The way that children learn shapes who they become.

I visited an Upper Elementary classroom today. Six children were clustered around their teacher who was presenting a lesson in adding and subtracting decimal numbers. The students were manipulating pieces on the decimal board and practicing reading large decimal numbers.

The rest of the children were working in pairs or individually at tables around the room.

Two were drawing a chart of the sun and planets. We had a conversation about the relative sizes and distances in the solar system and the impossibility of representing that accurately on a single piece of paper.

Two others were counting the number of syllables in a list of words. I showed them how clapping out the syllables makes it easier for me.
Employers can look for ways to amplify employees’ sense of control over their work, schedule, and environment.

What does this tell us about the Post Oak difference? That even when doing work that is “assigned,” Post Oak students are given choices that grant them a sense of control. Though everyone will read the same chapter of Texas history, each will choose his own projects to follow up, each will feel a sense of ownership of the work and shape it to reflect his interests. They will have a choice of whether to do the work now or later; whether to do the work with a partner or alone; whether to sit here or there; whether to make a map or draw an illustration. Offering these choices, within a framework of adult expectations, increases student satisfaction and happiness. As a Post Oak grad said at Alumni Night, “I really valued the TRUST that the teachers had in me.”

The act of making choices also helps students learn to plan for themselves, and to develop the “executive functioning skills (EF’s)” critical for success in the adult world.

Sometimes parents look at our classrooms and think of their child, and of their own school experience, and say, “I think my child needs more structure.”

What does “more structure” mean? Every student doing the same thing at the same time under the direction of the teacher. Less choice. Less sense of control. Less personal satisfaction. Lost opportunities to develop executive functioning skills.

The way children learn helps shape who they become—even when they are learning the same content.
Spelling Sensations

The Post Oak Upper Elementary Spelling Bee took place on Friday, January 11. After many rounds, a grade six student in Debbie Nickerson’s class, won the bee by spelling the word “insurrection,” and a grade four student from Errol Pinto’s class, was the runner up. will continue on to represent Post Oak in the Houston PBS Spelling Bee, which is the qualifying bee for 42 Texas counties leading up to the Scripps National Spelling Bee.

The last round words were statistician, emulate, disingenuous, and salinity.

FRIDAY NIGHT FEVER

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 1, 2013
POST OAK’S BIENNIAL GALA FUNDRAISER

WHAT ARE YOU WEARING TO GALA?
Seventies? Sequins? Soirée attire?
If you missed the 70s trunk show, there is one more on FRIDAY, JAN. 25 from 1–7 P.M. If you are looking for something fun to wear or are interested in vintage clothes in general, come check it out.

Marci Rosenberg, Refreshed Couture
7324 Southwest Freeway, Suite 340

GET YOUR RSVPs IN!
If you want to be seated with specific individuals, please let us know by writing that on the back of the RSVP card.

Need a card?
Pick one up at the front desk.

If you would like a VEGETARIAN, KOSHER, or other Dietary Restriction meal at the Gala, please email christinacantu@postoakschool.org

Post Oak's Biennial Gala Fundraiser
**GALA WINE RAFFLE**

These three handpicked wine offerings will appeal to all wine enthusiasts, from the novice to the connoisseur. Each wine offering will be raffled off the night of the Gala. Buy a $50 raffle ticket that night for a chance to win the wine package of your choice. Or buy three raffle tickets for a chance to win all three!

Note: IRS regulations require tax information to be submitted for raffle winnings over $600. Each wine package has a value over $1,300.

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**THE COLLECTOR**
Donated by: The Post Oak Dads’ Club

One case of wine. Each bottle is unique and represents a winery that’s highly sought after and highly respected by those who follow the industry. The twelve bottles include champagne, port, red and white wines from around the world.

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**THE EXPANDER**
Donated by: The Post Oak Dads’ Club

Two cases of wine. Unique wines that have been discovered by those “wine geeks” that will help the novice collector branch out into new wineries and regions. There are some duplicate wines in this lot.

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**THE IMPRESSER**
Donated by: The Post Oak Dads’ Club

Three cases of wine. All good value for the money. These wines are for the host/hostess who wants to impress their guests without feeling overwhelmed trying to navigate through the endless valleys of wineries. There are several duplicates in this lot.

