The Value of Membership  

By Carolyn Nesbitt, VP/Membership

Have you ever asked yourself why anyone would wish to belong to an organization such as ALTA? You might even ask yourself why you would spend $40 on membership fees. Are there more benefits than having your name listed in the ALTA Directory? Here are some of the reasons why I feel my membership in this organization is very important.

First of all, I spent two years in an intensive training, observation and practicum program. My training was preparation for taking the ALTA registration/certification exam to ensure that I measured up to the highest standards in the field of remediating students with dyslexia and/or related disorders. This hard-earned certification is not unlike passing the Bar or even the CPA exam.

See Membership on Page 4

IDA Accreditation and Certification: Collaboration or...?

In November, 1999, the Board of Directors of the International Dyslexia Association approved a plan to establish accreditation standards for teacher training programs that focus on multisensory structured language techniques, schools that use MSL techniques with their students and institutions of higher education that train teachers in these methodologies. IDA’s plan also includes the establishment of standards for the certification of individuals. Harley T. Toney, president of IDA, stated in Perspectives, Winter 2000, that the most important reason for this major undertaking is to establish a set of standards that defines qualitative MSL teacher training. Additionally, the standards will provide individuals with dyslexia, parents of those individuals, and schools with important information for decision-making.
Dear ALTA members,

The 2000-2001 school year is in full swing. We should all take great pride in the knowledge that there are CALTs across the country serving thousands of children. Because of your commitment to academic language therapy, students who have faced reading failure every day will experience success. What a joy it is to watch that process unfold!

Your ALTA Board of Directors met on August 19 for a day-long retreat in Grapevine, Texas. We had the opportunity to discuss key issues that affect the future of our organization. ALTAread.org has provided the board a wonderful communication tool. The online membership survey was beneficial to us in planning and responding to your needs and concerns. The survey will change this fall and I encourage you to go to our site and voice your opinions.

One request made by every committee chair was the need for new members to their committees. The technology available through e-mail, fax, and conference calling gives everyone, regardless of where you live, an opportunity to participate. Please consider volunteering in some capacity and notify the board with your interest. We have many capable members in ALTA and a broader base of participation will strengthen our mission.

Fall is a prime time to further our knowledge of dyslexia and effective interventions. Each day my mail is filled with announcements of conference and seminar opportunities. We are approaching the spring of 2001 and the first CEU audit of our membership. I hope each of you will give careful thought to how you will meet this new membership requirement. We must all be dedicated to seeking current information gained from empirical research and open to incorporating proven strategies into our therapy setting.

The International Dyslexia Association meeting is planned for November 8-11 in Washington, DC. I hope to see as many of you as possible at the conference. Once again, the program is filled with the names of CALTs that are participating in the conference program. ALTA is presenting the certification process in a combined session with IMSLEC and AOGPE on Saturday afternoon. Your presence and support would be very much appreciated. The ALTA Centers Council will meet during the conference. We will also have a booth in the exhibit hall. We need volunteers to work at the booth sharing information about ALTA with other attendees. Please contact the national office if you would like to volunteer during the conference.

I hope this is the beginning of a successful year for you and your students. I also hope that this year will be a time that more of you choose to actively participate in our association. Share your ideas, your time and your talents. Our membership and the students we serve will all benefit.

Elizabeth Cantrill

President’s Message
How wonderful it is to hear of your graduation and your plans for university. I can appreciate how hard you have worked, the struggles you have overcome. You are to be congratulated for your dedication and perseverance.

I recall the sweetest little second grader who showed up to work with me. She had a darling smile, a daring look of trepidation, and not a clue that I was soon to be her friend and mentor. Enchanting as she was, reading and spelling were so difficult that she was delighted when we had fire drills, and had to leave the classroom. Gradually, we were able together to figure out your learning style and break the code, so that reading was not nearly so impossible. You actually began to look forward to my visit each day. Your dad even insisted we continue to work even when you had chicken pox!

It has been such fun watching you progress. Your elementary school did a good job with your early years, and your parents have always been your best advocates. Gradually, we have seen you take over being your own advocate, which is a role you must continue.

