ALTA President’s Message

After a brief holiday break to rest and refresh, ALTA Board leadership and our professional administrative personnel have resumed efforts to improve our member services.

Let’s review ALTA’s progress:

- A complete rebuild of our website was done in record time for greater functionality
- CEU committee has simplified our membership renewal process
- The ALTA Competency Exam for MSLE is now administered digitally as of 1/1/2020
- 17 ALTA Chapters are sharing Chapter networking & PD in many regions of the USA
- ALTA Legislative Committee is making plans to visit Washington DC again in July 2020
- The first ALTA National Annual Conference ever to be held outside of Texas is scheduled in Colorado Springs, CO, on May 1-2, 2020
- Our Social Media team is increasing awareness of ALTA’s mission, activities, and profession through social media messaging

These past 18 months have proven to be a defining time in ALTA’s history. We have faced the challenges of a growing organization with an increasing national presence. It has been said, “When one isn’t planning for the future, then one is planning to fail”. In the fall of 2018 ALTA developed a future-minded Strategic Plan to build upon ALTA’s successful past legacy.

I would like to thank our many, many supportive ALTA Board and Committee members. These faithful volunteers offer their time, insight, wisdom, and assistance to assure ALTA is being inclusive, thorough, fair and deliberative when important decisions and action steps must be made to take ALTA to the next level. We all love our professional ALTA organization, and the time we spend to ensure our successful future is time well spent!

Here’s to another great ALTA year as we help more children learn to read and write in 2020! 

Jean Colner ICALP-CALT
New for 2020: Prometric Testing

Beginning January 2020, CALP & CALT exams will be individually administered through Prometric, a flexible and secure network of test sites.

www.prometric.com

Boon Philanthropy is a 501(c)(3) public charity, dedicated to funding teacher training in explicit, structured, multi-sensory reading instruction methods on an annual basis. Boon Philanthropy recognizes the leadership of the Academic Language Therapy Association in setting and maintaining the high standards of professional therapists that ensure effective services for those with dyslexia and related conditions.

Submit Poster Presentations for the ALTA National Conference

The 34th ALTA National Conference will include an inaugural poster presentation session to provide an opportunity for practitioners and researchers to present and discuss work related to the mission of ALTA and the field of learning disabilities. All attendees who have results to present towards this end are encouraged to submit a poster abstract for consideration.

Important dates:
- Abstract Submissions Close: January 31, 2020
- Conference Registration Closes: April 27, 2020
- Conference Dates: May 1-2, 2020
- Poster Presentations: May 2, 2020 12:30 – 2:30PM

On the Road to Success

Regional Dyslexia Summit
Dallas, TX

Sponsored by:
Texas Scottish Rite Hospital for Children
JFW Learning Center
Sight, Sound, Speech
Stay On Target

Scottish Rite Hospital for Children
2222 Welch Street
Dallas, Texas 75219

Registration
7:30am – 8:00am
Conference
8:00am – 3:30pm

Speaker topics include:
- Non-responders to Dyslexia Therapy
- Executive Function
- Oral Language
- Social Skills
- Panel Discussions with Area Experts

Snacks will be provided.
Registration begins this fall.
To inquire about being a sponsor, please contact G-g Shryer at gshryer@gmail.com.

6.0 CEUs available for ALTA members

SORRY! Registration is Full for next year
Plan NOW
The 2020 Academic Language Therapy Association Conference will be in Colorado Springs, Co., May 1st and 2nd! It will be held at the Cheyenne Mountain Resort, an incredible setting with breathtaking views of the Rocky Mountains! The focus this year will be on writing, both research and practice of handwriting as well as the writing process for those affected by dyslexia and/or dysgraphia. For the first time ever, there will be poster presentations of research and successful techniques for remediation. Click here for submission dates and applications if you would like to present a poster. We look forward to seeing you in Colorado!

REGISTER TODAY!

Please consider sponsoring or exhibiting at the 2020 ALTA National Conference. Several sponsorship and advertising opportunities are available! Special THANKS to Flyleaf Publishing for their generous contributions at our 2019 Conference!

https://www.flyleafpublishing.com
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--- | --- | ---
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### Great Lakes Chapter News

The Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Michigan, and Indiana are officially up and running together as the Great Lakes Chapter so ALTA members in those states can get even more support. The executive board is currently considering applications for additional board members at large and is planning to hold the first professional development opportunity.

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**Save the Date:**

**Dr. Eric Tridas to present**

*April 18, 2020 at South Bend, IN*

More information to come.....

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**Books Train Your Imagination to Think Big**

~ Taylor Swift ~
Mississippi Chapter News

On September 27-28, 2019, the Mississippi Chapter of ALTA, along with Mississippi College Dyslexia Education and Evaluation Center, hosted the 8th annual Fall Dyslexia Conference on the campus of Mississippi College in Clinton, Mississippi. This new joint two-day conference was entitled “Dyslexia, Add the Facts.”

