

Academic Language Therapy Association®
Dedicated to the remediation of written-language skills.

bul•le•tin

Summer 2006

The bul•le•tin is a quarterly publication of the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), and is free to its membership.

Overcoming the Language Gap

Invest Generously in Teacher Professional Development

By Louisa C. Moats

Reporters are fond of calling me. Ever since our project to study reading instruction in the District of Columbia public schools began four years ago, I have been viewed as an inside source. In the eyes of policy makers and press writers, ours may be useful science; our mission is to prevent reading failure. When the latest scores from the National Assessment of Educational Progress were published in mid-April showing that almost two-thirds of black, Hispanic, and other poor minority children had lost a bit of ground in fourth-grade reading and were still "below basic," I knew the press would solicit me for insights. Poor reading has become more than national news: It is a national crisis, an epidemic in the urban landscape.

Prior research consensus reports are true, I say: Most early reading failure is preventable. We are seeing progress in D.C. We gather extensive data on students, school contexts, teachers, and instructional programs. We have followed eight hundred kindergarten and first-grade children randomly selected from classrooms in nine low-performing schools all the way through third and fourth grade. Ninety-eight percent of the students in our study schools are African American and 96 percent qualify for free-and-reduced lunch. According to Snow, Burns, and Griffin's research summary of 1998, these students are "at risk" by demographics alone. The school district listed seven of our nine schools in 1996 as candidates for reorganization if their performance did not improve. Nevertheless, the evidence is clear: When teachers teach the instructional components supported by reading research, almost all students can learn to read.

Our progress has not come easily. Bringing the best that reading research has to offer into the classroom requires much more than handing teachers a good beginning reading series. We observe teachers and coach them, teach them to assess children's progress, and reward them for attending courses on how to teach phonological awareness, decoding, vocabulary, comprehension, and writing. One of our schools has been recognized for dramatic overall improvement. Four other schools are progressing faster than other "reform model" schools in the district. Our sample of students at the end of second grade scored above the national average on several respected reading measures, including passage comprehension. Some of the class averages could rival the results from the wealthy suburbs of nearby Fairfax County, Virginia. I feel proud of our achievements, but I mistrust their durability.

See OVERCOMING THE LANGUAGE GAP on Page 3

ALTA assumes no responsibility for errors or omissions. To submit news items or articles, which are subject to editing for space and style, or for advertising or other information, contact:

Tracey Cox
Editor

ALTA
14070 Proton Rd.,
Suite 100, LB 9
Dallas, TX 75244-3601
972/233-9107
Fax 972/490-4219
Hopeline 1-866-283-7133
toll free

Inside the bul•le•tin

- **President's Letter**
Page 2
- **Looking Back – Moving Forward: ALTA's 20th Anniversary Conference Is a Day to Remember**
Page 5
- **2005 – 2007 CEU Requirements**
Page 7
- **Book Reviews**
Page 8
- **Milestones**
Page 9
- **IMSLEC President's Report**
Page 10
- **CEU Calendar**
Page 11
- **Twentieth Anniversary Cornerstone Awards**
Page 12

OFFICERS 2006-2007

Nancy Coffman, MS, CALT, QI, *President*
Michelle Bufkin, MPA, CALT, *President-Elect*
Kathy Gilman, CALT, *VP/Membership*
Meg Carlsen, MS, CALT, *VP/Programs*
Tracey Cox, CALT, *VP/Public Relations*
Jeanine Phillips, MS, CALT, QI, *Secretary*
Mary Lou Slania, CALT, *Treasurer*
Melanie Royal, M.Ed., CALT, QI, *Historian*
Martha J. Haun, Ph.D., PRP, *Parliamentarian*

Board of Directors

Judith R. Birsh, Ed.D., CALT, QI
Kay Byrd, CALT, QI
Suzanne Carreker, CALT, QI
Sandra Dillon, M.A., CALT, QI
Lynne Fitzhugh, Ph.D., CALT
Elsa Cardenas-Hagan, Ed.D., CCC/SLP, CALT
Sara Rivers, M.A., CALT, QI
Linda Stringer, CALT, QI
Mary Dyer, CALT
Marilyn Mathis, M.Ed., CALT, QI
Mary Lou Slania, CALT
Karen S. Vickery, Ed.D., CALT, QI
Christine Wylie, CALT

Past Presidents

Jamie Williams
Sherry Malphurs
Corine Tycher
Avril Greenberg
Peggy Thornton
Nell Carvell
Barbara Fox
Elizabeth Cantrill
Martha Sibley
Kay Peterson
Melanie Royal

Committee Chairs

Lisa Tyler, M.Ed., CALT
Continuing Education
Jana Jones, MLA, CALT, QI
Ethics and Grievances
Janna S. Curry, M.Ed., CALT, QI, *Exhibits*
Mary Lou Slania, CALT, *Finance*
Margaret Carlsen, M.S., CALT, *Programs*
Tracey Cox, CALT, *Newsletter*
Trea Owens, M.Ed., CALT, QI
Newsletter Co-chair
Suzanne Carreker, CALT, QI
Registration Examination
Bryony Jane Welsh, M.Ed., CALT
Telephone Helpline
Kimberly Mullins, CALT, QI, *Website Helpline*
Lynne Fitzhugh, Ph.D., CALT, *Website*
Kathleen Carlsen, M.Ed., CALT, QI
ByLaws Committee
Karen S. Vickery, Ed.D., CALT, QI
QI Committee

Liaisons

Megan Cohen, MPA, CAE, *IDA*
Valerie G. Tucker, M.Ed., CALT, QI
IMSLEC/Alliance
Kay Peterson, M.S., CALT, QI
ALTA Foundation

President's Letter

Dear Fellow ALTA members,

It is with great pride and humility that I write to you as your president. I follow a tradition of such excellence; it is rather daunting! This organization has been blessed with strong leadership. Since I have had the privilege of working with almost all of the past presidents, I know how high they have set the bar for our profession, and I also know that I will hear from them if I do not follow suit!

