CEU BOOK LIST

Remember that active ALTA members will again be required to have 20 contact hours of continuing education credit before renewing membership in the spring of 2003. In addition to attending conferences and workshops, members may earn up to 15 of these hours by reading books and journals. The books must be current—published in 1998 or later. Books published earlier are, of course, still valuable sources of information, but for purposes of CEUs, we are focusing on learning the most CURRENT information available. Book report forms, available from the ALTA office, must be completed and retained in members’ personal files. Three (3) contact hours will be earned for each book read. The following bibliography contains a few suggestions.


Did you miss the April 2002 Academic Language Therapy Association Spring Conference and Annual Meeting? Each participant received an ALTA tote bag and you will want one too! It’s great for carrying books and teaching supplies. The bags are 100% cotton and cost $8, payable by check, Mastercard, Visa or American Express. The price includes the cost of the tote bag and shipping. Send your order to ALTA, 13140 Coit Rd., Suite 320, LB 120, Dallas, TX 75240, fax (972)490-4219, or email mad@dondillon.com.
Dear Members,

The Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) Board of Directors met on June 1, 2002, at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children to discuss issues and plan for the future of our organization. The intent of the nominating committee to bring diversity to our board was evident with seven members from the Dallas metroplex, seventeen from the state of Texas and two from out-of-state. Each member is dedicated to promoting and strengthening the mission of our organization. As stated in our by-laws, “The mission of ALTA is to establish, maintain, promote and strengthen standards to assure that Certified Academic Language Therapists will perform quality professional services for students with dyslexia and/or related disorders.”

To achieve its mission, the Academic Language Therapy Association shall: 1) provide uniform standards for the teaching centers and their students; 2) establish uniform certification/registration standards for Academic Language therapists; 3) promote public confidence regarding the integrity, competence and professionalism of Academic Language Therapists; 4) establish, promote and monitor standards for professional conduct; 5) unite

See President’s Message on Page 5

Reflections on the 2002 Conference

Dear Fellow ALTA Members,

This may be difficult to believe, but I am actually sad that my term as Vice-President of Programs is over. However, after filling this position for two years, I feel I finally have it down to an art. Here is some information about the spring conference, including the “behind the scenes” planning, decision making, and membership reaction to this year’s conference.

See Reflections on the 2002 Conference on Page 4
From The Past President

Dear Members,

Instead of looking back on the past year, I want this farewell letter to turn our eyes toward the current and future challenges and opportunities. Kay Peterson, joined by the other Officers and Directors, will lead us as we journey toward the Academic Language Therapy Association’s (ALTA) goals together. In other articles in this newsletter, you will notice several important “next steps” that we will be taking.

The Alliance was formally organized during a meeting in June and officers were elected. As one of the two certifying bodies in the Alliance, ALTA will be propelled into responding to certification issues on a larger scale than ever before. This will precipitate the long-overdue examination revision, for which the groundwork has already been laid. Our goal is to design an exam that is stringent enough professionally to preserve the uniqueness of the designation of Certified Academic Language Therapist, and yet, pragmatic enough to prevent its being just another academic exercise. I encourage each of you to contribute to this project from your storehouse of experience, knowledge, and wisdom.

We have been challenged to change the perception that ALTA is a “Dallas” organization. The location of the national office in Dallas and the many Dallas-Fort Worth area individuals who are such willing workers add to this mistaken perception. In reality, ALTA has always been of national scope, and recently leadership has been selected purposefully to represent the geographical diversity of our membership.

We can all be cognizant of ways to encourage colleagues to become vitally involved in ALTA’s leadership. However, even more important, each of us can find a niche to fill with our own time and talent. This is no time for reticence! If you have expertise that you know would be valuable to one of the committees, ALTA needs you. Besides, you will enjoy it! There is no substitute for direct involvement to deepen resolve, commitment, and appreciation for any worthy cause.

On a personal note, working with the ALTA Board and Committees has strengthened my faith in the potential of professional collaboration and collegiality. I have never observed anyone trying to escape responsibility. Conversely, I have seen those with astounding workloads enthusiastically absorb one more project because of a special ability or interest in that area, or just because it needed to be done! It has been extremely refreshing to watch individuals volunteer for a task without hesitation. This is only one of the reasons that it has been a distinct pleasure to be on the ALTA Board for the last three years. I feel as if I have many new “best friends” whom I have come to deeply appreciate. Now I look forward to getting to know many more of you.

Sincerely,

Martha Sibley, CALT
Historian
The ALTA Centers Council (ACC) held its annual meeting on April 5, 2002. A majority of the accredited centers and one formal candidate were represented either in person or by report.

