

Spring 2015 — ALTA bul*le*tin

The Newsletter of the Academic Language Therapy Association

President's Message

Marilyn Mathis, M.Ed., CALT-QI
President, Academic Language Therapy Association



Marilyn Mathis, President, Academic Language Therapy Association

Happy Spring ALTA Members! It's been a long, cold, dark, and snowy winter in many parts of the country and I know you must be as anxious as I am to welcome warmer weather.

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome."

— Anne Bradstreet

Our country is waking up, after decades of darkness, buried in reading instruction that has been ineffective in helping our suffering children. As a result the grass-root efforts of parents advocating for their children, legislators passing bills at the state level, and departments of education enacting these dyslexia laws, children are getting the intervention they need and ALTA is finally getting the recognition we so strongly deserve. We have stayed the course and fought the battles armed with the tools so wisely developed by our forefathers like Samuel Orton, Anna Gillingham, Sally Childs, Aylett Cox, and many more pioneers and contemporaries, far too many to mention.

We know all too well how thrilling it is to see a child flourish after receiving our services. It is as if they come out of the dark winter and into a sunny spring day as we see the smiling faces of these children overcoming the negative educational and emotional consequences they have endured. As certified Academic Language Practitioners and Therapists, we know how to put a stop to the downward spiral and debilitating ramifications impacting a child with dyslexia. Now we are seeing new dyslexia legislation around the country. States like Arkansas, Ohio, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin are changing the course for struggling readers from a harsh, dreary prospect into a bright and blossoming future because they are receiving evidence-based instruction from our members around the country who were trained at IMSLEC accredited courses.

Now is the perfect time to keep abreast of current research and intervention practices. ***Knowledge is Power! The Annual Spring ALTA Conference***, is being held again in Richardson, Texas at the Renaissance Hotel. Our conference chair, Suzanne Crawford, has worked hard with the help of Chris Bedenbaugh and Tim Odegard to organize a fantastic program. The exciting line-up of nationally recognized speakers will address evidence-based research on Friday with a focus on the brain and cognitive functioning followed by a panel discussion. Saturday is focused on early intervention followed by a panel discussion. It will be especially informative to learn about preschool Instruction for at Risk Students, K-3 Foundational Skills for Tiers 1 & 2, and K-3 Intervention for Tier 3. [Registration is now available.](#)

I look forward to welcoming you and seeing my many ALTA colleagues and friends. I can't wait to plant my feet back on the ground of beautiful Texas, the state that began to lead the charge in dyslexia awareness, education and legislation over 30 years ago!

Respectfully yours,

Marilyn Mathis

Knowledge is Power!

ALTA National Conference April 24-25, 2015

Registration is open for the 2015 ALTA National Conference — April 24th and 25th at the Renaissance Hotel in Richardson, Texas.

Friday's speakers:

- Laurie E. Cutting, Ph.D. — Brain Imaging: Word Skills and Comprehension
- Jeffrey Black, MD — Orthographic Processing: A Subcomponent or Subtype of Dyslexia?
- Jeremiah Ring, Ph.D. — The multiple-deficit model of dyslexia: What is it and what does it mean for assessment and intervention?

Saturday's speakers:

- Joyce Pickering, HUM.D. — Preschool Instruction for at Risk Students
- Karen Avrit, M.Ed. — K - 1 Tier 3
- Barbara Wilson, M.Ed. — Prevention and Early Intervention: So Worth The Time!

We are very excited to offer you the opportunity to hear these exceptional speakers from around the country. [Click here](#) to take advantage of the early registration discount, and to learn more about our fabulous speakers.

Book your room by April 2, 2015 to receive the discounted room rate of \$115/night. [Click here](#) to make hotel reservations online.

ALTA Chapters News

Jean A. Colner, ICALP, CALT, C/AOGPE
ALTA VP Long Range Planning

There are currently six ALTA Chapters: Arkansas, Mississippi, Rocky Mountain, New York, Ohio and 4 regional Texas chapters. The purpose of having our state and regional chapters is to provide collegial support and professional development opportunities for our members.

