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## IARLD UPDATES

A Newsletter of the INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY FOR RESEARCH IN LEARNING DISABILITIES  
Fall/Winter Issue Vol. 10 (1) 2008

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

*James Chapman*

One of the most enjoyable aspects of my current role in the IARLD is the contact I enjoy with members across the world. When I recently sent a personal email to each IARLD member inviting them to the conference in Wellington, New Zealand this coming January (15<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>), I was astounded at the response. Most members responded warmly to the email. Most sent a pleasant and engaging message. Even those who are unable to attend the conference sent very good wishes for a successful gathering of IARLD members in the New Zealand part of “Downunder”!

The warmth of the email messages is inspiring and gives meaning to the benefits of our being an international research-focussed organization. I was also impressed with the expressions of intention to travel to New Zealand for the next conference. I have to confess to being worried that attendance would be small because of the distance, and more recently because of the troubled international financial situation. It seems, however, that there will be a good attendance with members travelling from many countries to participate, including from Sweden. New Zealand and Sweden are about as distant as any two countries in the world!

Preceding the IARLD conference is a special conference on “Reducing the Literacy Achievement Gap and Helping Children with Dyslexia” (12-13 January). This conference is directed towards teachers and parents. The purpose of the conference is to present research-

based implications for practice aimed at improving literacy achievement. New Zealand only officially recognised dyslexia early last year. Since that time, there has been considerable discussion about the nature, definition, causes, diagnosis and remediation of dyslexia. Policy makers in the New Zealand Ministry of Education have been consulting a few experts (there are only a few in New Zealand) about ways to make the recognition of dyslexia in this country meaningful. Foremost among those who have been consulted is IARLD Fellow, Distinguished Professor Bill Tunmer. The opening keynote presentation at the “dyslexia” conference will be delivered by Bill Tunmer. Other Academy Fellows who have been invited to present include Professor Ingvar Lundberg (Sweden) and Professor Kevin Wheldall (Australia). Most of the other presenters are purposefully New Zealanders, including IARLD Fellow, Professor John Everatt (relocating from the UK to the University of Canterbury in New Zealand).

The combination of the IARLD and “dyslexia” conferences in New Zealand this January will provide a unique opportunity to showcase the Academy and to highlight the needs of those who struggle with literacy. I look forward to seeing as many Academy student members, members and fellows as possible. You can all be assured of a warm New Zealand welcome.

I hope that this Newsletter finds you well. Colleagues in the Northern Hemisphere are

moving into Fall and Winter, whereas those in the Southern Hemisphere are enjoying Spring and looking forward to Summer. I hope that everyone's research plans are proceeding well, and that the outcomes of this research will prove everyone's research plans are proceeding well and that the outcomes of this research will prove valuable to theory, policy and practice in the learning disabilities field. I strongly encourage members to be mindful of recommending IARLD to students and faculty or professional colleagues who work in the LD field.

Best wishes to everyone for a fruitful and enjoyable 2008-2009.

**VISIT THE *IARLD* WEBSITE**  
**WWW.IARLD.NET**

## **EDITOR OF *IARLD* UPDATES**

It is an honor to start my term as the new editor of *IARLD* Updates! It sure is a great opportunity to learn more about research in learning disabilities around the world and stay up to date with the most recent findings and news in the field. I am also very fortunate to have Rosemary Tannock as an assistant editor. Both of us would like to thank Jessica Toste, the former editorial assistant, for all her help and editorial clarifications which made this transition process very smooth and easy. Rosemary and I will do our best to make the forthcoming issues interesting and informative, and we hope to see a great response from all the IARLD members by sharing their news and providing updates, as well as submitting articles for our 'LD Around the World' and 'Thoughts from the Academy' rubrics!