This is a time of great opportunity for our organization. Public awareness and acceptance of dyslexia has never been higher. Quality training courses are growing in number as more individuals seek the training that we have enjoyed. Parents are beginning to request that the schools hire individuals with training that meet our criteria. The instructional components, derived from the research reported by the National Reading Panel in 2000 and included in No Child Left Behind, align directly with the descriptors that have guided ALTA for 20 years.

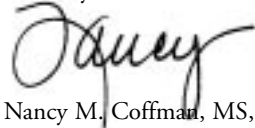
Our 20th Anniversary celebration was a momentous occasion where we acknowledged our past and looked to the future. We had a wonderful conference in Dallas, Texas with over 700 attendees and three national speakers: Reid Lyon, Louisa Moats, and Rick Lavoie. We also voted on bylaws changes so that we now offer a teaching/associate level as well as the therapist level and the qualified instructor of therapist level. Due to the support of the Alliance, of which ALTA is a founding member, there are certification exams at both the teaching/associate level and at the therapist level. And finally, ALTA Centers Council and IMSLEC voted to merge. All of the training centers that were previously accredited by ALTA Centers Council are now part of IMSLEC. So, IMSLEC the accrediting organization can support ALTA as the certifying organization, and visa versa. Resulting in more children with dyslexia being assured of quality services!

ALTA will now recognize the IMSLEC accredited courses and offer the same collegial support that was offered to the ALTA CC accredited centers. That support includes posting CEU opportunities offered by courses on the website, listing in the ALTA directory and website as an accredited center, and automatic acceptance of graduates of IMSLEC courses who desire to sit for certification exams.

Graduates of the IMSLEC courses are warmly invited to sit for the exam and to join ALTA. The intent is to offer the same benefits of ALTA membership to individuals across the country who hold the same quality training that we enjoy. These benefits include a national certification that stays with the individual as they move around the country, higher visibility as a profession, and a variety of CEU opportunities.

I look forward to serving you over the next two years. May we seize the opportunities before us, gain wisdom and strength as we face obstacles, and grow together to better serve children with dyslexia everywhere!

Sincerely,



Nancy M. Coffman, MS, CALT, QI



In 1977, Wesley Becker reported in the large-scale Follow Through studies done in high-poverty schools that children did best in code-emphasis reading programs that used direct, systematic, and explicit methods. The gains in relative standing, however, were hard for children to sustain after fourth grade. I have reason to fear we will replicate this result. Many children have learned to read early and well. Skillful and direct teaching of phoneme awareness, letter knowledge, sound-symbol correspondence, and decoding strategies, applied to reading text, really works. With excellent preparation in the primary grades, students are reading hundreds of books in their fourth-grade read-a-thon. Some teachers cannot satisfy their students' appetites for new reading material, as budgets for books are limited and the libraries are under-resourced.

Most children, however, came to us in kindergarten with little book experience, low knowledge of letters, and low phonemic awareness. Even more striking were their entering vocabulary scores. On a commonly used test of the oral recognition of reading involved), the students in our randomly selected kindergarten sample scored at the 5th percentile on average. That means they could not identify pictures showing the meanings of words such as penguin, sewing, or parachute. In second and third grade, the score on oral vocabulary recognition had improved only to the 15th percentile, in spite of much better results on the primary reading tests. Children typically could not identify pictures showing the meanings of words such as amazed, locket, balcony, or weasel. By fourth grade, many students are clearly lost in the more complex text they encounter in school, even if their decoding skills are good. Although as first graders, they knew the meanings of perhaps 5,000 words instead of 20,000 (the difference between linguistically "poor" and linguistically "rich" children), they may have been able to get the

gist of primary text, especially with the multiple readings and contextual supports that primary teachers give. But by fourth grade, children are expected to be more self-sufficient. They must decipher the vocabulary that carries the meanings of specialized topics. They must learn, for example, in a unit about traditional and alternative medicines, the multiple meanings of reservation and the differences between manipulate and maneuver. Without word knowledge, comprehension fails.

In addition to their vocabulary deficits, our students' spelling is much poorer than their reading, and written composition is seriously deficient. Sentences are poorly formed; paragraphs do not exist; and few papers are free from errors on inflections, pronouns, prepositions, or auxiliary verbs. Impoverished language will undermine their entire academic performance as they move into the intermediate grades.