Procedures for forming an ALTA Chapter [can be found here](#).

ALTA Ohio Chapter

The ALTA Ohio Chapter was formed three years ago and is hosting our third annual professional development workshop in June 2015. Our first workshop included two teachers who provide small-group Orton-Gillingham (OG) instruction for one of the Ohio Dyslexia Pilot grant recipients, an urban public school in Cincinnati. Also presenting was the developer of the Sound Literacy application. The following year, Kathleen Carlsen, QI, gave a presentation on Rite Flight, a classroom reading rate and comprehension program. This year our speaker is Chris Woodin, ED.M., Landmark School, presenting, "Teaching Multiplication and Division Facts for the Whole to Part Visual Learner." The workshop is being opened up to parents, as well as other non-ALTA member teachers in our region. Our Chapter exhibits at Ohio IDA branch conferences to raise awareness of our professional organization. Officers are: President: Jean Colner; Vice President: Peg Hollenback; Secretary: Kara Lee, Exhibits: Blythe Wood.

ALTA Rocky Mountain Chapter

ALTA Rocky Mountain Chapter has taken a big step toward making a big difference in the Rocky Mountain region. Based on the notion, "Many hands make light work," the previous board sought to expand from three active board members to a board of eight, clearly defined positions. On November 5, 2014, new board members from all over Colorado convened for the first time via conference call. To date, they have met five times and momentum is clearly building. They have exhibited at two major conferences and plans are in motion for a Spring and Summer meet-n-greet (for members and guests), as well as a one day conference to support the continuing education needs of local membership. The new positions and officers are as follows: President: Cara Avallone M.A.T, CALT; Vice President: Jen Rowland M.A, CALT; Secretary: Kathleen Borgerson M.A., CALT; Treasurer: Mary Russell M.A.,CALT; VP-Website/Marketing: Sandra Giorgetta M.A., CALT; VP-Membership/Outreach:Eva Plante, M.A.T, CALT; VP-Programs/ Conferences: Carolyn Dutton M.A., CALT; VP-Exhibits:Michelle Qazi M.A., CALT.

Arkansas ALTA Regional Conference — October 4, 2014



Melanie Royal, Kay Peterson, Vicki King,
Karen Vickery, Tim Odegard, and Kevin Beaumont

The ALTA Arkansas Regional Conference was held on October 4, 2014, in Conway, Arkansas. As new legislation was recently enacted, the Arkansas Chapter called upon experienced leaders in the field of dyslexia to provide important background information to classroom teachers across the state. Dr. Tim Odegard presented "Dyslexia: An Overview of Its Cognitive and Neurocognitive Aspects;" Karen Vickery, Ed.D., CALT, QI, presented "Dyslexia, MSLE, IMSLEC, and ALTA: What does all of this mean?;" and Vicki King, M.Ed., CALT, QI, presented "Introduction to School-Based Identification of Dyslexia in Arkansas."

For more information read on:

The Arkansas State Legislature enacted Act 1294 of the 2013 regular session to ensure that children with dyslexia have their needs met by all Arkansas public school systems. This act was codified as A.C.A. § 6-41-601. This code defines dyslexia, describes required screening and intervention, and lists required actions of the state, education cooperatives, and school districts. No later than the 2014-2015 school year, all teachers must receive professional awareness on the indicators of dyslexia and the science behind teaching students with dyslexia. The Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) is currently providing professional development for dyslexia regional contacts at each education cooperative. The ADE is also currently researching programs of study and certification for dyslexia therapists. No later than the 2015-16 academic year, a school district shall have individuals to serve as dyslexia interventionists.

The ADE email address established specifically for dyslexia questions or concerns is ADE.Dyslexia@arkansas.gov.

