DYSLEXIA (Specific Reading Disability)

By Sally E. Shaywitz, M.D., G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D. and Bennett A. Shaywitz, M.D.

Developmental dyslexia is characterized by an unexpected difficulty in reading in children and adults who otherwise possess the intelligence and motivation considered necessary for accurate and fluent reading. The definition also assumes the individual has had the benefit of reasonably effective reading instruction. Dyslexia (or specific reading disability) is the most common and most carefully studied of the learning disabilities, affecting 80% of all individuals identified as learning disabled. Longitudinal studies indicate that dyslexia is a persistent, chronic condition; it does not represent a transient “developmental lag.” Among investigators in the field there is now a strong consensus supporting the phonological theory. This theory recognizes that speech is natural and inherent, while reading is acquired and must be taught. To read, the beginning reader must recognize that the letters and letter strings (the orthography) represent the sounds of spoken language. In order to read, a child has to develop the insight that spoken words can be pulled apart into the elemental particles of speech (phonemes) and that the letters in a written word represent these sounds; such awareness is largely missing in dyslexic children and adults.

At all ages, dyslexia is a clinical diagnosis: the clinician seeks to determine through history, observation and psychometric assessment, if there are: 1) unexpected difficulties in reading (i.e., difficulties in reading that are unexpected for the person’s age, intelligence or level of education or professional status) and, 2) associated linguistic problems at the level of phonologic processing. There is no single test score that is pathognomonic of dyslexia. As with any other medical diagnosis, the diagnosis of dyslexia should reflect a thoughtful synthesis of all the clinical data available. In the preschool child, a history of language-delay or of not attending to the sounds of words (trouble learning nursery rhymes or playing rhyming games with words, confusing words that sound alike, mispronouncing words), trouble learning to recognize the letters of the alphabet, along with a positive family history represent important risk factors for dyslexia. In the school-aged child, presenting complaints most commonly center about school performance, “she’s not doing well in school,” and often parents (and teachers) do not appreciate that the reason for this is a reading difficulty. A typical picture is that of a child who may have had a delay in speaking, does not learn letters by kindergarten, has not begun to learn to read by first grade and has difficulty consistently sounding out words. The child progressively falls behind, with teachers and parents puzzled as to why such an intelligent child may have difficulty learning to read. The reading difficulty is unexpected with respect to the child’s ability, age, or grade. Even after acquiring decoding skills, the child generally remains a slow reader. Thus, bright dyslexic children may laboriously learn how to read words accurately but do not become fluent readers, that is, they do not recognize words rapidly and automatically. Dysgraphia and spelling difficulties are often present, and accompanied by laborious notetaking. Self-esteem is frequently affected, particularly if the disorder...
President’s Letter

Dear ALTA Members,

Happy 20th Anniversary! Some receive flowers, some a nice trip. For our anniversary, a huge reunion and celebration are in order. Plans for this event began over two years ago led by Michelle Bufkin, your Vice President of Programs. Michelle, or a member of her committee, has contacted many of you to contribute pictures and memorabilia that have aided them in putting together a commemorative Program Brochure and DVD presentation. Several exhibits at our conference will also focus on our history and the work that has been accomplished since ALTA’s inception twenty years ago. We have invited all of the Past-Presidents to join us in the Exhibit room to share their thoughts and provide us a live historical perspective. You will not want to be anywhere else on Saturday, April 22nd except at the Hilton Lincoln Center in Dallas, Texas, as we host Dr. Reid Lyon, Dr. Louisa Moats, and Richard Lavoie, keynote speakers. If you have not registered yet, do so quickly as you will definitely not want to miss this event!

As with many celebrations, there is usually business to be taken care of first. Our business meeting will be from 8:30 to 9:30 AM on April 22. This meeting is extremely important to our membership, as we will be voting on several bylaws changes that were introduced last spring. These changes have been in previous newsletters and are included in this issue for your review. The Bylaws Committee, chaired by Nancy Coffman, encourages you to contact them with questions before the meeting so that you may vote with confidence on April 22nd.

On a personal note, as my term as President draws to a close, I would like to say what an honor it has been to represent ALTA in this capacity. Although I often receive much of the recognition for the work of ALTA, none of it would have been possible without a tremendous Board of Directors, Committee Chairs, Committee Members, and general membership support. I also finish my term knowing that the leadership of ALTA will continue to remain steadfast under the leadership of Nancy Coffman.

We may be young in age, but we are also wise beyond our years. Congratulations on twenty years of Academic Language Therapy!

Fondly,

Melanie Royal, CALT, QI
ALTA President
has gone undetected for a long period of time (see Table 1, from Overcoming Dyslexia, Shaywitz, 2003).