Language comprises rules and words, as linguist Stephen Pinker describes. Reading and writing are acquired, unnatural forms of language that rest on an oral language base. Letters abstractly represent phonemes. Punctuation abstractly represents phrase and sentence structure. Printed word forms abstractly represent morphemes, their language of origin, and their interrelationships. The layers of language are interwoven. As Yale linguist and psychologist Alvin Liberman often pointed out, words carry meaning, but meaning is accessible only if the sounds and symbols of the word have been accurately processed. Vocabulary instruction must therefore include explicit teaching of the sounds, structural elements, and contextual meanings of words. Children must be aware of the subtle phonemic distinctions between words such as then and than, further and farther, or perfect and prefect to know which is which. Words have phonological form, spelling, grammatical function, and one or more

meanings in specific contexts, and literacy requires awareness of all.

I watch the gradual toll of word poverty in those children who are struggling. Word poverty includes partial knowledge of word meanings, confusion of words that sound similar but that contrast in one or two phonemes, limited knowledge of how and when words are typically used, and knowledge of only one meaning or function when there are several. A second grader, when asked to find multiple meaning words on a list, picks "jail." The teacher asks, "What else does that mean besides the place where they put people who've been arrested?" The child answers, "It's that stuff you put in your hair (gel)." In a fourth-grade class, dynamic Ms. Woods asks students for several meanings for "shock." A student responds, "a big fish." Ms. Woods adeptly takes the cue. Writing both shock and shark on the board, she contrasts the phonemes, asking the student to repeat them and use the words in sentences. The student looks surprised at the discovery that these are, indeed, two different words. In spite of previous exposure to each word, the girl has not fully attended to the internal details of sound and spelling or made the contrast implicitly. I am grateful that Ms. Woods understands her student's need for intensive, explicit instruction. Ms. Woods has taken three of our courses on language, on the importance of phonology to reading, and on the validated techniques of vocabulary and comprehension instruction. She is a star, but we need hundreds more of her.

Awareness of morphological relationships could be another important key to vocabulary knowledge, but the teacher must actively teach partnerships among such words as celebrity, celebrate, and celebration; manipulate, maneuver, and manual; and vent, ventilation, prevent, invention, and adventure.

See **OVERCOMING THE LANGUAGE GAP** *on Page 4*

Instructional materials, however, compartmentalize the various aspects of language. The word study part of the lesson (phonology, phonics, spelling, syllabication) is often separated from the vocabulary instruction that precedes and follows text reading. We choose vocabulary for instruction before, during, and after text reading according to its importance to understanding a passage (garage, mustache, ocean, probably, seriously are posted for Gloria: Who Might Be My Best Friend). The sounds, syllables and structural relationships between morphologically related families (serious, seriously; probably, improbable, probable, probability) may go unnoticed and usually are not taught. In much of our instruction, word meaning and word form are inadequately linked, especially for students who need to be taught explicitly how language works.

Early instruction in phoneme awareness is only the first layer of the direct language teaching necessary for children at risk. From the time they enter preschool, students must experience language stimulation all day long if they are to compensate for their incoming linguistic differences. Teachers must immerse them in the rich language of books. Children need to rehearse the rules such as staying on topic, taking turns, and giving enough information so the listener understands. Children must learn how to speak in discussions, to question, paraphrase, retell and summarize, as the recently developed standards for listening and speaking now

specify.* Teachers must teach directly the form, meaning, and use of words, phrases, sentences, and texts. Everything from the articulatory features of /k/ and /g/ to the construction of an organized essay is grist for the instructional mill.

The story of reading failure has several episodes, themes, and subplots. All must be addressed if children with poor language skills can reach "proficient" and "advanced" levels. The language theme, however, is central. In fact, the slogan, "Language is the new civil right!" would be more meaningful than President Bush's focus on reading alone. Language instruction, however, requires language instructors. What we ask our present and future teachers to know and do, and how we evaluate their preparedness, will have to change. Very few teachers come to classroom instruction with an understanding of the sound system, the print system, the nature of word learning, or the nature of sentence and text structure. A young teacher exclaimed in one of our classes, "I never heard of any of this!" Her words resonated with the entire group.

Teachers in our study have also affirmed, in anonymous interviews, that developing expertise took two years or more of coursework, in-class coaching, and program demonstration. "At first you're confused and overwhelmed," said one, "then the pieces of the puzzle fall into place. You know what you're doing and then it's easy." Many appreciated repeated oppor-

tunities to practice strategies with the companionship of colleagues, such as planning the questions for a comprehension lesson that would stimulate student discussion and understanding. Teachers developed with a combination of language study, strategy rehearsal, and assimilation of research summaries, such as the AFT's Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science monograph and the Report of the National Reading Panel. Many endorsed the importance of learning "the sounds." Simultaneously they understood how sounds begin the path to meaning.

I am cautiously optimistic. We have developed teachers who give the instruction that every child deserves. If it can be done for some, it can be done for all. We must teach all of language explicitly, with intention and intensity, and prepare all of our teachers to do so. This will take both patience and impatience: patience to stay the course and impatience to embolden our political will. Only then will we achieve what is both a civil right for our children and a social and economic necessity for our country.

*Speaking and Listening for Preschool through Third Grade, published by the New Standards Project.

