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THE PURPOSE of IMSLEC is to accredit training courses for the professional preparation of the Multisensory Structured Language Education specialist. IMSLEC is committed to quality training of MSLE clinicians and teachers, establishing standards and criteria of excellence for the programs it accredits.

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President’s Letter

I am so excited and honored to be writing my very first President’s letter. I cannot help but think of our dear friend and colleague Karen Vickery as I write this letter. She was a special mentor and friend to so many of us and will be sorely missed.

It was great seeing so many of you in Charlotte last month for the first annual Alliance Conference. It was such a success, the Alliance has voted to do the conference in Charlotte again next year on October 23 – 24, 2020.

IMSLEC continues to grow with several new inquiries each month. I love that IMSLEC just keeps moving forward, staying true to course, training specialists to serve the needs of students with dyslexia. I am so glad we are on this journey together.

Karen Avrit

IMSLEC Facts

◊ 45 training courses in 30 states and Puerto Rico
◊ A 501(c)(3) organization
◊ Accredits quality MSLE training courses that meet IMSLEC criteria and instructional program standards for preparing specialists in MSLE Education.
◊ Training programs, using a variety of approaches, offer extensive coursework and supervised teaching experience leading to professional certification.
◊ Training programs may be independent post-secondary training programs or may exist within already accredited institutions, such as colleges, universities or medical entities.
◊ Promotes and ensures quality MSLE training for teachers and therapists of individuals with dyslexia and related disorders.
◊ Accreditation process supports essential standards and criteria for academic and practicum work that are crucial to the successful training of dyslexia teachers, therapists and other specialists.
Innovator Awards honor individuals who demonstrate excellence in the teaching of or support of multisensory structured language education.

The Etoile DuBard Award of Excellence is awarded annually at the IMSLEC fall meeting, to a person who meets the ideals, professionalism and dedication exemplified by the life of Etoile DuBard.

2019 Innovative Awards

Outstanding MSLE Professional

Candi Sellers
Key Learning Center

Outstanding MSLE Teacher

Rebecca Rausch
The Gow School

Outstanding MSLE Educator in a College or University

Alison Webster
DuBard Association Method

2019 Etoile Dubard Award Honoree

Kay Allen

The Etoile DuBard Award was presented to Kay Allen at the IMSLEC Council meeting in Charlotte, North Carolina on Thursday, September 26, 2019.

Kay graduated from Oklahoma Baptist University with a BA in English and Education and an M.Ed. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Houston. Kay served as the Director of the Houston Community College's Right to Read for Adult Literacy Program from 1976 to 1980. In 1980, Kay traveled to Dallas for basic training with Aylett Cox. Kay completed her therapy level training through Neuhaus Education Center in 1982. She served as Associate Director at Neuhaus from 1982-2000 and as Executive Director from 2000-2007. Carolyn Wickerham and Kay wrote Multisensory Reading and Spelling in 1986.

Kay continues to teach at Neuhaus Education Center in the Adult Literacy Program one evening per week and continues to work with second and third grade students one-to-one. Kay became the Subject Matter Expert for Unclearn nine years ago and received the Nancy Lafevers Community Service Award from the Houston Branch IDA in 2014.

Kay states,"As my mentor Lenox Reed said, my greatest accomplishment is in knowing that I have been given the knowledge and tools to be able to sit down with anyone and teach them to read."
In Memoriam

Dr. Karen Vickery dedicated her career to teaching children to read and better understand and educate individuals diagnosed with dyslexia. Her sphere of influence is far-reaching and will continue to impact the lives of many through her encouragement and selfless dedication to serving others.

Karen became a Certified Academic Language Therapist in 1982 and a Qualified Instructor in 1985. Karen worked for Greenville Independent School District in Greenville, Texas, and served as their Chapter I Reading Teacher from 1982-1995, as their Dyslexia Coordinator from 1995-2001, then “officially” retired in 2001. Retirement brought about new positions although she continued to serve as Greenville’s 504 District Coordinator, Reading Coordinator for Special Programs, and Dyslexia Coordinator until 2013. She served as director for the Learning Therapy Program at Southern Methodist University beginning in 2001, once again in the classroom, teaching how to serve and best teach dyslexic students.

Karen was a guest speaker for at least 117 conference and professional events. She published curricula for universities and public schools, developed a dyslexia manual for Greenville ISD that continues to be used as a model for many school districts in Texas. Karen had an article published in the professional journal, Annals of Dyslexia. She was appointed by the Governor of Texas to serve on a Dyslexia Interim Study Committee and served on numerous committees to update the Texas Dyslexia Handbook: Procedures Concerning Dyslexia and Related Disorders.