Topics of interest included:

1. The Accreditation Committee announced that five site visits have been completed and reaffirmation of accreditation was awarded to Stratford Friends School MSL Training Program, Payne Education Center Therapist Training Program, LEAD, Southwest Multisensory Training Center, and The Multisensory Language Training Institute of New Mexico. Site visits have been scheduled for the remaining accredited centers and will be completed by the end of the year.

2. The Curriculum/Research Committee distributed two research papers, The Spelling of Final Letter Patterns: A Comparison of Instruction at the Level of the Phoneme and the Rime by Post, Carreker & Holland, and Teaching Reading in an Inner City School Through a Multisensory Approach by Joshi, Dahlgren and Bouland-Gooden.

3. The Scholarship Committee announced the recipients of three $300 scholarships. These scholarships were awarded to Jo Ann Sibley, Kathryn Camp and Diana Mizusawa. Congratulations!

4. The Nominating Committee submitted a slate of officers to fill expiring terms. The following officers were elected: Valerie Tucker, President; Nell Carvell, Vice President; Stacey Mahurin, Secretary; Karen Avrit, Treasurer; and Dr. Susan Fleming, Public Member.

5. The ALTA Exam Committee Chair, Melanie Royal, distributed notebooks containing guidelines and procedures for the ALTA Registration Examination to each accredited center.

6. The ACC approved the formation of an advisory board.

7. IDA and IMSLEC have elected to have representatives on the ACC board. IDA will be represented by Lenox Reed and IMSLEC will be represented by Karen Avrit.

8. The ACC, ALTA and IMSLEC will co-sponsor a presentation by Gordon F. Sherman, PhD, in September, 2002.

ACC will hold its next meeting during the IDA Conference in Atlanta.
Most tasks are usually easier the second time around, but this year was an exception. After having the conference at the beautiful Texas Scottish Rite Hospital (TSHR) for so many years, there were several areas that “ran themselves.” Of course, it helped to have so many of our members who worked at the TSRH to help with last minute details. The TSRH had a full time dietary staff to assist in meal planning, as well as a full time staff to serve breakfast and lunch. Also, audio/visual needs assistance was available. Suddenly, I realized that the move to Highland Park Presbyterian Church presented new challenges.

One challenge I faced both years was selecting our keynote speaker. What kind of format would the membership appreciate? Would participants like information that they could use on Monday with a student? Would they like to hear the latest in research that they could share with a parent or colleague? This year, I attended The International Dyslexia Association’s annual conference and scouted prospective speakers. Two in particular dazzled me – the two we invited to speak at our conference. Our intent was to have an informational morning and an inspirational afternoon.

The majority of those in attendance were happy with these two speakers. Dr. Henry provided us with some tools to use in therapy and Ms. Smith discussed what we could do with our talents. Many participants were overwhelmed with emotion as those who had been incarcerated gave their testimonies about the wonderful influence of Ms. Smith’s program, HOPE Literacy.

Another important challenge was food! The search for a caterer began. We pondered what to consider when choosing what to eat. A variety, something that could be served in 45 minutes, vegetarian choices and easy clean-up were all considered. The majority of participants enjoyed the lunch. Seventy percent of those who completed the evaluation rated lunch a five, the highest rating. A handful of participants were disappointed and some expressed missing that salad at TSRH.

Then there was the facility to consider. As our membership has grown, we have had to restrict the number attending due to space limitations at the TSRH. It was obvious that we needed a larger facility. We looked into several hotels (which would accommodate lunch and parking), but I also realized that the cost to attend the conference would increase significantly. Mr. Larry Evans, principal at the Hillier School of Highland Park Presbyterian Church, generously helped us keep our conference registration fee the same as the previous year.

Overall, the evaluations were supportive of the efforts of the Programs Committee. Thank you for taking the time to give your input and suggestions. We not only read every evaluation turned in, but we also compiled them for the ALTA Board of Directors. Jana Jones will be the new Vice-President of Programs and will appreciate your input, suggestions, and help for next year’s conference.

Finally, there is a little saying that I kept in mind for the past two years. “You can’t please all of the people all of the time, but you can please some of the people some of the time.” One participant wrote, “Lunch was great!” and another wrote, “Lunch was horrible!” It makes me wonder if they had the same lunch!

