



AMI/USA Administrators meeting 12/9/2020

To share strategies, questions, and concerns regarding the COVID-19 outbreak, school closings and reopening, and remote learning among AMI/USA Administrators.

AGENDA

1. Ayize Sabater, AMI/USA Executive Director, introduction.
2. Lisa Thauvette, of [Tilt Think Consulting and Improv](#), has merged Montessori and improvisational play by creating community games focused on collaboration, mindfulness, and empathy. Lisa has her AMI elementary teacher diploma and Master of Education from Loyola College and served as Head of School at International Montessori for eleven years. She coaches, consults, and delivers professional development trainings to Montessori schools nationally and internationally.
3. Samantha Levine, AMI/USA Director of Events, free-giveaway and updates regarding the 2021 Montessori Experience.

MEETING NOTES

Welcome all! We are so glad that you could join us! Ayize Sabater introduces the meeting as his first time as the AMI/USA Executive Director. We look forward to bringing a bit of joy and ideas for online games and engagement for AMI/USA administrators.
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Lisa introduces herself and her experiences as a Montessori teacher, administrator and with a comedic improv group and how she got started in improv. She found that Montessori and improv share so much, especially as we look at what is happening in the brain, what we are working towards with children, staff and in our community.

We are beings that have emotions and instincts that get lit on fire. You can see this with our little two-year-olds all the way up to our teenagers, where we see a tantrum or a see a crisis happening, and we are helping that child move from that part of the brain to their logic and to their reason, so we can get to problem solving and decision making. And we know that what that link between crisis mode and logic, is connection and empathy.

So, we don't talk about solutions at that point, we are going to talk about the emotions the child is experiencing and make a connection with empathy. Through those words, we see the child relaxing and now we know we can have this discussion, this is the logical mind. In improv, in a very artful way, we are doing something very similar. There is no script, there is no idea what is about to happen - which would put a lot of us into that into that reptilian crisis brain. And we know the way we are going to get out of this and have a magical moment and tell a beautiful story on the spot, is to connect with each other on stage, and look our partner in the eye, and relax and
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go into flow. We are going to figure this out together because I am going to listen to you, I know I am not building this all by myself, I've got my partner, and so we relax and are open for anything to happen.

Let's play some games, you don't need to worry about being funny or able to improv on the spot, we will work together, create together, to laugh together and to have joy together. If you have an open mind that we can trust each other and just let loose, then we can have some fun together.

“Show Yourself If...”.

In this game, everyone turns their video off.

The leader asks a series of questions starting with “Show Yourself If...”

For whomever the statement is true, they turn on their video.

Questions asked:

- Show yourself if you drink tea over coffee.
- Show yourself if you are left handed.
- Show yourself if you have a scar on one of your knees.
- Show yourself if you have sworn in the past twenty-four hours.
- Show yourself if you can roll your tongue into a tube.
- Show yourself if you were born in the month of December.

Variations – take turns asking questions.

In-person – Group stands in a circle. The phrase becomes, “Step forward if...” All whom the statement is true then steps forward.

The group gets to learn about each other and learn what you have in common, or is extra-ordinary about each other.

Three things

This game is about unfiltered association where we can get a lot of ideas without that self-critic saying “that's not a good idea” just to generate ideas.

Create an order of play which allows the group to know who goes next. For example, it could be using alphabetical order by first name. The first person (A) says the name of the next person in the alphabet (B) and says, “Sue, Three things on a table,” (or any category). Player B then lists very quickly three things related to the category. It does not need to be ‘right’, it just needs to be quick. Player B might say, “chocolate, a plate, crumbs!” The whole group then claps two times and says in unison, “Three Things!”. Player B now says the name of the next person in the alphabet and gives a new category. “Three things living on a dog.” Note: it's best not to use the word ‘you’ in this game, i.e.: “Three things you find on your table.” This becomes too specific and can slow the association down.

The game begins!

Lisa calls Susan names and says “three things you find in a bank vault” and everybody claps twice and says “three things”. Susan calls Cathryn and says “three things you have in your garden”, everybody claps twice and says “three things”. Cathryn calls Ayize and says “three things you have in your front room”, everybody claps twice and says “three things”. Ayize calls James and says “three things you have in your freezer”, everybody claps twice and says “three things”. James calls Shazia and says “three things you bring to the beach”, everybody claps and says “three things”.