For more information, please contact:

[Vicki King](#)

Certified Academic Language Therapist, Qualified Instructor, Dyslexia Specialist
Arkansas Department of Education
Division of Learning Services
Four Capitol Mall, Room 404-B

Little Rock, AR 72201

Phone: 501-682-4219

ALTA Texas Chapters News

Linda Gladden, CALT

Texas ALTA Legislative Advisory Council Co-Chair

The Texas Chapter of ALTA has had a busy fall and spring. This past fall, the north Texas regional group hosted a gathering at the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children. The east Texas regional group hosted a gathering at the Neuhaus Education Center, and it was well attended. Courtney Hoffman, ALTA lobbyist, attended and answered questions about our state licensure and the Sunset Review Commission. The south Texas regional group hosted a one-day conference in McAllen for teachers and parents. Over 50 people attended the conference and discussed how best to help children who are struggling with dyslexia in south Texas. The west Texas regional group has hosted several informational coffees at the JPW Learning Center in San Angelo.

This spring, Saint Mary's Hall in San Antonio hosted the south Texas regional group with Congressman Lamar Smith. Congressman Smith is the Chair of the Dyslexia Caucus in Washington DC. On February 4th, Texas ALTA hosted Dyslexia Awareness Day at the Capitol. A resolution recognizing Texas ALTA and Dyslexia Awareness Day was read on the House and Senate Floor.

Texas ALTA recognized Representative John Zerwas and Speaker Joe Straus as Champions for Children with Dyslexia. Representative Sid Miller of Fort Bend is sponsoring a bill on the Zhouse side to move our license from DSHS to the Department of a Licensing and Regulation. In addition, Representative Miller is sponsoring a bill to provide funding for remediation for children who are identified with dyslexia. On the Senate side, Senator Joan Huffman is sponsoring the bill to move our license to the Department of Licensing and Regulation. We are now working to contact each legislator about the importance of these bills.

We have increased our number of Texas ALTA supporters to over 100. However, we need many more supporters to join our efforts. Please consider becoming a supporter of Texas ALTA. All ALTA members are also eligible to become supporters. The Houston Branch of IDA recently made a significant donation of \$5,000.00 to Texas ALTA. We appreciate their collaboration with us to address the statewide issues facing children with dyslexia.

I would like to thank all of the regional co-chairs for their tremendous efforts this year: Melanie Royal, Sally Cain, Mary Yarus, Kim Jameson, Alice Marsel, Sara Mandelbaum Beer, and Betzy Day — you are all fabulous! Texas ALTA is almost one-year old. Please think about making a donation to help celebrate our birthday.

I have loved traveling around the state meeting and talking to all of you. I am so impressed with the level of commitment and passion all of you have for helping children with dyslexia. What an honor it has been to be representing all of you.

Texas Legislative Update for ALTA

Courtney Read Hoffman

CRH Capitol Communications

Licensure for Dyslexia Therapists and Practitioners is abolished in two Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Sunset Bills: HB 2510 by Four Price (Amarillo) and SB 202 by Jane Nelson (Flower Mound). If you are a constituent of either of those legislators, let them know you are against the bill because it includes that provision by calling Rep. Four Price at 512-463-0470 and Sen. Jane Nelson at 512-463-0112.

We are thrilled that Rep. Rick Miller (Sugar Land) and Sen. Joan Huffman (Houston) agreed to file bills to move licensure for dyslexia therapists and practitioners from DSHS to the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation (TDLR). We enthusiastically support both of those bills, HB 2683 and SB 1971, which would continue the license. To thank them email [Rep. Rick Miller](#) and [Sen. Joan Huffman](#).

Rep. Rick Miller also filed HB 2453, providing an allotment to school districts for students reported in the Public Education Information Management System (PEIMS) as identified with dyslexia and related disorders, who are receiving appropriate instruction by a trained individual. This bill provides the long-awaited funding for students with dyslexia.

When contacting legislators' offices, identify yourself as a licensed dyslexia therapist or licensed dyslexia practitioner who has invested time and money earning a license that the state now plans to take away from you. This licensure costs the state nothing. Share how difficult it will be to explain to clients and parents that you are no longer licensed.