In an accomplished adolescent or young adult, dyslexia is often reflected by slowness in reading or choppy reading aloud that is unexpected in relation to the level of education or professional status, for example, graduation from a competitive college or completion of medical school and a residency. Thus, in bright adolescents and young adults, a history of phonologically based reading difficulties, requirements for extra time on tests and current slow and effortful reading, i.e., signs of a lack of automaticity in reading, are the sine qua non of a diagnosis of dyslexia. In summary, at all ages, a history of difficulties getting to the basic sounds of spoken language, of laborious and slow reading and writing, of poor spelling, of requiring additional time in reading and in taking tests, provide indisputable evidence of a deficiency in phonological processing which, in turn, serves as the basis for, and the signature of, a reading disability.

**EXPERT OPINION ON MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

The management of dyslexia demands a life-span perspective; early on, the focus is on remediation of the reading problem. As a child matures and enters the more time-demanding setting of secondary school, the emphasis shifts to also incorporate the important role of providing accommodations. Effective intervention programs provide children with systematic instruction in each of the critical components of reading (see below) and practice that is aligned with that instruction. The goal is for children to develop the skills that will allow them to read and understand the meaning of both familiar and unfamiliar words they may encounter.

Just as in other areas of medicine, for the first time, there is now developing a knowledge base to inform the practice of evidence-based education. In 1998, the US Congress, concerned with what appeared to be an epidemic of poor reading nationally, mandated that a National Reading Panel (NRP) be formed. A major goal was to review the extant literature on teaching reading and to identify which specific methods and approaches are most effective. Based on a prior (1998) consensus report from the National Research Council and on the results of its own analysis, the NRP reported that there are five critical elements necessary to effectively teach reading: 1) phonemic awareness (the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes, elemental speech sounds, in spoken syllables and words); 2) phonics (understanding how letters are linked to sounds to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns); 3) fluency; 4) vocabulary and 5) comprehension strategies. The NRP emphasized that these elements must be taught systematically and explicitly, rather than in a more casual, fragmented or implicit manner. Such systematic phonics instruction is more effective than “whole word” instruction that teaches little or no phonics or teaches phonics haphazardly or in a “by-the-way” approach.

Fluency is of critical importance because it allows for the automatic, attention-free recognition of words, thus permitting these attentional resources to be directed to comprehension. Although it is generally recognized that fluency is an important component of skilled reading, it is often neglected in the classroom. The most effective method to build reading fluency is a procedure referred to as repeated oral reading with feedback and guidance, that is, the teacher models reading a passage aloud, the student reads the passage repeatedly to the teacher, another adult, or a peer, receiving feedback until he is able to read the passage correctly. The evidence indicates that this process of repeated oral reading with feedback has a clear and positive impact on word recognition, fluency and comprehension at a variety of grade levels and applies to all students – for good readers as well as those experiencing reading difficulties. Where the evidence is less secure is for programs for struggling readers that encourage large
amounts of independent reading, that is, silent reading without any feedback to the student. Thus, even though independent silent reading is intuitively appealing, at this time the evidence is insufficient to support the notion that, in struggling readers, reading fluency improves. No doubt there is a correlation between being a good reader and reading large amounts; however, there is a paucity of evidence indicating that there is a causal relationship that is, if poor readers read more they will become more fluent. In contrast to teaching phonemic awareness, phonics and fluency, interventions for reading comprehension are not as well established. In large measure this reflects the nature of the very complex processes influencing reading comprehension. The limited evidence indicates that the most effective methods to teach reading comprehension involve teaching vocabulary and strategies that encourage an active interaction between reader and text.

Large-scale studies to date have focused on younger children; as yet, there are few data available on the effect of these training programs on older children. The data on younger children are extremely encouraging, indicating that using evidence-based methods can remediate, and may even, prevent reading difficulties in primary school-aged children.

An essential component of the management of dyslexia in students in secondary school, and especially college and graduate school, incorporates the provision of accommodations. High school and college students with a history of childhood dyslexia often present a paradoxical picture; they may be similar to their unimpaired peers on measures of word recognition and comprehension, yet continue to suffer from the phonologic deficit that makes reading less automatic, more effortful, and slow. Consequently, for these readers with dyslexia the provision of extra time is an essential accommodation; it allows them the time to decode each word and to apply their unimpaired higher-order cognitive and linguistic skills to the surrounding context to get at the meaning of words that they cannot entirely or rapidly decode. Although providing extra time for reading is by far the most common accommodation for people with dyslexia, other helpful accommodations include allowing the use of lap-top computers with spelling checkers, tape recorders in the classroom, and recorded books (materials are available from Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic, telephone 800-221-4792) and providing access to syllabi and lecture notes, tutors to “talk through” and review the content of reading material, alternatives to multiple-choice tests (e.g., report or orally administered tests), and a separate, quiet room for taking tests. With such accommodations, many students with dyslexia are now successfully completing studies in a range of disciplines, including medicine.

People with dyslexia and their families frequently consult their physicians about unconventional approaches to the remediation of reading difficulties; in general, there are very few credible data to support the claims made for these treatments (e.g., optometric training, medication for vestibular dysfunction, chiropractic manipulation, and dietary supplementation). Finally, pediatricians should be aware that there is no one “magical” program that remediates reading difficulties; a number of programs following the guidelines provided earlier have proven to be highly effective in teaching struggling children to read, provided they are implemented by knowledgeable teachers.