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**Gala Program**

6:00 p.m.
Cocktails and Silent Auction

7:00 p.m.
Viewing of Class Art Projects (cocktails continue)

7:45 p.m.
Dinner Announcement

8:00 p.m.
Seated Dinner

9:00 p.m.
Program and Live Auction, Silent Auction closes at commencement of Live Auction.

Big Board Finale

10:15 p.m.
You should be dancing!

10:15 p.m.
Auction Check-out

Midnight

Good Night

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**IMPORTANT DATES**

**FOR SILENT AUCTION SIGN-UP ITEMS**

Feb. 22 - Kids’ Disco Party with the Waters

March 2 - “American Girl” Tea Party & Portraits with Samantha Wycoff

March 3 - Tour de Taco (bike tour with John Reed, John Powell, André Marshall, Lou Waters)

March 9–15 - Cabo San Lucas

April 5 - Bhangra Night with the Marshalls and Waters

April 6 - Final Four on the Big Screen with the Samuels

April 12 - Girls’ Design a Bedroom with Jenny Marshall

April 13 - Press-Hugg & Lu Mediterranean Dinner

April 17 - Loya’s Girls’ Night Out

April 19 - BBVA Compass Movie Night at Post Oak

April 20 - Symphony with the Busbys

April 27 - Dinner and Wine Tasting with the Saunders

May 4 - Dining Al Fresco with the Styles

May 10 - Kluk/Sood Pajama Night at Post Oak

May 11 - Miriam & Monica’s Tea Party for Primary

May 16 - Yates Food Truck Party

June 2–15 or July 21–26 Camp Balcones Springs
A WEEK IN DEER VALLEY
Donated by: The Gray/Wawro Family

“The gorgeous views, spacious accommodations, fabulous deck, and easy access to all the amenities in Park City, make this home a perfect getaway for your family and friends. We had a spectacular week!”
Jian Short (2011)

Spend a glorious week in Deer Valley, Utah. This 5,700 square-foot custom home boasts 5 bedrooms with a spacious master suite and 5-plus bathrooms. Enjoy the spectacular views of Deer Valley ski runs outside and the outstanding collection of contemporary artwork inside. You’ll be less than 40 minutes from Salt Lake City and a short three-minute drive to the slopes.

Restriction: Mutually agreed upon date; non-smokers.

SAN MIGUEL DE ALLENDE
Donated by: The Hetherington Family

A glorious escape awaits you and your closest friends/family in breathtaking San Miguel. Casa Cc is a 5 bedroom home which sleeps 10 and overlooks the Centro historico of San Miguel de Allende. Spend 6 nights and 7 days in total escape. To help make the most of your vacation, the home includes a staff of one cook and two housekeepers so you can enjoy all the luxuries with none of the responsibilities.

Restrictions: Adults and children over 13 only; mutually agreed upon date; not available June 1–August 15, Christmas, and New Year’s.

CABO SAN LUCAS
Donated by: Dana and Russel Morris

Spend Spring Break in Cabo with a 6 night stay in a 3 bedroom, 3½ bathroom home with private pool and hot tub in Cabo San Lucas. The house is in Montecristo Estates with access and use of their two nearby luxury resorts Pueblo Bonito Sunset Beach and Pacifica, their restaurants, spa, and other facilities. Check out www.pbmontecristoestates.com.

Restrictions: Available March 9–15, 2013 only.

COOKING WITH CHEF MONICA POPE
Donated by: Chef Monica Pope

Ten guests join Chef Monica Pope for a private cooking demonstration and seated dinner in your home. National sensation and Best Chef winner (2009), Chef Pope will prepare and serve a five-course local market dinner just for you!

Restrictions: Must be scheduled three weeks in advance, excluding Friday and Saturday, and subject to Chef Monica Pope’s schedule. Beverages not included.

COOKING THERAPY WITH CHEF MONICA POPE
Donated by: Chef Monica Pope

Everybody needs a little therapy! There’s nothing better than therapy where you cook, eat, drink, and laugh. This is a private, two hour, hands-on adult cooking class for 10 with Chef Monica Pope at her restaurant, Sparrow Bar + Cookshop, featuring three recipes that you help make . . . and enjoy!

We’ll pair your recipes with Monica’s favorite wine or specialty cocktail.

Restrictions: Must be scheduled three weeks in advance, excluding Friday and Saturday, and subject to Chef Monica Pope’s schedule.