Olga Jerman, Ph.D.,  
 Director of Research  
 Frostig Center, Pasadena, CA

## **GOALS WITHIN THE *IARLD***

To increase the *visibility, impact, and sphere of influence* of the Academy by:

- 1) Increasing our membership through ongoing membership drive initiatives.
- 2) Encouraging *IARLD* Fellows and Members to list the *IARLD* as an additional affiliation on all publications in journals, books, and newspapers.
- 3) Encouraging *IARLD* Fellows and Members to list the *IARLD* as an additional affiliation on all conference presentations.

## **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Fellows Report: *Marshall Raskind***

The Fellows' Committee is comprised of Marshall Raskind (Chair, Schwab Foundation), Lee Swanson (University of California), and C. K. Leong (University of Saskatchewan). From June 2007 to May 2008, we have welcomed nine distinguished scholars as *IARLD* Fellows. There have been no new fellows since May 2008.

### **Membership Report: *Christa van Kraayenoord***

The Members' Committee comprises Christa van Kraayenoord, Cesare Cornoldi, Mavis Donahue, and Gad Elbeheri. Two new members joined the Academy since the summer of 2008: Kristen Lee McMaster (USA) and Jade Wexler (USA).

### **Student Membership Report: *Henry Reiff***

As noted in the previous report, we added three new student members during the past year, bringing our total to 16. We currently have a couple of nominations in the pipeline and expect to see this division continue to grow. Student members are the future of the IARLD. Please

identify and nominate worthy graduate students from your programs. It should not be a hard sell to convince them that student membership in the IARLD is a wonderful opportunity!

***The advantages of joining IARLD for students:***

- ✓ You are joining the most prestigious group of international scholars in the field.
- ✓ You will receive several publications and an insider's view of the research in the field.
- ✓ You will find the *IARLD* conferences highly stimulating and rewarding.
- ✓ You will undoubtedly develop some wonderful professional and personal relationships.
- ✓ You will put yourself in an advantageous position to join later as a full member and possibly as a fellow.
- ✓ It looks great on your resume!

**Treasurer's Report: Lynda J. Katz**

As of October 2008, the *IARLD*'s total income was \$28,228. This amount includes a starting balance of \$17,628 and membership payments of \$10,600. We also have two certificates of deposits totalling \$27,970. Our expenses for the year amounted to \$15,090. Because our expenses are outpacing our dues collection and because the most recent series of Annual Meetings have not generated revenue after expenses, the Executive Committee voted to increase dues payments from \$75.00 to \$90.00 (US dollars) beginning with our request for dues payments in September 2009. Also, with the new website, members will be able to submit dues payments via PayPal. However, we will continue to mail out dues statements as e-mail addresses have proved too inaccurate a method. Currently, we have 209 members in *IARLD*, 121 of whom are current in their membership dues payments. Those members who are in arrears after three years, after notification, are discontinued from membership. If there are any questions regarding the payment of dues, please do not hesitate to contact me [[lkatz@landmark.edu](mailto:lkatz@landmark.edu)].

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## NEWS FROM *IARLD* MEMBERS

**Fielding-Barnsley, Ruth:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Fielding-Barnsley recently represented Queensland educators on the expert panel for the new National English Curriculum. She would like also to announce LDA/RSTAQ/SPELD (Qld) Joint Conference 2009 in Brisbane, 18-19 September. More about the conference see on page 12

**German, Diane:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. German was selected as a 2008 ASHA (American Speech-Language Hearing Association) Fellow to be bestowed in November at the ASHA 2008 conference in Chicago.

**Ghesquire, Pol:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Ghesquire started a new project in January. The project is titled "Temporal processing in dyslexia: in search for more neurophysiologic evidence" and was granted by the National Research Council and the Research Council of the University of Leuven (Belgium). It is conducted in collaboration with the departments of neuroscience and radiology.