Now is the time to reach out to your state legislators to state your support or opposition. You can find out who your state representative and state senator are at the website "Who Represents Me?" It is very important to email [Linda Gladden](#) or me, [Courtney Hoffman](#), any feedback you get when contacting legislative offices about these bills. Effective advocating requires follow up. It is very helpful to know if a legislator is for, against, or needs more information about these bills.

Pennsylvania Passes Dyslexia Screening and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program

Act 69 of 2014, the Dyslexia and Early Literacy Intervention Pilot Program became effective on June 26, 2014. The Act provides that the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will establish a dyslexia screening and early literacy intervention pilot program to provide evidence-based early screening and multitier support systems, using evidence-based intervention services for students with potential risk factors for early reading deficiencies and dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness, low letter and symbol naming and inability to remember sequences.

The Act provides that Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) will establish a dyslexia screening and early literacy intervention pilot program to provide evidence-based early screening and multi-tier support systems, using evidence-based intervention services for students with potential risk factors for early reading deficiencies and dyslexia, such as low phonemic awareness, low letter and symbol naming and inability to remember sequences. The Act requires that the pilot:

- Select at least three school districts to participate in the Pilot and operate for three (3) years.
- Participate in the program evaluation through annually reporting to the department data and information about the operation of the pilot program.
- Conduct screening three times per year for low phonemic awareness and other evidence-based risk factors for early reading deficiencies and dyslexia.

- Administer diagnostic assessments for students scoring below the benchmark to assess phonological awareness, alphabetic knowledge, concept of word, and grapheme/phoneme correspondence.
- Provide intervention measures, including multi-sensory structured language programs for students scoring below the benchmark delivered with fidelity by a trained interventionist that provides timely targeted instruction; strategic reteaching; intensive intervention; explicit multisensory synthetic phonics instruction and a structured language program.
- Provide a plan for Parent Notification that as part of the pilot their child is eligible to receive reading intervention services to measure the effectiveness of the early reading assistance program to which the parent or guardian voluntarily knowingly consents to student's continued participation in the pilot program.

The passage of Act 69 represents the hard work by the Pennsylvania Dyslexia Literacy Coalition. The coalition includes parents of dyslexic students who were not identified in early elementary school and did not receive evidence-based instruction. The group met tirelessly with legislators, rallied in Harrisburg, organized four dyslexia awareness events, and coordinated grassroots support of the bill.

In recognition of the work of the parents, Patricia Hozella, Director, Bureau of Special Education (BSE) decided to establish an advisory committee to assist in the design, implementation, and monitoring of the Act. Lynn Dell, Assistant Director is the Chair of the advisory committee. The membership of the advisory committee includes:

- Pam Cook
- Dr. Eugenia Flaherty
- Marilyn Mathis
- Dr. Monica McHale-Small
- Diane Reott
- Daphne Uliana

Further information about the pilot is [available here](#).

Alliance Exhibit Booth



Lynne Fitzhugh, Marilyn Mathis, Judith Birsh, Jean Colner and Jeanine Phillips
at the Alliance Exhibit Booth at IDA in San Diego, CA in November.

The Alliance Exhibit Booth drew a big crowds not only because attendees wanted to see the new Alliance Map Banner showing how ALTA and IMSLEC organizations have spread across the US but also, to have a chance to win a signed copy of Judith Birsh's book, *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills* and shake her hand.

ALTA Members Recognized by IMSLEC for Excellence



Jeanine Phillips was honored with the **2014 IMSLEC Innovator Award for Outstanding Professional**. Jeanine's work with children and teachers in Wichita, Kansas has been extensive. In 2001, Jeanine co-founded FUNDamental Learning Center in Wichita with the goal of helping children with learning difficulties reach their full potential. Additionally, she aimed to provide instruction and training for community teachers. Jeanine began Right Literacy Academy, the only school in the Mid-West that specializes in working with children with dyslexia, while training teachers in literacy intervention. Currently, Jeanine serves children at a national level as the treasurer for IMSLEC, VP of Long Range Planning on the Alliance Board, and a long term member of the ALTA Board.