Karen is a past president of IMSLEC. Among her many honors, Karen was presented an IMSLEC Innovator Award for Outstanding Educator in a University in 2008. She received the Etoile DuBard Award of Excellence from IMSLEC in 2015.

Karen provided leadership and strength in the field of dyslexia. She will be deeply missed by students and colleagues who recognized her as a leader, mentor, and friend.
Thank you to conference co chairs: Karen Avrit and Chris Bedenbaugh.

The Inaugural Alliance Conference held at the Charlotte Marriott City Center in Charlotte, North Carolina on September 27 and 28, 2019 was a great success!

Keynote speaker Dr. Eric Tridas was joined by professionals representing the four Alliance organizations: Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (AOGPE), International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC), and Wilson Language Training.

Watch your email for more exciting details to come about the 2020 conference.

In Appreciation

Take advantage of Boon’s $100,000 MATCHING GIFT opportunity.

Boon Philanthropy is a public charity dedicated to funding teacher training in explicit, structured, multisensory reading instruction methods on an annual basis.

Boon works to combine gifts from major potential donors to unconditionally match gifts from average donors across the nation for greater collective impact.

Visit Boon’s website to learn more about this opportunity.

www.boonphilanthropy.org
IMSLEC’s Parliamentarian Retires

IMSLEC sincerely thanks Dr. Martha J. Haun for her many years of service as our Parliamentarian.

Dr. Martha Haun is a Professional Registered Parliamentarian and has served seven years as national editor of the Parliamentary Journal of the American Institute of Parliamentarians and from 2015-2017, as editor of the National Parliamentarian of the National Association of Parliamentarians. She is a past National President of Phi Beta National Professional Fraternity for the Creative and Performing Arts and past National President of the Professional Fraternity Association which represents over a million members of professional Greek organizations.

She has published four books and over two dozen articles on the parliamentary process and has delivered dozens of papers and workshops to organizations. Martha won national recognition for her co-authored work with Dr. Robin Nicklin Williamson at the University of St. Thomas [Houston], “Let the Minority Be Heard.”

An endowed scholarship honors her nearly five decades of teaching and service to University of Houston. She has taught communication theory, effective meeting management, debate, relational communication, crisis communication and end of life communication. She has received numerous awards including the University Educator of the Year from the Texas Speech Communication Association and the Distinguished Service Award from the Commission on American Parliamentary Practice.

The IMSLEC Executive Committee, Board of Directors and Council have been very fortunate to have had Martha’s wisdom and guidance at our meetings. We are indeed grateful and wish our friend a very happy and well-deserved retirement.

IMSLEC’s Parliamentarian Retires

Dr. Martha J. Haun

IMSLEC sincerely thanks Dr. Martha J. Haun for her many years of service as our Parliamentarian.
Certificates Available

Instructor of Teaching and Instructor of Therapy

Teaching Level Instructors have the skills necessary to instruct teachers in the specific MSLE training course. A Teaching Level Instructor is approved to conduct Teaching Level instruction **only** in the specified MSLE training course. The Teaching Level Instructor must continue to work under the guidance of the MSLE training course director and follow the guidelines set by the specific MSLE training course. The MSLE training course must have an established procedure for admission into a Teaching Level Instructor program and a procedure for documenting all required IMSLEC-specified competencies.

A Therapy Level Instructor has the skills necessary to instruct teachers and/or therapists in the MSLE training course. A Therapy Level Instructor is approved to conduct Therapy Level instruction **only** in the specified MSLE training course. The Instructor must continue to work under the guidance of the MSLE training course director and follow the guidelines set by the specific MSLE training course. The MSLE training course must have an established procedure for admission into an Instructor of Therapy Level program and a procedure for documenting all IMSLEC-specified competencies.

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**WHY IMSLEC SCHOOL RECOGNITION?**

IMSLEC seeks to recognize excellence in implementation of accredited MSLE approaches, as well as excellence in accredited professional training programs.

IMSLEC school recognition is a voluntary process that signifies the school administration and staff are committed to increasing student achievement by implementing multisensory, structured, language education (MSLE) as taught in IMSLEC Accredited Teacher/Therapy Training courses.

**BENEFITS OF IMSLEC SCHOOL RECOGNITION**

IMSLEC School Recognition provides the following benefits to schools: Evidence that the school staff has completed rigorous IMSLEC-approved Teacher/Therapy Training Courses

Ongoing opportunities for staff professional development through IMSLEC-approved continuing education Periodic evaluation of academic program and staff Increased student achievement School Recognition/Prestige (IMSLEC newsletter and website, local news)

Authorization to use IMSLEC logos and the recognition statement on school publications.