Connie Peters, CALT
Another Student Success Story

By Joanne White, CALT

Katy Farmer, a teaching staff member at Neuhaus Education Center since June 2001, is as busy as ever helping to teach myriad courses and workshops. In her spare time, she spends time with her children and grandchildren, sews quilts, writes children's books and provides academic language therapy for a nine-year-old who, at one time, was struggling to learn reading and spelling. Although James is in the gifted and talented program in an area Houston Independent School District elementary school, reading and spelling did not always come easy for him. James previously attended a private school, and it was then that he was diagnosed as dyslexic.

Katy began working with James in September 2001, several days a week. After making substantial progress with academic language therapy, James' grades in school were exceptional. Katy believes that using Basic Language Skills, an Alphabetic Phonics-based curriculum, allows a student with a language learning difference to know what to expect at every session, which is, in part, why James has been so successful. As with Katy's former students, James enthusiastically strives to learn new concepts. His mother believes that working with Katy has changed her son's life because he has gained such confidence and self-esteem. In addition, James' handwriting has improved dramatically, and he does a fantastic job applying what he has learned. Katy now places a great deal of emphasis on reading fluency practice during their sessions together.

Continued President's Message from page 1

Academic Language Therapists in private practice or public and private schools; and 6) promote knowledge and awareness of the profession in the community.

The committee chairs have begun work for 2002-2003. Many of them expressed the need for new members to their committees. Would you consider filling this need? There are many opportunities to volunteer. Our desire is to involve as many members as possible in the work of ALTA. Please contact the ALTA office or any member of the Board of Directors if you are willing to serve on a committee.

When we look at the ALTA membership, it becomes evident the number of states represented by Certified Academic Language Therapists is growing. Due to the dedication to academic language therapy, students throughout the states who have been unsuccessful in reading, writing and spelling are being taught skills that will last a lifetime.

It is important for us as professionals to seek current information and continue to read up-to-date research. The ALTA web site lists dates for training and most region service centers have a list of courses. I hope your summer was filled with educational as well as recreational time.

Katy, who has been working as a private therapist since 1989, describes James as the typical dyslexic. He has had difficulty with spelling, word retrieval, and math word problems. However, he has an extensive vocabulary and participates in the sport of fencing where he has done very well in tournaments. Katy describes working privately with students as a wonderful experience and says it is “so much fun to see the light bulb go on,” and it surely has for James. During Christmas vacation last year, he read Hatchet by Gary Paulsen and has since read other books by the same author. Another young life has been touched by academic language therapy.
Giving Back

As a little girl growing up, I was often thought of as happy, outgoing, very friendly and wise. I was an average student in school, but with all the strengths I possessed and the things others saw in me, inwardly I was shy because I could not read. No one would have known it because I had the gift of speaking. The way I survived was to have my friends and sister read my assignments to me. Then I summarized what they said by drawing pictures and symbols to help me remember. When I had to present the assignment, I spoke with confidence. This went on for years until I reached seventh grade.

English class was my most stressful time of the day. The teacher would have us take turns reading. She was so predictable because she would call our names in order. I would memorize all the words before my turn, and when I was called on, I read well. The stressful part came when I had to pay close attention to what everyone else read. I had this reading thing under control, or so I thought. However, one day when I came to class, the teacher gave the instructions about the reading of the day, and you know what she did? She randomly called on each student and I was third. I did not have time to memorize anything. I was usually 12th or 13th, but not this time. As I began to read, I felt my heart beating to every mistake I made, amplifying my stumbling and mumbling over unfamiliar words, which was most of the text. I did not know how to break the words down. I did not know anything about rules of words or the language. Moreover, that day everyone else knew it too. That day I died inside. All the confidence I had was gone. My self-esteem and self-worth were shot. I did not believe I could do anything because now my friends thought I was dumb.

I am so very glad my story did not end there. There is so much more to tell about the struggles. However, to shorten my story, a teacher by the name of Ms. Bell came into my life. She was the special education teacher. Back then, for special education classes, students were taken out of the regular classroom. When Ms. Bell came to get me, everyone knew I was going to “THE DUMB ROOM” as the students called it, and every day I thought of myself as “dumb.”

Ms. Bell did not think of me in that way. She never acted as if I were that way. The three sentences she said to me EVERY SINGLE DAY were, “I BELIEVE IN YOU! YOU CAN DO IT! YOU ARE BRILLIANT!” These were her mottos. I heard these words of encouragement from her every day, and although I did not feel brilliant, she treated me as if I were. She had high expectations for me.

She loved me, which helped me to love myself. She brought out the best in me and I began to believe in myself again. I was beginning to read. I mean actually read. Oh, I still struggled, but I improved.

