



**ALTA**<sup>®</sup> Dedicated to the Remediation  
of Written-Language Skills.  
Academic Language Therapy Association

## Spring Newsletter



Presenter Dr. Hoeft

### Conference Registration is now open!

**32nd Annual ALTA National Conference**  
**April 27-28, 2018**

Renaissance Dallas Richardson Hotel  
900 E. Lookout Drive, Richardson, Texas 75082 USA

Fumiko Hoeft is one of our many fabulous presenters joining us this year. Dr. Hoeft comes to us with a rich background of experience including Professor of Psychiatry and Weill Institute for Neurosciences, UCSF; Director of UC-Stanford Multi-Campus Precision Learning Center (PrecL.org) and UCSF Laboratory for Educational Neuroscience (brainLENS.org); Deputy Director of UCSF Dyslexia Center (dyslexia.ucsf.edu); and Research Scientist at Yale Haskins Laboratories.

Hoeft was trained in medicine, neurophysiology and systems/cognitive neurosciences, at Keio University (Tokyo), Harvard, Caltech and Stanford. Hoeft's program of research focuses on the neuroscience of skill acquisition such as literacy, neurodevelopmental disorders such as dyslexia, and socio-emotional competencies such as motivation and resilience in those with dyslexia. Her team also specializes in R&D of cognitive science-based tools that can be deployed in educational practice to maximize personalized learning. She has received numerous federal and private foundation grants, published over 120 articles, and delivered over 150 talks including remarks at the White House. Hoeft currently serves on over a dozen boards and committees, including CA Department of Education Dyslexia Guideline Work Group, IDA Executive Board and NCLD Professional Advisory Board.

Honors she has received include the 2014 Norman Geschwind Memorial Lectureship from the International Dyslexia Association, 2015 Transforming Education through Neuroscience Award from Learning & the Brain Foundation, and 2017 Multicampus Research Program Award from the University of CA Office of the President. Her work has been widely covered in media such as The New York Times, NPR, CNN, the New Yorker, and Scientific American.

Dr. Hoeft will present on the neuroscience of dyslexia: At-risk populations, early identification, developing compensatory mechanisms and building cognitive and socio-emotional resilience. In this talk, she will cover a wide range of topics related to the neuroscience of dyslexia. She will discuss the latest neuroscience research on how the brains of at-risk populations differ from those with low risk, and the key predictors of successful early literacy acquisition in young children drawing from the behavioral and brain imaging literature. Hoeft will discuss the emerging trends in how we think about the cause of dyslexia, from the idea that multiple factors contribute to the overall liability of a child in developing dyslexia disorders, as well as our latest comprehensive neurobiological theory of dyslexia, which we call the 'Neural Noise Hypothesis of Dyslexia'. Finally, she will close by presenting work on the concept of normalization versus compensation after intervention in dyslexia, as well as how we can help promote resilience (cognitive as well as socio-emotional) in children with dyslexia, now known as the 'Resilience Framework of Dyslexia'.

To submit articles for future ALTA newsletters  
contact Tammy Tillotson at [tammyt1@charter.net](mailto:tammyt1@charter.net)



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## MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

The 2018-19 membership renewal period runs through the month of March. You may begin renewing on March 1, 2018. Online renewals are preferred, but you do have the option of renewing by mail. All pertinent information on how to renew online is available on the website. If you have questions, you may contact the national office by using the email address [office@altaread.org](mailto:office@altaread.org) or by phoning 972-233-9107 ext. 226.

This year the last day to renew falls on a Saturday. The national office is closed on that day and there will be no one to assist you. Please keep that in mind and try to renew before the 31st. Any renewal applications submitted after March 31st will have a late fee added.

Our membership numbers have continually climbed and we have membership throughout the United States and beyond. Thank you for being a part of ALTA!

*“You can find magic wherever you look. Sit back and relax, all you need is a book.”  
~ Dr. Suess~*

## RENEWAL REMINDERS

Go to [www.altaread.org](http://www.altaread.org)

- Log in and click the "Renew My Membership" box in the members only area.
- Be sure you have 10 CEUs recorded under the 2017-18 category where it asks you to record your CEUs online.
- If you have any questions about how to record your CEUs please click here for step-by-step directions. Keep in mind that the new directions for the 2018-19 renewal period will be updated on the FAQ page beginning March 1st.
- CALTs & CALPs who joined after 3/1/17 are not required to verify 10 hours until next renewal period.
- CALTs & CALPs who joined prior to 3/1/17 are required to verify 10 hours
- QIs & ICALPs are required to verify 10 hours and submit proof of the 10 hours.
- All QIs and ICALPs will now have the opportunity to upload their CEUs when renewing online.
- Your join date is visible by logging into the members area at [www.altaread.org](http://www.altaread.org).