1 Neurobiological data now provide strong evidence for the necessity of extra time for readers with dyslexia. FMRI data demonstrate a disruption in the left occipito-temporal word-form area, the region supporting rapid reading. At the same time, readers compensate by developing anterior systems bilaterally and the right homologue of the left word-form area. Such compensation allows for accurate reading, but does not support fluent reading.


References


Developmental Neuropsychology 2003; 24: 613.


Key Concepts – Dyslexia

1. Unexpected difficulty in reading in children and adults who otherwise possess the intelligence, motivation and reading instruction considered necessary for accurate and fluent reading.

2. Most common and most carefully studied of the learning disabilities, affecting 80% of all individuals identified as learning disabled.

3. Persistent and chronic – does not disappear over time.

4. Diagnosis established by 1) unexpected difficulties in reading and, 2) associated linguistic problems at the level of phonologic processing.

5. Treatment based on evidence-based methods and reflects a lifespan approach: Remediation of the reading problem in early childhood and provision of accommodations in adolescents, young adults and adults.

Table 1: Clues to Dyslexia from Second Grade on Problems in Speaking

- Mispronunciation of long or complicated words
- Speech that is not fluent—pausing or hesitating often
- Use of imprecise language
- Problems in Reading
- Very slow progress in acquiring reading skills

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- The lack of a strategy to read new words
- Trouble reading unknown (new, unfamiliar) words sound out
- The inability to read small ‘function’ words such as that, an, in
- Oral reading that is choppy and labored
- Disproportionately poor performance on multiple-choice tests
- The inability to finish tests on time
- Disastrous spelling
- Reading that is very slow and tiring
- Messy handwriting
- Extreme difficulty learning a foreign language
- History of reading, spelling, and foreign language problems in family members


**Table 2: Critical Elements in an Effective Reading Program**

1) phonemic awareness (the ability to focus on and manipulate phonemes, speech sounds, in spoken syllables and words)
2) phonics (understanding how letters are linked to sounds to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns)
3) fluency
4) vocabulary
5) comprehension strategies

These elements must be provided in a systematic, explicit, comprehensive manner.

Sally E. Shaywitz, M.D. is Professor of Pediatrics and Co-Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention. G. Reid Lyon, Ph.D. is Chief of the Child Behavior and Learning Branch of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institutes of Health. Bennett A. Shaywitz, M.D. is Professor of Pediatrics and Neurology and Co-Director of the Yale Center for the Study of Learning and Attention. Direct correspondence to:

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**It’s not too late…..**

…..to donate a door prize or refer a donor for a door prize. We need educational and personal items as well as gift certificates. See the information in this newsletter about online gift registries. Contact Nora Moore at 817-488-0693 or noramoores@hotmail.com.

…..to have your favorite vendor participate in our elegant Exhibitors Area. Contact Ginny McCrea at 214-349-0904 or ginnymcc@swbell.net.

…..to order your copy of the 20th Anniversary Program Brochure with Multimedia DVD. Simply fill out the registration form in this mailing and send it with your payment to ALTA Headquarters. This will save you time standing in line at the conference and guarantee a copy for you.

…..to order your special ALTA Birthday Surprise Present for $20. Fill out the registration form in this mailing and send your money to ALTA. Some of these Surprise Presents will hold gifts of up to $500 in value!

…..to book your room at the Hilton Hotel for our conference. Join the fun group who raves about the service and style of our host hotel! Our special ALTA rate ($89) expires on April 2. Every room booked by an ALTA member saves our conference money. You can book a room online at www.hilton.com.

…..to donate to the ALTA Garage Sale! This fun tradition needs a wide variety of therapist tools and materials. Linda Byther, Garage Sale Chair, would love to hear from you. Contact her at linda_byther@yahoo.com or 972-618-1335.

We’re looking forward to seeing you at this year’s conference. Don’t be late for these very important dates!
Mississippi College approves Master of Education in Dyslexia Therapy

The Mississippi College Dyslexia Therapy program is a two-year graduate level course of study leading to a Master of Education degree in Dyslexia Therapy. Qualified participants, upon completion of the two required electives, will have a Gifted supplement endorsement. The program evolved from the Orton-Gillingham Approach, a specific teaching approach that combines all three learning modalities – auditory, visual, and kinesthetic. The Dyslexia Therapy Program has been strongly supported by both the National and Mississippi Scottish Rite Masons.

Two 32 Masons from Mississippi have been instrumental in this project, Mr. J. W. Fagan, retired Sovereign Grand Inspector General (SGIG) and Mr. Howard Kerce, current SGIG. They have supported the use of the TSRH video taped series in the state of Mississippi. Dr. Lucius Waite, retired director of Child Development from the Child Development Division at TSRH, joined the Masons in an effort to develop a dyslexia law in Mississippi. He traveled to Jackson, Mississippi in 1996 to meet with the legislature to begin discussions. The law was passed in 1997. Martha Sibley, retired dyslexia coordinator from TSRH, a graduate of Mississippi College and a past president of ALTA has also been a part of this effort. She has collaborated with the Masons and the University over the past two years. Martha presented an overview of phonological processing at the inaugural orientation in May 2004. Dr. Waite also attended the orientation for the first class and presented the history of the dyslexia program at TSRH.

