



## Spring 2009 Newsletter

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### President's Letter

#### Welcome

I write this on the first day of spring, a time which always reminds me of the many new beginnings in my life. One of those exciting new beginnings was my first year of teaching, when I was assigned to teach a freshman English class in a new high school in a rapidly growing area of San Jose. I had been told that this class was a little behind their peers, but it took no more than a week to realize that many of these bright, articulate students couldn't read much beyond a second grade level. Thus began my life-long passion for teaching reading and writing skills to those students for whom this does not come easily.

Another new beginning is unfolding for me as I take over as your new president of NCBIDA. I welcome this challenge as I welcomed those students over 30 years ago: enthusiastically, optimistically, and a little nervously. My hope is to continue to support efforts to spread the word about effective ways to teach dyslexic students and others who learn differently. This organization has a long history of encouraging the awareness of dyslexia here in the Bay Area and of forming a network of parents and professionals who desire to support students who learn differently so that they grow up to be the valuable members of society that they are meant to be. Let us continue in that effort.

I have an extraordinary group of dedicated professionals who join me on the 2009 Board of NCBIDA. Serving on the Executive Board are:

- Barb Langeloh, Vice President
- Jennifer Rabalais, Secretary
- David Futterman, Treasurer
- Leslie Lingaas Woodward, Past President

Additional Board Members are Jane Ashley, Christine Goias, Brian Inglesby, John Osner, Cathy Robinson, Cindy Schlichte, and Chris Voll. These are the hard working people who really make it all happen!

I hope that you were able to attend one or more of our events this year, including the recent talk by Marianne Wolf at Palo Alto High School on the reading brain in the digital age. Her enthusiasm for and knowledge about the subject is boundless. If you missed her, or just want a recap, please see Leslie Woodward's article in this newsletter.

#### Summer Teacher Training Opportunities

We are pleased to offer a three-day overview of the Wilson Language program in Berkeley this summer. There will also be several offerings of the Slingerland course in the San Francisco area. Partial scholarships are available for Slingerland and other approved summer programs. Please look at the article in this issue on Teacher Training scholarships or the NCBIDA scholarships webpage for more information.

## ***Mark Your Calendars!***

### **Education Revolution 2009**

This event, sponsored by the PEN, will be taking place at AT&T Park in San Francisco on April 25, 2009. NCBIDA is proud to be participating in this ambitious event by offering mini-simulations throughout the afternoon. More information and registration is on the PEN website at [www.parentseducationnetwork.org](http://www.parentseducationnetwork.org). Come out and join the fun!

### **Diane Shepard**

Join us October 24, 2009, when Diane Shepard will again address middle and high school students and their parents about developing organizational and study skills. She delivers information that is immediately useful in a fun, interactive presentation which combines her lively manner with her showmanship as a magician. *Location to be announced.*

### **Dyslexia Fun and Fundraising Event**

We are exploring the possibility of an event in November somewhere in the Bay Area. Look for information over the summer as it becomes available. We hope this fun event will help raise awareness about dyslexia while raising money to benefit our programs. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Nancy Redding at [president@dyslexia-ncbida.org](mailto:president@dyslexia-ncbida.org).

### **National Conference**

If you have not been to a National Conference, this might be a perfect year to attend! This fall the conference will be held November 11-14 in Orlando, Florida, at the Walt Disney Dolphin Hotel, adjacent to Disneyworld. Check the IDA website at [www.interdys.org](http://www.interdys.org) for more information.

Happy Spring!

Nancy Redding  
President, NCBIDA

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## **Summer 2009 Teacher Training Scholarships**

NCBIDA is pleased to announce that during Summer 2009, we will once again be offering scholarships for training in Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) approaches. We will be distributing a number of partial scholarships for trainings in the Bay Area this summer.

Scholarships are awarded for training programs that adhere to the principles outlined by (the International Multisensory Structural Language Education Council (IMSLEC),) and the Orton-Gillingham Academy. In addition, training courses must contain a practicum that gives trainees the opportunity to apply what they are learning during the program. The Slingerland trainings listed in the link below (in San Francisco, Concord, and San Jose) are eligible for scholarships, and there may also be an Orton-Gillingham course that would meet our scholarship criteria, but at this time, we do not yet know if it will be offered during the summer. Please check back soon for further details.

In awarding scholarships, we are looking for the "multiplier effect." That is, we strive to fund multisensory language education for those teachers who will reach the most students over the length of their career. For this reason, first priority for scholarships will be given to classroom teachers, especially those working with children in grades K-2. However, educational therapists and other professionals are also encouraged to apply. After completing the training program, scholarship recipients are asked to conduct a teacher in-service at their school

(or for a group of other professionals), highlighting what they learned in their summer training program, with the goal of encouraging other teachers to seek out MSLE training.

Here are the links:

Summer Courses 2009 – [www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/scholarships.summer2009.html](http://www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/scholarships.summer2009.html)

Application Form (pdf file) – [www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/pdfs/ScholarshipApplication2009.pdf](http://www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/pdfs/ScholarshipApplication2009.pdf)

**Applications postmarked by Friday, May 1, 2009, will be given first priority.** Later applications are welcome and will be considered until all funds have been granted. Please be aware that there are two separate processes: 1) applying for and enrolling in a teacher training course and 2) applying for a teacher training scholarship. Time is critical with both, as spaces and funding are limited. Proof of enrollment in one of the eligible courses is required in order to apply for one of our partial scholarships.

Scholarship recipients will be notified by the end of May if they have been awarded a scholarship. Please see the time-line below for further details.