## TEXAS ALTA CHAPTER

Effective February 1, 2018, a new Executive Committee will be leading Texas ALTA. Linda Gladden will become past Chair and advisor.

The new executive committee will be:

Libby Grafa: President

G-g Shryer: Vice-President

Kathy Kelly: Secretary

Sally Cain: Treasurer

On January 20, 2018, Texas ALTA hosted the On the Road Regional Conference at the Thompson Conference Center on the UT campus. Speakers included Dr. Margie Gillis, Dr. Elsa Cardenas Hagen, Evan Weinberger, and Dr. Alexandra Hudson. The conference was well attended and informative.



## Returning Board Members

|                                     |                             |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Treasurer                           | Ginny Little,<br>M.Ed.      |
| VP Membership                       | Jo Ann Handy,<br>M.Ed.      |
| VP Public Relations                 | Susan Louchen,<br>M.S.      |
| VP Long Range Planning              | Joyce Pickering,<br>SLP/CCC |
| Historian – Past Pres. (non-voting) | Janna Curry                 |
| Board Member                        | Mary Lou Johnson,<br>M.Ed.  |
| Board Member                        | Tammy Tillotson,<br>Ph.D.   |
| Board Member                        | Rebecca Gould,<br>M.Ed.     |
| Board Member                        | Vicki King                  |

## OHIO ALTA CHAPTER

ALTA Ohio Chapter is happy to bring the Readsters to Columbus, Ohio on April 14, 2018 for an exciting conference regarding phonological and phonemic awareness. Classroom teachers, tutors, speech & language therapists, parents, and anyone interested in this important topic is welcome to attend. Registration is limited and will continue until March 30, 2018 or until full. Cost is \$90 for ALTA members and \$100 for non-members. Participants can earn 6 CEU units and will leave with a Phonological Awareness Notebook as well practical, hands-on, "ready to implement" activities. Breakfast with coffee as well as an afternoon snack will be provided. We're thrilled to be offering this opportunity for professional growth.



### OHIO ALTA CHAPTER CHAIR

#### KARA LEE

I earned my Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. I then attended the School Psychology program at Miami University where I earned both a Master of Science and Educational Specialist degrees. I worked as a School Psychologist for six years before going into the classroom as an Intervention Specialist. For 9 years I have had the privilege of teaching students with mild to moderate disabilities in grades kindergarten through six in a variety of classroom settings (i.e. self-contained classroom, small group pull-out, and inclusion). I have worked as a Trainer and Supervisor for the Children's Dyslexia Center in Columbus, Ohio and have taught classes and conducted trainings for a variety of school districts on a wide range of topics. I have over 1,000 hours of OG tutoring and training experience and I'm an Instructor of Certified Academic Language Practitioners. I've served on the Board of Central Ohio Branch of the International Dyslexia Association and was a founding member of the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) Ohio Chapter in 2012. In January, 2017 I started my own tutoring and teacher training business. I am excited to serve as the Chapters Chairperson for ALTA.



## VIRGINIA ALTA CHAPTER

In September, several Virginia Chapter members were invited by a group of neuropsychologists to present a panel discussion about dyslexia and the role of Academic Language Therapy.

In October, the ALTA Virginia Chapter meeting was held in the state Capitol of Richmond, at the Orton-Gillingham based Riverside School. AOGPE Fellow Nancy Spencer, and Cynthia Davis, AOGPE Fellow-in-Training presented to the Chapter on the "OG process." ALTA members with OG based IMSLEC or AOGPE training gained understanding about our common foundation, scope, and practice. Members enjoyed a catered lunch, school tour, and earned CEUs.

Also during the Fall, graduates of the Atlantic Seaboard Dyslexia Education Center - Cathy Ruse, J.D. and Nancy Rooker, M.A., earned the professional distinction of Certified Academic Language Therapist, and CALT Deborah Spear achieved the advanced professional distinction of Qualified Instructor!