Jean Colner was the recipient of IMSLEC's **2014 Outstanding MSLE Therapist Award**. She has been the Director of the Children's Dyslexia Center in Dublin, Ohio since 2004. During the course of her directorship, she has trained many individuals in Practitioner-Teacher Level as well as Instructors of the Practitioner-Teacher level. She has developed multiple public and private school district teacher training partnerships, which have greatly benefitted the teachers and students of her community. This has led to her working on dyslexia advocacy for the children of Ohio. Currently in Ohio, she is serving on the Ohio Department of Education Third Grade Reading Guarantee as well as the Ohio Standards Writing Team for K-3 Approaches to Learning. In both of these groups, she is providing her expertise to provide effective teach training. She recently became a member of the Ohio School Psychologist Association's Dyslexia Task Force. Jean is, also, contributing on a national level as member of the ALTA Board of Directors, VP for Long Range Planning for ALTA, and as the ALTA Chapters' Chairperson.



Dr. Nancy Cushen-White received the **2014 Etoile DuBard Award** because she meets the ideals, professionalism and dedication exemplified by the life of Etoile DuBard. Nancy's service to the dyslexic community has been extensive. She has served IMSLEC in various ways even before its incorporation in 1995. Nancy has served as a Board member, officer, and as a chair/committee member for IMSLEC and has helped in the setting of benchmarks that are now respected national standards. As a member of ALTA, Nancy is a Certified Academic Language Therapist, as well as being a member of the Board of Directors. Her service in IDA has included serving as a member of the Board of Directors, program chair for the annual conference, member of the Government Affairs Committee, and also as Representative on the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities. Currently in California, Nancy is active in many different avenues to assist in the advancement of dyslexia instruction. Nancy is an Associate Clinical Professor for the University of California, a Consultant in Learning Disabilities and Gifted Students with Dyslexia, Instructor of Advanced Literacy and Instructions and University fieldwork supervisor with the San Francisco State University, and a private language therapist/learning specialist.

ALTA congratulates these three women for their passion and professionalism that has contributed so much to the advancement of dyslexia awareness. They inspire and encourage us all as we work for the benefit of our communities.

Proposed 2015-2017 Slate of Officers and Board of Directors

Proposed Slate of Officers

Please review the proposed slate, which provides the positions that will be filled this year and the nominees proposed by this year's Nominating Committee. As provided by our bylaws, Article V, Section 1, (b) and (c), additional nominations for officers and directors may be submitted in writing and signed by three active members in good standing at least 15 days prior to the annual meeting. Any submissions should be mailed to the national office and received by April 10, 2015. At the April 24, 2015, business meeting, active members in good standing will be allowed to vote on those nominees as proposed by the Nominating Committee and any additional nominees submitted by April 10, 2015. Unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Executive Committee, no nominations will be made from the floor.

The slate listed below provides the positions that will be filled this year and the nominees proposed by this year's Nominating Committee. As provided by our bylaws, Article V, Section 1, (b) and (c), additional

nominations for officers and directors may be submitted in writing and signed by three active members in good standing at least 15 days prior to the annual meeting. Any submissions should be mailed to the national office and received by April 9, 2015. At the April 24, 2015, business meeting, active members in good standing will be allowed to vote on those nominees as proposed by the Nominating Committee and any additional nominees submitted by April 9, 2015. Unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Executive Committee, no nominations will be made from the floor.