Years have passed since seventh grade. Because of Ms. Bell, a teacher who took the time to care for the heart of a student like me, I went on to graduate from high school. From there I went to college, graduated with honors, and became a teacher. These were great accomplishments for a person like me, but my most treasured moments came when a man by the named of Leroy McClure Jr. introduced me to Alphabetic Phonics. At the time, I was teaching in a private school and he would come and get my low reading stu-

See Giving Back on Page 8
In 1991, Jeanine Phillip's son, Cooper, was diagnosed with profound dyslexia while in first grade. The school psychologist told her that it would be unfair for her to expect him to learn to read. As a mom and a teacher, Jeanine refused to accept the psychologist's prognosis. Jeanine decided to travel from Wichita, Kansas to Dallas, Texas to attend the Alphabetic Phonics training program to learn how to teach her son to read. With a great deal of hard work, Cooper is now a successful high school student at a college preparatory school in Wichita, KS. Jeanine credits Dr. Beverly Dooley, Aylett Cox, and the Scottish Rite Hospital in Dallas, Texas for being such an important factor in her child's success. In the following article, Jeanine Phillips, founding director of FUN•da•men•tal Learning Center in Wichita, KS, shares information about the center. It was established to provide a place where parents, teachers and other professionals could learn researched-based techniques for helping children with learning differences. FUN•da•men•tal Learning Center also provides affordable services for children with learning differences to teach them reading, handwriting, spelling, listening, and written expression.

At the FUN•da•men•tal Learning Center, we have three main strands of service. We assess and serve children between the ages of 4 and 18 years of age. This has forced us to become familiar with the TOPA, CTOPP, TPRI, Get Ready to Read, GORP, TOWL, and other acronyms I never thought I would ever be able to name. We have a team of six individuals who do assessments most every day of the week. In addition, we serve 48 children between the ages of five and 17, in classes of four, during the school day with Alphabetic Phonics, Reading Readiness, and Multisensory Reading and Spelling. We currently contract six Academic Language Therapists to work with these groups of children at our Center.
We educate regular classroom teachers and Academic Language Therapists. We offer three levels of Alphabetic Phonics training classes three times per year, with 92 therapists-in-training currently in some level of education. Approximately 35 therapists working within many of the public, parochial and private schools in Wichita and the surrounding area have completed the Alphabetic Phonics coursework and have graduated. Almost 520 children are currently being served by one of our specialists. In addition, we offer the workshops Reading Readiness, Multisensory Grammar, and Scientific Spelling one Saturday per month throughout the year to regular education teachers.

Finally, we help parents by offering a parent lunch lecture series on Tuesdays. Topics include dyslexia, ADHD, children’s legal rights and parental responsibilities, and assessment and evaluation. The sixteen individuals supporting the services at the FUN•da•men•tal Learning Center stay very busy.

On the other hand, should I say they were not going to let us fail? They had the same motto as my seventh grade teacher, “I BELIEVE IN YOU! YOU CAN DO IT! YOU ARE BRILLIANT.” With the daily echo of those words, in April of 2000 Lannie Turner and I graduated from training. We took our test in June of that same year and both succeeded. We are now Certified Academic Language Therapists teaching at Focus Learning Academy.

Ms. Bell died before I had the chance to share my accomplishments. She never knew I became a teacher, but every day that I love a child and teach him/her in the way he or she learns best, I am giving back.

Thank you, Barbara, Kay and Rae, for believing in me every day and for having high expectations. Thank you, Lannie, for walking along side me during those times when it was tough. Thank you, ALTA, for being an organization that supports the training of teachers and certifies them so that they can properly teach children reading, writing and language skills in the ways that they learn best. Finally, thank you, Leroy McClure, Jr., for investing in my life and for giving me the tools that will help me teach kids for a lifetime, for I am now equipped to effectively, “GIVE BACK.”

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Continued FUN•da•men•tal from page 7

Continued Giving Back from page 7
At the dinner following the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) Spring Conference and Annual Meeting, a person made an interesting statement to one of the ALTA officers: “We need to work on moving the leadership of ALTA out of Dallas.”

Since ALTA has made strong efforts during the last two years to gain representation from outside Dallas, she learned from her dinner partners that the 2001 board and committee chairs included only five with Dallas addresses and six from other towns close to Dallas. Therefore, a majority of the 30 total members are from areas other than the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

The 2002 group of officers and directors continues this trend. It includes only four with Dallas addresses, seven from towns nearby, and nine from locales completely outside the Dallas-Fort Worth Metroplex.

During the dinner, discussion on this topic moved ahead on a very positive level. Everyone agreed that, in fact, expanding the sphere of influence and representation on the board has already been accomplished to a great degree. The rest of the conversation, then, centered on the need for more members to express a willingness to offer their talents to do small segments of the work of ALTA.