In January, many Chapter members met in informal small group sessions to share resources and techniques for building decoding fluency and reading comprehension, with controlled and real-world text.

Planning is underway for the March membership meeting, which will feature the topics of "Data Collection Part 1- for baseline, progress, and end-of-service documentation," and "Pro-active PreK Screening". Members will earn CEUs while gaining immediately useful skills. New officers will be elected during this meeting as well.

# Dream Big READ!

## 2018-2019 NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Kathleen Carlsen (2016 – 2018)

Marilyn Mathis (2016 – 2018)

Cherie Howell (2017 – 2019)

Ginny Little (2017 – 2019)

Susan Louchen (2017 – 2019)



## LEGISLATIVE REPORT

by Courtney Hoffman

The New Year began with a bang!

This year ALTA Chapters will have access to advice on legislative processes and initiatives at the state level. Quarterly conference calls will include dialogue about advocacy, government processes and legislative initiatives related to dyslexia. This will give states an opportunity to collaborate and benefit from discussions with other ALTA chapters. Ohio has already taken advantage of this new offering as it is pursuing legislation and has a need for suggested language and strategy.

Texas ALTA leadership has already met at the state Capitol and committees have been working on letters and testimony to the State Board of Education. Kudos to Karen Avrit, Robin Cowsar, Betzy Day and Mary Yarus for their leadership and participation.

With discussions of Dyslexia Handbook updates, Dyslexia rule changes, the TEA Corrective Action Plan related to the US Department of Education report on Special Education/Dyslexia, meetings of the Public School Finance Committee and Interim Hearings, there is much happening.

Primary elections will be held on Tuesday, March 6 with early voting beginning on Tuesday, Feb. 20. Texas ALTA members are encouraged to know the candidates and who will represent them in the Texas House and Senate. This is the perfect time to message legislators about the importance of early intervention and funding for dyslexia.



## CONTACT THE SLATE OF BOARD MEMBERS

### Executive Board 2018-2020 Slate

President Elect – Jean Colner, [jean.colner@gmail.com](mailto:jean.colner@gmail.com)

Vice President Elect – Lynne Fitzhugh, [lfitzhugh@literacynow.org](mailto:lfitzhugh@literacynow.org)

Secretary – Paul Entzminger, [mereread@gmail.com](mailto:mereread@gmail.com)

VP Programs– Michelle Quazi,

VP Website- Leshia Stallons, [stallonl@friscoisd.org](mailto:stallonl@friscoisd.org)

### Board of Directors' - 2018-20 Slate: (6 positions roll off every year)

Kim Haughee , [homekch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:homekch@sbcglobal.net)

Jennifer Rowland, [rowland@literacynow.org](mailto:rowland@literacynow.org) or [Jennifer.rowland@comcast.net](mailto:Jennifer.rowland@comcast.net)

Carin Illig, [cillig@cdcnmj.org](mailto:cillig@cdcnmj.org)

Helen Mannion, [helen.mannion@dvfs.org](mailto:helen.mannion@dvfs.org)

Jackie Valadez, [jvaladez3@gmail.com](mailto:jvaladez3@gmail.com)

Sydna Zilm, [szilm@spalding.org](mailto:szilm@spalding.org)

## SHELTON MULTISENSORY TRAINING



The Shelton Multisensory Training Course in SEE (Sequential English Education) is used as one of the MSL approaches at Shelton School. SEE is also used in the Shelton Scholars Saturday program. Scholars is a three-hour weekly program for students

needing help but not attending Shelton or any other school for learning differences. For the last 27 years training in SEE has been offered to hundreds of teachers from many states and is used in public and private schools.

In the last five years Shelton School has provided training for several new programs including The May Center in New Mexico, Bridgemark Center in Tyler, Texas and Brighton School in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The most recent use of the SEE program is for adult literacy. Working with Karen Guida at LIFT (Literacy Instruction for Texas), an adult literacy version of SEE was created. The Wilkinson Center for adult literacy has also begun to be trained and use the SEE approach.

The original version of SEE was written in the mid 1960's. The research data on the effectiveness of the program has informed edits and additional lessons over the 50 years the program has been used. SEE is IMSLEC accredited and IDA recognized.

