



Winter Newsletter

(650) 328-7667

February 2003

Spring Meeting — Saturday, March 1 — 9 a.m. to Noon

Place: UCSF Conference Center
3333 California Street
San Francisco, California
(Directions on page 8)

For more info: www.dyslexia-ncbida.org

*The Northern California Branch of
The International Dyslexia Association & Schwab Learning
present*

Eileen S. Marzola, Ed.D.

BECOMING A STRATEGIC READER
*Linking Assessment to
Reading Comprehension Instruction*

**PRE-REGISTRATION
FOR SPRING MEETING**

Pre-registration is required.

Pre-registration is due by February 25.

Send this form with your check to:

NCBIDA Spring Meeting

1737 Vallejo St., San Francisco, CA 94123

Branch Phone: (650) 328-7667

Please print legibly and include all info

Name: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Address: _____

Make check(s) payable to NCBIDA:

_____ IDA member @ \$20.00

_____ Non-member @ \$25.00

_____ Total Amount Enclosed

Please include a list of all names of persons pre-registering so that nametags can be made.

NO confirmations will be sent; your cancelled check is your confirmation.
NO REFUNDS available.



THE NATIONAL READING PANEL has issued a clarion call to educators to provide explicit instruction in comprehension and vocabulary strategies for their students. High stakes assessments put more and more emphasis on sophisticated reading skills. Fortunately, today we finally have the research-validated tools in hand to raise the comprehension proficiency of our students. The days when comprehension was assumed to be a natural by-product of fluent reading have passed. Reading is seen today as an active, complex process where children build meaning by activating prior knowledge, identifying and evaluating important ideas, creating webs of connections within text and, finally, organizing information to facilitate retrieval. Not all students come to this process with the same foundations, however. We have learned that one single approach cannot meet the requirements of all students. We need to differentiate comprehension instruction to match the strategy to the student. The first step in meeting the needs of our struggling students in reading comprehension is an appropriate assessment that can guide our teaching. We have long recognized the importance of the assessment process in determining general reading levels. Even more importantly, however, it can open a window to view a student's specific strengths and weaknesses in reading as well as the current use of reading strategies (both effective and ineffective) of the student at-risk for reading failure. We can use descriptive data from appropriate assessments to make a better match between students who are having difficulties in gaining meaning from text and powerful strategies to address those problems. Our ultimate goal is to teach students to become more independent, active readers. Fortunately, today we have witnessed an explosion of information about effective comprehension strategies for both narrative and content area text that have been supported by research. This presentation will offer an overview of best practices in diagnosing and treating the reading comprehension difficulties of struggling readers.

Please see Page 4 for Eileen S. Marzola's bio and article.





Northern California Branch

Telephone: (650) 328-7667

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The International Dyslexia Association

(Formerly The Orton Dyslexia Society)

8600 LaSalle Road
Chester Building/Suite 382
Baltimore, MD 21286-2044
(410) 296-0232
Fax: (410) 321-5069
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Letter from the President

AS A BOARD MEMBER of the Northern California Branch of The International Dyslexia Association for the past seven years, I am extremely honored to be the new Branch President. I first became a member of IDA as a classroom teacher taking a multisensory structured language summer course. I remember attending the national conference in Los Angeles shortly after joining and being completely inspired by all the information I received. It was refreshing to be surrounded by such dedicated educators. There is no doubt that my experiences at the L.A. conference, including participating in the simulation developed by our branch called "Put Yourself in the Shoes of a Dyslexic," helped to pave my way to becoming a learning specialist. Now I am looking forward to the new challenges as Branch President.

Heidi Renner, Immediate Past President, moved our Branch forward in several ways over the past two years. Most recently, she organized a retreat last fall with a consultant to help us develop a long-range plan. We generated many ideas and are ready to begin mapping our course for outreach in Northern California. We appreciate all of her efforts and are glad she will remain on our Board of Directors. Additionally, Heidi will continue her role as the Western Regional Representative for IDA, acting as the liaison between the IDA branches in the western part of the United States and our national office in Baltimore.

Last, I want to thank Susan Eckert, Angela Trombley, and Russ Henry for serving on our Board for the past several years. Their dedication and hard work have been greatly appreciated. I want to welcome our two new Board members, Cathy Dunn and Ellice Sperber, who will begin their terms in January. Our new Executive Board includes Barb Langeloh as Vice President, Mia Callahan Russell as Secretary, and David Futterman as Treasurer.

This year promises to be one of continued growth for our branch. All of us are looking forward to an exciting year ahead and the work we hope to accomplish.