Attendees included academic language therapists, parents, teachers, administrators, dyslexia therapists, and Speech Language Pathologists from Mississippi and surrounding states.

On Friday, September 27, the MS Chapter of ALTA welcomed Rick Lavoie as he presented two general sessions on The Motivation Breakthrough: Secrets to Turning on the Tuned-Out Child and Some Strategies That Don’t Work with Learning Disabled Kids…and Some That Do. Saturday, September 28, the Mississippi College Dyslexia Education and Evaluation Center welcomed Ms. Jennings Miller, a Fellow in the Academy of Orton Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, who trains teachers in Multisensory Math Approach. Breakout sessions on a variety of topics including handwriting, technology, and assessment were provided both afternoons.

With fifty nine members in attendance, the Mississippi ALTA Chapter met on Friday, and enjoyed presenter Jenny King, CALT, who discussed multisensory strategies for older students. The chapter is expanding by naming regional directors throughout Mississippi to help strengthen the network of ALTA members in the state. MS ALTA officers for 2019-2021 are as follows: Kate Sistrunk, M.Ed., CALT, President; Ashley Runnels, M.Ed., CALT, Vice-President; Hope Staples, M.Ed., CALT, Secretary; Lacasta C. Waltress, M.Ed., CALT, Treasurer.

On Saturday, October 19, 2019, approximately 60 VA-ALTA members, parents, and educators gathered at the Vienna Community Center for a presentation by Dr. Karin Varblow, M.D. on Dyslexia and ADHD: Connections and Treatment. Participants learned about the overlapping characteristics of dyslexia and ADHD. Dr. Varblow discussed ways to separate the roots of related symptoms and compensatory behaviors, as well as how to determine the types of treatments likely to produce successful outcomes. Dr. Varblow also addressed medication treatments, management, and recent advances to this population. The 90-minute presentation included time for Q&A from attendees.

Virginia Chapter News

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To learn to read is to light a fire; every syllable that is spelled out is a spark.
~ Victor Hugo ~
Shelton Scholars Tutoring Program  Looking Back in Time  
By John Hodges

For over 20 years, the Shelton Scholars program has helped countless students, ages six and above, improve their reading, spelling, handwriting, auditory discrimination and memory skills. It has been a strong part of Shelton’s continued commitment to provide support to learning different students and their families in the Dallas/Fort Worth metroplex.

The Scholars program began at the Shelton School in 1991, but the dyslexia method it utilizes for teaching its students – the Sequential English Education (SEE) method – has been helping learning different students for much longer. The SEE program (originally named the Alphabetic-Phonetic-Structural-Linguistic Approach (APSL)) was developed by Dr. Charles Shedd in a ten-year research study from 1955-1965 at Berea College in Berea, Kentucky. To prepare for this study, Dr. Shedd extensively researched different theories and findings in the dyslexia field – especially those proposed by Samuel T. Orton and Anna Gillingham. His extensive research led him to create a Student and Teacher manual for a reading, writing and spelling series which became known as the Alphabetic-Phonetic-Structural-Linguistic Approach (APSL).

Each summer between 1955-1965, Dr. Shedd trained and worked with college-age tutors in his APSL program to coordinate an eight-week, one-to-one tutoring program to discover which multisensory techniques worked best to promote stronger literacy skills. To determine this, Dr. Shedd would pre- and post-test each student to monitor progress. The techniques that worked he kept, and the techniques that didn’t work he removed from the series. Based on the pre- and post-testing data over ten years, APSL proved to be a very successful and strong literacy program.

In 1967, Dr. Shedd moved to the School of Medicine at the University of Alabama and directed the Reading Research Institute and Reading Disability Clinic. There, he used the reading therapy model he developed at Berea to set up tutoring and reading therapy programs throughout the Southeast and Midwest. Dr. Shedd worked at several universities and set up countless reading programs until his death in 1974.

In 1975, Dr. Shedd’s protégé, Dr. Joyce Pickering, took over APSL and updated the program, renaming it the Sequential English Education (SEE) method. In her updates, Dr. Pickering rewrote SEE to be more appropriate for younger students, starting at age 5. She also designed SEE to be even more scripted and added exercises to....Continued pg 7
Shelton Scholars Tutoring Program Continued…

enhance expressive and receptive language skills. In 1997 SEE became an internationally certified Dyslexia program through the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC). Since then, SEE has also received recognition through other notable organizations like the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), and the International Dyslexia Association (IDA).

Today SEE is used across the country, and even overseas, as a therapeutic program by individuals and schools. Dr. Pickering brought SEE to Shelton in 1991, and so began the Shelton Scholars program, which helps dozens of struggling students succeed in reading, writing, and spelling each year.

