

Alliance Exam Retreat: A Collaborative Process

The Alliance for Certification and Accreditation for Structured Language Education, Inc. sponsored by the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) met over the weekend of September 17th to begin collaboration on a professionally written certification exam. The Alliance members include representation from ALTA, ALTA Centers Council, IMSLEC, and IDA. A professional test development company sent two consultants to guide the process. This retreat was funded by a grant from the Amon Carter Foundation.

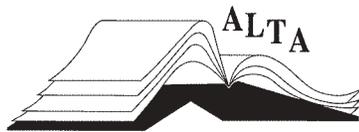
Representatives of various multisensory structured language approaches were present to insure an inclusive exam. An outcome of the retreat was a chart of competencies to be addressed on the exam. A task analysis was developed in coordination with a timeline for completion. Prior to the next meeting representatives from each of the organizations will contribute possible test questions to be considered.

ALTA will continue to administer the exam and the current application and administration guidelines will remain the same. The expecta-

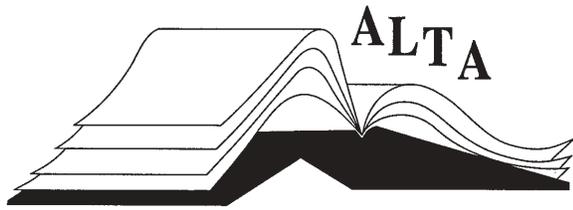
tion is that more applicants will be encouraged to sit for the exam and then enjoy the benefits of ALTA membership. The goal is to develop an exam that would reflect the training offered by any multisensory structured language training program that meets the quality standards that ALTA has always maintained.

Respectfully Submitted:
Nancy Coffman, ALTA Centers Council
Kay Peterson, ALTA
Valerie Tucker, IMSLEC

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.



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bul•le•tin

Fall

2004

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

Creating Rich Associations for the Rapid Recognition of Words

By Suzanne Carreker

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Oral language is important to both the decoding and comprehension components of reading. Reading involves the translation of printed words into speech equivalents (decoding) and the attachment of meaning (comprehension). Comprehension is supported when the subsequent oral representations of print are known words in the reader's oral vocabulary (National Reading Panel, 2000). The reader must know the meanings of most of the words in a text to understand the text. Decoding is aided by rich associations of orthographic and semantic knowledge (Adams, 1990). That is, a reader more easily and quickly recognizes unfamiliar words in print if they contain familiar letter patterns and are in the reader's oral vocabulary. This facilitated recognition of words adds to the accuracy and speed with which the reader reads.

Teachers and parents can expand oral language by engaging students in conversations and reading aloud to them at levels above their reading levels. Wide independent reading and direct instruction of word meanings and word-learning strategies add to the depth of students' general word knowledge (National Reading Panel, 2000). Activities for increasing students' oral language and teaching specific vocabulary are suggested below.

Naming

The naming activity familiarizes students with words related to a particular topic and increases the speed at which they retrieve words. Initially, the activity is done orally, with very quick responses elicited from students. Students are asked to name words or objects related to a particular topic (e.g., name fruits and vegetables). Students are then asked to name words and objects in specific, related categories (e.g., name fruits that are red, name vegetables that are green, name fruits that are round, name vegetables that can be eaten raw, name words that describe the preparation of fruits and vegetables). The orally generated words can later be recorded on cards and used for sorting words by categories.

Describing

The describing activity enriches oral language through the description of objects related to the topic used for the naming activity. An object or a picture of the object is presented. The following set of questions organizes the students' description of the object:

1. What is the name of the object? (e.g., apple)
2. In what categories does it belong? (e.g., fruits, fruits with skin, fruits that grow on trees, round objects)

See Rich Associations on Page 4

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

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President's Letter

Dear ALTA Members,

Although the weather still feels like summer for many of us, juggling new schedules and new therapy situations certainly lets us know that fall is here. The ALTA Board of Directors began its new year with a meeting held on August 28th at Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. The enthusiasm of the board was evident as reports were given on everything from website helpline activity to plans for next year's Annual Conference which will be held on April 23, 2005. ALTA committees would welcome additional members. If there is a particular committee that you are interested in, please feel free to contact the Committee Chair or me directly.

Along with a new school year come excellent professional development opportunities. The 55th Annual Conference of the International Dyslexia Association will be held November 3-6, 2004 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and includes many ALTA members as presenters. Several regional branches of IDA will also be hosting their Annual Conferences including the New Jersey Branch on Oct 15 and the Houston Branch on October 16, 2004. The Council of Educators for Students with Disabilities, Inc. Annual Dyslexia Conference will be held in Austin, Texas on November 1-2, 2004. All of these conferences provide excellent CEU opportunities.