Kay Peterson and Barbara Fox, both past presidents of ALTA and ALTA Qualified Instructors, travel from Dallas to Clinton to serve as adjunct instructors for the program.

For more information, contact Shirley Tipton, Secretary to Dean Don W. Locke, Mississippi College, School of Education, Clinton, Mississippi (601)-925-3250 or tipton@mc.edu.

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Return Engagement: ALTA Garage Sale at the 2006 Conference

Great finds on pre-owned teaching materials, office supplies, chapter books, and other good stuff.

Available only through YOUR support and that of teachers or schools willing to part with their unneeded excess of supplies and materials.

For questions or item donations, contact: Linda Byther (972)618-1335 linda_byther@yahoo.com

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Martha Sibley, past president of ALTA, introduces Jeff Black, M.D., Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children, as he presents “Neurobiology of Developmental Dyslexia: Implications for Teachers” to the advanced class at Mississippi College.
Mississippi Becomes First State to Grant License to CALTs

On November 18, 2005, the Mississippi State Board of Education granted approval of a Masters Level Program in Dyslexia Therapy at Mississippi College School of Education, and the implementation of a Mississippi Class AA License as a Dyslexia Therapist. This action was taken in response to a request by Mississippi College, a private liberal arts university in Clinton, Ms., and upon the recommendation of the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Licensure Development.

Dr. Donald R. Wheelock, Director of Educator Licensure with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), began the process in October when he presented the request to the Commission. He asked Jackie Mockbee, Dyslexia Coordinator of MDE, and Dr. Locke, Dean of the School of Education at Mississippi College, to supply necessary supporting information.

Ms. Mockbee presented statistics regarding the state’s students with characteristics of dyslexia. She described the effective dyslexia services currently funded by the state’s grant program and explained how Academic Language Therapists can expand and enhance these services. She ended with a statement about the unique opportunity for the state to be the first in the nation to officially recognize this type of training with licensure. Dr. Locke then outlined the specifics of the degree plan and described the stringent standards which all candidates will have met to be eligible for licensure.

The odyssey toward this milestone began in 1996 when the Scottish Rite Masons of Mississippi began a concerted effort to help the children in their state who needed special dyslexia reading instruction. They enlisted the guidance of Lucius Waite, M.D., a pioneer in the field of dyslexia, and retired Medical Director of the Child Development Division at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children (TSRHC) in Dallas, Texas. Over the next few years, they effectively worked with the legislature to write and pass a funding law for dyslexia, and then went about providing state-wide conferences for teachers, and instructional materials at minimum cost to the public schools and parents. The staff of TSRHC supported them in this effort by supplying presenters for the conferences, and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) assisted with publicity and coordination of such events.

Seeking to expand educational opportunities for teachers, Mr. J. W. Fagan, retired Sovereign Grand Inspector General (SGIG) for Mississippi Masons, and Mr. Howard Kerke, current SGIG, arranged a meeting with Mississippi College administrators in August, 2003, to discuss the possibility of developing a Masters Degree based on the established model for training Academic Language Therapists. The President of Mississippi College, Lee Royce, Ph.D., and Ron Howard, Ph.D., Vice President of Academic Affairs, enthusiastically endorsed the plan and led in its implementation. Also attending this inaugural meeting was Margaret Carmean, Ph.D., Special Education Professor, who had received training through Teachers’ College at Columbia University, and had introduced its concepts to her students.

This group gathered again in February 2004, to design the degree plan, and outline instructional components which would satisfy standards for future accreditation of the program and certification of the trainees. Three past presidents of ALTA have been involved in this endeavor – Kay Peterson, Director of Dyslexia Therapy Training Program; Barbara Fox, Instructor in the Program, and Martha Sibley, who coordinated the various entities who were working together, and serves as consultant.

The first class, or “cohort,” of trainees began their two-year journey in May, 2004. Upon completing their coursework and practicum in May, 2006, they will be the first ones to be eligible to apply for licensure in this specialized discipline.

Robin Miles, Bureau Director of the Office of Reading, Early Childhood and Language Arts for MDE, stated, “This program is an incredible asset for teachers and students in Mississippi. Now Mississippi schools will be able to secure Academic Language Therapists who can provide appropriate diagnosis and treatment on a daily basis for students exhibiting characteristics of dyslexia.”
Milestones

(I to r) Nancy Coffman, Suzanne Carreker, Jeanine Phillips and Gretchen Andeel at the ALTA Centers Council meeting in Denver, as Jeanine and Gretchen of the FUNdamental Learning Center, Wichita, Kansas, are presented with a certificate of accreditation.