## MISSISSIPPA ALTA CHAPTER

ALTA's Mississippi Chapter is looking forward to hosting William Van Cleve at their annual ALTA Regional Meeting on February 27, 2018. CEU credits as well as ALTA contact hours are available. William will provide a hands-on and interactive workshop for participants in the area of writing. The Mississippi ALTA Chapter is welcoming the opportunity to share with others the opportunity to learn more about how to advance students' writing skills at this workshop - From Words to Works: Developing Writing Skills.

Mississippi is also proud to announce the addition of Mary Lou Johnson, CALT, QI to the ALTA Board of Directors. Mary Lou is a former president of the Mississippi ALTA Chapter, an instructor at Mississippi College in the Dyslexia Therapy Program and a dyslexia therapist at the Choctaw Tribal Schools. Thank you, Mary Lou, for representing our state!



*“There is no friend as loyal as a book”  
~ E. Hemingway ~*

## NEW WITH ALTA CEU'S

**When you log into our ALTA website you will see some exciting new changes designed to make recording your CEU's easier.**

**Here's what you will find:**

- ❖ **Continuing Education now has its very own link in the top row between Resources and Chapters. This puts all of our resources in one easy to find spot.**
- ❖ **When you sign into members only you'll see we also have a photo tile that is a direct link to the CEU area.**
- ❖ **We have revised the Policy and Procedures (Quick Reference) now called Approved Resources. This will give you information on the different ways you can obtain your CEU's.**



- **New revision to procedures for Book/Video CEU credit: Beginning with the 2018 membership renewal, everyone who is claiming book/video credit will be required to submit their reports to [alta.ceus@gmail.com](mailto:alta.ceus@gmail.com) In return you will receive a CEU Approval letter**

- ❖ **There are 2 new online submission forms: a CEU Book/Video Suggestion Form and a CEU Book/Video Report Form. Both of these forms can now be submitted directly online!**

## ~ NEW IN RESEARCH ~

Melissa McMahan, M.Ed., LDT, ICALP-CALT

Tim Odegard, Ph.D., CALP

### **Found: Teachers with knowledge of language**

Many educators are ill-prepared to teach reading to the diverse population of children who await them in their classrooms, lacking a practical understanding of direct reading instruction coupled with limited knowledge of the structure of the English language. This reality was first highlighted by research conducted almost 25 years ago, and it continues to be documented by on-going research exploring this topic (Moats, 1994; 2009). This is an alarming trend in light of research demonstrating the importance of teacher knowledge and ability to the provision of effective reading instruction. Teachers with an in-depth knowledge of components and skills in reading have students who make greater gains in reading than the students of teachers who lack this level of knowledge (e.g., Cohen, Mather, Schneider & White, 2017; Piasta, Conner, Fishman & Morrison, 2009).

***The overarching conclusion drawn from this body of research is that our nation continues to face a very real and pressing challenge. We know that not all children easily develop the capacity to read proficiently, with some of them struggling as a result of dyslexia. Yet, many of our schools lack educators with the knowledge and practical skills to address the instructional needs of children who struggle to read.***

In light of this reality, many individuals continue to advocate on behalf of children with dyslexia, fearing that they will slip through the cracks in the educational system. As a result of these efforts, several states now require teachers who work with students identified with characteristics of dyslexia to complete training to equip them with knowledge and practical skills intended to aid them in meeting the needs of students who require intensive reading interventions. While the connection between teacher knowledge, teacher skills, and student outcomes continues to be more fully established through empirical studies, we are learning that training may not result in the anticipated change to teachers' knowledge of language and reading skills (e.g., Folsem, Smith, Burk & Oakley, 2017). This raises grave concerns as to the prospect of exacting the change required to address the educational needs of children who struggle to develop word reading proficiency indicative of dyslexia.

The Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) and likeminded organizations, such as the International Multisensory Language Education Council (IMSLEC), the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, the International Dyslexia Association (IDA), and others have stressed a need to develop and maintain standards of knowledge essential for teachers of students who struggle to read as the result of dyslexia or similar language-based learning differences. Since their inception, the focus of ALTA and IMSLEC has been clear and consistent. They were founded to foster the development of highly rigorous, practicum-based training courses intended to enhance the knowledge and instructional abilities of educators who work with individuals struggling to read as a result of dyslexia and related language-based learning differences. IMSLEC accredits training courses that prepare educators to deliver intensive reading intervention to individuals who struggle to read as the result of dyslexia and related learning differences. ALTA certifies individuals by confirming their level of knowledge, level of training, and amount of supervised practicum experience.