ALTA was well represented by Kay Peterson, Nancy Coffman, and Valerie Tucker at a recent retreat sponsored by the Alliance for Accreditation and Certification. The purpose of the retreat was to begin the process of developing a new National Registration Exam, which will continue to be administered by ALTA. I will continue to keep you updated on the progress of this important Alliance project throughout the coming year.

The 2004-2005 ALTA Directory is currently at the printers and will be mailed out very soon. Please take a moment to review the Policies and Procedures as many of the guidelines have been revised and refined.

Have a great fall season and I hope to see you in Philadelphia!

Melanie Royal, CALT
ALTA President

Future ALTA Registration Exam Dates

January 15, 2005
Southwest Multisensory Training
Center
600 S. Jupiter
Allen, TX 75002-4065
972-359-8291

June 4, 2005
The Scottish Rite Learning Center
of Austin
1622 E. Riverside
Austin, TX 78741
512-472-1231

June 29, 2005
The Scottish Rite Learning Center
of West Texas
602 Avenue Q, PO Box 10135
Lubbock, TX 79408
806-765-9150

Unsung Heroes: A Tribute to Valarie Reynolds, CALT, ALTA QI

We have recently lost a valuable friend and major contributor to our profession, Valarie Reynolds. Many of you do not know Valarie, as she retired a number of years ago due to poor health. Valarie and her colleague, Karen Vickery, were leaders in the six year field testing of MTA in a small school district in Northeast Texas. They published one of the first formal, longitudinal studies proving the positive effects of multisensory, structured, language education instruction for both dyslexic and non-dyslexic students in both reading and spelling. (Vickery, K., Reynolds, V., & Cochran, S. 1987. Multisensory teaching approach for reading, spelling, and handwriting, Orton-Gillingham based curriculum, in a public school setting. *Annals of Dyslexia*, Volume XXXVII, 189-200.) Valarie always worked selflessly, without seeking personal recognition or fame. She founded a Multisensory Training Center through her church and established a scholarship

fund for students who could not afford private therapy. Her other accomplishments as a professional were numerous, but this learning center and scholarship fund will live on.

A number of years ago, the late Gil Schiffman, who was then head of the National Right to Read effort, came to Dallas for an IDA meeting. He said that the answer to the nation's illiteracy problems could not be solved through legislative mandates, but through each individual, working in his or her corner of the world, helping dyslexics. These individuals are true "unsung heroes." Valarie was surely one of these.

I write this not only as a tribute to Valarie, but to all of you who are working in your corner of the world to make a difference in the lives of dyslexics. You are also "unsung heroes."

— Margaret Taylor Smith

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**ALTA Spring
Conference
Hilton Hotel Dallas
Lincoln Centre
Saturday, April 23, 2005**

**Keynote Speaker: Dr. Marilyn
Jager Adams, Chief Scientist,
Soliloquy Learning, Inc.**

**Author, *Beginning to Read:
Thinking and Learning About Print***

**Conference brochures containing
all registration details will be
mailed in December. Make plans
now to attend!**



Rich Associations *continued from Page 1*

3. What is the use or function of the object? (e.g., eating, baking, making juice)
4. What are the attributes—color, shape, size, and feel—of the object. (e.g., red, round, size of a fist, smooth)
5. How is the object the same as or different from another object? (e.g., compare an apple to a baseball)

Story Retelling

Reading aloud to students at levels above their reading levels exposes them to words they may be unable to read. While students become familiar with these new words, they may not be established words, words that students use. Story retelling activates usage of words that students may recognize but do not or rarely use. Storytelling also acquaints students with story grammar (e.g., sequence of events, setting, and characters). Awareness of story grammar helps students anticipate the text content as they read, which facilitates fluency. Additionally, story retelling requires students to hold verbal information in working or short-term memory, which is important for processing and making sense of information while reading.

As the teacher reads a story, he or she draws a few simple pictures that represent salient events or information in the story. After the story is read, the teacher models the retelling of the story, using the pictures as a guide and incorporating vocabulary from the story. Students then take turns retelling the story. While their retellings may not be verbatim, they will use many of the words used by the teacher as he or she modeled the retelling of the story.

Previewing Important Words

Before students read a passage, it is helpful for them to have a preview of words they will encounter that are important to understanding the text. The words can be defined (e.g., vertebrate – having a backbone), used in a sentence (e.g., An animal with a backbone is a vertebrate), or presented with examples (e.g., Dogs and alligators are vertebrates) and non-examples (e.g., Squids and caterpillars are not vertebrates).