Referrals of parents and teachers to IMSLEC Accredited Schools

**RECOGNIZED SCHOOLS**

The Academy for Literacy, Learning & Innovation Excellence Colorado Springs, Colorado

DuBard School for Language Disorders University of Southern Mississippi

Key School at Carolina Day School

Asheville, North Carolina

Rawson Saunders School

Austin, Texas

Scottish Rite Learning Center of West Texas

Lubbock, Texas

Shelton School and Evaluation Center

Dallas, Texas
CEU Policy Updates—Sponsoring Organizations

IMSLEC requires every IMSLEC-accredited training course graduate to complete 30 clock hours of continuing education (CE) every three years in order to remain in good standing.

* indicates update

IMSLEC has approved the following sponsoring organizations:
1. IMSLEC-accredited training courses
2. The Alliance for Accreditation and Certification of Dyslexia Specialists (Alliance)*
3. The Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA) and state chapters
4. The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators (AOGPE)
5. The American Montessori Society (AMS)
6. The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association and its branches (ASHA)
7. The International Dyslexia Association and its branches (IDA)

CEU Policy Updates—Journals and Books

* indicates update

Journal Articles: To qualify for IMSLEC CE credit, the article must be selected from a journal listed on the IMSLEC-approved Journal list. Articles that were required reading for the training course may not be used to earn IMSLEC CE credit.

a. Credit: Each journal article counts for one CE hour.
   1) Note: For IDA’s Perspectives magazine, the entire issue counts as one CE hour.

b. Maximum of ten CE hours of the 30-clock hour requirement in any three-year period

c. Documentation: Completion of the requirements listed on the Journal Form

Books: To qualify for use to earn IMSLEC CE credit, the book must be selected from the IMSLEC approved book list.
Training course graduates may read an entire book or selected chapters from multiple books. Books/chapters that were required reading for the training course may not be used to earn IMSLEC CE credit.

a. Credit: Every 25 pages counts as one CE hour. *
b. Maximum of ten CE hours of the 30-clock hour requirement in any three-year period

c. Documentation: Completion of the requirements listed on the Book Form

IMSLEC’s updated CEU policy and forms are available on the IMSLEC website: https://www.imslec.org/ceu-policy.asp
The University of Southern Mississippi Welcomes New Cohort in Dyslexia Therapy Education

The School of Education and the DuBard School for Language Disorders in the School of Speech and Hearing Sciences at The University of Southern Mississippi welcomed the sixth cohort of the Dyslexia Therapy Master of Education program to campus June 3, 2019. Members from this group of twelve professionals come from Mississippi, Louisiana, Alabama, and Texas and have fifty-three years of combined experience working with K-12 students. Over the next academic year, these graduate students will work with students in public and private schools and in after school therapy using the scientifically based DuBard Association Method® to remediate reading, writing, and spelling difficulties.

Facts about the Southern Miss Dyslexia Therapy Education Program:

- The program is accredited by the International Multisensory Structured Language Education Council (IMSLEC) and the International Dyslexia Association (IDA).
- It is a 30-semester-hour program delivered over four semesters in a hybrid format to accommodate working professionals.
- The methodology taught is the scientifically based DuBard Association Method®.
- Graduates are eligible for MDE Educator Licensure endorsement #203.
- Graduates are eligible to sit for the Alliance for Accreditation and Certification national examination, which leads to the Certified Academic Language Therapy (CALT) national credential and membership in the Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA).
- Scholarships are available from the Robert Hearin Foundation.
The Alliance for Accreditation and Certification exists to provide a united association of organizations focused on the accreditation of Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) training courses and the certification of graduates of those courses. The Alliance has represented the highest level of training and achievement for academic language practitioners, academic language therapists and classroom dyslexia specialists for more than 25 years.

The Alliance for Accreditation and Certification represents training, accreditation, and certification organizations with well-established processes in place to certify individuals and accredit courses that meet rigorous standards. Our organizations recognize that individuals diagnosed with dyslexia require specialized and diagnostic instruction from a highly trained specialist. ALTA, AOGPE, and WLT certify individuals who have met course standards and demonstrated a level of competency, including a practicum mentored by a highly qualified instructor. AOGPE, IMSLEC, and WLT accredit training programs, institutions, and organizations that uphold those high standards of training and instruction, including a required supervised practicum.

For over two decades, organizations within The Alliance have influenced the success of reading specialists and advocated for the understanding of teaching reading to all students, but especially for those identified with dyslexia. The Alliance promotes the professional development and standards required of competent Multisensory Structured Language Educators.