Despite the development of standards for teacher knowledge and practice, and training courses addressing these standards, the efficacy of these courses to bring about the intended change in the knowledge of teachers working with students with dyslexia has not been well studied. To address the need for research in this area, we have embarked on a multi-year, longitudinal study being conducted through the Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia at Middle Tennessee State University. The goal of the study is to test the efficacy of training provided through IMSLEC accredited courses and the ability of certification through ALTA to signal increased levels of teacher knowledge. As part of our initial research report of this study, we examined the relationship between training and certification on teachers' basic English language knowledge and skill. Specifically, we focused on knowledge in five literacy domains: *phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding, and morphology*. Conducting this study is allowing us to answer several questions pertinent to teacher training, and we are providing you with an initial summary of some of the results included in our first research report of this ongoing study.

### ***Holding an Advanced Degree.***

A perennial question in this area is what is learned by educators who go on to complete a master's degree. Administrators must be able to find educators capable of addressing the instructional needs of students who struggle to read as the result of dyslexia and related learning differences. A common selection criterion is a candidate's terminal degree. Yet, does the level of a person's terminal degree signal advanced knowledge of language? The answer to this question likely does not come as a surprise to many of you. No, it does not.

***When we analyzed the level of knowledge held by those licensed educators who had not received any training through an IMSLEC accredited training course, the knowledge of the licensed educators with a bachelor's degree did not differ from the knowledge of the licensed educators with a master's degree.***

On the whole, performance on the measures of knowledge used in our study leaves plenty of room for improvement through advanced training. Both groups only answered roughly half of the questions correctly.

Yet, it could be argued that completing a master's degree focused specifically in the area of reading or literacy would equip educators with knowledge of the components of language taught as part of direct intensive reading instruction. We are gathering additional information to address this hypothesis empirically as the study continues.

### ***Years of Teaching Experience.***

Another criterion often touted as being predictive of teachers' depth of knowledge is their years of experience teaching. The logic is simple. Educators are accruing thousands of hours working directly with children in their classrooms. Moreover, they complete continuing education annually. Thus, it could be argued that these experiences are adding to the knowledge that teachers have about the English language. Yet, we found no association between years of experience and level of teacher knowledge for those educators who had not received any training through an IMSLEC training course.

***Put simply, the number of years licensed teachers had taught did not predict how much they knew about the English language.***

Here again, this might not come as a surprise to many of you. We are learning through continued research into teacher training that stand and deliver workshops do not result in the changes that we would hope to see (e.g., Logan, Castel, Haber, & Viehman, 2012). Moreover, engaging in ill-informed instructional practices time and time again likely does little to result in an improved understanding of the structure of the English language that children with dyslexia require to read with accuracy and efficiency.

However, some might argue that we should be focusing on the nature of the teaching experience. It could be the case that the number of years that a teacher has served students in special education or as a reading interventionist would predict the amount of knowledge they have of the English language. Moving forward we are gathering additional information to allow us to empirically test this hypothesis.

### ***Role of Training Through an IMSLEC Accredited Course***

So, if years of teaching experience and obtaining a master's degree are not associated with increased knowledge, then what is? Training provided through an IMSLEC accredited training center is associated with elevated knowledge of language. Educators who had completed both years outperformed those educators who had not received training in their knowledge of phonemic awareness, decoding, encoding and morphology. While these results may not come as a surprise to you, we must support efforts to empirically validate our practices and be open to the possibility that our assumptions based on our own experiences may not be confirmed in all cases. In this instance however, the hypothesis that would likely be made by all of you was verified through these initial results.

With that said, we have not finished the study. We are in the process of tracking a cohort of teachers through the entire two years of training to model any potential gains in their knowledge longitudinally. It could be argued that people who stick it out through both years of training are unique and possibly entered training with elevated knowledge. So maybe what the training does is weed out those teachers who are not already knowledgeable of the English language. As we have been saying throughout this summary, alternate hypotheses will be tested moving forward as our longitudinal study continues and we collect additional data.

### ***ALTA Certification Signals Increased Knowledge.***

Keeping in mind the practical questions that motivate our summary, we must remember that administrators and others need selection criteria to aid them in choosing the educators they want working with students with dyslexia, as well as other students who need intensive reading intervention. This raises a practical question. Does holding the credentials CALT signal an elevated level of knowledge?