Sincerely
Frances Dickson, M.A.
President

Our Mission Statement

The mission of the Northern California Branch of The International Dyslexia Association is to assist individuals with Specific Language Disabilities. We **educate** the community about the causes, symptoms, assessment and remediation; **disseminate** information about available resources; **teach** structured multisensory approaches to educators and other professionals; and **collaborate** with organizations working on behalf of the dyslexic.

IDA Disclaimer

The International Dyslexia Association supports efforts to provide dyslexic individuals with appropriate instruction and to identify these individuals at an early age. The Association believes that multisensory teaching and learning is the best approach currently available for those affected by dyslexia.

The Association, however, does not endorse any specific program, speaker or instructional materials, noting that there are a number of such which present the critical components of instruction as defined by the Task Force on Multisensory Teaching which works under the guidance of The Association's Teacher Education Issues Committee.





Calling All Educators: Scholarships Available!

Improve your students' reading and writing skills through training in phonics-based, structured, multisensory approaches to language instruction! If you are an educator in Northern California, we invite you to apply for a scholarship for teacher training during the summer of 2003. Last year, we awarded 42 scholarships for teacher training, and we hope to award more in 2003. Note that these scholarships are for professional educators, not for parents who will teach only their own children.

Who is eligible to apply for a scholarship?

- public and private school teachers, resource specialists, and administrators
- educational therapists and professional tutors in private practice

- students completing university teacher training programs

For what types of trainings are scholarships provided?

- Orton-Gillingham (beginning and/or advanced)
- Slingerland (first, second, or third year)
- other structured multisensory approaches approved by IMSLEC (International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council)

Where will these trainings be offered?

- Definite sites include Belmont, Modesto, San Francisco, San Jose
- Tentative sites include Los Altos, Martinez, Morgan Hill, Turlock

How do I obtain a scholarship application form?

By mail: Look for a special mailing that will go out this winter with application materials.

By phone: Call (650) 328-7667 to request a scholarship application.

Web: Log onto our website at www.dyslexia-ncbida.org for application materials.

Start planning ahead now to make the most of your summer! Look for our special scholarship mailing this winter!

Orton-Gillingham Courses

A Beginning Orton-Gillingham Teacher Training course will be offered in San Jose on June 20, June 23-27, 2003. The Continuation Orton-Gillingham course will be offered June 30, July 1, 2003. Instructors are Sylvia Biddick and Sharon Nelson. More information will follow in future newsletters. Save the dates for now!

Upcoming Events

More information and registration to follow in forthcoming newsletters or on the NCBIDA website: www.dyslexia-ncbida.org.

Donald A. Winkler, Former CEO of Ford Financial

A Phoenix's Tale — Rising Out of the Ashes Every Day: A CEO's guide to dealing with learning differences

June 14, 2003

9:00 a.m. – Noon

South San Francisco Conference Center

Reflections of a CEO who had to deal with the agony of his learning differences on a daily basis, and how that gift has led to success.

Adult Panel on Dyslexia: All Day Conference

October 4, 2003 – 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Our preliminary plans for this full-day event include an adult panel that will consist of a clinical psychologist, teacher, parent, filmmaker, educational therapist and others. Dr. Nancy Cushen-White will moderate the panel. Jonathan Mooney, dyslexic writer and activist, who wrote *Learning Outside the Lines*, will be a keynote speaker. Numerous informative and pertinent break-out sessions will be held during the event.

Heartfelt thanks to Susan Eckert and Angela Trombley, who are leaving the Board. They have dedicated countless volunteer hours to The International Dyslexia Association and have made a difference in our Northern California Branch Chapter. Thanks also to the outgoing Board members who have given their leadership and guidance to the chapter.





Improving Reading Comprehension

by Eileen S. Marzola, Ed.D.

THE MAJORITY of reading instruction has always emphasized the decoding aspect. Once students were able to read accurately, they were expected to comprehend what they were reading automatically. Teachers in today's schools, however, are aware that comprehension of text does not always come so easily. The National Institute of Education's 1985 Report of the Commission on Reading, *Becoming a Nation of Readers*, stressed the critical importance of teaching students strategies that show them how to "focus their attention on the relevant information, synthesize the information, and integrate it with what they already know" (ps. 71-72). This same report, however, indicated that students spend up to 70% of the time designated for reading instruction doing independent practice, mostly on workbooks and skill sheets.

Research does not support practice in isolated specific subskills of reading comprehension (e.g., finding the main idea, determining sequence). There appears to be little if any transfer from this kind of "skills" work to reading and understanding real text.