Purpose Statement

- **To provide** a united association of organizations concerned with the accreditation of Multisensory Structured Language Education (MSLE) training courses and the certification of graduates of these courses;
- **In order** to provide criteria and standards for quality control in the education of those individuals trained to instruct individuals with Dyslexia and Related Disorders in therapeutic and/or preventative settings;
- **So that** (1) the consumer will be informed as to the professional development required for competent MSLE teachers and therapists, and (2) the combined strength of the organizations in The Alliance can influence the goals of the field of reading specialists and the understanding of teaching reading to all students.
Sequential English Education (SEE)-A Shelton MSLE Program

Since 1990, the SEE program has been used at Shelton. This program was written by Dr. Joyce Pickering based on the work of Dr. Charles Shedd, her mentor. From 1967 to 1970 this approach was used in a research grant from Title III ESEA Department of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW). During this program 5,000 students were screened for Dyslexia, 500 received remediation in SEE, and 101 attended a full-time school program, which used SEE as the approach for teaching reading, writing and spelling. The pre-post data collected on the progress of the students indicated that the approach was highly effective. In 1969, this program was chosen as the most effective program for students with reading disorders funded by HEW.

The approach was then used in a second HEW study called Early Childhood Study from 1970-73. Students in Kindergarten through first grade received the remediation on a daily basis at least 60 minutes a day. This early intervention study paired the approach with the Montessori Language program. This program was named as the most promising program funded by HEW in 1970.

Since the earliest use of this approach, it has been utilized as the remedial approach in numerous states in the U.S. and overseas in Australia, Brazil, Canada, and Spain.

In January of 1991, the Shelton Outreach program was founded. The first outreach program established was Shelton Scholars. This program offers remediation on Saturday mornings for 3 hours in the fall and spring semester and a summer session at a low cost. The SEE program is used for remediation. Shelton Scholars continues today and has served hundreds of children from every ISD and every major private school in the metroplex area. Through this program, students have been able to achieve functional written language skills in 3 to 5 years. This program is presently coordinated by John Hodges.

SEE is one of five language therapy programs used at Shelton School. These include, Take Flight, MTA, Wilson, the Association Method and SEE. The reason that this variety of programs is available is that students are placed in the program that most matches their learning profile as seen in their admissions assessment.

SEE is a structural linguistic program, which teaches the student the patterns of the language from simple to complex. It is highly structured and scripted for the teacher/therapist. As a linguistic program, it presents the patterns of words beginning with short vowel word families and progressing to long vowel word families with a final e, long vowel combinations, and diphthongs. In decoding the student is shown to identify the word family, then the beginning sound, and then blend the beginning sound to the word family. The beginning sounds that are taught are consonants, consonant digraphs, and consonant blends. Patterns of words are taught carefully before the rules of decoding are presented. The program is intensely multisensory, with every new letter/sound and word being traced on a memory board with a textured surface. Every error in reading or writing is also remediated on the memory board.

The word family approach is taught based on research by clinical psychologists into the difficulty that individuals with dyslexia have in perceiving the internal details in words, both visual and auditory processing. This is seen in their frequent errors in calling words that look alike (have the same shape – party/pretty) incorrectly. By directing the student’s attention to the internal detail, assistance is given in perceiving the word correctly.

Shelton Outreach has trained teachers in SEE from across the country and helped set up programs in Tyler, Texas at Bridgemark School, Baton Rouge, Louisiana at Brighton School, and Santa Fe, New Mexico at the May Center. The author of SEE has partnered with Karen Guida at Literacy Instruction for Texas (LIFT) to create an adult literacy version of SEE. The SEE approach has also been used by the Juvenile Justice system and is currently used at Wesley Rankin Community Center as a satellite Scholars program.

Training in SEE, MTA and Take Flight is available at Shelton. Information on each training and dates of training are available on the Shelton website, www.shelton.org.
The reality is that IQ and academic performance are not well-correlated.

Response to Intervention: Let's Get It Right
By Dr. John J. Russell
Head of The Windward School

It has been almost 15 years since Congress passed legislation authorizing the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) as a means for identifying and remediating students with language-based learning disabilities. There are four common elements of RTI: high quality, research-based instruction in general education; continuous progress monitoring; screening for academic and behavior problems; and multiple tiers of progressively more intense instruction (Office of Special Education Programs, 2006).

These four elements of RTI are typically delivered to students through three tiers of intervention. Tier 1 calls for qualified teachers to provide a research-based reading program to all students in general education classrooms. Students who do not make appropriate progress at the Tier 1 level are moved to Tier 2 where they receive special education services in their schools. Students who do not respond sufficiently to Tier 2 interventions are then eligible for Tier 3 and placement in special education schools.