The answer to this question is yes. Those individuals who took part in our study and held certification as a CALT had greater knowledge in phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, encoding, and morphology compared to licensed teachers who had completed both years of training through an IMSLEC course but had yet to become certified. One would hope that this would be the case given that each of us had to pass a national certification exam that contains questions pertaining to the areas of knowledge highlighted in this study.

Of course, the initial phase of the study is focusing on knowledge, and it may not be the case that CALTs will perform at elevated levels on more practical questions pertaining to reading instruction. This is an empirical question that will be answered as we expand the scope of our study moving forward.

### **Caveats and Future Directions.**

We have been pointing out limitations of this initial report that have tempered our conclusions. Yet, with each limitation, we highlight how we plan to address it moving forward.

One limitation that will be more difficult to address moving forward is the issue of randomization to condition. In essence, those educators who hold a master's degree in reading or literacy but who did not receive training through an IMSLEC accredited course will serve as the control group in our on-going study. We will be able to compare their knowledge to those educators who complete the two years of training through an IMSLEC accredited course. Although we are not in a position to randomly assign educators to the control or IMSLEC conditions, we will strive to make sure that in all other ways these educators are equivalent to one another.

Another caveat that must be acknowledged is that the professional standards that we hold ourselves to must be validated through systematic empirical study. That is to say that we must link knowledge and practical skills outlined in these standards to student outcomes, in a systematic way. When it comes to teacher training, our organization, as well as other likeminded organizations, are built on a system of beliefs derived from practical experience. While this is one source of knowledge, we must also support and acknowledge the need to have systematic empirical evaluations of the standards that undergird our training practices.

Yet, of all the words in the English language that the members of this organization should fear, systematic and empirical should not be counted among them. For the sake of the children we strive to serve and the pride that is manifest in our professional integrity, we must facilitate and support the evaluation of the role teacher knowledge and skills has on student learning outcomes. Specifically, we must test the extent to which this knowledge and the practical skills that we all had to demonstrate through our practicum experiences predict the gains that we want our students with dyslexia to realize in their reading abilities. This is the work left to be done to more fully validate the standards that are the basis of our model of teacher training.

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# NEWS

Here's your slate of new  
**ALTA**  
Executive  
Board Members



**BOARD PRESIDENT: Jean A. Colner ICALP, CALT, C/AOGPE**

Jean Colner is the Director of the Children's Dyslexia Center in Dublin, Ohio. Jean began her journey in our field as a second career in 1999, and has been the principle trainer of the IMSLEC accredited Children's Dyslexia Center in Dublin since 2004. Jean has served on ALTA Executive Board as VP for Long Range Planning. She has been the ALTA Board Chapter chairperson for several years, and was a founding member of ALTA Ohio Chapter. She has also served on the for the Alliance for Accreditation and Certification Board of Directors. Jean served as a member of the Central Ohio IDA Branch Board of Directors, and is also certified by the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. Jean received the International Multisensory Language Educator Council (IMSLEC) Innovator Therapist of the Year in November 2014. Jean has served on the Ohio Department of Education's Third Grade Reading Guarantee work group, and was a member of the Department's writing team for the Ohio Reading Competencies.



**BOARD VICE-PRESIDENT: Lynne Fitzhugh, Ph.D., LDT, CALT-QI**

Lynne Fitzhugh is President and Founding Director of the Colorado Literacy and Learning Center, an IMSLEC accredited non-profit organization. Dr. Fitzhugh is a Visiting Assistant Professor and the Director of the Reading Institute at Colorado College. She received her Ph.D. in Psychology from Southern Methodist University with a concentration in learning disabilities. Dr. Fitzhugh is a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT), Qualified Instructor (QI), and Licensed Dyslexia Therapist (TX). She has served on the national boards of the Academic Language Therapy Association and the International Dyslexia Association, as well as numerous local and regional boards and state committees. Dr. Fitzhugh is a founding member of the ALTA Rocky Mountain Chapter. Dr. Fitzhugh is committed to the field of reading and bringing about positive changes in the lives of individuals with dyslexia.



**BOARD SECRETARY: Paul Entzminger, LDT, CALT**

Paul loves that, with fervor and commitment, ALTA loves people with Dyslexia and those who want to help those with Dyslexia. This commitment includes comradery, collaboration both within our membership and with governmental entities, and rigorous standards of preparation and continuing education. ALTA gives me professional context as a therapist, that I am part of a large family committed to the same people and principles.