To make it simpler for members from afar to participate, last year’s leadership conducted only four general board meetings, with much of the intervening decisions and committee work being accomplished via e-mail and telephone conferences. This proved to the group that business can be conducted quite effectively by individuals who are geographically distant. In addition, the committees were organized so that each committee chair was aligned with one of the vice presidents for support and collaboration. This “de-centralized” the work of the board even more and put most of the problem solving and decision-making in the committees. This enabled the board to focus on major issues and committee decisions that deserved consideration by the board.

This structure has provided avenues for anyone to participate. No one should hesitate because of his or her location. In fact, the next suggested change is to try to move some of the meetings to other cities, perhaps with various board members serving as hosts. Such a plan would enlarge perspective, as well as enable members from scattered locations to participate more fully.

Someone at the table suggested that the next step is for members to be made aware of opportunities to participate and ways to volunteer. In fact, no one has to wait for another election of board members to volunteer for ALTA leadership because there are many positions on committees that will need to be filled in the next few weeks.

The committees are listed in this newsletter, so individuals may even choose the one that seems most interesting. Any of the officers, board members, or committee chairpersons would count it a privilege to connect members with the appropriate individuals who appoint committee members. Also, if they prefer, members could e-mail ALTA via the on-line Helpline at www.ALTAread.org, or call the National Office at (972) 233-9107 to offer their expertise.

It is always appropriate for members to let someone know of a willingness to serve as an officer or director on the board in a future year. The nominating committee works from lists of interested members whose names are given to them in a variety of ways.

Consider this an open invitation for you to submit your name or the name of other members who will be an asset to ALTA. It will be to everyone’s benefit to have as many members as possible involved in the activities and decisions. ALTA and its members will be the richer for it!

An Open Invitation
By Martha Sibley, CALT

Social Skill Groups
and one-on-one counseling
now available for all ages.

If you are interested or have questions, contact:
Lana Stripling, L.P.C. (972) 386-5343
12810 Hillcrest Plaza, Suite B118, Dallas, TX  75230
Controversies In Auditory Processing

By Jeffrey L. Black, M.D.

This is part one of a two-part research article written by Dr. Jeffrey L. Black, M.D., director of The Luke Waites Child Development Center at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, Dallas, Texas. This research article first appeared in The Asset, the newsletter for the Dallas Branch of The International Dyslexia Association.

Children with oral language disorders and dyslexia are frequently said to have auditory processing problems. The use of this term has become widespread in the absence of a precise and generally accepted definition. This lack of precision and agreement has contributed to confusion about the etiology of dysfunction in the auditory system. Clinicians from diverse disciplines have focused on different elements of the auditory pathway in developing approaches to assessment and treatment (Table 1).

A number of interventions designed to improve some aspect of auditory processing have achieved popularity despite significant theoretical limitations and flaws in efficacy research. Three of the most popular and controversial theories and therapies are: central auditory processing - assistive listening devices, auditory temporal processing - acoustically modified speech training with computer-based multimedia games (Tallal), auditory distortion — auditory integration training (Tomatis).

Central auditory processing disorder (CAPD) is said to involve the auditory system from the inner ear (cochlea) to the cerebral cortex. CAPD cannot be attributed to impaired hearing sensitivity or intellectual impairment. Symptoms of CAPD are nonspecific: distractibility, inattentiveness, difficulty hearing in noisy environments, trouble with sound localization and difficulty following complex verbal instructions. The evaluation often includes tests of uncertain validity and reliability, particularly in a population with a high prevalence of attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. Some tests used in CAPD assessment are so attention dependent that they appear to measure little other than attentional processes. Treatment known to be effective for ADHD appears to be equally efficacious for changes in CAP test scores. Evidence for the efficacy of the commonly recommended treatment, auditory trainer or FM assistive listening device, is lacking. These devices, designed for the hearing impaired student, increase the loudness of the teacher’s voice above classroom noise using a teacher microphone and student receiver, often earphones.

Tallal has published extensively on the hypothesis that language impaired children are deficient in the ability to perceive rapidly presented sounds. This perceptual deficit is postulated to interfere with the ability to discriminate between phonemes, a prerequisite skill for reading. It has been proposed that the deficit lies in the fast conducting sensory pathway, the magnocellular system. Tallal’s collaborators also cite neuroscience research claiming that training produces functional reorganization changes in the brain resulting in improved perceptual abilities. A computerized treatment has been marketed, based on these hypotheses, and a small-scale intervention study that measured oral language outcomes. Recent research has not found Tallal’s test of auditory temporal order judgment to be correlated with phonological awareness or reading achievement. The sample size, practice effects, outcome measures used, multiple training components, phonemic awareness gains, and absence of reading measures of the computer treatment study have been criticized. There are a limited number of published studies in peer-reviewed journals on a second phase of the CD-ROM-based training program, FastForWord, which has additional components teaching phonological awareness and word recognition.