You know what your learning style requires and you must take advantage of all the right moves. Sit at the front of the classroom, use a tape recorder to assist your memory in lectures, and listen to the lecture again the same day. You can even amend your class notes from the tape, if needed.

There are three channels through which you learn: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. Try to find ways to assist the memory. Everyone learns better if he can read it, hear it, and do it. If you can, “twice learning” is best, and before the information gets cold. Your auditory processes need reinforcement; that is why I say listen to the tape recorder on the same day of the lecture. Writing notes is not only kinesthetic, but also visual, and another reinforcement for memory.

One of the Ten Commandments of college education is “Be NOT afraid of asking the professor to explain it one more time.” Ask her to say it in a different way. Never hesitate to admit you are dyslexic and need it said slower or differently. Then, ask to repeat the information back to the professor for your own understanding. She may correct you or explain further. The point is, before you are completely lost, give the professor the opportunity to assist you.

That leads me to say one more thing. Professors sometimes forget that their job is to teach you! Be a pest until you understand the course. That is your job as your own advocate. They won’t all be thrilled by your consternation, but they will admire your determination.

God has given you many talents, and your family has provided you support, but most of all, you are the excited learner who has seen how far you have come, and what strengths you possess. My daily prayers will include you as you prepare for this new adventure!

Annette Stokes is a Certified Academic Language Therapist, trained at Neuhaus Education Center, and currently serving on the board of The Dyslexia Foundation. This letter was written when her student graduated from high school.
Second, as a professional, I feel the need to be a part of a larger group, that is associated with setting and maintaining standards at the highest level for us all.

Third, my professional organization functions as an advocate for all Certified Academic Language Therapists. Fourth, I can be assured that ALTA Centers Council will provide uniform standards for the accredited training centers. It will establish uniform certification/registration standards for ALL Academic Language Therapists and assure that once the therapist has passed the exam he/she will continue to keep updated and informed by meeting the CEU requirements.

Lastly, ALTA will promote public confidence regarding the integrity, competence and professionalism of all Certified Academic Language Therapists. Our annual conference provides the latest information in the field of dyslexia, information that oftentimes is on the cutting edge of research (like the address by Dr. Gordon Sherman, keynote speaker for the spring 1998 conference).

Yes, my membership in ALTA is valuable, and I look forward to being associated with this organization for many years to come!

In the Perspectives, Fall 1999, past president of IDA, Gordon Sherman, stated “there are groups who are doing good work to develop standards of accreditation and certification, but I think it is fair to say that no single group has been able to bring unity to the process.” Dr. Sherman was correct that good work to develop standards has been accomplished, but today his statement regarding a lack of unity is incorrect. Currently ALTA, the ALTA Centers Council, IMSLEC, and AOGPE are all communicating with one another on matters of accreditation and certification. All of these groups desire a collaborative process. Our goal continues to be a commitment to provide the best educational treatment available to the individuals with dyslexia that we serve.

Regrettably, we have received no information from IDA since our spring conference last April. The ALTA Executive Board is asking you to voice your support and commitment to a collaborative endeavor. A sample letter is provided as an insert in this newsletter. Either write a letter of your own, or sign the sample letter with your name, title and address to communicate with IDA president Harley Tomey. Also, make a copy of your letter to send to Emerson Dickman, whose address appears at the bottom of the letter. This is an issue of critical importance. Please take a moment to help establish ALTA’s voice in this new process.
Center Spotlight

LEAD/Literacy Education &
Academic Development, Inc.
PO Box 262
Argyle, Texas 76226
Phone: (940) 464-3752
Fax: (940) 464-7293
E-mail: lead1234@gte.net
Director: Valerie Tucker
Director of Teacher Training: Melanie Royal

Our mission at LEAD is to provide a structured, Alphabetic Phonics based program to successfully train dyslexia therapists, to provide both public and private schools the framework for implementing multisensory structured language programs, and to be a resource for parents, teachers, and the community.