**VP WEBSITE: Leshia Stallons, M.Ed., CALT, QI**

Leshia is currently a Dyslexia Specialist and Qualified Instructor at Frisco ISD. She began her teaching career as a Special Education teacher in 2002 and became a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) in 2010 through Texas Scottish Rite Hospital. She received her Master's Degree in Educational Technology Leadership from Lamar University and continued her training through Texas Scottish Rite Hospital to become a Qualified Instructor (QI). She continues to teach Take Flight to elementary students in Frisco ISD as well as oversees the Take Flight Training program. She has served as a member of the ALTA Board of Directions since 2016.



**VP PROGRAMS: Michelle Qazi, M.Ed., CALT**

Michelle is the Associate Clinical Manager of Learning Services at Children's Hospital Colorado. In addition, she provides training to school districts around Colorado in best practices in literacy instruction. Michelle received her training through the Colorado Literacy and Learning Center where she completed the Literacy Intervention Specialist Certification Program. She is currently certified through the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) as an Academic Language Therapist (CALT) and is working on completing the necessary requirements for a Qualified Instructor (QI) certification. Michelle serves as the Exhibits Chair for ALTA and the President Elect for the Rocky Mountain Chapter of ALTA. She is also on the Rocky Mountain Chapter of the International Dyslexia Association. Michelle is honored to work alongside such dedicated and knowledgeable professionals as they help all children learn to read and spell without frustration.

# Here's your slate of new ALTA Board Members

## Learn about those representing you!



### BOARD MEMBER: Carin M. Illig, M.Ed, CIT, CALT, ICALP

Carin Illig has been the Clinical Director of the Children's Dyslexia Centers since July 2009, supervising this IMSLEC-accredited program with over 40 tutoring and training sites. Carin earned a Bachelor's degree in psychology, a Master's degree in Elementary Education, and a Graduate Certificate in General Special Education. She holds a NH Experienced Educator License with endorsements in Elementary Education, General Special Education, Learning Disabilities, and Reading/Writing Specialist. She is certified by the Children's Dyslexia Centers at the Initial, Instructor of Initial, Advanced, Instructor of Advanced, Therapy, and Instructor of Therapy levels. Carin is certified by ALTA at the Practitioner, Instructor of Practitioners, and Therapy levels. She has fourteen years of experience tutoring children/adults with dyslexia and training adults to become MSLE interventionists. Carin serves on the IMSLEC Board and Council. She has served on the ALTA Board of Directors and the Board of the Wisconsin IDA Branch. Carin worked in public education for twelve years, primarily as a Case Manager and Reading Specialist at the high school level. Observing the daily struggles of children with reading disabilities inspired her to become better educated to teach children with dyslexia and to train adults to work with these children.



### BOARD MEMBER: Helen Mannion

As the Director of Teaching & Learning and Director of Teacher Training, Helen Mannion focuses on Language and Literacy Remediation, working closely with teachers and administrators to ensure that classroom instruction reflects best practices supported by current research. Helen is also the Director of The DVFS Adolescent Literacy Center where she trains teachers in the comprehensive Orton-Gillingham based curriculum that she helped develop to meet the needs of the bright adolescent student. She is a Certified Academic Language Therapist who focuses her research and curriculum development on language and literacy instruction. Helen's recent research, published articles and conference presentations have focused on the language demands of content area reading and the instructional strategies needed to help students navigate these demands. Helen received her BA from Bucknell University, her M.Ed. from Benedictine University in reading and literacy and has served on the board of the PBIDA.



### BOARD MEMBER: Sydna Zilm, M. Ed., CALP

Sydna is currently the Professional Development Specialist at Spalding Education International. She began her teaching career in 1984 and has over 25 years of classroom teaching experience. She became a Certified Academic Language Practitioner (CALP) in 2016 through the Spalding Method. She received her Master's Degree in Elementary Educational with an emphasis in Reading from Northern Arizona University in 2006. She teaches the Spalding courses and oversees the certification of teachers and instructors for Spalding Education International. I believe all children can learn, and that, as a teacher, it is my responsibility to educate myself so that I have the knowledge and tools to help every child. I want my dyslexic students to know they are smart, they are capable, and that with the right tools, they will succeed. A few years ago, I realized that I could impact the lives of more children by moving from the classroom, where I taught students directly, to teaching teachers who could take it back to their classrooms. The impact I could have on the education of dyslexic and other students would grow exponentially. As I serve in this organization, I am fulfilling a responsibility I have to society and specifically children.