The slate of officers and directors as proposed by the 2015 Nominating Committee includes:

Jo Ann Handy	VP Membership	(2015-2017)
Margie Gillis	VP Long Range Planning	(2015-2017)
Lynne Fitzhugh	VP Public Relations	(2015-2017)
Janice Robson	Treasurer	(2015-2017)
Jean Colner	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)
Rebecca Tolson	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)
Rebecca Gould	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)
Vicki King	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)
Helen Macik	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)
Judith Birsh	Board of Directors	(2015-2017)

Officers and Board of Directors returning to complete terms include:

Marilyn Mathis	President	(2014-2016)
----------------	-----------	-------------

Janna Curry	President Elect	(2014-2016)
Christine Bedenbaugh	Secretary	(2014-2016)
Suzanne Crawford	VP-Programs	(2014-2016)
Lexie Barefoot	VP-Website	(2014-2016)
Ginny Little	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)
Maureen Martin	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)
Mary Wines	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)
Suzanne Carreker	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)
Cherie Howell	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)
Nancy Cushen White	Board of Directors	(2014-2016)

Officers and Board members who completed their terms in 2015 include:

Tim Odegard	VP Membership	(2013-2015)
Jean Colner	VP Long Range Planning	(2013-2015)
Lynne Fitzhugh	VP Public Relations	(2013-2015)
Kathleen Carlsen	Treasurer	(2013-2015)

Janet Flory	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)
Margie Gillis	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)
Carin Illig	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)
Janice Robson	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)
Rebecca Tolson	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)
Cheryl Ward	Board of Directors	(2013-2015)

The 2015 Nominating Committee members are:

Rebecca Tolson (2014-2016)
 Cherie Howell (2014-2016)
 Maureen Martin (2015-2017)
 Jean Colner (2015-2017)
 Karen Avrit (2015-2017)

Candidate Biographies



Judith Birsh, Ph.D., CALT-QI

Education Consultant and Teacher Trainer in public and private schools

Judith Birsh, Ph.D., teaches graduate courses in reading and learning disabilities, and works as a consultant and teacher trainer in public and private schools, and presents training workshops in multisensory structured

language education throughout the country. She is a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) and a Qualified Instructor (QI), certified by the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA). Her primary interests are the preparation of teachers who will instruct students with serious difficulties in learning how to read, write and spell. She is also deeply committed to the prevention of reading problems through early intervention and successful acquisition of skills in the primary grades based on what we know through research. She is also the editor of *Multisensory Teaching of Basic Language Skills, Third Edition* (2011), Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brookes Publishing Company.



Jean A. Colner, ICALP, CALT, C/AOGPE

Director, Columbus Children's Dyslexia Center, Columbus, Ohio

Jean Colner is the Director of the nonprofit International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) accredited Children's Dyslexia Center in Dublin, Ohio. She became a member of the Academic Language Therapists Association (ALTA) in 2006, and is certified at the Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) and Instructor of Certified Language Practitioners (ICALP) Levels. She has trained 18 cohorts of Practitioner-Teacher Level teachers and tutors in her tenure as the Columbus CDC principal trainer. Her center is working with eight Central Ohio school districts for professional practitioner level training, and is developing several train-the-trainer interns in school district-center training satellites.

Jean has served on the Ohio Department of Education's Third Grade Reading Guarantee Work Group, and was a member of the writing team for the recently-adopted Ohio Reading Competencies. These reading competencies will inform teacher preparation courses of study in universities. The new Ohio Reading Competency document now includes dyslexia as one of the diverse learning factors affecting some students, as well as the National Reading Panel's five essential components for evidence-based reading instruction.

Currently, Jean is the President of the ALTA Ohio Chapter and has served as the ALTA VP of Long Range Planning and ALTA Chapters Chair.



Lynne Fitzhugh, Ph.D., LDT, CALT-QI

*President of the Colorado Literacy and Learning Center, Colorado Springs, Colorado
Assistant Professor and Director of the Reading Institute, Colorado College*

Lynne Fitzhugh, Ph.D., is President of the Colorado Literacy and Learning Center (CLLC), a non-profit organization with offices in Colorado Springs and Denver, CO, providing evaluations, direct services to children with dyslexia, professional development, and community outreach. She also is an Assistant Professor and Director of the Reading Institute at Colorado College. Dr. Fitzhugh developed CLLC's Literacy Intervention Specialist Certification Program, an International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) accredited course, which is available through a partnership with Colorado College as a Master of Arts in Teaching — Literacy Intervention Specialist. The program offers Colorado Department of Education Reading Endorsements at both the Reading Teacher and Reading Specialist levels. Dr. Fitzhugh received her Ph.D. in Psychology from Southern Methodist University with a concentration in learning disabilities. She is a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) and Qualified Instructor (QI), and a founding member of the ALTA Rocky Mountain Chapter.