Louisa C. Moats is project director of the District of Columbia site of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Interventions Project, a four-year longitudinal study of early reading instruction. She is the author of numerous articles and books on language and reading instruction, including, most recently, Speech to Print: Language Essentials for Teachers. This article originally appeared in the Summer, 2001, issue of the American Educator, a publication of the American Federation of Teachers, and was reproduced with permission, for noncommercial personal or educational use only.

bul•le•tin Calendar

September, 2006-February, 2007: Neuhaus Education Center, Bellaire, TX: "First Fridays: Classes Designed for Parents." \$55 per class includes materials. Contact Cathy Lorino or Suz Hall, (713) 664-7676 or go to www.neuhaus.org.

October, 2006: Neuhaus Education Center, Bellaire, TX. "Seminars for Parents and Professionals," October 13 and October 27. Reservations required, \$15 to \$30. Contact Cathy Lorino or Suz Hall, (713) 664-7676 or go to www.neuhaus.org.

Looking Back – Moving Forward: ALTA’s 20th Anniversary Conference Is a Day to Remember

**By Michelle Bufkin, MPA, CALT
Vice President/Programs, 2005-2006**

“This was the best ALTA Conference ever!”
“Can we just repeat this day? I need to hear these speakers over and over again.”
“To see the three legends of our field in one room – amazing!”
“I rearranged major surgery to be here. I wasn’t going to miss this!”
“What a gift – seeing Aylett Cox, Dr. Waites and Mary Frances Yancey being honored.”
“This day made a profound impact on my career as a teacher of young children.”
“I have waited for years to see these three together. THANK YOU!”

These are just a few of the comments shared by guests at ALTA’s 20th Anniversary Conference held on April 22, 2006, in Dallas, Texas. The Programs Committee mission for this event was lofty: to create a bridge between ALTA’s rich past and promising future in a way that was meaningful for our members, guests and honorees. From comments on the evaluation forms, this special day in ALTA’s history was a winning formula of fun, reflection and inspiration.

The conference weekend began with fun and Texas-sized hospitality for our speakers. Meg and Peter Carlsen again graciously opened their home for an elegant dinner honoring our speakers. Our board members, past presidents and training center directors enjoyed this relaxed time with our speakers, who were deemed Honorary Texans before the night ended! Our speakers were very gracious to spend the time with us, and it was clear the dinner guests enjoyed the time with them.

Saturday morning at the Hilton was a flurry of activity as each area of our con-

ference prepared for our guests. Registration desks were moved upstairs to the lobby which proved helpful with traffic flow. Balloons, decorations, displays, exhibitors and video and DVD presentations added a festive touch for our guests as they arrived. The Hilton Lincoln Centre ballroom was comfortably cozy by 8:30 a.m. when extra seating was required for the almost 800 guests in attendance.

Our conference opened by reflecting on our past. ALTA members and guests were given a rare glimpse of the roots of our organization during the Cornerstone Award presentations. The 2006 Cornerstone Award honorees – Dr. Luke Waites, Aylett Cox and Mary Frances Yancey – added a regal touch to our proceedings, turning legends into reality for many in the audience. Their gracious acceptance of ALTA’s recognition set the tone for our entire day, and I am grateful for the family members and friends of each honoree who made it possible for them to be with us. Following the presentations, Dr. Waites and Mrs. Yancey held court in the ALTA History Exhibits area, greeting old friends, signing programs, and lighting up that area of our conference.

The exhibits created by the ALTA Training Centers for the ALTA History Exhibit Area also provided an important element in reflecting on our organization’s past. The time and creativity spent by these centers to highlight our organization’s timeline made our common journey with ALTA come alive. The DVD presentations of ALTA’s early days and founders brought smiles to many. As a lasting tribute to this conference and ALTA’s contributions to literacy, the 20th Anniversary Program Brochure and DVD was professionally presented and eagerly swept up by members and guests!

For inspiration, your evaluation comments indicated nothing could top our three speakers. Dr. Reid Lyon’s presentation on reading research was timely and relevant, and many commented on his engaging presentation style. Dr. Louisa Moats’ spelling presentation was cutting-edge and provided practical techniques for working with our students. And who could have left the ballroom at 4:00 p.m. feeling anything but refreshed, uplifted and inspired for our future? Rick Lavoie brought the house down as our closing speaker and graciously offered to spend extra time after his presentation to sign books for members. Our speakers gave our conference guests a wonderful gift, and the Texas hospitality our members shared with them was appreciated by all three speakers.

It is impossible to adequately convey my gratitude for the many people who helped with the planning and execution of this event. Committee chairs, volunteers, ALTA Board members, Hilton staff and many others tended to a myriad of details over the past two years to ensure that ALTA’s 20th Anniversary Conference ran smoothly and reflected our lofty goals for the day. Based on your comments, ALTA members can look back on our 20th anniversary conference with a great deal of pride in our organization, its history, mission, principles and dedication to excellence. From these comments, it seems both new and veteran therapists found the day inspiring:

“This was my first ALTA conference – WOW! I won’t miss another one!”
“I attended a recent national conference in another city and actually enjoyed this conference & speakers more – they were more useful to my practice than any conference I’ve attended recently.”



Meg Carlsen and her committee already have many exciting plans in place for next year's event, and I'm confident our conference will continue to grow and improve under Meg's leadership.



I close with a favorite quote by Roger Rosenblau:

"There may be no more pleasing picture in the world than a child peering into a book – the past and the future entrancing themselves."