Current research in reading comprehension has demonstrated that for good readers, reading is an active process. They use strategies that help them in identifying important ideas, organizing information to ease retrieval, and creating a web of connections among ideas in the text.

The good news is that poor readers can be taught to use the same techniques good readers use instinctively. Data from current research have indicated which strategies may be most powerful for increasing students' understanding of text. Strategies used before, during, and after reading can greatly facilitate comprehension.

What do good readers do before reading? They summon the prior knowledge they have about a given topic, focus

their complete attention on reading, and set a purpose before they begin. If they are reading a textbook, for example, they set a different purpose than if they are reading a novel for pleasure.

During reading, good readers keep their attention focused on the task at hand. One of the most important strategies used by good readers is their constant monitoring of their comprehension. They do it so often that it becomes automatic. Once they become aware that comprehension is slipping, they use "fix-up strategies" such as re-reading, clarifying vocabulary, and summarizing what they have gleaned from the text up to this point to improve their understanding of what follows.

After reading, good readers summarize the major ideas they have read in some fashion. Some review these ideas verbally. Others use a graphic organizer of some kind (semantic maps, flow charts, etc.). In any case, they evaluate the comprehension of what they have read, deciding if they have reached the goal they set for reading. If necessary, they seek additional information from outside sources to further clarify and enrich their understanding.

Specific strategies like semantic mapping and self-questioning techniques like Reciprocal Teaching employ the comprehension steps good readers use automatically.* As a result, they have been shown to improve comprehension performance of poor readers significantly.

**For more specific information about these strategies, see Marzola, E.S. (1988).*

Interrogating the Text: Questioning Strategies Designed to Improve Reading Comprehension. Reading, Writing and Learning Disabilities, 4: 243-258.

Editor note: The above article was originally printed in *Dyslexia Discourse*, the quarterly newsletter of the New York Branch of The International Dyslexia Association.

Eileen Marzola received her doctorate in special education (with a focus in learning disabilities) from Teachers College, Columbia University. For over 15 years she was an adjunct assistant professor of education at both Teachers College and Hunter College of the City University of New York. Marzola was recently named adjunct associate professor at education at Fordham University in New York City. Currently, Dr. Marzola is an educational consultant for public and private schools and is a part-time staff developer for Community School Districts 2 and 15 in New York City in addition to her work at Fordham. Dr. Marzola serves on the Board of Directors of the New York Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. Dr. Marzola was recently honored by the New York State Federation of the Council for Exceptional Children with the New York State Teacher of the Year Award.

Announcing the New Website for
The Northern California Branch of
The International Dyslexia Association

Visit the website to see information about:
IDA, NCBIIDA, Teacher Training,
Scholarships for Teachers,
Simulations, Local Events

Access our Branch Newsletters



www.dyslexia-ncbida.org





Fluency: Stepping Stone to Comprehension

By: Susan C. Palmer and Sandra Jones

THE GOAL OF FLUENCY is to improve comprehension. Fluency is defined as the ability to read connected text, rapidly, smoothly, effortlessly, and automatically with little conscious attention to the mechanics of reading, such as decoding (*Meyes and Felton, 1999*). It allows the reader to attend to the meaning of the text rather than the mechanics of the decoding.

What do fluent readers do?

- Read almost every word, skipping only a few words like “the”
- Read every letter in every word
- Perceive letters in chunks, not individually; recognize high frequency letter combinations just like they recognize high frequency words
- Perceive letters almost instantly; break words into syllables with little conscious effort
- Read fluently with adequate speed, appropriate phrasing and intonation
- Use their knowledge of how words are spelled to quickly search their memory for a word that matches the letter pattern (excellent knowledge of orthography)
- Activate their extensive vocabulary
- Use their knowledge about written text (sentence structure, paragraphs, subjects, predicates and clauses) to anticipate words

What do non-fluent readers do?

- Slow halting decoding
- Inconsistent speed
- Poor phrasing
- Omit and substitute letters/words
- Inappropriate recognition of prosodic features (expression and rhythm of language)
- Ignore punctuation
- Inadequate sight-word recognition
- Inadequate rapid automatic naming skills
- Inadequate recognition of morpheme patterns (units of meaning)

For good readers, fluency usually develops in grades two or three, or around 7-9 years of age.

The double-deficit hypothesis proposes that deficits in both phonological processing and rapid-naming speed (one aspect of fluency) can impair both phonetic and comprehension skills. Those with double-deficits often have severely impaired comprehension. Phonological processing and phonemic awareness affect decoding ability, which affects word recognition.