Variations:

- In-person, the group stands in a circle and passes the category and the list in circle order (versus alphabetically). The clapping and energy should be high and quick!
- Can go to five things, versus 3 things.
- For older students or adult players, the categories can be more abstract, such as “Three things that are illegal”, “Three things that represent freedom”, etc.
- For leaders, the categories can be related to problems and solutions. For example, “Three ways to unclog a toilet”, “Three things you want to say to a difficult parent”, etc.

The idea is not to make real solutions, but to shake up the thinking—resulting in ridiculous solutions, or surprisingly real ones.

Dance Party

Music is shared through the facilitator’s computer audio. Everybody freely moves/dances to the music. The facilitator will then show a name card of one of the players, and also says the person’s name. This person is now the leader of the group. Everyone then watches that one person and copies their movement. The person leading the dance is making the dance easy and fun for the group. After several seconds, the facilitator shows another name card (also saying the name), and now the group has a new leader.

Variations:

- In-person there is a group of 5 – 6 dancers who stand in a diamond, facing the audience. Four of the dancers are at the points of the diamond and 1 – 2 dancers are in the middle. Each point of the diamond takes a turn leading the dance by physically turning a new direction. So, if everyone is facing toward the audience then there is one person ‘in front’ (top of the diamond) and is now the leader that everyone follows. When this person turns to the right, then the person who is at the lead point to the right is now the new leader. This is called a Diamond Dance.
- Online you can have everyone choose a physical activity and do this movement (cutting cucumber, folding clothes, driving a car). Start the music and ask everyone to keep their activity but turn it into a dance. Now you have exaggerated and graceful actions. Tell everyone to now watch one person and to copy their actions. In some instances, the group all starts to do the same action.

Introduce different types of music and cultures, and to enjoy one another.

Slow motion

The leader conveys a situation such as “friends from long ago, each other for the first time”. Players silently and in slow motion enact the scene, while music plays.

Suggestions (online or in person):

- Greet a friend after a long time (2 players)
- Greet a very friendly dog (2 players)
- Giving a gift (2 players)
- Bowling a strike (2 players)
- Reading horrible news (2 players)
- Sprint Finish (4 – 8 players)
- Tug o War (4 – 8 players)

Object matching

This is only played online. Three to four people volunteer to play this game. One of the players will be the leader. The leader finds something in their environment that is unique. The leader shows their object and describes it (physical, meaning, function, sentimental value, etc.). The 2 –

3 other players now have 10 seconds to go into their own environment and find something that 'matches' the leader's object. The leader will count down out loud from 10, when everyone should be back with their object. The players will then, one-by-one, explain why their found object exactly matches the leader's object using justification in creative and fun ways. The leader will then choose whose object best matches their own.

[List of Games shared by Lisa](#)

Thanks to all of the players! Remember if you are having fun, the group has fun – the secret to improv. We hope that these games and activities will be useful for you!

Gifts Giveaway

- [The Red Corolla: Montessori Cosmic Education \(for ages 3-6+\)](#) by Susan Mayclin Stephenson
- [No Checkmate, Montessori Chess Lessons for Age 3-90+](#) by Susan Mayclin Stephenson
- [Child on the Sea of life pin](#), placed in a faux velvet purple bag.

The 2021 *Virtual* Montessori Experience!

The year 2020 has been full of *transitions* — on a local, national and global scale. Many of these transitions have required unfathomable feats of *adaptability*. Join us February 12-15, 2021 as we explore these two concepts over the course of a weekend in ways that we hope will enrich, encourage and enliven!

Typically, we have a live event, things will be a bit different this year. This year, we are offering some deep dive content at every level, but instead of 9 to 5, we are going to break it up into hour-and-a-half sessions. We really want input your input as administrators on what would be supportive to you. So, the administrators track is in development. We are hoping to incorporate more discussion type elements where you can all come together to discuss experiences. Panel discussions also offered incorporating voices of guides, administrators, trainers, and heads of school.

We are grateful to be partnering with a number of experienced and dynamic speakers, including Ann Velasco, Tiffany Liddell, Andrea Fleener and many more! This year's event will be available at the lowest rate ever – AMI/USA Members can get an all-access pass starting at \$159. Details and registration information coming soon.

Thank you to all who were able to attend! Please feel free to share topics and suggestions for future meetings and requests for support needed.

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