GOLF WITH VOICE OF THE TEXANS
Donated by: Houstonian Golf Club, Marc Vandermeer

Marc Vandermeer, Voice of the Texans, joins your golf foursome! Marc Vandermeer has been the Houston Texans’ play-by-play announcer since the team’s inception and has been a fixture on Houston sports talk radio for the past decade as part of the top rated morning drive time show. Whether you want to hash out the last season, talk about the upcoming one, or just shoot the breeze, this item is perfect for you and your friends or clients.

Restrictions: Valid Monday–Thursday, excluding holidays; cart fees are included; mutually agreed upon date.

A BOOK OF PRICELESS MEMORIES
Donated by: Jian Short

Post Oak parent, Jian Short, will custom make a very special hardcover photo book of lasting memories of your child(ren) at school. Book is 40 pages, up to 8 x 10 in size, delivered by December, 2013.

AARON PARAZETTE ARTWORK
Donated by: Aaron Parazette

Texas Artist of the Year, Aaron Parazette offers GoGo (2012), a unique ink jet work of art. Artwork on display. 24 x 20 inches.

SHARON ENGELSTEIN ARTWORK
Donated by: Sharon Engelstein

Local artist, Sharon Engelstein, offers Foot with Minerals (2012), a ceramic and calcite sculpture. Artwork on display. 14 x 4 x 2 inches.

See The Weekly Post on Feb. 1 for more info on these two nationally-known artists.

CUSTOM PHOTO ART BY JOHN LONG
Donated by: John Long

John Long will create a personalized original work of art that your family will treasure for many years. Mr. Long begins the process by taking individual photo portraits of you and your partner and/or your children. The images are then woven into a unique creation, something that your family will cherish for generations.
Post Oak Alums Are Life-Long Learners

Last week, 10 former students came back to share their experience of life and learning after Post Oak. We are grateful to all our alumni who took the time to come answer questions and offer their thoughts on the value of the school and Montessori in their lives. Thanks to alumna and Post Oak parent Alison Wong for taking on the role of co-moderator for the evening with High School Director James Moudry. Below are our panelists and a glimpse of where they are now:

Josh Brenner (2009) – Josh is a senior at St. John's School. He is involved in Quizbowl and feels that his Montessori education taught him to pursue his interests, namely science.

Payal Chana – Former student and current Post Oak parent, Payal attended Bellaire High School and Vanderbilt University where she received a Bachelor of Engineering and majored in biomedical engineering. She then attended the Jones School at Rice University where she received her MBA. Over the years, Payal has enjoyed dancing and swimming, spent time volunteering in public schools teaching science and math, and worked with a crisis hotline in Houston. She believes that a Montessori education at Post Oak fosters independence. Payal says, “When I walked into Post Oak for the first time in years (when applying for my son) it was surreal. I was remembering the past (activities as well as thoughts I had at that age) as I walked through the hallways, I was in the present moment listening to Vivian speak about Post Oak, listening to the parents’ question/answer session, and I was thinking about my son's future here ... all these thoughts happening simultaneously.”

Jeffrey Davis (2008) – Jeffrey graduated from Episcopal High School and is a freshman in the Cockrell School of Engineering at the University of Texas at Austin.

Masoud Darvishi – Masoud graduated from Clements High School in Sugar
Primary Parent/Child Night
Thursday, February 7

Group 1: 5–6 p.m.
Group 2: 6:15–7:15 p.m.

This is an evening when children bring their parents to school and demonstrate to them the work they do during the day. Childcare is available; call the front desk to make a reservation.

Land and received his Bachelor of Arts in Government and History from the University of Texas at Austin. He received his Juris Doctor from South Texas College of Law. Masoud practices law in Houston and is a founding and current member of Young Alumni Council at South Texas College of Law. Montessori taught Masoud that balance in life is paramount.

Tyler Goff (2004) – Tyler graduated from Episcopal High School in 2008. She currently attends the University of Houston where she is studying geology and involved in Kappa Alpha Theta sorority. Tyler believes that the opportunity to be independent and achieve by your own will, philosophies championed in a Montessori environment, is an incredible gift to a developing mind that should never be taken for granted. Tyler says, “The support that Post Oak gave my family during extremely hard times when my sister Jessica was sick helped us more than anyone will ever know, and I will appreciate that for the rest of my life.”

Tom Harvey (2008) – Tom graduated from St. John’s School and is currently a freshman at Notre Dame.

BenMaan I. Jawdat (2002) – Ben attended Episcopal High School and Emory University (B.A.) where he graduated in 2010 with High Honors in Physics. Ben is currently working on his PhD in Physics at the University of Houston. Ben feels that a Montessori education encourages curiosity.

