Am Ex; ❑ Discover
  Please indicate credit card type and fill out the information below.
Card Number: __________________________________________________
Name on Card:  _________________________________________________
Expiration Date: _______ 3- or 4-digit Authorization Code:_________
(month/year)           (found on front of AmEx, back of other cards)
Address:  _______________________________________________________
City:___________________________________ State/Province: __________
Postal Code: ____________________________ Country: ________________

Join NAMTA and register for this workshop online at:
www.montessori-namta.org

Denver Marriott West • 1-303-279-9100
Use this form to join NAMTA or renew your membership. Membership is for individuals only. No schools, please. You must provide an e-mail address to receive The NAMTA Bulletin and member mailings.

- U.S. Resident ............................................................................❑ $50
- Outside U.S. ........................................................................... ❑ $60
- Lifetime ......................................................................................❑ $600
- The NAMTA Directory (not included with membership)..........❑ $18
- NAMTA’s Online Bibliography (see description below) ..........❑ $10
- Total Enclosed ............................................................................$______

Return by January 15, 2016, to have your name listed in The NAMTA Directory. ❑ Check here if you do not want your name listed.

The NAMTA Online Montessori Bibliography is a searchable database of Montessori articles. Copies of articles are available for a fee.

Last Name: ___________________________First Name:______________________
Address: _____________________________________________________________
City:_________________________________________________________________
State/Province: ______________ Postal Code: ___________Country:
Name of Your School: __________________________________________________
Phone : ____________________________ Email: ___________________________

If you are a new member, please list your Montessori training information:
Location:  _________________________________________  Affiliation:  _______
Date of Diploma:  ______________________________Level of Course:  _______

Current Montessori Status:    ❑ Administrator ❑ Guide (Teacher) ❑ Trainee
                               ❑ Assistant ❑ Parent ❑ Program Coordinator

Payment Options
❑ Check or money order: payable in U.S. currency and drawn on a U.S. bank.
❑ Visa ❑ MasterCard ❑ AmEx ❑ Discover (complete the information below)
Card Number: ________________________________________________________
Name on Card: ________________________________________________________
Expiration Date:___________________ 3- or 4-digit Authorization Code: ________
(month/year)          (found on front of AmEx, back of other cards)
Address:  _____________________________________________________________
Street address where credit card bills are sent.
City:_______________________________________ State/Province: _____________
Postal Code:_________________________________________ Country:_____________
Make your hotel reservations by **October 15, 2015** to receive the NAMTA workshop rate!