Questioning

After students have listened to or read a passage, questioning checks comprehension and provides opportunities for discussion. The answers to simple questions are found on the page. Complex questions require students to extend beyond the information on the page and demand lengthier, more thoughtful answers. Questioning activities should contain both simple and complex questions, with the goal of gradually increasing the percentage of complex questions, so that eventually they represent the majority of questions.

Examples of Simple Questions

- Who is the story about?
- When and where does the story take place?
- What happens?

Examples of Complex Questions

- Why do you think the character does what he does?
- How do you think he feels? Why?
- Have you ever been in a similar situation?
- What would have happened if...?

Multiple Meanings of Words

Knowing the meaning of a word is not just knowing the definition. It is also

understanding how the word relates to other words. The meanings of some words vary, subtly or greatly, according to the context in which they are used:

1. He will run the marathon.
2. I am going out for a run.
3. She has a run in her stocking.

The word run has a different meaning in each of these three sentences. The meanings of the word in the first and second sentences are not too dissimilar; they both involve the action or act of moving faster than a walk. The meaning of run in the third sentence is very different as it refers to a ravel or rip. Students can generate multiple meanings of words and discuss how the meanings change in different contexts. Many words with highly regular decoding patterns present interesting opportunities for the discussion of multiple meanings: pin, tip, tap, jam, slip, run, cut, puff, catch, see, free, round, and gave. Special attention should be given to words with multiple meanings that have the same spelling but different pronunciations, such as bow, wind, or wound.

Morphology

Morphemes are the meaning-carrying units of language. An understanding of morphemes or word parts—base words, prefixes, suffixes, and roots—aids in vocabulary development and the instant recognition of words. With knowledge of word parts, students can more easily form orthographic images of the words.

Introduction of a Word Part

A word part is written on the board (e.g., struct). Students generate derivatives of

See Rich Associations on Page 5

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Rich Associations *continued from Page 4*

the word part. The teacher writes the words on the board so that the new word part in each word is aligned. Students determine the meaning of the word part (Henry, 1990).

Examples:

overdo	struct	homeless
overeat	structure	helpless
overpass	construction	careless
overheat	destruction	hopeless

Introduction of a Word Part

USING OBJECTS

Students are presented with objects that in some way represent words that share a common word part. For example, a bottle of extract, a subtraction flashcard, magnets that attract, and a tractor are objects that represent the root tract. Students discuss the meanings of the words that share the word part. Extract is pulled from a vanilla bean or almond. One pulls the subtrahend from the minuend in subtraction. Magnets that attract pull toward one another. Tractors pull. Students decide the common meaning in all the words. The root tract means to pull. Common roots include port (carry); spect (see); struct (build); scrib, script (write), vis (see); bio (life); geo (earth); meter (measure).

BECOME A WORDSMITH

Students use word parts to create new words. The root phila means love. The suffix ist means one who. For example, a philanthropist is one who loves mankind. Combining these word parts with others, students can create words such as philaphonist (one who loves sound), philathermist (one who loves heat), or philachronist (one who loves time).

REVIEW OF WORD PARTS

As word parts are introduced, they can be written on index cards and reviewed regularly and systematically. During the review, students read the word part on the card, give a meaning, and generate derivatives of that word part (e.g. Students see

a card with the word part tract and say, "Tract; to pull; tractor, extract, attract, subtraction, distraction").

WORD WEBS

Word webs are an effective activity for introducing new words. The more connections that are made to a word, the more fully it is learned (National Reading Panel, 2000). The word web described below connects a new word to prior semantic and syntactic knowledge.

Students use one piece of paper for the webbing of each new word. They draw five connected circles in the shape of an X. At the top, they write the new word (e.g., antediluvian) and the part of speech that is pertinent to the word in context (e.g., adjective). Students discuss the usage of the word (e.g., describes a noun).

Students then look up the word in the dictionary to find its origin (e.g., Latin—from ante meaning before and diluvium meaning flood). The origin is discussed (e.g., Before what flood?) and recorded in the circle in middle of the page. The definition (e.g., made or developed a long time ago) is recorded in the same circle. Students generate synonyms (e.g., primitive, ancient, antiquated, old-fashioned) and write them in the circle above and to the left of the middle circle. Students generate antonyms (e.g., new, modern, contemporary, fresh) and write them in the circle above and to the right of the definition. Students think of things that can be described with the adjective (e.g., rotary-dial telephone, typewriter, Model-T) and write them in the circle under and to the left of the middle circle. Students think of people who could be

described with the adjective (e.g., grandmother, curmudgeon) and write them in the circle under and to the right of the middle circle. Finally, students write a sentence using the new word at the bottom of the page. They can borrow information from the web to write the sentence.