Accurate retrieval (high frequency words, word families/ patterns) supports rapid word retrieval/naming, which improves sight word recognition.

The general principals of fluency training:

- Explicit instruction
- Selection of text (90-95% accuracy in decoding)
- Listening (body position, attention, self-monitoring)
- Monitoring progress through charting
- Using a marker
- Silent pre-reading
- Comprehension strategies

Following the same model as the Orton-Gillingham approach, instruction moves from the simple to the complex, smallest to largest, most frequent to least frequent. Daily, short practice is advised with three to four repetitions where the text is pre-viewed, the adult reads aloud, they read together, and the student is timed while reading alone. Books on Tape provide good opportunities for modeling.

Fluency training starts at the word level: using flash cards and moving to lists; from single to contrasting syllable patterns; from words formed from single consonants and vowels on to words with diphthongs and vowel teams and various types of syllables. If students can't read individual words fluently, they may not be able to move to the next level of fluency. *Concept Phonics* by Fischer from Oxford

Press provides materials in this area.

The next level of fluency training is the phrase/sentence level. Students need to learn to “chunk” or group words into meaningful syntactic units such as phrases. Methods for working on chunking include chunking letters of alphabet, reading phrase strips, and sentence strips. Passages can be reformatted to chunk material. Markers can be used to chunk material too. The “Frog and Toad” series offers a good example of text already formatted to facilitate chunking. At the paragraph level, modeling can help; the student reads silently while following as the teacher reads, or while listening to a taped story. Choral reading with a teacher, a group, or a tape is also appropriate. Again, repeated reading is indicated.

For older, or better readers working on fluency, it is recommended that the teacher mark the phrasal boundaries with marker or pencil in the beginning of short passages and ask the student to continue phrase reading when the marks stop. The students can learn to mark the phrases themselves and compare theirs to a model. Chunking can be used at any grade level. Chunking fluency develops best when students are given numerous opportunities to practice reading fluently. Text in different content areas varies syntactically so exposure to a wide variety of material and genres is important.

Suprasegmental/prosodic features refer to reading text more like speech — with expression, inflection and rhythm. Reading with expression increases a student's awareness of syntactic patterns in his own writing. Teacher modeling is helpful when the student repeats and imitates inflection. Again, repeated readings are indicated.

Paraphrasing is a way to focus on phrase meaning rather than word identification. Semantic paraphrasing tasks require the student to rephrase with the

See **FLUENCY** on Page 6





IDA Northern California Branch

FLUENCY continued from Page 5

same meaning using different words. Syntactic paraphrasing requires restating with the passive voice rather than active voice, for example.

To check for understanding, cloze procedure, oral questioning, vocabulary, and summarizing are recommended. The goal of these activities is to improve comprehension, not just to increase rate. In assessing fluency, first-graders are fluent at

30-50wpm, second-graders at 85-120 wpm, fifth- to eighth-graders at 120-150 wpm, and ninth- to 12th-graders at 200 wpm. The length and number of pauses is important too, though research is conflicting as to exactly how long and how many.

Two helpful references include:

1. Meyer, Marianne S., Felton, Rebecca H. (1991), "Repeated Reading to Enhance Fluency: Old Approaches and New

Directions," Annals of Dyslexia, Vol. 49. The International Dyslexia Association.

2. Snow C. E., Burns, M.S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.) (1998), "Preventing Reading Difficulties in Young Children," Washington, D.C.: National Academy Press.

Editor note: This article was reprinted with permission from the UMB/IDA Newsletter. It is a brief of a presentation from The IDA National Conference.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT THE STATUS OF YOUR MEMBERSHIP

If you have the number '01 on your mailing label, this will be the last newsletter that you will be receiving. We encourage you to become a member of The International Dyslexia Association.

Join forces with over 13,000 other parents, professionals, educators, physicians, and make a difference! The voice of our membership is heard among teachers, school administrators, professionals and policy makers in more than 60 countries. By joining IDA, you strengthen the voice of individuals with dyslexia and enhance their ability to benefit from early intervention and effective teaching methods.

Membership provides you with: access to an international network of professionals in the field of dyslexia; regular information on dyslexia, including our peer reviewed journal, Annals of Dyslexia, and our quarterly newsletter, Perspectives; discounts on IDA conferences; and U.S. residents are affiliated with one of our local branches and receive newsletter and event mailings.