LEAD holds accredited status from the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) and from the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) at the Therapy and Instructor of Therapy Levels.

LEAD offers two levels of training as well as community outreach programs and prevention and intervention courses in workshop format. Admission to either training program requires a Bachelors Degree in Education or a related field. A Masters Degree is preferred for the Therapy Level Training.

Therapy Level Training

- 200+ hours classroom instruction (45 hrs. from teaching level applicable)
- 700 supervised clinical teaching hours (150 from teaching level applicable)
- 3 therapy situations covering all levels of instruction are required within the 2 years required to complete training
- 10 observations and conferences with written feedback
- Auditory conceptual function and oral production of sounds competency
- Exit exam

Upon successful completion of all requirements at the therapy level, a Therapy Level Certificate will be issued and the candidate will be eligible to take the ALTA certification examination to become a Certified Academic Language Therapist.

Teacher Level Training

- 45+ hours classroom instruction
- 50 supervised lessons of at least 40 minutes each
- 5 observations and conferences with written feedback
- 9 month minimum completion
- Auditory conceptual function and oral production of sounds competency
- Exit exam

Upon successful completion of all requirements at the teacher level, a Teacher Level Certificate will be issued.

CEUs are required for both levels of training.

Professional Seminars are available for Certified Academic Language Therapists and Classroom Teachers upon request:

- Using your Brain in the MSL Classroom
  This seminar explores the functions of the brain and how multisensory teaching techniques complement the various functions.
- Scientific Spelling
  Scientific Spelling is a multisensory spelling program designed for teachers who teach spelling.
- Reading Readiness
  Reading Readiness is a workshop designed to provide young children phonological awareness skills to prepare them for reading. This workshop is appropriate for therapists and classroom teachers.
- From Verbal to Written Expression
  Grammar and written expression skills are developed in this structured multisensory curriculum.

Community Outreach

LEAD participates in community forums designed for parents and educators interested in learning more about dyslexia and the services available to the dyslexic individual. Please contact LEAD for additional information.

Are you attending the IDA national conference in Washington, DC? Please let us know by contacting the ALTA office at 972/233-9107 ext. 204, fax 972/490-4219 or e-mail mad@dondillon.com.

Thank you!
Plano ALTA Professional Group

By Jean Fortune

The ALTA Plano Professional Group was established two years ago to encourage one another, stimulate professional growth, share insights and network regarding clients and their needs. We began with six therapists in attendance. The speaker was a Qualified Instructor who shared techniques to aid reading comprehension. Our group moved to the Harvey Hotel Plano where we meet quarterly.

We begin with a light meal and share insights, experiences and techniques that we have learned. Our presenters, who speak for two hours, are Certified Academic Language Therapists, learning disability specialists, physicians, educational diagnosticians, and Qualified Instructors. Past programs have included a Scientific Spelling workshop, educational assessments - their format and evaluation, older student situations, issues with schools including IEPs and early release, and visualizing/verbalizing instruction techniques to promote reading comprehension.

Our mailing list has grown to forty and our attendance has grown to twenty-five. The ALTA Plano professional group meetings are often approved by the ALTA CEU committee. Meeting our CEU requirements gives our group another important purpose. Our group finds it most beneficial to be in contact with each other, and we learn a great deal which ultimately helps the students we serve.

ALTA Professional Groups

The Membership Committee is in the process of developing policies and procedures for establishing ALTA professional groups. Several groups around the United States are already meeting and there are requests to form others. Local groups give ALTA members the opportunity to share therapy strategies as well as the opportunity to get acquainted with professional colleagues. Please contact ALTA Vice President of Membership Carolyn Nesbitt for information on establishing an ALTA professional group.

ALTA Certification Exam Study Help

Classes with study materials

- Taught by CALTs
- 6 to 8 hours
- 2-Saturday a.m.
- 1-Saturday

Out of town possible

Call for further information
(972) 840-1718

This is a private venture and is not endorsed nor supported by ALTA
Queens of the School

Classroom for sale or rent,
We left to be therapists.
No homeroom class to train,
We traded’em for writing frames, there are

New concepts we have found,
“W” doesn’t make a sound.
We are therapists in training,
Some think we’re fools!