Tomatis, a French otolaryngologist and psychologist, has developed a neurophysiological theory about auditory system impairment. Auditory distortion due to hyperactive hair cells in the cochlea (inner ear) is presumed to cause a wide range of communication, behavioral and learning disorders. The diagnosis of auditory distortion typically involves finding hypersensitivity at one or more pure-tone audiometric frequencies. Multiple sessions of listening to music through a device that filters or modulates frequencies reportedly correct the hair cell function and cure the disorder. There is no scientific support for hypersensitivity at one or more pure-tone frequencies. The short treatment course is counter to requirements for existing auditory or communication skill intervention.

Clinicians who advocate and parents who choose, for their child, assistive listening devices for CAPD, FastForWord for dyslexia or auditory integration training (AIT) for any language disorder have adopted unproven methods. A sampling of the literature critical of these treatments are cited in the references. While it is helpful to have a basic understanding of the anatomy and function of the auditory system to evaluate the theories upon which auditory treatments are based, it is more important to review the research support of these treatment approaches.

Auditory integration training (AIT) fails to achieve scientific support on several criteria. There is no convincing evidence that some hair cells are hypersensitive. The small variations in hearing thresholds at different frequencies, said to be diagnostic of auditory distortion, are
common in the normal population. Controlled studies of AIT have not been reported in peer-reviewed journals, a basic requirement of scientific proof.

The basic tenets of CAPD are reasonable, that children differ in their ability to distinguish auditory figure-ground and discriminate between sounds that vary in volume, pitch or rate. The main difficulty with the CAPD diagnosis is the audiologic evaluation which relies heavily on the Screening Test for Auditory Processing Disorders (SCAN), which can be abnormal in children with ADHD who have no auditory deficits. Also, the CAPD evaluation sometimes fails to fully consider other causes of poor listening, such as - receptive language/semantics, working memory/chunk size capacity, low intelligence/incomplete concept formation, mental distractions/ stress or mood, selective hearing/resistive behavior. An assistive listening device for CAPD is often recommended when only one SCAN subtest is reported abnormal. Yet there are few studies which compare the response to treatment using an assistive listening device with modifications teachers can make in the classroom - seat preferentially, reduce background noise, gain attention, check comprehension, rephrase/ restate, or use visual teaching aids.

The arguments of critics and proponents of FastForWord are stated in the referenced articles from the fall 1996 issue of Perspectives. Both sides of the debate agree that poor readers make errors discriminating stop-vowel syllables, like /b/-/d/, at rapid rates of presentation. Tallal attributes this to a deficit in the perception of rapid frequency changes not limited to speech. Brady and others from Haskins Laboratories view the deficit as a speech specific failure in phonological representation. This deficit underlies the dyslexic’s difficulty detecting sound units (phonemes) in speech and learning relationships between sound units and written symbols (alphabet). Other investigators, in addition to the Haskins group, have not found poor readers to be deficient in processing brief patterns of rapidly changing acoustic (non-speech) information.

The strongest criticisms of the intervention study of the precursor to FastForWord are not complex problems with research design. Tests of reading were not given, so valid conclusions about the effect on reading cannot be drawn. There were less than 20 subjects in the experimental group. The absence of a broad set of conventionally used receptive and expressive language tests both before and after treatment makes gains in oral language skills difficult to interpret. Subsequent independent investigations (Gillam, 2001) of FastForWord with small sample sizes did find gains in some aspects of language comprehension, production and phonemic awareness but no improvement in reading skills. Failure of FastForWord to improve reading skill is consistent with studies showing best results when phonological awareness training is paired with explicit word analysis instruction. No evaluation data is available on the

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*controversial
new FastForWord Language to Reading, which contains training in sound-symbol associations. Larger scale replications by independent investigators would be necessary before FastForWord can be accepted as a proven intervention for children with language-based learning disorders.

REFERENCES


Letters From Our Members

Dear ALTA,
Thank you for the scholarship you extended to me back in 1999 when I began Language Therapy Training with an introductory course in Sounds and Syllables. I have continued the training through the therapy level and am now applying to take the certification exam from ALTA. The wonderful progress that my students have shown in our work together has been a very gratifying reward.