Gaby Posada (2009) – Gaby is a senior at Kinkaid and is currently applying to college.

Lou Posada (2008) – Lou graduated from Kinkaid and is a freshman in the Honors College at the University of Houston studying biomedical engineering.

Nikhil Schneider (2008) – Nikhil graduated from Episcopal High School and is a freshman in the Honors College at the University of Houston. Nikhil is studying science.
High School J-Term—What Is That?

by James Moudry, High School Director

Each January (hence the J in J-Term), Post Oak High School students have the opportunity to participate in courses that they help design. The ideas for the courses come from both students and faculty members. The courses are collaboratively designed by a small group of students with a faculty member.

The goals of the J-Term experience are for students to take on increased responsibility for their own learning. Creating a path of study is challenging work and it calls on students to consider content, timing, field work, assessment, and budgeting. The faculty facilitator for each course supports the students in their work ensuring a successful course experience for everyone. After J-Term, the students enrolled in each course will present a summary of their course experience to the school.

The work involves a complete course including class work, field experiences, and assessments. The courses are opportunities for students to pursue topics that connect directly with their interests. The student suggestions are developed over several weeks in November and December. Planning groups meet regularly during this time with their faculty facilitator to lay out the course expectations, experiences, and assessment plan.

This year, there are three J-Term courses:

**EXPLORING HISTORY THROUGH COMPUTER SIMULATIONS**

This course assesses the value of a number of historically-themed games for learning about real historical processes. Students read from the works of influential historians that connect with the games and time periods. After playing and observing the games, pairs of students write up their “history” of the game. Students then do research to find out whether the historical patterns they observe in the games appear realistic in the light of the real historical record. The class culminates with presentations of results and assessments of the value of popular video games in modeling real historical events.

**PSYCHOLOGY 101**

In this class, students learn about the basic areas of psychology: personality theory, developmental psychology, animal behavior, social psychology, abnormal psychology, and more. Students choose reading selections and make presentations on the various areas. They learn the basics of psychology research including how to conduct scientific field observation. Museum District experiences take students to The Jung Center, Houston Museum of Natural Science, Rice University’s Fondren Library, and our own main Post Oak campus.

**ENTREPRENEURIAL DESIGN AND PROCESS**

Students in this class work as a collaborative team to design, plan, create, display, and sell a product of their choosing. Each student has a managerial position that covers the design,
budget, assembling, supplies, and public relations aspects of the project. The goal is to produce a line of small products (e.g., small furniture, lamps, stationary, buttons/pins, artwork, etc.) that will be sold either in a local store or displayed in a local gallery. Students are responsible for planning the ideas and starting them on their own. This class is a fun, yet challenging experience of creating and running a small business.
Parenting the Love & Logic Way®

Thursday mornings, 9–10:30 a.m.
Jan. 17, 24, 31, Feb. 7, 14, 21 (6 weeks)
Cost: $20 including workbook

Wednesday evenings, 6:30–8 p.m.
Jan. 16, 23, 30, Feb. 6, 13, 20 (6 weeks)
Cost: $250 per couple, $170 individual
Optional workbook $10
(Discount will be given to Post Oak parents!
Free for prior completion of entire series)

Payment is due at the first class

For more information call Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson at 713-668-6558
or email her at phylistomlinson@gmail.com

Redirecting Children’s Behavior
The Gentle Art of Parenting

Tuesday evenings, Jan. 29, Feb. 5, 12, 19, 26, Mar. 5, 6:30–9 p.m.

Course fee: $235 for one; $335 per couple
(Includes book, workbook and 15 hours of class time)

Taught by Deborah Fry, PhD, CPE
For more information and to register, please call Deborah at 713-840-8663.

Registration for Conferences

Parent/teacher conference scheduling will be available online on Friday, February 8. Conference days are March 22, April 12, and 26 (Infant Community is in session on the 22nd). To sign up for a conference go to www.postoakschool.org ▶ For Parents ▶ Schedule/View a Parent-Teacher Conference and have your login information ready. If you are having problems, please contact the technology director, Mirna Andrade-Salgado at technology@postoakschool.org or 281-822-8063.
LETTERS TO POST OAK COUNSELOR PHYLIS TOMLINSON

ShrinkRap

How do we help children differentiate between secrets that are okay to keep (birthday, etc.) and secrets related to strangers and dangers?