The structure of the web changes slightly for different parts of speech. All the circles are the same except for the two lower circles. For verbs, students generate words that tell how the action would be done and write the words in the lower left circle. Students generate and write words that describe when or where the action would take place in the lower right circle.

See Rich Associations on Page 6

The Hillier School

*"Equipping learning-disabled students ...
academically and spiritually."*



Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin On the Move



Teacher graduates of '04 at the Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin.

Summer, 2004, was an exciting time for Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin. Training in our new space for the first time in June, 22 participants attended the Advanced Basic Language Skills Class. Teachers represented 12 different school districts, as well as private schools and

private therapists in training. In July, 44 participants attended the Introductory Basic Language Skills Class representing 18 school districts, private schools, and tutors. Instructors and participants celebrated the benefits of having our own training facility. A special thank you is due to the community of the Masons, parents, therapists, and families, who gave their time, talents, money, materials and creativity to make this dream of a training facility a reality.

May 5, 2004, was graduation time for eleven elementary students completing the two year program, ten educators completing requirements as Dyslexia Specialists and now able to take the national examination for becoming Certified Academic Language Specialists, and one CALT who had completed the requirements to become a Qualified Instructor.

The ceremony took place at the beautiful Scottish Rite Temple in Austin with the Masons, graduates, families, and supporters in attendance. After a wonderful performance of FOX TALES, written and directed by Dr. Charles Pascoe, and performed by students of Texas State University Children's Theatre Program, a welcome by Gordon Kelso, Robert Northcutt, and Pat Sekel, the following graduates were honored:

Students: Caleb Patrick Johnson, James Caleb Lindsley, Danielle Marie Quiroz, Collin Howard Ronsonette, Tareza Najib Wehbe, Cade McCredie Adkins, Joe Angel Guzman, Jacob Ben Broadway, Phillip Trinidad Davila, Bridgette Lauren Kerr, and Hunter Austin Kerr.

Dyslexia Specialists: Audrey J. Baker, Shirley J. Canon, Nancy A. Donley, Angella Guerrero, Jamie G. Nettles, Celia Ray, Perry Denson Stokes, Louisa Ann Thomas, Dianne D. Warren, Jodi L. Witt.

Qualified Instructor: Dena Marie Crook, M.Ed.

The evening was especially meaningful because many of the young students spoke to the audience and shared their appreciation for the gift the Learning Center and the Masons had given them—the ability to read! In closing, one of our parents, Kathy Davila, eloquently read her original poem, *My Special Place*, in honor of the Scottish Rite Learning Center. The evening was magical for all in attendance!

Rich Associations continued from Page 5

For nouns, students generate and write appropriate adjectives in the two lower circles.

Summary

As students' general word knowledge grows, comprehension and their ability to recognize unfamiliar words in print grows. Activities that promote this knowledge should be incorporated as part of fluency training.

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Further Reading

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Suzanne Carreker is director of teacher development at Neuhaus Education Center in Bellaire, Texas. She is the theme editor of this issue.

Book Review

Emotion: The On/Off Switch to Learning

By Priscilla L. Vail, M.A. T.

Can emotion unlock the door to learning? Priscilla Vail believes it does and uses her book *Emotion: The On/Off Switch to Learning* to prove her point. Her purpose is twofold: to prove the correlation between students' emotional states and their capacity for learning; and to provide helpful strategies and activities for use at school and home to ensure that students are emotionally available for learning.

Using current brain and learning research coupled with her own personal case studies, Vail opens her argument with a layman's overview of how different areas of the brain work. She emphasizes that all higher order learning skills are inaccessible, or switched off, if the limbic system, or emotional wiring, is switched on by a negative emotion such as fear, humiliation, anger, or depression. Chapter one discusses six guiding principles that Vail believes fuel successful child raising and exciting education. These six issues become the springboard for the remaining chapters, each dedicated to how children are strengthened or weakened by different emotions such as anger, friendships, confidence, reluctance, and discipline. Always providing relevant answers to the questions she poses, Vail concludes each chapter with specific strategies for parents and activities for teachers to help students deal with the emotion being discussed. In the end, Vail convinces her readers that the emotional system of a student does impact the quality and quantity of learning a student can absorb.

For students in language therapy, *Emotion: The On/Off Switch to Learning* offers three useful insights. First, Vail's description of the structure of the brain and its workings is an excellent model to share with older students, especially her description of the

limbic system's function as the elevator required to reach higher level cortical processes. Second, Vail's specific tips for organizing time, space, possessions and written assignments should be included in any student skills training for students. Finally, Vail's strategy for approaching a new task – her Five Questions technique – helps students bridge from what they know to new learning and provides a sequential process for collecting and organizing new information.