Voiced, unvoiced, open, blocked,
Formulas are really hot.
Old decks, approach strokes, wow!
We all use multisensory now, there are

New concepts we now know,
Linkages that really flow.
We are therapists in training,
Learning the rules! We know

Every Office Max in a 20-mile range
And street names that sound so strange.
Pauline’s learning how to say “duck.”
The Class of 2002 wishes her “lick” (oops, “luck!”)

Medieval Times will go,
We won’t take Mary Rumsey though.
Mind trippin’ is Karen’s part,
She’s already at Stein Mart, there are

New concepts we will use,
“ng” can really give us the blues,
We are therapists in training,
Queens of the School!

New lyrics by Tracy Goff

Members!

Spotlight your students’ talents on the ALTA website SPOTLIGHT PAGE
We are featuring art and writing. Art must be submitted on a floppy disk. Descriptive, expository, or creative writing must be scanner-ready. Send to Jean Fortune at fortsearch@aol.com or call 972-527-3215 for more information. Please use the application at www.altaread.org or call for a copy. The form requires the signature of a parent and the therapist. What a wonderful way to show our students’ giftedness to the world!
CEU Calendar

September 29, 2000
Time: 9:00 am-3:00 pm
Cost: $15.00
Contact hours: 5
Topic: “Non-Verbal Learning Disorder: The Hidden Disability” and
“Interventions for Non-Verbal Learning Disorder: The Importance
of an Image”
Speaker: Michele Berg, Ph.D., Director of the Center for Learning
Disabilities, The Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kansas
Sponsor: Neuhaus Eduction Center
Location: Neuhaus Education Center, 4433 Bissonnet, Bellaire, Texas 77401
Contact: Cathy Lorino, (713) 664-7676

September 30, 2000
Cost: $30
Speaker: Terri Abraham, Licensed Educational Diagnostician, School
Psychologist, and Mental Health Counselor
Sponsor: Southwest Branch of the International Dyslexia Association
Location: Student Services Center, Albuquerque, NM
Contact: Sue Fitzmaurice, (505) 232-2373, sfitz@rt66.com

October 13, 2000
Topic: Teaching Reading IS Rocket Science
Speaker: Louisa Moats, Ed.,D.
Sponsor: Philadelphia Branch of International Dyslexia Association
Contact: (610) 527-1548
Location: Valley Forge Hilton

October 14, 2000
Topic: Pathways to Potential V
Speaker: Susan Neuman, Ed.D
Sponsor: Houston Branch of International Dyslexia Association
Location: Doubletree Hotel at Allen Center
Contact: Consuelo Duroc-Danner, PO Box 540504, Houston, Texas 77254-0504, or Janis Block, (713) 960-6660

October 19-20, 2000
Cost: $35 member/$70 non-member/$80 after Sept. 29
Contact hours: 7 possible
Sponsor: Association of Christian Schools International, Teacher/ Administration Convention
Location: Wichita Convention Center, Wichita, KS
Contact: Jane Schimmer, 4039 Echo Glen Dr., Dallas, TX 75244, (972) 247-6558

October 23, 2000
Topic: ADD/ADHD: Manifestations, Accommodations, Counseling Strategies
Contact hours: 2
Speaker: Dr. Paul Warren, Behavioral Pediatrician
Sponsor: Plano ALTA Professional Group
Location: Harvey Hotel, Central Expressway and 15th St., Plano, TX
Contact: Jean Fortune, (972) 527-3215, reservations required

October 19-21, 2000
Topic: Tools for Life-Long Success: Interventions That Work
Sponsor: Council for Learning Disabilities (CLD)
Keynote Speaker: Priscilla Vail
Location: Hyatt Regency on Town Lake, Austin, TX
Contact: CLD (913) 492-8755, fax (913) 492-2546

October 25-28, 2000
Topic: If Not Now, When?
Sponsor: Learning Disabilities Association of Texas, Texas
Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas
Location: Renaissance Austin Hotel, Austin, TX
Contact: Learning Disabilities Association of Texas (LDAT), 1011 West 31st St., Austin, TX 78705