Happy “secrets” are frequently called “surprises.” Surprise has the connotation to children of joy and fun. We keep those surprises to ourselves because we want to enjoy the moment when the surprise is revealed. Surprises hopefully give us a light-hearted feeling. In this day and time we might want to say “happy surprises” … that used to be redundant!

Any secret we are asked to keep about which we feel heavy hearted is not one to keep. The way to dispel that heavy feeling is to tell it to a trusted adult. If a promise is made, threats are made, that’s exactly when to tell the “secret.”

This brings me to an opportunity some families take to discuss the things that happened today, “when I felt heavy and my energy was drained.” Additionally, the things that happened today “when I felt light and upbeat, energized.” Examples:

“When I left the office and saw all the traffic lined up I felt pretty bummed.”

“I was so excited when I came home and heard you playing the piano (violin, guitar, voice).”

Thanks for your questions! —Phylis

Here’s a portion of a question which came from a parent:

Are there any tips you can give for how to have that first conversation about the mechanics of how the baby gets in the mom’s body?

The book you mentioned is still a good one, Where Did I Come From? I like it in book form because it can be read, put on the shelf and your child can find it to read, review when he wants to do so. Children are usually around 8 to 10-years-old depending on many factors.

There are a few guidelines I’d suggest:

- Get the book out when the child’s questions are persistent.
- Set aside one-to-one, uninterrupted time to read the book.
- Read as much of the book, to the curious child only, as holds his/her interest.
- Answer any questions they ask, offer only information your child asks about.
- Note: it is wise to use correct anatomical names for body parts.
- Tell the child where the book will be and if they want to see it or read more, it is available.
- Also tell your child this is private and personal information for our family only. Other parents will talk to their children in their way. We talk about these things in our family and if you have any other questions, come to us (parents) and we will give you the best information we can. You can ask us when we are alone together, write us a note, or let us know in some way you’d like to have a chat.

Also, for the past two years in the spring, I have offered a time for parents to come to a meeting to discuss this very issue. Look for that event and plan to come share your experiences and expertise.

—Phylis R. Tomlinson, LMFT, LPC, ATR-BC

Post Oak Counselor Phylis Tomlinson offers guidance and advice on issues such as discipline, consequences, money and children, peer relationships, and more. Send in your parenting questions, including the gender and age of your child for an appropriate response.

SEND QUESTIONS TO phylistomlinson@postoakschool.org or leave a note anonymously in her mailbox at the front office.
CALENDAR

JANUARY 20–26

Mon
1/21
MLK Jr. Day
School closed

Tue
1/22
Bearkats Basketball
5 p.m. at St. Catherine’s

Wed
1/23
Bearkats Basketball
4:15 p.m. in the gym

Fri
1/25
HS J-Term ends
No Weekly Post this week
Look for a Gala Post Highlights in your email!

JANUARY 27–FEBRUARY 2

Mon
1/28
HS second semester begins

Tue
1/29
Redirecting Children’s Behavior (1 of 6)
($ and reg. required)
6:30–9:00 p.m.

Fri
2/1
Post Oak
2013 Gala!
The Houstonian Hotel
6:00 p.m.

Big Brother
Hubbard
Infant Community student
has a new little sister!
was born on
Monday, January 7 at 10:18 a.m.,
weighing 7 pounds and 14 ounces,
and measuring 20 inches long.
Congratulations to parents, Cynthia
and Darren!

NOTICE BOARD

Bearkats Basketball
Come support the team!

TUES., 1/22
at. St. Catherine’s, 5 p.m.

WED., 1/23
vs. St. Stephens
Home games start
at 4:15 p.m.

Check out our calendar
online or download a copy
at www.postoakschool.org

ABOUT THE WEEKLY POST

The Weekly Post appears on most Fridays of the regular school year.
You can receive a printed copy from your oldest child, or a PDF version online.
Submit letters, articles, or photos in electronic form by 5:00 p.m. on the Tuesday before publication
to Communications Coordinator Elaine Schweizer (elaineschweizer@postoakschool.org). If publication is
on a Thursday due to school closure on Friday, then the deadline is 5:00 p.m. on the preceding Monday.

All photos in The Weekly Post are by Elaine Schweizer unless otherwise noted.
The Post Oak School was founded in 1963 and accredited by both the Association Montessori Internationale
(AMI) and the Independent Schools Association of the Southwest (ISAS)
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