While each page of Vail's book is a wake-up call for educators, three of her points possess special application for language therapists. First, Vail's view that consistency is the epoxy which holds all learning together, especially for emotionally battered students, endorses the consistency of structured daily lessons, organized around logical schemas. Surprisingly, these same structures help students to identify, label and manipulate their emotional states as well. Second, language therapists must incorporate into lesson planning activities which counter the negative emotions of fear, humiliation, and anxiety that students often bring to the therapy setting. Examples might include humor, drama and games to lighten students' moods. Finally, as a current in this flow of energy between student and learning, learning therapists must balance their roles of technician, advocate, mentor, supporter and encourager. A therapist's attitude and choice of words can make the difference between the student's emotional elevator making it to the higher order processes or remaining stuck on the lower floors. Vail is quick to emphasize, however, that the social/emotional structure is complemented and propelled by making students responsible for their learning, ultimately leading to their increased resilience.

Clearly written for parents and educators, *Emotion: The On/Off Switch to Learning*'s worthwhile and compelling reading for

anyone interested in how we learn. It is an especially effective book to share with parents of new students at the start of language therapy. Chapters are clearly focused with important points highlighted in margins. Carefully balancing research with human interest applications, Vail is at her best with her metaphor of power/brain systems and how they are dimmed, brightened or extinguished by the emotional states of learners. She convinces her readers that the stakes are high in this power play, and that the educational process must recognize and incorporate students' emotions in order to be effective. As such, emotion becomes the gate, gatekeeper and key to opening pathways to lifelong learning, both in and out of the classroom. *Emotion: The On/Off Switch to Learning* is published by Modern Learning Press, New York.

– Reviewed by Michelle Bufkin, MPA, CALT

Access the ALTA Bulletin Online

You may now access the Academic Language Therapy Association newsletter, ALTA bulletin, on-line. Go to ALTA's web site at www.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.

Milestones

The **SMU Learning Therapy Program**, SMU-In-Legacy; Plano, Texas, is pleased to announce an important addition to its program opening in the summer of 2005, Margaret Smith's **EDMAR MTA & MTS** Training. This program will allow SMU/LTP to provide teacher-level certification training in addition to its existing therapy-level certification training. For information contact SMU's Learning Therapy Program, SMU-in-Legacy, Building 4, Suite 108, 5236 Tennyson Parkway, Plano, TX 75024, learning.therapy@smu.edu, 214-SMU-READ, fax 972-473-3442.

WELCOME, NEW STUDENT MEMBERS Holly Aranda, Regina Barnes, Kimberly Bell, Harry Burg, Alva Carey,

Abbe Carow, Patricia Cavanagh, Peggy Chesnutt, Tom Chesnutt, Donna Coyne, Jean DeVre, Maureen Geis, Joan Hall, Melinda Haug, Michelle Iemma, Rori Kilmer, Dana Kiser, Axia Kydd, Paulette Mayfield, Sharon McNearney, Georgina Mendoza, Christina Mignone, Donna Mills, Jeanne Mitchell, Linda Neal, Maureen O'Brien, Mary Porcher, Melissa Quick, Nora Schlesinger, Roxanne Schoen, Mary Senn, Tammy Stewart, Susan Stinnett, Andrea Stoddard, Carrie Toffoletto, Mary Louise Tufts, Linda Walter, Susan Watson, Cindy Williams and Monie Wright.

WELCOME, NEW ACTIVE MEMBERS Regina Anthony, Ruth Barnes, Debbie Bielefeld, Cherie Blewett, Rachel Cantrill, Margaret Carlsen, Janet Costa, Jeanette Davis, Shippen Davis, Cheryl Eliason, Janet Fisher, Karene Groesbeck,

Donna Hagan, Sharon LeConey, Kelly Lorscheider, Stacy Magoffin, Linda Main, Kim McGehee, Sarah Moore, Linda Neal, Jamie Nettles, Diane Newberry, Herlinda Paredes, Peggy Pierce, Molly Ratliff, Celia Ray, Jodye Sharp, Perry Stokes, Louise Swartswalter, Lynelle Sylliaasen, Kelly Tate, Anne Temple, Barrett Van Zandt, Deborah Velchoff, Karen Walker, Margaret Wood and Mary Yarus.

CONGRATULATIONS, NEW QUALIFIED INSTRUCTORS Juancita Petro and Jody Rockley.



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The SMU Learning Therapy Program
SMU-In-Legacy; Plano, Texas

FALL 2004 ELECTIVES

COST: \$250 per elective
15 contact hours per elective (1.5 CEU's)

Procedures & Measures for Assessing Students w/ Dyslexia
Friday & Saturday, November 19 & 20, 8:00am-4:00pm
Building 4, Room 230

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Building 4 Suite 108
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The Alliance for Accreditation & Certification of Structured Language Education, Inc.