Margie Bussmann Gillis, Ed.D., CALT

*President, Literacy How, Inc.
Research Affiliate, Haskins Laboratories and Fairfield University*

Margie has been teaching children of all ages to read for over 35 years. She became interested in reading while at the University of Connecticut, where she studied with Isabelle Liberman. She was a special educator in public and private schools for 15 years during, which time she became certified as an Academic Language Therapist through Teachers College, Columbia University. Subsequently, she received her Doctorate of Education from the University of Louisville in Special Education where she began her work training teachers of

reading. In 2000, she became an Early Reading Success Fellow at Haskins Laboratories and was promoted in 2006 to be the Director of Haskins Literacy Initiative, which advances the science of teaching reading through professional development and classroom support for teachers.

In 2009, Margie founded Literacy How, Inc., to provide professional development opportunities for teachers (PreK through Adult Ed) on how best to implement research-based reading practices in the classroom. As president of Literacy How and as a Research Affiliate at both Fairfield University and Haskins Laboratories, Margie creates new opportunities to empower teaching excellence, which extend to her commitment as a partner in the Early Language and Literacy Initiative (ELLI) and the ELLI Lab School. She continues to present and publish research on language and literacy skill building at scholarly conferences and in journals. She has worked at the policy level through the Connecticut State Department of Education on the Advisory Committee for the Early Childhood Cabinet, and other state advisory task forces.

She is the co-founder, former president, and a board member of Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities; the former president of the CT Branch of the International Dyslexia Society; a board member of the Dyslexia Society of CT and New Alliance Foundation; an executive board member of the Academic Language Therapist Association (ALTA) and a founding board member of Literate Nation.



Rebecca A. Gould, M.Ed., LDT, QI, CALT

Licensed Dyslexia Therapist, Judson ISD, San Antonio, Texas

Rebecca Gould initially started in private practice in 1997, and became a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) in 2000. She earned her Masters of Education and QI from Southern Methodist University and initiated SMU's Learning Therapy Graduate Certification program in San Antonio, serving as an Adjunct Instructor. After 13 years in private practice, she entered public education, working as a therapist and coordinator for Section 504 and RtI programs in charter school and public school settings. Rebecca has used various curriculums including those developed by Scottish Rite, SMU, MTA, and Neuhaus. Beyond holding teacher and Licensed Dyslexia Therapist certificates in the state of Texas, Rebecca is certified as a principal.



Jo Ann Handy, M.Ed., LDT, CALT, QI
Owner, The READ Center, Alamo, Texas

Jo Ann Handy earned a Master's degree in Reading, as well as certificates in Supervision, Mid-Management, and Master Reading Teacher. She is retired from public education where she spent thirteen years in the classroom, twelve years as a campus administrator, and four years as a district dyslexia coordinator. In 2003 she earned her Certificate in Academic Language Therapy from Southern Methodist University. She later returned to SMU to earn a Certificate in Advanced Studies to become a Qualified Instructor. She currently has her own private practice, The READ Center, where she works with individuals with dyslexia and general reading difficulties. She also provides staff development training in dyslexia to school districts. Jo Ann has worked as an off-site adjunct instructor for SMU's Learning Therapy Program and as a field supervisor for a teacher alternative certification program. She has previously served on the Academic Language Therapists Association (ALTA) Board of Directors as Secretary and the Alliance Board of Directors as Treasurer. She currently is a member of the Alliance Exam Review Committee.



Vicki King, M.Ed., CALT, QI
Dyslexia Specialist and Program Advisor, Arkansas Department of Education

Vicki King is the Dyslexia Specialist and Program Advisor for the Arkansas Department of Education. Before accepting the position, she worked as a private therapist and therapist-level trainer. Her experience includes 17 years of service in Arkansas public schools, for which she held the titles of K-12 Special Education Resource Teacher, K-4 Literacy Interventionist, Reading Specialist and Literacy Facilitator.