### BOARD MEMBER: Jacqueline P. Valadez, Ph.D., LDT, CALT

Jackie is a Certified Academic Language Therapist in South San Antonio ISD where she began her teaching career approximately 30 years ago. Her career in education includes over 20 years in higher education serving in numerous capacities, including associate professor and administrator in teacher education. In addition to providing dyslexia therapy, she serves as Faculty of Supervision & Instruction in the Alliance for Catholic Education, Institute for Educational Initiatives, at the University of Notre Dame, teaching in the ACE M.Ed. program and in the Program for Inclusive Education as an adjunct professor. Dr. Valadez is a Faculty Research Affiliate with the Notre Dame Center for Literacy Education with research interests in models of inclusive education and differentiated instruction in under-resourced Catholic schools, leading to a continuum of professional development in structured literacy education utilizing multi-sensory and comprehensive, phonetic instruction for master teachers to best support children who struggle in learning to read and write. She received her Ph.D. from Texas A&M University in College Station, TX in Educational Administration with a specialization in reading and holds several certifications, including professional reading specialist, principal, special education, elementary education reading, and is a Licensed Dyslexia Therapist in Texas. Dr. Valadez has owned and operated a private therapy learning center leading to work in consulting and private testing. She is currently a QI (Qualified Instructor) in training at the Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas in San Antonio where she received her therapy training in Take Flight, earning eligibility to sit for the Alliance National Registration Exam to become a CALT. She is currently serving on the Texas Catholic Conference of Bishops Accreditation Commission as Commissioner at Large, providing assistance to the TCCB-Education Department who oversees the accreditation of Catholic Elementary and Secondary schools of Texas. She has conducted numerous workshops and professional training sessions for schools and professional organizations.



### BOARD MEMBER: Jen Rowland, CALT & QI

President of the Rocky Mountain Chapter, Jen earned the title of Certified Academic Language Therapist in 2012 and Qualified Instructor in 2016. With this new certification, Jen has shifted from reading intervention in the local public schools to focus her efforts on continuing education utilizing MSLE and OG methods. An employee of the Colorado Literacy and Learning Center, Jen and her colleague Jodi Champagne have built day-long professional development courses in the five components of literacy. Their primary goal is to make a greater impact on Colorado's emergent, struggling readers by deepening teacher knowledge. Additionally, Jen administers literacy skills evaluations, remediates dyslexic children privately, and volunteers in a local first grade classroom to support phonemic awareness. In the summertime, Jen instructs at Durango Mountain Camp providing academic, social and emotional guidance to dyslexic campers.



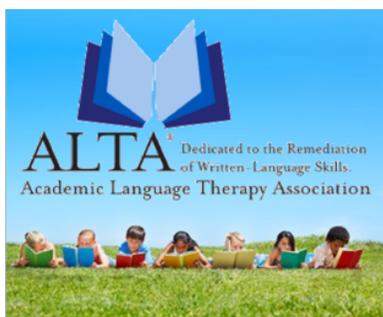
### BOARD MEMBER: Kim Haughee, M.A.E., CALT, ICALP

Kim loves that ALTA has established, continues to maintain and promote, the highest standards of education and practice for professionals who provide multisensory intervention for individuals with language disorders such as dyslexia. Continued professional development opportunities are made available which allows members at all certification levels to obtain the necessary and most current knowledge to provide effective intervention and training for those in need. It also demonstrates continued collegiality and support for its members. It is my privilege to be a member of ALTA and serve on the board.

## ABOUT ALTA...

The Academic Language Therapy Association® (ALTA) is a non-profit national professional organization incorporated in 1986 for the purpose of establishing, maintaining, and promoting standards of education, practice and professional conduct for Certified Academic Language Therapists. Academic Language Therapy is an educational, structured, comprehensive, phonetic, multisensory approach for the remediation of dyslexia and/or written-language disorders.

The name, Academic Language Therapy Association, represents and identifies the profession and the professionals who are its members. "Academic Language" denotes that services offered to clients are educational and emphasize reading, spelling, handwriting, and written expression. "Therapy" indicates that those services are intensive and therapeutic rather than tutorial. At the present time there are almost 2,600 ALTA members in 43 states and Colombia, Hong Kong, India, and Singapore.



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