The Alliance for Accreditation & Certification of Structured Language Education, Inc. was incorporated in 2002. The Alliance recently asked its participating organizations to gather data from their accredited courses. The following table reflects the results gathered from the 17 courses that responded. We are pleased to be able to share these results.

**# of trainees and/or graduates at all levels
since 2002 - 2,278**

**# of trainees and/or graduates in public schools
since 2002 - 1,720**

**# of public school students served by trainees &
graduates since 2002 - 18,667**

**# of trainees and/or graduates working in private
school or private therapy since 2002 - 558**

**# of private school students or private
students served by trainees and/or graduates
since 2002 - 4,442**

bul•le•tin Calendar

October, 2004-January, 2005: Neuhaus Education Center, 4433 Bissonnet, Bellaire, TX 77401. Developing Metacognitive Skills, 8:30 am-2:30 pm, dates are November 2 and 9, 2004, January 6 and 13, 2005, or January 20 and 27, 2005. A course for reading teachers in grades 4 to 8, high school teachers working with students who need to improve their comprehension, dyslexia specialists, educational therapists, and adult literacy providers. This 10-hour course provides strategies and instruction that will help students improve their vocabulary and comprehension by teaching them to think about their thinking before, while, and after they read. Teachers receive ten in-service hours. Call (713) 664-7676.

January 11-April 13, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, TX. Introductory Course of Basic Language Skills – Spring Semester (15 days total, 8:15 – 4:00, attendance to all sessions is mandatory.) Dates are January, 11, 12, 13, 19, 26, February 2, 9, 16, 23, March 2, 9, 23, 30, April 6, 13. Call (512) 472-1231.

February 11, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas, C.J. Davidson Memorial Lecture Series - Sylvia O. Richardson, M.D., "Early

Childhood Identification for Children At-Risk for Language Learning Disabilities," 8:30 am-4 pm, Lubbock Civic Center Theater, Lubbock TX. CEU credit pending. Call (806) 765-9150 or srlcwt@nts-online.net.

June 4, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, TX. ALTA registration exam, Noon-5 pm, contact ALTA office for application.

June 6-17, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, TX. Advanced Course of Basic Language Skills (10 days total, 8:30 am-3:30 pm, attendance to all sessions is mandatory.) Call (512) 472-1231.

June 11-29, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, TX. Introductory Course of Basic Language Skills (15 days total, 8:15 am-4 pm, attendance to all sessions is mandatory.) Call (512) 472-1231.

June 30, 2005: Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas. ALTA registration exam. Call (806) 765-9150.

ALTA members are responsible for maintaining their own personal CEU records for possible audit.

CEU Calendar

Event: **Parent Seminar Tying it All Together: Handwriting from the Viewpoint of an Occupational Therapist**
Date: Friday, October 22, 2004
Time: 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Sponsor: Neuhaus Education Center
Location: 4433 Bissonnet, Bellaire, TX
Contact: (713) 664-7676
3 CEUs

Event: **Dyslexia in the Workforce**
Date: November 2, 2004
Time: 7:00 - 9:00 P.M.
Speaker: Barbara Nwaigbo
Location: Lovers Lane Methodist Church
2 CEUs

Event: **Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow: 1963 – 2004**
Date: November 3 – November 5, 2004
Time: 1:00 – 3:00 P.M.
Sponsor: Learning Disabilities Association of Texas
Location: Renaissance Austin Hotel • Austin, TX
Contact: Ann Robinson • idat@earthlink.net

Event: **Multisensory Syllable Division**
Date: November 13, 2004
Time: 9:00A.M. – 12 :00 P.M.
Sponsor: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin, Inc.
Location: 1622 Riverside, Austin, TX
Contact: (512) 472 – 1231
3 CEUs

Event: **Dallas/Fort Worth Teacher Convention**
Date: November 22-23, 2004
Sponsor: Association of Christian Schools International
Contact: Jane Schimmer
4039 Echo Glen Dr. • Dallas, TX 75244

Event: **A College Panel of Students With Learning Differences**
Date: Tuesday, January 4, 2005
Time: 7:30 – 9:00 P.M.
Sponsor: Neuhaus Education Center
4433 Bissonnet, Bellaire, TX
Contact: Mary Worth or Cathing Lorino • (713) 664 – 7676

Event: **Phun Phoneme Phacts**
Date: February 5, 2005
Time: 9:00 A.M. – 12:00 P.M.
Sponsor: Scottish Rite Learning Center of Austin
Location: 1622 Riverside, Austin, TX
Contact: (512) 472 – 1231
3 CEUs

Event: **C.J. Davidson Memorial Lecture Series**
Presenter: Sylvia O. Richardson
Early Childhood Identification for Children With Learning Disabilities
Date: February 11, 2005
Time: 8:30 A.M-4:00 :P.M.
Sponsor: Scottish Rite Center of West Texas
Location: Lubbock Civic Center, Lubbock, TX
Contact: srlcwt@nts-online.net

EDMAR

ALTA CENTERS COUNCIL (ACC)

If the ACC does a good job of training, why should their graduates have to take an exam to be a CALT?