Since its inception, this very promising tool has been used to varying degrees of success. A review of the development of RTI and the evolution of its implementation provides important insights into its benefits and shortcomings.

A Brief History: The Genesis of RTI

The Education of Handicapped Children Act was passed in 1975 and amended in 1990, becoming the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). While both of these laws resulted in significant improvements for students with disabilities, they also contained a major flaw by requiring an IQ-achievement discrepancy to identify students with language-based learning disabilities (Fuchs & Fuchs, 1998). The discrepancy model compares assessments of a child’s intellectual ability with the progress the student is making in school.

As a result of IDEA, unexpected underachievement based on IQ became the primary criterion for identifying students with learning disabilities. Unfortunately, this methodology is at best defective and at worst harmful to students. The reality is that IQ and academic performance are not well correlated. In fact, the correlation between measures of intellectual ability and academic achievement rarely exceed .60 (Sattler, 2001). Almost immediately, it became very clear that establishing a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement is not sufficient for assessment or intervention purposes, especially for students in the early grades (Restori, Katz and Lee, 2009).

Despite the mounting evidence of the shortcomings of the IQ-achievement discrepancy model, the reauthorization of IDEA, which was entitled the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA, 2004), allowed states and school districts to choose between using the traditional IQ-achievement discrepancy model or Response to Intervention (RTI) for identifying students at-risk for a Specific Learning Disability (SLD). It is important to note that the 2004 amendments established only that local education agencies "may" use RTI in determining whether a child qualifies for special education services by being identified as
Response to Intervention: Let's Get It Right, Cont.

having SLD, while each state has the option to either require or allow RTI for SLD identification, a state may not prohibit it.

According to Understood.org, 39 states still allow their school districts to use the discrepancy model while 11 states forbid it. For example, it was not until 2012 that the New York State Department of Education banned the use of IQ-achievement discrepancy for identification and required the use of RTI. The Department's website states:

*Effective on and after July 1, 2012, a school district must have an RTI process in place as it may no longer use the severe discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability to determine that a student in kindergarten through grade four has a learning disability in the area of reading.*

**The Response to Intervention Model**

RTI has garnered support from many significant sources. The framework of RTI is very similar to the recommendations that the National Reading Panel made in 2000. In his meta-analysis of the effectiveness of educational strategies, the Australian researcher, John Hattie (2016) found Response to Intervention to be one of the most powerful practices with an effect size of d=1.07. Other researchers (Swanson, Tran, Sanchez & Arellano, 2011) have found RTI effect sizes ranging from .45 to 1.53. An effect size of 0.8 or higher is considered large (Cohen, 1988). With these values, RTI should be a potent intervention. In his book Language at the Speed of Light (2017), Mark Seidenberg states, "RTI is a thoughtful, logical, well-designed program." By these measures and other very positive reports, Response to Intervention should be producing significant improvement in reading for both the general education and special education populations, but it is not.

**Reading Performance Since RTI**

The acquisition of reading skills by students is regularly assessed at the international, national, and state levels. In the 15 years since the introduction of RTI, an analysis of these measures paints a bleak picture.

The Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) is a triennial international survey that evaluates education systems worldwide by testing the skills and knowledge of 15-year-old general education students. Since the inception of PISA in 2000, the scores of United States students on the PISA Reading Literacy portion of the test have resulted in a steady decline in the ranking of the United States compared to other members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). In 2000, the United States ranked 7th; in 2009, it ranked 17th; and in 2017, it ranked 24th.

The National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP), also known as "the nation's report card", is the largest nationally representative and continuing assessment of America's students' achievement in a range of subject areas. Since 2004 when RTI was instituted, the performance of general education students has improved somewhat, but remains consistently subpar. The performance of students with disabilities has also improved slightly, but can only be described as abysmal. It should be noted that the classification "Students with Disabilities" includes all disabilities; however, 70 to 80% of that group are students with language-based learning disabilities-most notably dyslexia.
Response to Intervention: Let's Get It Right, cont.

National Assessment of Educational Progress—Grade Four Reading

Percentages of Students Reading at Proficient or Higher

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>General Education</th>
<th>Students with Disabilities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

With 60% of general education students and a stunning 88% of learning disabled students failing to meet proficient reading standards, it is entirely reasonable to ask how an evidenced-based program with a significant body of research confirming its efficacy would produce no better results than have been observed after 15 years of practice.

Researchers offer a number of insights into the reasons for the failure of RTI to meet expectations for general education students and students with disabilities. Two factors stand out for the negative impact they have on teaching students to read: the use of reading programs and instructional methodologies that are not research-based and inadequately trained teachers.