As Academic Language Therapists, our daily passion is helping this picture to develop for our students. As Program Chairman, my passion for our 20th Anniversary Conference was similarly rooted – to have ALTA's past and future linked in a very unique – almost entrancing - way. I am grateful that ALTA's 20th Anniversary Conference allowed us to look back on our past with as much pleasure as we look forward to and plan for our future. Thank you for allowing me the privilege of helping this happen.



Michelle Bufkin
Vice President – Programs
2005 - 2006



2005 – 2007 CEU Requirements

Members who become Certified Academic Language Therapists must comply with ALTA's CEU requirements beginning with the third membership renewal after achieving membership status. Members must earn 20 contact (clock) hours of CEU credit every two years. Our bylaws state that 2% of our membership will be chosen at random for audit, which will next be held in 2007. These people will receive letters 45 days prior to the membership renewal date (March 1st) asking them to provide written documentation to the ALTA CEU Committee that they have earned 20 contact hours of CEU credit between March

1, 2005 and February 28, 2007. Such documentation consists of a signed letter, form, transcript or certificate, including the course title, name of the approved sponsor, date(s) hours were earned, and the number of contact hours earned. These should be kept together in a file. Members chosen for audit must provide such documentation. It is to be sent in with their membership renewal and fees. All CALT-level members must sign a statement on their renewal form affirming that they have earned 20 contact hours of CEU credit between March 1, 2005 and February 28, 2007.

2005 – 2007 QI Requirements

CALTs who become Qualified Instructors must provide documentation of completion for 10 contact hours of CEU credit EVERY YEAR along with their membership renewal.

*Please note: in the 2005 -2006 directory there was a misprint. The above requirements have been reprinted acknowledging the corrections.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATORY POLICY AS TO STUDENTS

Southwest Academy admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, scholarship and loan programs, and athletic and other school-administered programs.

SOUTHWEST MULTISENSORY TRAINING CENTER



Teaching multisensory techniques that benefit the dyslexic and learning different student.

- Alphabetic Phonics
- Multisensory Math
- Verbal-into-Written Expression

600 S. JUPITER ROAD • ALLEN, TEXAS 75002 • 972-359-6646 • WWW.SOUTHWESTACADEMY.ORG

BOOK REVIEWS

IT'S SO MUCH WORK TO BE YOUR FRIEND

By Richard Lavoie
Touchstone Books, hardcover

Traditionally, help for children with learning disabilities has focused on academic shortcomings. In recent years, however, a growing number of special education experts have called for similar efforts in social-skills training. This new book from Richard Lavoie both bolsters that argument and provides a practical guide to such instruction.

Mr. Lavoie, longtime principal of a school for learning-disabled children in Massachusetts and now a lecturer and consultant, starts with two points. The first is that children with learning disabilities are most likely to have difficulty with social skills. The second is that such children are less likely to succeed in academics — or in real life — if their lack of social skills leaves them miserable and anxious.

Stated so boldly, both points seem obvious. But social-skills training is a subject that is barely beginning to win acceptance in an educational system formed around the idea that schools are responsible only for academics.

In the first third of the book, Mr. Lavoie analyzes the kinds of social difficulties caused by deficits in verbal and nonverbal communication, by attention-deficit disorder and by the anxiety that often accompanies learning disabilities. He then considers the toll social deficits take during “the other 16 hours” — the time a child spends outside of school. A particularly helpful and touching chapter talks of the strains placed on siblings. He concludes by laying out strategies for developing the social abilities needed for greater success in school, from deflecting bullies to pleasing teachers.

The book is chockablock with useful techniques, from simple tips (like giving advance warning to a child who has difficulty with

changes in routine) to more complicated procedures (like a “social autopsy,” in which a fight or misstep is analyzed in a neutral fashion for lessons to be learned).

To a parent, this torrent of good advice can feel daunting which, in a way, is proof of Mr. Lavoie’s contention that schools should do more to address these deficits: it’s a lot for parents to do on their own.

— John O’Neil

This review appeared on July 31, 2005 in the New York Times, and is reprinted with permission.

WHY KIDS CAN'T READ

Challenging the Status Quo in Education
Edited by Phyllis Blaunstein and Reid Lyon

Nearly 40% of all fourth graders in this country cannot read at grade level, and this number rises to 60% for children coming from poor families. This gap in learning increases as students go through grade school and is a primary reason for school failure. Ironically, this problem comes at a time when there is research to demonstrate that nearly all children can learn to read if taught using research-based instruction. Here, the authors describe the principles of this research in language that non-educators can understand and educators can use. It discusses how to recognize whether the research on reading is being used appropriately, and if not, how to make that happen. Through the eyes of parents and educators who have succeeded in their own struggles to change the educational system, the book provides the reader with the tools and knowledge for transforming the way reading is taught in their children’s classrooms.

This book takes the reader step-by-step through an understanding of the research on reading and ways in which a single, determined person can make a difference in the learning ability of every student in our nation’s schools. Part One is a series of chap-

ters written by individuals who discuss what they experienced during these battles and what made them successful. Part Two is written by a series of experts who describe how they have overcome the challenges involved in creating widespread change in school systems. The appendix is filled with resources—people, places, sample tools, a glossary and bibliography to help the reader.

“This book will help every adult help every child in every classroom experience the pride and thrill of reading well and all of the learning that results from it.”