Be Informed ... Be A Member of The International Dyslexia Association



Access to an International Network of Professionals
Perspectives, Annals of Dyslexia, & Other Information



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Elementary/Secondary Educator

General Supporter

Individual with Dyslexia

Other

Parent of Child with Dyslexia

Physician

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Speech-Language Pathologist

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Department of Education Notice

The California High School Exit Examination (CAHSEE) Administration, California Department of Education (CDE) sent an official notice about the CAHSEE to all school districts. The notice was prepared by a district court judge in a federal court lawsuit. CDE was required to direct all school districts to provide a copy of this notice to all parents and guardians of tenth grade students with an IEP or Section 504 plan. All school districts were asked to distribute the written notice immediately to all such parents and guardians of tenth grades in a manner consistent with the district's normal custom and practice, prior to giving the CAHSEE.

Phil Spears, Division Director, Standards and Assessment Division, California Department of Education, from a memo released April 23, 2002

If you did not receive this notice, please go to:

<http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee> under "Notice to Parents and Guardians."

Special Education Accommodations Matrix Approved for State Testing Programs

For a number of months, Standards and Assessment Division and Special Education Division staff members at the California Department of Education (CDE) have been working together to develop a document for the field that identifies all the accommodations/modifications approved by the State Board of Education (SBE) for testing special education students and students with 504 plans. The SBE in November approved the Accommodations/Modifications matrix for California statewide assessments. The matrix classifies each accommodation/modification into 1 of 3 categories: (1) testing condition available to students who regularly use it in the classroom, (2) accommodations only available to students if specified in their IEP or 504 plans, (3) modifications only available to students if specified in the IEP or 504 plans. The accommodations (2) identified will provide a valid score for students on the statewide assessments. Modifications (3) alter the content assessed and therefore valid scores cannot be provided for students assessed with the modifications. The intent of the matrix is to serve as a resource for county, district, and school personnel responsible for ensuring that special education stu-

dents have appropriate accommodations/modifications that meet their individual needs and allow them access to all state tests. The matrix is attached and also posted at: <http://www.cde.ca.gov/statetests> on the CDE Web site.

Summary data also was provided for three additional sub-groups: language fluency, program participation, and parent education. This five-year summary report is posted at <http://star.cde.ca.gov/>. Districts will be able to use this data to make local comparisons with statewide performance.

Phil Spears, Division Director, Standards and Assessment Division, California Department of Education, publication dated December 4, 2002

For More Information...

For more information about state assessments contact the Standards and Assessment Division of the California Department of Education at (916) 445-9441 (phone), at (916) 319-0968 (fax), at STAR@vde.ca.gov (e-mail), CAHSEE@cde.ca.gov (e-mail), CELDT@cde.ca.gov (e-mail), or at www.cde.ca.gov (Internet).

California High School Proficiency Examination

Administration Dates Scheduled for 2003

The California High School Proficiency Examination (CHSPE) is scheduled to be administered on three dates in 2003: January 11, April 26, and November 15. Registration bulletins are now available on the CDE Web site at www.cde.ca.gov/statetests. Bulletins also are being sent to all high schools and public libraries. The bulletins can be used to register for the remaining dates.

Questions should be directed to Sacramento County Office of Education, the CHSPE contractor, at 916-228-2484. Use the above number to ask questions about further test dates.

For further updates please check online. California Department of Education: www.cde.ca.gov/statetests/cahsee, Disability Rights Advocates: www.dralegal.org



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NORTHERN CALIFORNIA BRANCH

Founded in Memory of Samuel T. Orton

THE INTERNATIONAL DYSLLEXIA ASSOCIATION



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Spring Meeting

Eileen S. Marzola, Ed.D.

*Becoming a Strategic Reader:
Linking Assessment to Reading Comprehension Instruction*

Saturday, March 1, 2003

9 a.m. to Noon

UCSF Conference Center
Laurel Heights
3333 California Street
San Francisco, California

\$20 member, \$25 nonmember

Pre-registration is required.

Free parking is available.

DIRECTIONS:

From SF Airport or
SF/Oakland Bay Bridge

- Take US Highway 101 to 9th Street/Civic Center exit.
- Take 9th Street (2 right-hand lanes) north across Market Street onto Larkin Street. Continue north 13 blocks to California Street.
- Turn left (westbound) on California, and proceed 18 blocks to Walnut Street drive-in entrance on left at 3333 California Street.

From Interstate 280 Northbound or
Golden Gate Bridge Southbound

- Take 19th Avenue/Hwy 1 exit.
- From 280, proceed north on 19th Avenue approximately six miles to California St. Turn right (no left turn allowed) on California Street. From GG Bridge, turn right on California St. and make an **immediate** U-turn to return east on California Street.
- Proceed east 20 blocks to Walnut Street drive-in entrance on right at 3333 California St.