Lack of Clarity in the Definition of "Research-Based"

The movement toward research-based practices was partly a response to the pseudoscientific and unproven interventions that have plagued special education for years (Kozloff, 2005). Unfortunately, the term "research-based" (also known as "evidence-based") is not definitively defined in the RTI legislation, so states, school districts and individual teachers are left to decide what is research-based and what is not. Mistaken beliefs about teaching and learning often originate from schools of education and from education officials at the state and local levels who, despite decades of accumulated evidence, continue to incorrectly believe that systematic and explicit instruction is harmful to learning, that an eclectic approach is best, and that teachers should be innovative (Seidenberg, 2017).

Publishers of textbooks and reading programs have seized upon these by applying the label "research-based" arbitrarily. For example, publishers have, to a large degree, abandoned the use of the widely discredited approach called "Whole Language" and have instead adopted "Balanced Literacy" touting these reading programs as research-based when in fact they are not.

As early as 2000, Louisa Moats chronicled this deception in her seminal piece, Whole Language Lives On: The illusion of "Balanced" Reading instruction in which, she cautions,

*It is too easy for practitioners, while endorsing "balance," to continue teaching whole language without ever understanding the most important research findings about reading or incorporating those findings in to their classroom practice. Wrong-headed ideas about reading continue to characterize textbooks, reading*
Response to Intervention: Let's Get It Right Cont.

course syllabi, classroom instructional materials, state language arts standards, and policy docu-
ments.

In addition to balanced literacy instruction, which is simply a repackaging of the whole- language, many other popular education interventions are unsupported by evidence. In fact, the use of unproven practices proliferates in schools across the country (Miller & Sawka-Miller, 2010). The widespread use of interventions that are not supported by research partially explains the underperformance of RTI in improving literacy. Jason Travers (2016) described the consequences of these unsupported practices, which are often publicized as "innovative," stating,

Although many unproven or pseudo-scientific interventions might appear relatively benign at first glance, it could be argued that every ineffective intervention is associated with some degree of harm. A main problem is that a tried intervention is only revealed to be a failure after the investment is made; instructional time is permanently lost and educational benefit is not conferred. Implementation of an intervention that failed to confer benefit means resources were wasted and a student's opportunity to learn (i.e., time) has been perma-
nently lost. Every student with a disab-
ility has a finite amount of time to receive special education services; and professionals are ethically obli-
gated to maximize the impact of these limited services. It may seem that a few weeks of time exploring whether an intervention works has only minimal harm, but a small amount of time lost to ineffective in-
struction can accumulate over time to a significant loss of potential educa-
tional benefit.

Inadequately Trained Teachers

"Parents who proudly bring their children to school on the first day of kindergarten are making a big mistake. They assume that their child's teacher has been taught how to teach reading. They haven't" (Seidenberg, 2017)

Many Americans think that the ability to teach is more the result of innate talent than training, but recent research clearly demonstrates that the best teachers are made, not born (Goldhaber, Liddle, & The-
obald, 2013; Michelli, Dada, Eldridge, Tamim, & Karp, 2016). Tragically, teachers are not being adequately prepared in colleges and universities to become the effective teachers required for RTI to reach its full potential.

There remains a significant disconnect between the preparation teachers need to be successful in implementing RTI and the preparation they actually receive in their pre-service and graduate education courses (Walsh, Glaser, & Denne-Wilcox, 2006). In 2017, the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) released its annual review of teacher preparation pro-
grams in the United States. As was the case in previous studies, once again col-
leges and universities were cited for their substandard preparation of teachers. Of great significance to all parents, and es-
pecially to parents of learning disabled students, the NCTQ evaluated 717 col-
lege and university pre-service teacher
Response to Intervention: Let’s Get It Right, Cont.

education programs that prepare teachers to teach students who are identified as "struggling readers" and found that 75% of these programs did not meet the basic standards set by NCTQ. Although lack of adequate teacher preparation disproportionally harms students with disabilities, it has serious negative consequences for all students as well as for the teachers themselves who must suffer the professional and emotional burden of not being able to adequately support the children they work so hard to teach.

A recent study, conducted in 2015 by John Hattie of the University of Melbourne confirmed the dominant effect that teacher quality has on student performance in general and by extension on initiatives like RTI. He conducted a meta-analysis of more than 65,000 research papers on the effectiveness of hundreds of interventions on the learning of millions of students and found that what matters most is teacher expertise. The most powerful ways to improve student learning identified by this meta-analysis all depended on what teachers did in the classroom. Every day teachers make hundreds of instructional decisions based on what they have been taught in their preservice and graduate school programs. Regrettably, few teachers are exposed to research that is relevant to their jobs and most are ill-prepared to critically assess scientific claims, leaving them vulnerable to fads and fallacies in their instructional decision making as they search for a program or methodology that will help them teach their students to read and write (Siedenberg, 2012).