WELCOME, NEW CALTS: Drina Bennett-Sosa, Greg Ezzell, Rebecca George, Montine Gibbons, Dana Gilliland, Jessica Harris, Lori Jones, Julie Parker, Tammy Riemenschneider, Nicholette Risley, Patricia Rominsky, Shelly Roszak and Wendy Stacy.

WELCOME, NEW STUDENT MEMBERS: Lorraine Adams, Tracy Ahlert, Jill Arnold, Cynthia Bailey, Ramona Bailey, Alyssa Burke, Megan Christenberry, Donna Davis, Katy Fairchild, Ilana Fineberg, Kathleen Fish, Shannon Foreman, Katherine Grassi, Jennifer Gwinn, Jennifer Harrington, Cindy Hutto, Toni King, Tammy Lea, Donna Lewis, Alisca Long, Sandra Marr, Joan McNamara, Cindy Medlicott, Monica Mitchell-Werp, Isabel Nieves, Anieta Oltmann, Mary Jean Oman, Amy Popp, Susan Powell, Michelle Redman, Lea Roepke, Lisa Roult, Sandra Sanders, Tammy Secules, Rita Siska, Brandy Smith, Margaret Smith, Mari Tandeski, Denise Teague, Lisa Thomas, Andrea Thomas, Sulinda Trilops, Rosa Vasquez, Mary Vinson, Sue Winewiller and Diane Wood.

WELCOME, NEW QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS: Dena, Crook and Janet Fisher.

Louisa C. Moats, Ed.D., one of the nation’s leading experts on reading education and a board member of the International Dyslexia Association, spoke to Central Texas teachers and therapists on September 28 during her lecture on dyslexia and the Speech Sounds of English in Austin. The Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, which provides therapy at no charge to children with dyslexia and a training program for Central Texas therapists, hosted the event at the Scottish Rite Theatre. Pictured left to right are: Kay Peterson, ALTA board member; Linda Gladden, director of the Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin; Juanita Petro from Grand Prairie ISD and ALTA board member; Dr. Moats; Lois McCook from the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children; and Brenda Taylor, state dyslexia coordinator for Texas.

ALTA was pleased to share an exhibit booth at the 56th Annual Conference of the International Dyslexia Association in Denver, Colorado with ALTA Centers Council and IMSLEC, our associates in The Alliance. Each organization assigned volunteers to answer questions regarding The Alliance. ALTA members represented The Alliance in the booth on Thursday, November 10. We were honored to participate with our colleagues in The Alliance at the IDA Conference to increase awareness of our new organization. (Pictured, left to right: Melanie Royal, ALTA president; Joyce Pickering, IMSLEC president; Valerie Tucker, Alliance president, and Nancy Coffman, ALTA Centers Council president.)

The Mississippi Board of Education has approved the Master Degree Program in Dyslexia Therapy at Mississippi College and also approved a new statewide AA License in Dyslexia Therapy. These are both milestones for MC and the State of Mississippi. The master level degree program, in its second year at Mississippi College, has received approval from the Mississippi State Board of Education and graduates are eligible to apply for an AA License as a Dyslexia Therapist. The AA Dyslexia Therapist License was established by the MS Board of Education in November, 2005, to recognize individuals who complete a master’s level program in dyslexia therapy.

New graduates of the Southwest Multisensory Teacher Training Center are Lori Schultz, Leslie Haas and Kara Smartt. From left to right are Peggy Brooks (instructor), Lori Smartt, Leslie Haas, Kara Smartt and Beverly Dooley (instructor). Leslie Haas received the Linda Laird Memorial Award.
CEU Calendar

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.

ALTA Conference
Date: April 22, 2006
Time: 8:00 – 4:00
Location: Hilton Hotel Lincoln Center
5410 LBJ Freeway
Dallas, Texas

Presenters: Dr. Reid Lyon
Dr. Louisa Moats
Rick Lavoie, M.Ed.
Telephone: 972-233-9107, ext. 201
Email: altaread.org
CEU Contact Hours: 3

Technology in Classrooms
Date: May 4, 2006
Location: Southwest Multisensory Training Center
600 S. Jupiter
Allen, Texas
Sponsor: Southwest Multisensory Training Center
Presenters: Dr. Beverly Dooley
Contact Person: Dr. Beverly Dooley
Telephone: 972-359-6646
CEU Contact Hours: 3

UPCOMING DATES FOR ALTA REGISTRATION EXAM

June 3, 2006
Neuhaus Education Center
4433 Bissonnet
Bellaire, TX 77401
713-664-7676 Fax 713-664-4744
www.neuhaus.org

June 10, 2006
Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, Inc.
1622 East Riverside Drive
Austin, TX 78741
512-472-1231 Fax 512-326-1877
www.scottishritelearningcenter.org

June 17, 2006
Southern Methodist University
5236 Tennyson Parkway, Bldg. 4, Room 120
Plano, TX 75024
214-768-7323 Fax 972-473-3442
www.smu.edu/continuing_education/learningTherapy

June 21, 2006
Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas
602 Avenue Q, PO Box 10135
Lubbock, TX 79408
806-765-9150 Fax 806-765-9564
www.lubbock.tx-srmason.org
ALTA Centers Council (ACC)

By Nancy Coffman, MS, CALT, QI President, ALTA Centers Council

This will be my last article for the ALTA Newsletter as president of the ALTA Centers Council. This is a bitter-sweet parting. Bitter because my affiliation with this group has given me so much. It led me to more knowledge to share with students, therapists-in-training, and parents. I have formed friendships with individuals involved in quality training across the country. ALTA Centers Council is a small, hard-working group of very committed, talented women. I will miss my regular interaction with them. The parting is sweet in that we are moving forward with renewed energy to benefit not only training courses, but students and their families.