—Richard Riley, former U. S. Secretary of Education and former Governor of South Carolina

“Reid and Blaunstein have made a significant contribution to the tools parents have available to support their children’s reading instruction. Why Kids Can’t Read articulates the challenges parents face with practical solutions and advice on effectively interacting with schools and teachers to support student learning. Parents, teachers and policymakers will appreciate the no-nonsense stance and strategic resources included in this book.”

—Brenda Lilienthal Welburn, executive director, National Association of State Boards of Education

“Parents and teachers working together can be an unstoppable force in solving our children’s reading problems. This book will guide all who want to strive for a nation of readers”

—Robert Chase, past president of the National Education Association

Phyllis Blaunstein is senior counsel at Widmeyer Communications. She is a national leader in education policy and public engagement. As a long-standing advocate for an effective education for all children, she has actively promoted the use of research to inform instruction.

Reid Lyon has been a classroom teacher, university professor, research scientist, and recent advisor to President Bush and Mrs. Bush on child development and education research and policy.

Milestones

WELCOME, NEW CALT MEMBERS

Kimberly Arthur, Anne Carow, Patty Cunningham, Cyndee Eastin, Terie Farren, Lori Jones, Jennifer Kapavik, Dawn Lay, Nicholette Risley, Mary Senn, Kari Shekhter, Cynthia Sloan, Barbara Walters, Betty Watrous, Jeri Wooldridge, Jean Wootan and Kathryn Worthy.

WELCOME, NEW QUALIFIED

INSTRUCTORS Clayton Allen, S. Maile Kane, Caroline Kethley, Ann Kleine, Michele Nelson, Treasa Owens, and Debra Pierce.

The International Dyslexia Association recently announced the death of Roger E. Saunders, a pioneer in the field of dyslexia awareness. Saunders studied, tutored, diagnosed and taught generations of students in the fields of reading disorders



Pictured at the 2006 ALTA Conference are (l to r) Marilyn Mathis, Dr. Lucius Waites and Beverly Dooley.

and dyslexia, and was instrumental in establishing schools dedicated to reading disorders, including the Jemicy School and the Odyssey School in Baltimore and more recently, in 1997, the Rawson-Saunders School in Austin, Texas. He served as IDA's president from 1968 to 1974 and remained active with IDA until his death, having achieved a perfect record for attending every Orton/IDA

conference since the beginning. In 1976, Roger received The Samuel T. Orton Award, the Association's highest honor. In 2004, Roger was honored with the Margaret Byrd Rawson Lifetime Achievement Award and was recognized by his close friends with a plaque on the Pioneer's Wall in the Sylvia O. Richardson Hall of Honor in the future home of the national office of IDA.



RAWSON-SAUNDERS SCHOOL

*Academic Excellence
for Dyslexic Students
Serving Grades One
through Eight*



Our mission is to provide a comprehensive educational program for professionally diagnosed dyslexic students in the elementary through middle school years by using proven methods to meet the educational needs of each child in a supportive environment.

2600 Exposition Blvd. · Austin, TX 78703 · (512) 476-8382 · Fax: (512) 476-1132 · www.rawson-saunders.org

IMSLEC President's Report

By Valerie Tucker, M.Ed., CALT, QI

Things have been very busy for IMSLEC since the November Annual Meeting.

- An ad hoc committee was formed at the November meeting to ensure that all standards and procedures of IMSLEC and ALTA Centers Council were aligned. The committee completed a thorough review and sent the documents to the board for approval. The Board voted to recommend approval of the merger to the Council. On April 3, 2006 the Council acted on the Board's recommendation and unanimously approved a merger of the two accrediting organizations. This important step was taken to eliminate the duplication of efforts of each organization and to simplify the process of finding a course which meets high standards for the public.
- IMSLEC was well represented on the Alliance Exam Committee. The

Committee has finished its work on the exam and turned the administration responsibilities over to ALTA. There will be ongoing public education about the exam and I hope that many of you will participate in your area. We will be presenting an exam overview and information session at the IDA Conference in Indianapolis.

- IMSLEC will be part of the Alliance presentation at the Indianapolis IDA Conference. The presentation is scheduled for Friday, November 10 from 10:45–12:15. If you are presenting a session at the conference please let us know the topic, date, and time so that we can include this information in the newsletter.

The IMSLEC Board met at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children on April 21. Tince Miller, Chairman of the Texas State Board of Education, spoke to the Board about the current legislation in

place in Texas which addresses the learner with Dyslexia. Because of her efforts Texas has been the legislative model for many states.

Dates for the November meetings in Indianapolis have been changed to allow for the many presentations by IMSLEC members on Saturday. Please make a note of the new dates and times. The Board will meet from 7-9 pm on Tuesday, November 7th. The Council will meet from 1-5 on Wednesday, November 8th.

WELCOME to the ALTA CC courses that were not previously dually accredited. I thank each of you in advance for the work you do for IMSLEC. If you are an accredited course please use the IMSLEC logo in all of your published materials and advertising. It is due to our combined efforts that we have been able to accomplish so much for the benefit of the people we serve.