The Shelton Scholars program emulates Dr. Shedd’s original tutoring model: students learn from trained volunteer tutors, who are overseen by highly trained SEE supervisors, or Certified Academic Language Therapists (CALT). Each Scholars session is 3 hours long. During the 1st and 3rd hours, a tutor works with a small group of students (2-3 students), guiding them in making the correct sound/symbol connection and accurately using those skills to decode and encode words. During the middle hour, students are placed into different small groups to receive auditory training/drills. These drills focus on strengthening phonemic awareness and auditory memory skills. The remediation process for each child is different, but typically it is a 3- to 4-year process. This program offers an economical source of remediation for student’s, whose parents cannot afford a private school or therapist.

When comparing current pre- and post-testing data scores to the historical data recorded during Scholars’ debut in 1991, Shelton is proud to report that the rate of success has been consistent and strong over these past 25 years. Our results emulate the same positive results Dr. Shedd discovered after his 10-year research study that lead to the creation of APSL – the father of SEE. We all know that the gift of literacy is priceless. This is why Shelton Scholars will continue its efforts in helping learning different students learn to read.

For more information on the Scholars program or information on how to start your own Scholars program, please visit our website www.shelton.org/Scholars. You can also follow us on Facebook.

I will defend the importance of bedtime stories to my last gasp.
~ JK Rowling ~

“Being a member of ALTA validates that the training I received was of the highest quality, provides me with a nationally-recognized credential, and enables me to network with like-minded individuals.”
~ Toni Davis ~
Combining Multisensory Structured Language Education and the Montessori Method—Early Childhood Intervention

By Joyce S. Pickering, SLP/CCC,CALT,QI,LDT,AMS-EC,HUM.D

In a three-year study on identification and instruction for individuals with dyslexia was funded by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare under a Title III grant of $500,000.00. The MSLE assessment and approach was the APSL method created by Dr. Charles Shedd. The study showed that with an intensive, individualized, explicit, multisensory structural-linguistic method, students with dyslexia made significant progress and in a longitudinal study after remediation, the gains remained and in most cases literacy skills continued to improve. This program titled the Perceptual Development Center was named the best Special Education program funded by Title III in 1967-70.

Pleased with the progress of students 7 years of age to adulthood, the program director and staff wanted to attempt to use the program with younger children, beginning at 5. Trying to work with children younger than 8 was not considered possible at this time. To explore the concept of early intervention, the Early Childhood Center grant was written and studied from 1970-73. During this time Dr. Joyce Pickering wrote a version of APSL, with Dr. Shedd’s approval. This approach was named Sequential English Education (SEE). Dr. Sylvia Richardson, a pediatrician, speech-language pathologist and Montessori trained teacher was a consultant to this study.

The Early Childhood Study compared the progress of pre-school children in 2 public school Kindergarten programs. One school employed the Early Intervention of combining the Montessori method with SEE. This kindergarten had 22 students; 21 of the 22 had been screened and found to be At Risk for learning disabilities. The comparison kindergarten had 28 students and 5 were indicating the At-Risk characteristics of delays or disorders in the development of co-ordination, language-speech, attention and perception.

The Montessori method created by Dr. Maria Montessori, a medical doctor is an individualized, multisensory, structured approach. Each area of the Montessori curriculum was developed while working with children and using the scientific method to determine how young children learn.

In the Early Childhood Study, data was collected on each of the two kindergarten groups relative to scores on measures of mental ability, auditory perception, visual perception and pre-academic skills including recognition and ability for letter naming, sound/symbol correspondence, blending sounds into words, and early reading ability.

The Montessori Language Curriculum was modified with strategies from the MSLE approach. These two approaches blended well with the result that young students developed the pre-reading and writing skills....
needed as the foundation for beginning reading. The data comparison between the two kindergarten classes showed that the At-Risk students achieved higher scores on the test measures that the students in the traditional K class.

There were also first grade classes created to provide a strong program for children entering school without a K experience. The result of the K and first grade data was very encouraging. The details of this data can be seen on the Shelton School and Evaluation Center website under the titles Perceptual Development Center and Early Childhood Education.

The greatest benefit of this study was that children experiencing school and literacy skills for the first time, were feeling successful. The positive experience helped the student to gain confidence, even when the skill development was not easy for them, but was possible with a tailored program and trained staff delivering the intervention. The negative result, so often seen in children, who have reading disorders, of anxiety and depression were avoided. A strong program of parent education helped parents to better understand their child’s learning differences and to become realistic in the rate of progress to be expected.

Learning disabilities can become mental health issues. Beginning as early as possible to offer a program written for the needs of the individual student is optimal.

Any book that helps a child to form a habit of reading, to make reading one of his needs, is good for him.

~Maya Angelou~

Purchase the book

MONTESSORI STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES

by Dr. Joyce Pickering and Sylvia O. Richardson by clicking HERE
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- **Questions:** Contact the King’s College Office of Graduate Admission (570)208-5991, gradprograms@kings.edu or Instructor of Record marilynm@Kings.edu

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