November 15, 2000
Topic: Stress in School Seminar: Research Advances in Dyslexia - Implications for Practice
Contact hours: 1
Speaker: Jeffrey L. Black, M.D., Medical Director of Child Development Center, Texas Scottish Rite Hospital, Dallas
Sponsor: Highland Academy, 1231 W. Belt Line Rd., Richardson, TX 75080
Location: Highland Academy
Contact: Dr. Lynda K. Handlogten, (972) 238-7567

November 3, 2000
Topic: Helping Our ADHD Students Learn More Effectively
Contact hours: 4
Speaker: John Burnside, M.D., Gary M. Barnard, Ph.D.
Sponsor: Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas, 308 Ave. E at 4th St., San Antonio, TX
Location: Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas
Contact: Wanda Ward, (210) 222-0133

November 8 - 11, 2000
Topic: Literacy - A Capital Idea
Event: 51st Annual Conference, International Dyslexia Association
Location: Omni Shoreham Hotel, Washington, D.C.
Contact: IDA office (410) 296-0232 or (410) 321-5069

November 20-21, 2000
Cost: $35 member/$70 non-member/$80 after Nov. 10
Contact hours: 9-11 possible
Sponsor: Association of Christian Schools International Teacher/ Administrator Convention
Location: DFW Airport Hyatt, Dallas, TX
Contact: Jane Schimmer, (972) 247-6558

March 2, 2001
Topic: Is Anybody Listening
Speaker: Richard Lavoie, Executive Director, Riverview School and Marcia Henry, Ph.D.
Sponsor: Southwest Branch of the International Dyslexia Association
Location: Albuquerque, NM
Contact: Sue Fitzmaurice, 614 Ridgecrest SE, Albuquerque, NM 87108, (505) 232-2373, sfitz@rt66.com

April 21, 2001
Event: ALTA Spring Conference
Speaker: TBA
Location: Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, Dallas, TX
Contact: Connie Peters, ALTA Vice President/Programs

Contact the Region Education Service Center in your area for other seminars that may qualify for CEU hours.
Joan Keagy, a Certified Academic Language Therapist, will be the director of the new Spring Valley School in Birmingham, Alabama. Local parents led the initiative to establish the new school. A group of parents who were frustrated by public schools’ services for students with learning disabilities asked Joan to serve as director. Spring Valley is the first secondary school strictly for learning disabled students in Birmingham. The school serving students grades three through seven, will be housed in Trinity Presbyterian Church. The class sizes will be small and they will use an Orton-Gillingham curriculum for the students with learning disabilities. “It has been very rewarding,” said Keagy, who has worked at a school for learning disabled students in Dallas for ten years.

Lucy Smith, a Certified Academic Language Therapist, is the director for HOPE Literacy. The program began in 1997 as a pilot program under the Texas Chaplaincy Department at the Gatesville Trusty Camp, Gatesville, Texas and the Hutchins State Jail, Dallas, Texas. HOPE Literacy is built around the MTS Reading Program (developed by Margaret Smith), a multisensory structured language system for learning disabled individuals. Individualized instruction is provided by offender tutor to offender student. Students are taught to teach themselves to read, write, and spell. Mastery Checks are administered by qualified free-world volunteers for each phase of the curriculum. Senior tutors instruct new tutors in the program content.

Joan Davis, a Certified Academic Language Therapist, traveled to China to show Chinese educators a special way to teach students with dyslexia. Joan explained through interpreters, some of the techniques developed to help children with dyslexia. The teachers especially liked the colorful, three-dimensional plastic letters. The Chinese teachers had never seen them even though the letters were made in China. “The concept of dyslexia and multi-sensory teaching is foreign (to the Chinese teachers),” said Joan. “Seeing dyslexia as a neurological disability and understanding that it makes learning symbol-sound relationships more difficult was new to them. Students with disabilities are isolated, much like was done in the U.S. in the 1950’s and 1960’s. The teachers enjoyed the hands-on activities, just as teachers do here.” Joan said that presenting professional papers all over the United States helped prepare her for this assignment. Joan received her training at Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas, where she worked for nine years before going into private practice.