ALTA FOUNDATION

Please keep the ALTA Foundation in mind whenever you consider giving a memorial, scholarship money, or simply a charitable donation. The ALTA Foundation is a 501(C)(3) non-profit entity established to accept donations and contributions which support ALTA's educational mission. Through the financial support provided by the Foundation, Academic Language Therapists benefit from continued education in the most current research based information emphasizing strategies and techniques most effective in clinical and school settings. The Foundation also supports programs to help students with dyslexia, their peers, and public at large to better understand dyslexia and to demystify the disorder. Other Foundation activities include opportunities to provide and support best practices among our members and maintain high levels of professionalism in the field. For more information, or to make a tax-deductible donation, please contact the ALTA national office.

ALTA members are responsible for maintaining their own personal CEU records for possible audit. Twenty contact hours which equal 2CEUs are required every two years.

CEU Calendar

2006 Annual Dyslexia Institute

Date: June 26-30, 2006
Time: 8:30 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. M-Th
8:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Fri
Location: Region 10 Education Service Center
400 E. Spring Valley Rd.
Richardson, Texas 75083
Sponsor: Region 10 Education Service Center
Presenter: Virginia Berninger, Ph.D.
Contact Person: Brenda Taylor, State Dyslexia Consultant
Telephone: 972-348-1454
Email: brenda.taylor@region10.org
CEU Contact Hours: Mon - Thurs = 6, Fri = 3.5

Cognition –Study Skills

Date: September 15 & 16, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: SMU in Legacy
5236 Tennyson Pkwy, 4-108
Plano, Texas 75024
Sponsor: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Presenter: Kim Mullins, CALT, QI
Contact Person: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Telephone: 214-768-7323
Email: www.smu.edu/learning-therapy
CEU Contact Hours: 15

Dyslexia ID Process, Kindergarten and Beyond

Date: July 28 & 29, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: SMU in Legacy
5236 Tennyson Pkwy, 4-108
Plano, Texas 75024
Sponsor: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Presenter: Janna Curry, CALT, QI
Maragaret Smith, CALT, QI
Karen Vickery, Ph.D., CALT, QI
Contact Person: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Telephone: 214-768-7323
Email: www.smu.edu/learning-therapy
CEU Contact Hours: 15

Phonological Awareness

Date: Oct. 6 & 7, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: SMU in Legacy
5236 Tennyson Pkwy, 4-108
Plano, Texas 75024
Sponsor: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Presenter: Jana Jones, CALT, QI
Contact Person: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Telephone: 214-768-7323
Email: www.smu.edu/learning-therapy
CEU Contact Hours: 15

Procedures and Measures

Date: Nov. 3 & 4, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.
Location: SMU in Legacy
5236 Tennyson Pkwy, 4-108
Plano, Texas 75024
Sponsor: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Presenter: Dr. Karen Vickery, CALT, QI
Contact Person: SMU Learning Therapy Program
Telephone: 214-768-7323
Email: www.smu.edu/learning-therapy
CEU Contact Hours: 15

Slingerland Summer Session

Date: June 26 – July 21, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Opportunity Schools
Cypress, CA
Sponsor: Slingerland Institute for Literacy
Presenter: Maryjane Palmer, Ed.D, CDSA
Contact Person: L. Elyce Newton
Telephone: 425-453-1190
Email: mail@slingerland.org
CEU Contact Hours: 133

Slingerland Summer Session

Date: June 26 – July 21, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Hamlin Robinson School
Seattle, WA
Sponsor: Slingerland Institute for Literacy
Presenter: Sandi Olsen, CDSA
Contact Person: L. Elyce Newton
Telephone: 425-453-1190
Email: mail@slingerland.org
CEU Contact Hours: 133

Slingerland Summer Session

Date: June 27 – July 28, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: KZV Armenia School
San Francisco, CA
Sponsor: Slingerland Institute for Literacy
Presenter: Dr. Nancy Cushen White, CDSA
Contact Person: L. Elyce Newton
Telephone: 425-453-1190
Email: mail@slingerland.org
CEU Contact Hours: 133

Slingerland Summer Session

Date: July 10 – August 2, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Our Lady of the Lake School
Seattle, WA
Sponsor: Slingerland Institute for Literacy
Presenter: Bonnie Meyer, CDSA
Contact Person: L. Elyce Newton
Telephone: 425-453-1190
Email: mail@slingerland.org
CEU Contact Hours: 133

Slingerland Summer Session

Date: July 24 – August 18, 2006
Time: 8:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.
Location: Park Academy
Marylhurst, OR
Sponsor: Slingerland Institute for Literacy
Presenter: Myrna Soule, MPA, MAA (Spec. Ed.), CDSA
Contact Person: L. Elyce Newton
Telephone: 425-453-1190
Email: mail@slingerland.org
CEU Contact Hours: 133

Twentieth Anniversary Cornerstone Awards

The Academic Language Therapy Association is pleased to have named Aylett Royall Cox, Luke Waites, M.D. and Mary Frances Yancey as the Twentieth Anniversary Cornerstone Award recipients. As indispensable pioneers in the field of dyslexia, these three honorees each played a major role in ALTA's fundamental mission of serving persons with dyslexia. Their combined efforts as educator, physician and parent paved the way for ALTA to continue their legacy for the past twenty years, and to maintain the highest of professional standards for the future. A commemorative plaque honoring their lasting contributions and visionary leadership will be placed in The International Dyslexia Association facilities upon their opening.



Luke Waites, M.D.