Conclusion

If RTI is to deliver on its promise to improve reading achievement for general education students, to efficiently identify students who need special education services and to provide effective interventions for special education students, several steps must be taken.

First, all teaching materials and teaching practices that are labeled "researched-based" must be held to certain standards. Citing Skinner (1953), Travers (2016) offers the following criteria necessary to warrant the label "researched-based" or "evidenced-based"

Evidence-based special education depends on the acquisition of robust empirical findings obtained via meticulous experimentation. The processes of empirical inquiry are necessary accompanied by a set of attitudes that emphasizes valuing facts over authority, accepting evidence regardless of conflict with strongly held beliefs, and abstaining from acceptance of a claim until compelling evidence is available (Skinner, 1953).

Second, the quality of teaching must be improved. Schools need to recognize that during their undergraduate education teachers have, in most instances, not received the foundational knowledge necessary to teach reading. To improve the quality of teaching reading, comprehensive professional development is an absolute necessity. Dedicated, conscientious teachers can mitigate deficiencies in their preparation through professional development, but only if professional development programs are more rigorous and of a better quality than the undergraduate and graduate programs that are responsible for the deficits in the first place. In response to this reality, The Windward School established a professional development program that is comprehensive, demanding, and extremely effective in closing the knowledge gap between research and teaching.
Response to Intervention: Let’s Get It Right, Cont.

practices. Other schools have followed a similar path in their efforts to improve teacher quality.

For RTI to be truly effective, highly qualified, trained teachers must use instructional practices and programs that have been rigorously validated as evidenced-based.

This article originally appeared in the fall 2018 issue of The Beacon, The Windward School bi-annual newsletter for educators and parents.

The Windward School established a professional development program that is comprehensive, demanding, and extremely effective in closing the knowledge gap between research and teaching practices.

Windward Teacher Training Institute (WTTI) is proud to acknowledge four faculty members of The Windward School who successfully completed their IMSLEC certification at the Teaching Level this year. Juliana Bondor, Kelly Burke, Christina Goodnough, and Danielle Ngo joined 50 current and former Windward teachers as well as several educators from other schools in achieving this level of certification. Ms. Bondor and Ms. Burke teach at The Windward School’s Westchester Lower School campus, Ms. Goodnough teaches at The Windward School’s Westchester Middle School campus, and Ms. Ngo teaches at The Windward School’s Manhattan Lower School campus. To achieve the Teaching Level certification, educators must complete a minimum of 80 hours of IMSLEC required coursework and participate in an extensive supervised practicum.
Dr. Laurie Cutting Shares How Lessons in Neuroscience Can Build More Informed Classrooms
at 2018 Robert J. Schwartz Memorial Lecture

By Danielle Scorrano
Research Coordinator and Manhattan Middle School Teacher
The Windward School

In her book, *Proust and the Squid*, Marianne Wolf states that the human species "was never born to read" (Wolf 1). Since the invention of writing, the systems of the human brain that were once allotted for more basic verbal language functions have re-wired to read written text. Researchers in the field of educational neuroscience have studied the brain's intricate neural mechanisms, as well as other environmental factors, to better understand the evolution of the reading brain. During this year's Robert J. Schwartz Memorial Lecture, Dr. Laurie Cutting, an educational neuroscientist and professor at Vanderbilt University, explained the fundamentals of neuroscience, its application for education, and the future integration of science and classroom.

**Lessons from Neuroscience**

While neuroscientists have learned many lessons about the brain, Dr. Laurie Cutting highlighted key ideas that are applicable to education.

1. **The brain is complex.**
   Neuroscience, an interdisciplinary field, has enabled scientists to understand a variety of elements that impact the brain's development, including its structure, genetics, hormones, and other environmental factors.

2. **Brain imaging measures reveal patterns in the brain that behavioral studies may not identify.**
   In recent decades, brain imaging measures such as EEG, MRI, and functional MRI have supported existing behavioral methods in neuroscience research. In addition, imaging techniques have revealed patterns in the brain that the existing behavioral tests may not show. For example, researchers have used fMRI and behavioral measures to compare the brain's response when completing various cognitive tasks. In certain contexts, brain imaging has illustrated differences in brain activity between two people who seemingly have similar behavioral testing scores.