The following motion was presented to the ALTA Centers Council on Wednesday, November 9, 2005 and to the IMSLEC board on Saturday, November 12, 2005:

"Be it so moved that the Academic Language Therapy Association Centers Council (ALTA CC) and the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council merge into one non-profit accrediting organization by a vote of both organizations in November 2005 and that an Ad Hoc Committee be formed with three members of each organization to complete the details of the merger by March, 2006."

Both organizations approved the motion with a unanimous vote in Denver and formed an ad hoc committee. The committee will align the policies and procedures of both groups and expect to have completed the process by March 2006.

The members of that committee are:
Karen Avrit
Suzanne Carreker
Nancy Coffman
Mary Farrell (IMSLEC)
Maureen Martin (IMSLEC)
Valerie Tucker (IMSLEC)

Over the past few years, many individuals have been working to move toward a merger with IMSLEC. It is my hope that the merger will result in a stronger accrediting body that will in turn, strengthen the awareness of this process in providing quality training to those working with individuals with dyslexia. The members of this organization, ALTA CC, represent a quality core. Nine of these centers are also accredited by IMSLEC, so a strong affiliation is already in place.

By merging with IMSLEC, the presence of quality training courses in multisensory structured language is more recognized across the nation. The hope is that we will also broaden the presence of ALTA, the only certifying body, as well.

This will be the last time that you see these centers listed as ALTA Centers Council accredited centers. In the future, they will be listed as IMSLEC accredited centers. These centers have set the standard, and I am certain they will continue to do so as we all enter our third decade of serving children with dyslexia.

Alliance Update

The Alliance for Accreditation and Certification of Structured Language Education, Inc. also known as “The Alliance” is comprised of the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), the Academic Language Therapy Association Centers Council (ALTA CC), the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC), and sponsored by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA). The Alliance is now three years old and in a sound financial position.

Projects which have been completed or are on-going are as follows:

• The Certification Exam Project was completed and turned over to ALTA for administration.
• The Alliance will continue its mission of supporting a National Registration Exam by developing and carrying out a plan to inform the professional community of the availability of the Registration Exam.
• The Scholarship Project continues for the 2006 training cycle.

Details regarding this project, as well as, an application may be downloaded from the Alliance website at www.allianceaccreditation.org.
• The Standards and Competencies Chart, as well as, the Colleges and Universities database are downloadable from the Alliance website.
• An Alliance powerpoint presentation is available to anyone wishing to become more informed about the history of the Alliance and its mission. Contact Valerie Tucker, Alliance President, for more information regarding viewing or ordering a copy of this presentation.
• A new brochure was printed prior to the National IDA meeting along with a new CD directory. Both were distributed at the conference in Denver with positive response.
• Support for the Multisensory Research Initiative continues both financially and in voice.

ALTA is a founding and proud member of the Alliance whose primary mission is to promote standards for quality professional preparation.
ALTA CENTERS COUNCIL (ACC)

ALTA ACCREDITED CENTERS

Centers for Youth & Families
Stacey Mahurin
6601 W. 12th St.
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(505) 898-7500 phone
(505) 890-4119 Fax
sandradillon@msn.com

Neuhaus Education Center
Kay Allen
4433 Bissonnet
Bellaire, TX 77401
(713) 664-7676 phone
(713) 664-4744 fax
kallen@neuhaus.org

Payne Education Center/OK City
Janet Riggan
3240 W. Britton Rd., Ste. 104
Oklahoma City, OK 73120
(405) 755-4205 phone
(405) 755-4281 fax
info@payneeducationcenter.org

The Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin
Linda Gladden
1622 E. Riverside
Austin, TX 78741
(512) 472-1231 phone
(512) 326-1877 fax
lgladdensrlc@sbcglobal.net

The Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas
Doris Haney
602 Avenue Q
PO Box 10135
Lubbock, TX 79408
(806) 794-2210
(806) 765-9150
haney@nts-online.net

Southern Methodist University LTP
Karen Vickery
Learning Therapy Program
Southern Methodist University
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Plano, TX 75024
(972) 473-3442 fax
kvickery@smu.edu

Southwest Multisensory Training Center
Beverly Dooley
600 S. Jupiter
Allen, TX 75002-4065
(972) 359-6646 phone
(972) 359-8291 fax
bev@patrickodooley.com