Thank you again for your early support. I just wanted you to know that the grant went toward helping in the development of another language therapist.

Terry Davis
Arroyo Seco, New Mexico

Dear ALTA,
I have just returned from Washington, D.C. where our small school district in Alaska received the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award. We, along with a large school in New York and a college, were the first in education to receive this award given by the Department of Commerce. The President of the United States presented the award.

So, why do I want the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) to know about this? Many ALTA members were essential players in what this district has done in the area of reading. I was fortunate enough to be the reading specialist for Chugach School District for the past 7 years. The superintendent of our schools, Roger Sampson, had been given the mandate to teach the students of Chugach School District to read. Seven years ago, 80% of our students were reading below grade level, according to the California Achievement Test. Mr. Sampson had observed the use of Multisensory Teaching Approach (MTA) in my multi-graded classroom in the little village of Tattilek. At the end of the year, all my students were reading above grade level. I was asked to come into the district office and head up staff development and to develop a method of teaching all our students to read. I had received my training as a therapist from the Learning Therapy Program at Southern Methodist University in Dallas and had used Edith Hogan and Margaret Smith's MTA materials for several years with much success in Alaska. Naturally, I wanted to use Alphabetic Phonics as the main thrust of reading instruction after giving all our students the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests and discovering our students could not decode. Since comprehension instruction assumes students have the ability to decode, we had no other choice but to start teaching our students to break the code. Jamie Williams came from Texas and trained our staff in a Montana one room schoolhouse. We purchased MTA kits for each teacher and made a two-year commitment to teach Alphabetic Phonics using MTA for one hour every day at all grade levels. I had the joy of retesting our students at the end of the first year. The progress was amazing and at the end of two years, unbelievable. We have an amazing staff, administration support, and community encouragement along with some very wonderful children who made all this possible.

The Department of Commerce has given out the Baldrige National Quality Award to business for years, but in 1999, they branched out to look for models in education that were realizable. We have an amazing staff, administration support, and community encouragement along with some very wonderful children who made all this possible.

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So now, you see just how many ALTA members have been involved in our trek to Washington, D.C. If you would like to know more about this, there is some information on our web site, www.chugach-schools.com. I would also be willing to share our data with anyone interested.

I wish I could have attended the Spring Conference in April. Missing out on the ALTA activities is one price I pay for living so very far away. I will forever be grateful to the Aylett Cox Foundation for providing the means for me to receive the training through SMU Learning Therapy Program.

Sincerely,
Betty Sue Crain, CALT
Chugach School District
Anchorage, Alaska

Jamie Williams presented the reading model of Accuracy, Fluency, and Comprehension to equal a Competent Reader during our reading staff development. Now, five districts in Alaska have designed their developmental report cards around this model.

We have been so fortunate to have wonderful people and excellent materials to use at our sites. One of our visiting experts was Dr. Marcia K. Henry. She modeled the use of her materials in all our remote sites. What a privilege is was for me to spend time with her.

Dr. Marcia K. Henry (center) discusses language learning with ALTA members.
Welcome, new student members

Milestones

Welcome, new student members

Congratulations, new qualified instructors

The Academic Language Therapy Association Centers Council (ALTA CC) Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce the recipients of the 2002 Scholarships for Teacher Training. This year three people will receive $300 each to apply toward tuition at one of the ALTA CC accredited training centers. The recipients and their chosen training centers are JoAnn Sibley, LEAD, Argyle, Texas; Kathryn Camp, Southwest Multisensory Training Center, Allen, Texas; Diana Mizusawa, Multisensory Language Training Institute, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Eight individuals completed Neuhaus Education Center’s Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program this spring. The graduates were Patricia Clark, Alvin Independent School District (ISD); Stephanie Ellzey, Hardin-Jefferson ISD; Suzanne Hall, private practice; Elizabeth Hendrix, Conroe ISD; Janet Lenhart, Katy ISD; Dianne Poole, Alvin ISD; Bridget Rahbany, Alvin ISD; and Paula Selle, private practice. The Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program and the Graduates of 2002 were spotlighted at the Sixteenth Annual Neuhaus Benefit Luncheon on March 7, 2002, at the Westin Galleria Hotel, Houston, Texas. Walter Negley, Neuhaus advisory board member, presented certificates of completion to the attending graduates. Graduate Stephanie Ellzey and her student, Timothy Baker, spoke to the audience of 1,100, sharing their thoughts about the impact of the program on their lives. Following the presentation, Dr. Robert Sternberg, IBM Professor of Psychology and Education at Yale University, delivered the keynote address, Successful Intelligence: Why There Is Much More to Intelligence Than IQ.