Mary Frances Yancey



Aylett Royall Cox

Telephone and Online Helpline Assistance Needed

By Bryony Welsh

When people call our Helpline or log onto the Website, they are seeking help for a child, a loved one or themselves. We all know that there is a great up-swing in the number of people seeking help, thanks to our efforts in getting out the message. However, there is a dearth of

therapists and it is often really difficult for volunteers to find numbers to give people. When you renew your ALTA Membership, you are asked if you will take telephone or online referrals. Please, when you renew next time, consider adding your name to those who are prepared to help. We all have students drop out for one reason or another, or you may

have a vacancy coming up in the near future, or you may know of someone in your area who could help, or, most importantly, you can be a supportive ear for someone in need. We urgently need more people willing to help. Please contact me at (281) 589-6539 or Bryonyw@aol.com if you would like to help.

NEW ALLIANCE REGISTRATION EXAM

By Suzanne Carreker, CALT, QI

The qualifying exam for membership in ALTA is now The Alliance Registration Exam. The Alliance For Accreditation and Certification of Multisensory Structured Language Education, Inc., an organization sponsored by The International Dyslexia Association that promotes quality standards for professional preparation, funded the development of the new national registration exam and has charged ALTA with managing the administration of the exam. The exam provides a measure of an individual's knowledge of and skills in Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) and verifies that the individual has achieved the highest level of competency in the field of dyslexia education. Nine standards are evaluated on the exam:

- Knowledge of language development
- Knowledge of the structure of the language
- Knowledge of dyslexia, written language disorders, and other related disorders

- Knowledge of psycho-educational tests and informal assessments
- Knowledge of diagnostic and prescriptive MSL strategies to improve reading, spelling, and written expression
- Knowledge of relevant research in instructional practice
- Knowledge of 504 and IDEA to guide professional conduct and advocacy for students
- Knowledge of ethical standards of the profession
- Awareness of effective professional written and oral communication with parents, colleagues, and other professionals.

The all-objective, pass-fail exam is untimed and requires about two hours to complete. It will be offered at the therapy level, completion of 200 instructional hours and a 700-hour practicum in a course accredited by the International Multisensory Structure Language Education Council (IMSLEC) or a commensurate Orton-Gillingham-based course, beginning in

June 2006. At some locations, the exam will be offered at the teacher level to individuals who have completed 45 instructional hours and a 90-hour practicum in an accredited IMSLEC course or a commensurate Orton-Gillingham-based course. The events calendar on the ALTA website, www.altaread.org, lists upcoming dates and locations for the administration of the new exam. The exam application and procedures are also found on the ALTA website.

For a calendar of future dates to take the Alliance Registration Exam, go to www.altaread.org, or contact Judy Shimp, (972) 233-9107 ext. 201 or judy@madcrouch.com.



hillier  school

3821 University Blvd. ~ Dallas TX 75205 ~ 214.559.5363

In the picture shown, second and third grade Social Studies students pose for a picture. The Hillier School has been an outreach ministry of Highland Park Presbyterian Church for more than 35 years. The school serves students in grades one through seven with Dyslexia and related learning disabilities; seeking to prepare them for the mainstream of education. A Christ-centered environment fosters students' feelings of self-respect and competence for success in life.

Online with ALTA

Help ALTA When You Purchase From Amazon.com

When you purchase your books, music, videos, etc. using the www.amazon.com link found on the ALTA web site, you help ALTA with its web site operating expenses. ALTA receives 5% of the purchase price when you buy an item by visiting www.altaread.org first, then clicking on the link for amazon.com. In addition, ALTA receives 15% of the purchase price when you visit the book review section of the ALTA web site and make a purchase. Once you review a book and decide to purchase it, click on the link for www.amazon.com. Consider www.amazon.com through www.altaread.org when shopping for professional reading material, children's books, music, and videos and help ALTA with operating expenses.

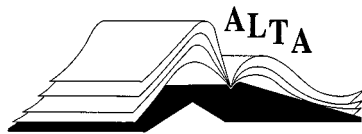
Access the ALTA Bulletin Online

You may now access the Academic Language Therapy Association newsletter, the ALTA bulletin, on-line. Go to ALTA's web site at ALTAread.org and click "Resources" from the menu selections. You will then click "Newsletters." You may choose to view the most recent newsletter, or perhaps a past newsletter. Newsletters will download to your computer. They are in Adobe Acrobat PDF format and, due to their length, may take a few minutes to download.

Update Basic Membership Information Online

As you may have already noticed, www.ALTAread.org had a facelift. One of the new features of the site extends the capability for members to update their basic member information on the website by themselves. By basic information we

mean name, address, phone number, and email address. You may also change your password if you desire. **Important! You will still need to report these changes to the ALTA office to update the association's regular database.** Here's how it works. From the home page of ALTAread.org, click "Member Login" from the selection menu. Type in your member number and password. (If you don't remember your member number and/or password click the "Contact Us" selection and drop us an email. We'll get that information back to you within 48 hours of receipt.) Once you are logged-in, select "My Account" from the selection menu. Immediately to the right of "Profile Information" you will see "edit profile." Click "edit profile" and this will take you to the place where you can make changes.



Academic Language Therapy Association®
14070 Proton Rd.,
Suite 100, LB 9
Dallas, TX 75244-3601