Helen Macik, M. Ed., CALT, QI

Educational Diagnostician

Coordinator, Diagnostic Center for Dyslexia, Learning Therapy Center, Southern Methodist University

Helen Macik is currently the coordinator for the Diagnostic Center for Dyslexia in the Learning Therapy Center at Southern Methodist University Annette Caldwell Simmons School of Education & Human Development. In addition to coordinating the day to day operations of the Center, Helen works as an Educational Diagnostician evaluating both children and adults.

Helen worked in public education 28 years. Her experience includes teaching students with developmental and learning disabilities, including dyslexia in public schools and privately. Helen also has worked as an educational diagnostician in public schools diagnosing learning disabilities, dyslexia, and developmental disorders, as well as assisting with developing individual educational plans for students of all ages. For 11 years, Helen worked as a dyslexia education consultant with Texas Education Agency (TEA) and the Region 10 Education Service Center. During this time, she assisted and served as the State Dyslexia Coordinator. Her work as a consultant included: organizing and providing staff development for consultants, school district staff, and parents; and answering the TEA "800 dyslexia hotline" to provide information to parents and public school staff with questions about dyslexia. While at Region 10, Helen took part in several of the revisions of the Texas Education Agency's Dyslexia Handbook.

Helen has been active on committees as well, serving as ALTA past president (2012-2013); president (2010-2012); and Vice President for Public Relations (2009-2010). Helen served on the Board of Directors for ALTA and was part of the first committee that wrote the Alliance Certification Exam. She has also served as a board member and past treasurer of the Dallas Branch International Dyslexia Association.



Janice Robson, M.Ed., LDT, CALT, QI

Program Director, Dyslexia Center of Austin, Austin, Texas

QI, Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas, San Antonio, Texas

Janice Robson retired from 30 years of public education in Texas in 2010. She received her dyslexia therapist training at the Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children in Dallas and became a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) in May 2002. Janice continued to train at the Austin Scottish Rite Learning Center in order to become a Qualified Instructor (QI), which she completed in May 2007. Having attained this qualification, Janice contracts with the Dyslexia Center of Austin, where she is the Program Director. She also contracts with the Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas to train teachers to become Dyslexia Therapists. Janice has served on the Academic Language Therapists Association (ALTA) Board of Directors for the period 2013-2015.



Rebecca Tolson, M Ed., CALT, QI

Owner, Tolson Dyslexia Services, LLC, North Canton, Ohio

Partner, Keystone Literacy, LLC

Adjunct professor, Ashland University and Notre Dame College

Rebecca Tolson is the owner of Tolson Dyslexia Services, LLC, and a partner in Keystone Literacy, LLC. She is a Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) who provides remediation to students with the specific learning disability of dyslexia and trains teachers through graduate level courses on dyslexia. She is a member of Academic Language Therapists Association (ALTA) at the level of Qualified Instructor (QI). She has a Master's of Education degree from Southern Methodist University. She is Wilson Language level I, II, and group certified, and has taken Orton-Gillingham Introduction and Advanced courses. She has fifth grade teaching experience and has 15 years of private practice and clinical experience using multisensory structured language techniques.

Rebecca is also an adjunct professor for Ashland University and Notre Dame College, and provides professional development presentations on dyslexia and multisensory structured language education for educational service centers and school districts. Rebecca is actively involved in the Ohio dyslexia legislation movement and serves on the Ohio Board of Regents Dyslexia Task Force, HB 96 early-screening pilot study committee, and HB 157 dyslexia professional development committee. She serves on the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) national university review board committee which recognizes institutions of higher education and is an advisory board member of the local Northern Ohio Branch of IDA. She has served one term on the ALTA Board of Directors. Rebecca completed her Certificate of Advanced Studies program at Southern Methodist University in May of 2013, and is currently a student at Akron University working toward her Ph.D. in Elementary Education.