Congratulations to Susan Patteson who was named Dyslexia Specialist at Region XIII Education Service Center, Austin, Texas. Susan was formerly the dyslexia coordinator for Hays Consolidated Independent School District, Kyle, Texas.

Position available: Shelton School seeks qualified Wilson Language specialist for Upper School classroom position. For more information visit www.shelton.org or contact Anne Hendrick-Thomas, APR, director of public relations & human resources at 972/774-1772, ext. 241.
## CEU Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event:</th>
<th>Presenter:</th>
<th>Sponsor:</th>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Written Composition</td>
<td>Nancy Redington</td>
<td>Southwest Multisensory Training Center</td>
<td>600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX</td>
<td>August 1, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Readiness Skills</td>
<td>Helen Macik</td>
<td>Southwest Multisensory Training Center</td>
<td>600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX</td>
<td>August 5, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Assessment Conference: The Identification of Dyslexia</td>
<td>Helen Macik</td>
<td>Region XIII Education Service Center</td>
<td>Shetson School, 15720 Hillcrest Rd., Dallas, TX</td>
<td>August 5, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dyslexia Laws</td>
<td>Nancy Redington</td>
<td>Southwest Multisensory Training Center</td>
<td>600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX</td>
<td>September 20, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dysgraphia</td>
<td>Regina Richards</td>
<td>Austin Area Chapter of the Academic Language Therapy Association Austin Area Branch of The International Dyslexia Association</td>
<td>(972) 359-6646</td>
<td>September 26, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of the English Language</td>
<td>Contact: Susan Patteson</td>
<td>AABIDA</td>
<td>207 W. 18th Street Austin, TX</td>
<td>August 12, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading Comprehension</td>
<td>Nancy Redington</td>
<td>Houston Branch of The International Dyslexia Association, Neuhaus Education Center, The Briarwood School</td>
<td>J.W. Marriott Hotel-Galleria, Houston, Texas</td>
<td>August 13, 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multisensory Keyboarding</td>
<td>Contact: Cathy Lorino</td>
<td>Neuhaus Education Center On-line Workshops</td>
<td>Visit <a href="http://www.neuhaus.org">www.neuhaus.org</a></td>
<td>September 9 and 11, 2002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Event: Visualizing and Verbalizing Strategies for Comprehension
- **Event:** Visualizing and Verbalizing Strategies for Comprehension
- **Date:** October 14 and 16, 2002
- **Presenter:** Nancy Redington
- **Location:** 600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX
- **Telephone:** (972) 359-6646
- **Fax:** (972) 359-8591

### Event: Dyslexia All the Time / 2002 Dyslexia Conference
- **Event:** Dyslexia All the Time / 2002 Dyslexia Conference
- **Date:** October 28-29, 2002
- **Presenter:** Council of Educators of Students with Disabilities
- **Location:** Double Tree Hotel, 9801 Anderson Mill Road, Austin, TX
- **E-mail:** CESD

### Event: The Learning Disabilities Association of Texas State Conference
- **Event:** The Learning Disabilities Association of Texas State Conference
- **Date:** October 30-November 2, 2002
- **Location:** Renaissance Austin Hotel, 1011 W. 31st Street
- **Contact:** LDAT
- **E-mail:** LDAT@compuserve.com

### Event: Editor's Checklist for Written Language
- **Event:** Editor's Checklist for Written Language
- **Date:** November 18 and 20, 2002
- **Presenter:** Nancy Redington
- **Location:** 600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX
- **Telephone:** (972) 359-6646
- **Fax:** (972) 359-8591

### Event: PowerPoint Presentations
- **Event:** PowerPoint Presentations
- **Date:** January 27 and 29, 2003
- **Presenter:** Nancy Redington
- **Location:** 600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX
- **Telephone:** (972) 359-6646
- **Fax:** (972) 359-8591

### Event: Verbal into Written Expression
- **Event:** Verbal into Written Expression
- **Date:** February 28, 2003
- **Presenter:** Beverly Dooley
- **Location:** 600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX
- **Telephone:** (972) 359-6646
- **Fax:** (972) 359-8591

### Event: Informal Assessments and Effective Interventions for Students Struggling with Basic Reading and Writing Skills
- **Event:** Informal Assessments and Effective Interventions for Students Struggling with Basic Reading and Writing Skills
- **Date:** October 5, 2002
- **Presenter:** Nancy Mather, Ph.D.
- **Location:** 600 Jupiter Rd., Allen, TX
- **Telephone:** (972) 359-6646
- **Fax:** (972) 359-8591