Stratford Friends School MSL Teacher Training Program
Sandra Howze
6 Llandillo Rd.
Havertown, PA 19083
(610) 446-3144 phone
(610) 446-6381 fax
showze@stratfordfriends.org

Teachers College, Columbia University
Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills
Mary Rowe
Dept. of Curriculum & Teaching
PO Box 31
New York, New York 10027
(212) 678-3080 phone
(212) 678-3237 fax
mcr30@columbia.edu

Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children
Karen Avrit
Luke Waites Child Development Center
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Dallas, TX 75219
(214) 559-7885 phone
(214) 559-7808 fax
kavrit@tsrh.org
Door Prizes Update

Door Prize Committee Chair Nora Moore has simplified life for everyone wanting to donate a door prize but are uncertain what to give. Now, donating a door prize can be accomplished from the comfort of your computer.

Several online gift registries have been established for the 20th Anniversary Conference. Simply access the web sites listed below, review ALTA’s Door Prize Wish List, make your purchase and it will be delivered to Nora and her committee. A variety of items are listed on each registry.

Door prizes are always a festive part of our annual conference. Join the shopping fun and benefit ALTA, too. Who knows, you just might win the prize you donate!

**Target.com**
- Click Club Wedd registries
- First Name: ALTA 20th Ann
- Last Name: 2006 Conference

**WilliamSonoma.com**
- Click gift registry
- First: ALTA 20th Ann
- Last: Moore

**PotteryBarn.com**
- Click Find a registry
- First Name: ALTA 20th

**Bedbathandbeyond.com**
- Click Gift Registry
- First Name: ALTA
- Last Name: Conference

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**ALTA 20th Anniversary Birthday Surprise Presents**

Every birthday celebration needs birthday presents! This year, ALTA members can take home their own surprise birthday presents from our conference.

These festive boxes will adorn our luncheon tables and contain a surprise worth at least $20. Some of these surprise present boxes will contain gifts worth much more! Surprises include language therapy supplies, gift certificates, gift cards, tuition certificates for training courses and fabulous personal items.

ALTA Birthday Surprise Presents are available only by pre-purchase on the conference registration form. If you have already registered for the conference, but would like to reserve your birthday surprise present, simply fill out the registration form included in this newsletter and mail to ALTA headquarters with your payment. Your surprise present will be waiting for you at our conference!
ALTA Board Recommends Bylaws Changes

Last spring, the ALTA Board of Directors approved several changes to the current bylaws. These changes are being recommended in order to raise the standards for inclusion in the ALTA directory, as well as to broaden the scope of and increase our membership base. Currently there are a variety of multisensory programs across the nation which adheres to the same high level of standard that ALTA promotes. A person who is in and/or has completed training in one of those courses is eligible and encouraged to join ALTA.

Since these changes were proposed to the membership last year, the Alliance has completed the process of producing a revised National Registration Exam at two levels, both the teaching/associate level and the therapy level. Due to this development, the board recommends adding, “Acceptable performance on a teaching level comprehensive examination administered by ALTA” as a criteria for membership at the teaching/associate level. Since the exam is prepared by psychometricians rather than by ALTA, the board recommends changing the verbiage at the therapy level to reflect that, saying “administered by” rather than “prepared by.”

The proposed changes are as follows:
- Change “Certified Academic Language Therapist” in the second paragraph of the Mission Statement to read “Member”.
- Change “perform” to “provide” in the second paragraph of the Mission Statement.
- Article III, Section 2 – re-ordered the descriptions of membership to follow a continuum of training involved.
- Article III, Section 2 – added the term “Multisensory Structured Language (MSL).
- Article III, Section 2a – changed the CEU requirement to be aligned with that currently used by IMSLEC, documentation of 30 hours every three years instead of the current 20 hours every two years. Both groups require ten hours each year. Change would be beneficial to audit rotation for both groups.
- Article III, Section 2b – Changed “Student” membership level to “Associate Level (Academic Language Teacher)” and aligned the criteria for membership accordingly. This inures that everyone in the directory has had a minimum level of training.
- Article VI, Section 2b – Added, “The diversity of the board should be maintained in terms of membership levels and number of years served on the board. The composition of the board in relation to membership levels and the number of years served on the board is outlined in the policies and procedures.”
- Article VI, Section 2c – Deleted “a non-voting student representative from each accredited therapist in training center.”
- Article VII, Section 1 – Changed one year to two years to maintain consistency.

The board of ALTA believes that these proposed changes would strengthen ALTA by assuring that everyone in the directory has had some training, that our membership base would be increased, and that our membership would expand nationally. With these goals in mind more individuals with dyslexia will be served and our public will have more confidence in knowing whom to call for quality intervention. For more information regarding these changes you may contact one of the following Bylaws Committee members: Melanie Royal, Nancy Coffman, Suzanne Carreker, Kay Peterson, or Edith Hogan.