3. **The brain's regions and networks are multifunctional.**
   In their investigations of the language and executive networks of the brain, researchers have learned how the brain's systems integrate when executing various cognitive tasks. Interestingly, fMRI scans have shown activation across seven converging networks of the brain while a person is reading! Certain regions of the brain share distinct responsibilities for word recognition, language, and reading comprehension. Furthermore, research has shown that the executive functioning region may coordinate different cognitive and language tasks. By understanding the activation of brain networks, researchers have also understood the nature of the multifaceted brain as well as underlying mechanisms of dyslexia.

4. **Neuroplasticity impacts the wiring of the brain over time.**
   The brain's structure can change based on experience, which has implications in the study of reading. As children learn to read, the brain's neuronal wiring and structure change. For chil-
Danielle Scorrano, Cont.

...ren with reading difficulties, the brain may be less malleable than typical developing readers. Consequently, children who experience more difficulty learning to read may need more explicit instruction, as demonstrated in the biological underpinnings of their brain structure.

Implications for the Classroom

While the gap between neuroscience and classroom may seem wide, the above four lessons have direct implications for education.

1. Educators can gain a deeper understanding of how and why children learn differently.
   Findings of the brain’s plasticity, structure, and networking explicitly demonstrate the neurodiversity of all students who enter classrooms every day. These variations may result in differences in how children learn, read, and perform academically. Furthermore, although some students may seem to perform similarly, their biological makeup may be significantly different.

2. The executive functioning network plays an integral role in brain development.
   As Dr. Cutting has demonstrated in her research, the executive functioning network helps to coordinate language tasks in the brain. Generally, the executive functioning network plays an important role for a range of cognitive and behavioral tasks in the brain. Dr. Cutting’s research has also shown that a stronger executive functioning network may aid in better response to reading intervention in children with reading difficulties. Future research about the role of executive functioning will certainly impact how educators help students grow academically and socially.

Key Conclusions and the Future of Science and Classroom

Emerging findings in neuroscience will continue to address how families and educators identify and remediate reading disorders.

Families and educators should consider the role of genetics and familial risk of reading disabilities, including dyslexia, when screening and identifying children at risk of developing a reading disorder.

Due to the brain’s neuroplasticity, the brain can change with the right intervention to target reading difficulties. In the future, Dr. Cutting hopes to learn more about how executive functioning and reading interventions in context may target a wider range of difficulties.

Future advances in technology could lead to deeper understanding of the brain’s structure and function and provide more efficient ways to identify and diagnose children at risk of developing a reading disorder.

Despite the complexity of the human brain’s evolution, educational neuroscience has contributed to our understanding of the brain’s development. With advances in technology and collaboration between experts such as Dr. Cutting, new knowledge of this intricate organ will benefit both the scientific and education communities.

This article originally appeared in the fall 2018 issue of The Beacon, The Windward School biannual newsletter for educators and parents.
Mississippi: 2019 HB 150 authorizes loan forgiveness to individuals providing instructional or clinical service as a licensed dyslexia therapist in a public or eligible nonpublic school.

New York: Sandra Schwarz (Legislation committee member) reports that Dr. John J Russell, Executive Director of The Windward Institute, along with Drs. Sally and Bennett Shaywitz and state assemblyman Robert Carroll (who also happens to be a Windward School alumnus), will be attending the School Dyslexia Forum that the Rockefeller Policy Institute is sponsoring. They plan to explain why it is important to clearly define what is dyslexia, who is affected, how to identify dyslexia, and what are the curriculum remedies. Their ultimate goals are to advocate for the passage of legislation that would require early screening for all New York State students and to change teacher certification requirements so that teachers are required to demonstrate knowledge of dyslexia and research-based practices. As you can see from the most recent report (below) New York State, unlike a growing number of states, does not currently have this legislation in place. New York does not have dyslexia screening legislation in place.

New York does not have dyslexia screening legislation in place. It also does not have pre-service or in-service legislation related to dyslexia. Dyslexia intervention is not required in the state of New York.

North Dakota: 2019 HB 1461 Dyslexia Screening. An act to provide for reading screening and a 3-year pilot program to provide early screening and intervention services for children with risk factors for dyslexia, including low phonemic awareness.

Texas: The Dyslexia Amendment has been removed from HB 2847. This would have outlawed the provision of private services for dyslexia of any kind except by persons licensed as multisensory structured language education (MSLE) therapist. It no longer contains any provisions that would impact or change dyslexia services or licensing in Texas.

Allison Peck noted that Texas HB3 has recently added funding per student for dyslexia. The funding is available to districts as soon as the child is identified with dyslexia.

Hawaii, Idaho, Michigan, South Dakota, Vermont and Wisconsin do not have legislation specific to Dyslexia.

Most of the information gathered came from the website Dyslegia: A Legislative Information Site.
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