<b>March 2009</b>	Scholarship applications available
<b>May 1, 2009</b>	Scholarship applications due
<b>May 2009</b>	Scholarship recipients are selected and notified of their awards. Recipients will be notified no later than May 31, 2009.
<b>June-July 2009</b>	Teacher training programs take place
<b>August 31, 2009</b>	Scholarship recipients return course verification forms no later than August 31, showing that they have completed coursework. Once these forms are received, scholarship checks are sent out to reimburse recipients. Please note that a portion of the scholarship amount will be held back until the inservice presentation (see below) has been conducted.
<b>Fall 2009</b>	Recipients conduct their teacher inservices and report back to NCBIDA, highlighting what they learned in the MSLE training program. Inservice reports should be submitted no later than October 31, 2009. At this point, the remainder of the scholarship will be disbursed.

Other Summer Courses (not eligible for scholarships) –  
[www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/scholarships.summer2009\\_other.html](http://www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/scholarships.summer2009_other.html)

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## Dyslexia Simulation “Sampler” at PEN Event

NCBIDA will offer an abbreviated version of its popular learning disabilities simulation, “Put Yourself in the Shoes of a Person with Dyslexia,” as part of the Parents Education Network (PEN) annual conference. Called Education Revolution 2009, the PEN event will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 8:30 to 4:00 pm at AT&T Park in San Francisco. Keynote speaker Jonathan Mooney anchors the morning program, but the afternoon will include a resource fair with a wide variety of exhibits. NCBIDA will offer a “simulation sampler” as part of the resource fair, with sessions at noon, 1:00 pm, and 2:00 pm. Each session will feature three of the six stations in the standard simulation and is designed to give participants an idea of the power of this presentation. To register for the PEN program, go to the PEN website at [www.parentseducationnetwork.org](http://www.parentseducationnetwork.org).

NCBIDA continues to sell its dyslexia simulation as a kit that can be purchased by schools or organizations. Visit our simulations webpage at [www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/simulations.html](http://www.dyslexia-ncbida.org/simulations.html) to learn more.

## Workshop Notes

# Maryanne Wolf on the Science of Reading

by Leslie L. Woodward

Reading may be an essential skill in our modern age, but there is nothing “natural” about it, said Tufts University neuroscientist and author Maryanne Wolf speaking at NCBIDA’s March 14<sup>th</sup> event in Palo Alto. Reading is an invention, a cultural phenomenon that has arisen only within the last 5,000 years with the development of the earliest scripts. Before the advent of reading, there was no such thing as the impairment we know as dyslexia. Indeed, the brain differences that make someone a dyslexic reader could have had advantages in a preliterate society.

“Children with dyslexia, by and large, think differently,” said Wolf, who is the parent of a dyslexic son. Those different thinking skills may give individuals with dyslexia advantages in other areas. Studies suggest, for example, that a high percentage of entrepreneurs are dyslexic.

## Building reading circuits

To read, each individual has to set up a complex brain circuit to handle the task, forging new neural connections between areas of the brain that have evolved for other skills such as visually recognizing an object or understanding speech. In the simplest terms, expert readers have fast reading circuits, whereas dyslexic readers have slower, less efficient circuits.

The title of Wolf’s best-selling book on the science of reading, *Proust and the Squid*, highlights the spectrum of elements that go into expert reading. The basic element of brain circuitry is represented by the squid. Scientists in the 1950’s studied the long central axon that makes up this creature’s nervous system to understand how neurons fire and transmit signals to each other. A brain that can read expertly has organized its neural circuitry to handle even the most demanding texts, like those written by Marcel Proust, the French author known for his layered prose. Expert readers can navigate complicated works like those of Proust with an ease that leaves them time to think their own thoughts about what they have just read. Wolf is an unabashed fan of the ability to be such a “deep reader.” “You become different based on what you are reading,” said Wolf.

Imaging studies have shown that brain circuitry can arrange itself in many ways to read. Different areas of the brain are activated when reading different languages, for example, depending on the structure of that language. The brains of dyslexic individuals activate in a different pattern than non-dyslexic readers. Dyslexic readers typically have much more right hemisphere activation than normal readers, who rely more on the left hemisphere.

## Building reading skills

Developing rich language skills in young children is important to their reading success. According to Wolf, the number of times you hear a word helps the neural clusters in the brain form clear “representations” of words. The more you know about a word’s phonological, orthographic, semantic, morphological, and syntactic processes the faster you will read and comprehend it. Many intervention programs do a good job with the phonological component, but may neglect other aspects. A strong intervention program, said Wolf, integrates them all.

## Reading in the digital age

Wolf voiced some concerns about the effects of on-line reading on the development of reading skills. There are not yet any studies examining the issue, but she is concerned that the traits that digital, Internet-based reading encourages, such as continuous partial attention, and demand for immediate information, may interfere with the development of the “deep reading” skills that expert readers need. Instead, the digital age may be forging a different kind of brain circuitry. As Wolf said at the close of her talk, “We are both *what* we read and *how* we read.”

## Welcome to Our Newest Members!

Please welcome the following members who joined our branch in December 2008-February 2009

Janette Alicaway  
Christine Carlos  
Lizabeth Coe  
Crystal Cox-Cooper  
Heather Dugan  
Cheri Garcia  
Robin Irely  
Martha Krones  
April Kumlin  
Susan Landis Lieberman  
Sara Leggett  
Sarah Lord  
Lydia Parker  
The Reading Clinic