A decade ago, this was my most burning question. I had worked VERY hard in my courses at SMU. I had submitted videos and carefully listened to and read the comments made by my advisors. I had read a “b-jillion” articles and books and critiqued them, and then read the critiques of those critiques. I had carefully kept track of my clinical teaching hours and filled in another “b-jillion” forms to document those hours. I firmly believed, and still do, that I had been lectured to, monitored by, and with a “velvet hammer” molded by the very best instructors available. And yet I still had to take that EXAM! I was indignant! Did they not have faith in these able instructors? In their own burdensome requirements? What was the problem? Why did I have to jump over one more hurdle?

As the president of the ACC, I was asked this question recently. I have also been asked why the training is necessary if an individual knows the structure of the English language and can pass the exam without the training.

I have discovered over the past decade, that there is a very good reason for that exam. I also know that the training is also necessary, even if the exam could be passed without that training. Certification as an Academic Language Therapist is based on four very important components, each one as vital as the next. Those components are classroom instruction, demonstration lessons, supervised clinical experience, and finally the exam.

The classroom instruction provides the theoretical background related to the nature of learning differences, princi-

ples of multisensory structured language instruction, structure of the English language, diagnostic procedures and professional communication and ethics. The demonstration lessons provide an opportunity for a qualified instructor to guide the therapist-in-training as that theoretical information is put into practice. The supervised clinical experience is an extension of that guidance by a qualified instructor.

Because therapist-in-training are being taught and supervised by qualified instructors, a personal relationship develops. As a qualified instructor, I take a vested interest in those therapists in training that I have the pleasure to instruct. It is difficult to maintain an objective view! That is why an exam is necessary. The exam is an objective measure of the retention and understanding of all the components of training. It is the final stamp of approval on the training that an individual has completed.

It is the combination of classroom instruction, demonstration lessons, supervised clinical experience, and the exam that say to the world that an individual has earned the title “Certified Academic Language Therapist.” So, the next time someone asks you why an exam is needed, you can read this article aloud or just say, “We are a professional organization with high standards for our members so that individuals with learning differences can be confident that they are being served by a competent professional.”

I hope that you are as proud to put CALT after your name as I am to put it after mine!

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

ALTA ACCREDITED CENTERS

Centers for Youth & Families

Stacey Mahurin
PO Box 251970
Little Rock, Arkansas
72225-1970
(501) 660-6886 x 1129
smahurin@aristotle.net

LEAD

Valerie Tucker
406 Country Club Rd.
Argyle, TX 76226
(940) 464-3752 phone
(940) 464-7293 fax
lead1234@gte.net

Multisensory Language Training Institute of New Mexico

Sandra Dillon
6344 Buenos Aires N.W.
Albuquerque, New Mexico 87120
(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

Pat Sekel
508 W. 14th Street
Austin, Texas 78701
(512) 472-1231
(512) 472-3861 fax
psek@l@austin.rr.com See ACC on Page 11

ACC continued from Page 10

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
5236 Tennyson Pkwy., Bldg. 4-108
Plano, TX 75024
214) 768-7323 phone
(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
bevdoool@buz.net

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
2222 Welborn Street
Dallas, TX 75219
(214) 559-7885 phone
(214) 559-7808 fax
lwcdc@airmil.net

Update Basic Membership Information Online

As you may have already noticed, www.ALTAread.org got a facelift this summer. One of the new features of the site extends the capability to members to update their basic member information themselves. By basic information we mean name, address, phone number, and email address. You may also change your password if you desire. Here's how it works, from the home page of [ALTAread.org](http://www.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 try to 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.



Neuhaus Education Center

- ◆ Dyslexia Specialist Preparation Program
- ◆ Courses and Workshops for Educators
- ◆ On Site and Interactive Video Classes

www.neuhaus.org

Kay A. Allen, M.Ed. — Executive Director
Suzanne Carreker, CALT — Director of Teacher Development

 **Neuhaus Education Center** 4433 Bissonet
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SINCE 1988 713.664.7676 • F: 713.664.4744

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AND DIAGNOSTIC ASSESSMENT CENTER

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16150 Preston Road
Dallas, Texas 75248
Email: info@fairhill.org

Fairhill School is an independent non-accredited, co-educational institution open to qualified candidates of any race, color or national origin.