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 2006 Spring Conference

“Navigating a Brighter Future”
Saturday, April 22, 2006

SCHEDULE:
8:00 am – 8:30 am Registration and Continental Breakfast
8:30 am – 9:30 am Business Meeting, Election of Officers
9:30 am – 9:45 am Break
9:45 am – 11:45 am Dr. G. Reid Lyon
   Why Reading Instruction MUST Be Based on Scientific Evidence
11:45 am – 12:30 pm Lunch and Door Prizes
12:45 pm - 2:15 pm Dr. Louisa Moats
   Spelling and Writing: Old Challenges and New Approaches
2:15 pm – 2:30 pm Break
2:30 pm – 4:00 pm Rick Lavoie, M.A., M.Ed,
   Batteries NOT Included: Motivating the Reluctant Learner

LOCATION:
The Hilton Hotel Lincoln Center is located at the intersection of LBJ Freeway (635) and the Dallas North Toll Road. Entrance to the hotel is on Harriett Hill Road. Three parking options are available: complimentary lakeside, covered garage for $4/day, or valet for $8/day. Detailed directions to the hotel, parking maps and hotel reservation instructions are posted on www.altaread.org. Special hotel rates for ALTA are available until April 2.

REGISTRATION INFORMATION:
A registration form is included in this newsletter. You may also download the brochure and registration form from www.altaread.org. Early registration closes February 15, 2006. Registration will be confirmed this year by email only.

Proposed 2006-2007 Slate of Officers and Board of Directors

If you are a member in good standing who will NOT be at the 2006 Spring Conference to vote, please mark this ballot ( ) FOR or ( ) AGAINST, and mail to ALTA, 14070 Proton Rd., Suite 100, LB 9, Dallas, TX 75244. Names of write-in candidates must be received, in writing, at the ALTA office two weeks prior to the conference date.

OFFICERS
President, Nancy Coffman
President-Elect, Michelle Bufkin
VP/Membership, Kathy Gilman
VP/Programs, Meg Carlsen
VP/Public Relations, Tracey Cox
Secretary, Jeanine Phillips
Treasurer, Mary Lou Slania
Historian, Melanie Royal

BOARD OF DIRECTORS
Judith Birsh
Kay Byrd
Suzanne Carreker
Sandra Dillon
Lynn Fitzhugh
Elsa Hagan
Sara Rivers
Linda Stringer

DIRECTORS COMPLETING TERMS
Mary Dyer
Marilyn Mathis
Karen Vickery
Christine Wylie

ALTA bulletin/Spring 2006
Frequently Asked Questions – 2006 ALTA Conference

Registration:
I have a question about my registration. Who should I call?
ALTA National Headquarters. 972-233-9107, ext. 201. Conference registration will be confirmed by email only this year.

Parking:
Is complimentary parking available?
Yes, 1,100 parking spaces are available surrounding the lake on the west side of the property.

How much is parking in the Hilton garage?
ALTA has been given a reduced parking rate for our conference. You may park in the garage for $4.00 per day. In the event of inclement weather, an underground tunnel connects this garage to the entrance to our conference.

CEUs:
I need to leave after lunch. Can I pick up my CEU certificate before then?
Two separate CEU certificates are available to conference guests. If you must leave prior to the conclusion of the conference, the 2 hour CEU inside your conference folder will be your CEU certificate. When the conference concludes around 4 pm, guests will receive an additional CEU certificate for three contact hours. Room proctors will distribute the final CEU certificate at the close of the last session in exchange for a completed Conference Evaluation form.

Audio/Visual Problems:
I can't hear the speaker. What can I do?
Please alert one of the room proctors stationed at the back of the ballroom.

Program Brochure:
Where may I pick up the Program Brochure/DVD I reserved on my conference registration form?
Conference guests who purchased the Program Brochure on their registration form will receive their brochure upon check-in at the conference. Pre-purchasing the program brochure will alleviate the need to stand in line at the conference.

I didn't reserve a copy of the program brochure and DVD. May I still purchase one?
Yes. You may fill out the registration form included in this newsletter, simply indicating the number of copies you desire and your method payment. Mail this to ALTA Headquarters and your name will be added to the list of reserved copies.

Will program brochures be available on the day of the conference?
A very limited number of the 20th anniversary program brochure with DVD will be available for purchase at the conference. Instructions for purchasing this program brochure are contained in your conference folder. A table will be set up in the Anniversary Showcase Exhibit room, and forms will be placed in the conference folder for this purpose. Please note that when the supply at the conference is exhausted, no additional copies will be available.

ALTA Birthday Surprise Presents:
I purchased one of the ALTA Birthday Surprise Presents. Where do I pick it up?
Instructions will be found in the conference packet you’ll pick up at registration.

Door Prizes:
When will Door Prize winners be announced?
Winning door prize tickets will be drawn throughout the morning. Check the Door Prize Winners board during lunch to learn of the winners. Door prizes may be picked up during and after lunch.

Lunch:
I registered late or on-site. What are my lunch options?
If we are unable to accommodate you for lunch, the Hilton property contains three restaurants. Check the facility map in your conference folder for these locations.
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.