Do you know of other ALTA members making a difference in your community? Please mail, fax or e-mail your news item to the ALTA National Office at 4020 McEwen, Suite 105, (972) 233-9107 ext. 204, fax (972) 490-4219, mad@dondillon.com.
Harry Potter has been earning money for ALTA. It’s not wizardry! It’s
because ALTAread.org is an associate of Amazon.com, and we’ve all heard
that Harry is big at the bookstore.

Sales of Harry Potter books can earn ALTA 5% each time Harry Potter (or
any other book, tape, CD, toy or game for that matter) is ordered
online from Amazon.com. Sales of a book reviewed on our site, Multisensory Teaching of Basic
Language Skills by ALTA member Judith Birsh, for example, can earn
ALTA even more.

How does this wizardry occur, you ask? Go to the ALTA web site,
ALTAread.org, before you make ANY book, tape, CD, toy or game purchase
online. Use the Amazon.com icon on
our home page to link to Amazon.com.
Order your materials, and ALTA is the recipient of 5% of your order.

Still more magic. ALTA can even earn 15% from your book purchase. How?
If you go to ALTAread.org and click
on the Resources button at the top of
the home page, you will find the sec-
section where ALTA reviewers have
reviewed books for you. If you choose
to purchase a reviewed book, click on
the blue text (hot text) of the book
title or on the book jacket icon. This
will take you directly to
Amazon.com. You must purchase the
book directly; that is, without doing
any other browsing first. If you do
purchase a reviewed book in this
direct way, ALTA will receive 15% of
the purchase price. Every time some-
one purchases Multisensory Teaching of
Basic Language Skills, for example,
ALTA is rebated $6.20. Harry Potter
IV rebates ALTA $.78 each time he is
purchased by linking from
ALTAread.org to Amazon.com.

A word about ordering online. Don’t
be afraid to try. The process is very
clear, and you can cancel at any place
along the way. In fact, on the last
screen, after you have ordered, given
your billing address, your mailing
address and your credit card
number, you have to click a
button that asks if
you really want to place this order.

We’d like to cast a spell; but casting spells on one’s peers is frowned upon
by Hogwarts. We’ll simply encourage
you to get in the habit of going to
ALTAread.org first; then, linking to
Amazon.com for purchases of books,
tapes, CD’s, toys, and games.
Encourage your family and friends to
do so, too. You can bewitch them if
your wand is powerful enough.

It’s not really magic; it just makes
good “cents”.

Note: When you are ready to pur-
chase from Amazon.com, do not use
the on-click purchase option. It
negates the rebate. What will those Muggles think of next?

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ALTA WEBSITE
FIND-A-THERAPIST LISTING

Mark ✓ additional items you wish to include in your listing. A phone &/or e-mail address must be included so that clients will know how to reach you! Listings may be updated weekly.

Last Name: ______________________________ First Name: ___________________________ (required)
☐ Title: __________________________________________________________
☐ Business/School/Private Practice: ________________________________________
☐ E-Mail Address: ________________________________

Certified: Yes ______ No _________ (required)
Accepting Students: Yes____ ______ No _________ (required)
☐ Include Picture: Yes(attached)______ No _______
☐ Address: ______________________________

__________________________________________________

City:______________________________________ State:_______ Zip:____________ (required)
☐ Phone (including area code): ________________________________
☐ FAX (including area code): ________________________________
☐ Member Site URL: ________________________________

Ages of students served: Mark categories that apply. (required)
☐ Preschool-K ☐ Elementary ☐ Jr. High ☐ Sr. High ☐ Adult ☐ All

☐ Philosophy: ___________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

☐ Educational Background: ______________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

☐ Areas of extended training:

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________

Mail form with $60 payment to:
ALTA National Office/4020 McEwen, Suite 105/Dallas, TX  75244
October

October-February

November

October-February

October-March

October-July