***A message from your Programs Committee:
The Importance of Planning Ahead***

Last year's annual conference was a huge success! Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz inspired all of us, and the popular breakout sessions provided by CALTs testified to the quality of talent we have within our own membership. Jana Jones and her Programs Committee did an outstanding job in putting together such an exciting conference!

As you can imagine, preparations for the annual conferences never stop. This year's Programs Committee is already hard at work setting in place important plans for our next conference. There are several easy ways all of us can support this valuable training opportunity for our membership and other conference guests.

- **First, make plans now to attend.** The conference is set for *Saturday, April 23, 2005*. Early registration will close on February 15 this year, so put it on your calendar now to respond quickly when you receive your brochure. If online registration is available this year, please take the time to use it, as it streamlines the process and expense of registration. Also, if you know of someone who needs to be on our mailing list for the conference, please let us know.
- **Second, whether you are traveling to our conference or you are in the local area, make plans to stay at our host hotel,** The Hilton Lincoln Center. The hotel is centrally located at LBJ Freeway and the Dallas North Tollroad (across from the Galleria), and is exquisite, having just completed a \$5 million renovation. Even better, they have drastically reduced their rates for us (\$79/night). Your conference brochure will contain all the details for reserving your room either by phone or online at our special rates. What could be more fun than catching up with your ALTA colleagues while enjoying the luxury of the hotel!
- **Third, consider placing an ad in our program advertising brochure,** a new addition to the conference. Whether you have a service or product to promote, a special student, teacher or therapist to honor, or know of others who would like to participate, please take time now to think about the ad you or your contacts could place in this year's brochure. With our conference attendance ever increasing, program advertisers will receive wonderful exposure at very competitive advertising rates ranging from \$10 to \$100.
- **Fourth, begin looking for exhibitors who would like to exhibit in the registration area this year.** Our new venue is elegant and large, a perfect setting for exhibitors' tables. Think of those vendors and groups that you rely upon to find products to help your students or that you know would like to target our audience members.
- **Fifth, think of anyone you know who would like to donate a door prize.** Yes, door prizes are back this year, and we would love to have a wonderful variety of gifts. Door prizes can be related to our field (teaching supplies and materials or gift certificates) or purely whimsical (manicures, trips, gift cards, dinners, trips, retail shops). And, there will be special door prize incentives for those who register early, stay at our host hotel or place an ad in our program brochure!

To make it easier for all of us to plan ahead, the reverse side of this page contains a survey to help your Programs Committee plan an outstanding conference in 2005. Simply fill out the survey and return it by mail, fax or in email format at your earliest convenience. *Any advance information we receive significantly helps ALTA with conference costs and planning.*

Our annual conference serves many purposes and deserves our participation at all levels. With a little advanced planning, we can all take part in ensuring the success and excitement of this year's conference. We look forward to seeing all of you there in April!

2005 Programs Committee:
Michelle Bufkin, Chair

Anita Bruck
Meg Carlson

Jana Jones
Helen Macik

Gina Mitchell
Ginny McCrea

Jody Millsap
Terri Zerfas

ALTA 2005 Annual Conference
Saturday, April 23, 2005
Hilton Lincoln Center – Dallas, Texas

Your name: _____
Your phone: _____
Your email: _____

Member Survey: Five Easy Ways to Support Your Conference

1. Attendance:

- _____ Yes, I'm planning on attending the 2005 conference.
_____ Yes, I know of someone who needs to be on the mailing list:
(Please list your contact's information below)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone/email: _____

2. Hotel:

- _____ Yes, I'm traveling to the conference and will consider staying at the Hilton.
_____ Yes, I will consider staying at the Hilton.

3. Program Advertising Brochure:

- _____ Yes, I have an idea for an ad that I would like to place in the brochure.
_____ Yes, I will consider placing a \$10 ad as a Friend of ALTA.
_____ Yes, I know of someone who would be perfect for the program brochure.
(Please list your contact's information below)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone/email: _____

4. Exhibitors:

- _____ Yes, I know of a perfect exhibitor for our conference.
_____ Yes, I am interested in being an exhibitor at our conference.
(Please list your contact's information below)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone/email: _____

5. Door Prizes:

- _____ Yes, I know of a vendor who might consider donating a door prize.
(Please list your contact's information below)

Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone/email: _____

Every effort we spend early on in planning our conference saves ALTA time and expense.
Thank you for taking the time to complete and return this survey to:

Michelle Bufkin, MPA, CALT
Vice President – Programs
Address: 4433 Amherst Avenue Dallas, Texas 75225

Fax: 214-890-0248
email: msbufkin@bigplanet.com