In August 2008, Dr. Ghesquire also became Director of the Center for Parenting, Disabilities and Child Welfare. He also started his second year at the Center as a representative of the group "humanities and social sciences" on the board of the research council of the University of Leuven (Belgium). Some of Dr. Ghesquire's recent publications include:

- De Smedt, B., Swillen, A., Devriendt, K., Fryns, J.-P., Verschaffel, L., Boets, B., & Ghesquière, P. (2008). Cognitive correlates of mathematical disabilities in children with Velo-Cardio-Facial Syndrome. *Genetic Counseling, 19*(1), 71-94.
- Boets, B., Wouters, J., Van Wieringen, A., De Smedt, B., & Ghesquière, P. (2008). Modelling relations between sensory

processing, speech perception, orthographic and phonological ability, and literacy achievement. *Brain and Language*, 106(1), 29-40.

Gadeyne, E., Ghesquière, P., & Onghena, P. (2008). Child, family and school characteristics associated with nonpromotion in pre-primary education. *Exceptional Children*, 74(4), 453-469.

De Schryver, J., Ernestus, M., Neijt, A., & Ghesquière, P. (2008). Analogy, frequency and sound change. The case of Dutch devoicing. *Journal of Germanic Linguistics*, 20(2), 159-195.

**Klingner, Janette:** *IARLD* Fellow and Professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, would like to announce publication of her new book:

Klingner, J. K., Hoover, J., & Baca, L. (Eds.) (2008). *Why do English Language Learners struggle with reading? Distinguishing language acquisition from learning disabilities*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

**Lyytinen, Neikki:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Heikki Lyytinen of the Academy of Finland of the University of Jyväskylä recently published the following articles:

Hintikka, S., Landerl, K., Aro, M. & Lyytinen, H. (2008). Training Reading Fluency: Is it important to practice oral articulation and is generalization possible? *Annals of Dyslexia*, 58, 59-79.

Puolakanaho, A., Ahonen, T., Aro, M., Eklund, K., Leppänen, P.H.T., Poikkeus, A.-M., Tolvanen, A., Torppa, A., & Lyytinen, H. (2008). Developmental links of very early phonological and language skills to the 2nd grade reading outcomes: strong to accuracy but only minor to fluency. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 41(4), 353-370.

**Meymandi, Assad:** Dr. Meymandi continues to be the Editor-in-Chief, Wake County Physician, now in its 14<sup>th</sup> year of publication, (online issues of the magazine may be accessed and downloaded:

[www.wakedocs.org](http://www.wakedocs.org)). You could check in the latest online issue of the magazine Page 12, for the Announcement of the Gala opening of the Meymandi Theater in Raleigh; and page 34, announcement of a three year extension of his appointment as Adjunct Professor of Psychiatry at UNC School of Medicine at Chapel Hill.

**Montague, Marjorie:** *IARLD* Fellow and Executive Committee member, The School of Education's Professor Marjorie Montague (University of Miami), is the Principal Investigator for the Institute for Education Sciences funded efficacy study. The study is titled Improving Mathematics Performance of At Risk Students and Students with Learning Disabilities (LD) in Urban Middle Schools-Middle School Math (MSM) Project. Dr. Montague conducted a 3-day professional development workshop on August 11-13 to train teachers on her Solve It! problem-solving routine. Dr. Montague is shown here with participating teachers, interviewing Miami-Dade County Public School math teacher Mr. Ray Cruz.



Teachers were provided with this research-based instructional program that explicitly teaches students how to solve mathematical problems effectively and efficiently. Teachers and students across 34 middle schools from Miami-Dade County Public Schools are participating in this 3-year efficacy research project. More information about this project can be found at [www.education.miami.edu/solveit](http://www.education.miami.edu/solveit).

**Reiff, Henry:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Henry B. Reiff changed positions at McDaniel College

and is currently serving as an Acting Dean of Graduate and Professional Studies.

**Rourke, Byron:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Byron P. Rourke received the Distinguished Career Award from the International Neuropsychological Society (INS). His recent publications include:

Tsatsanis, K. D., & Rourke, B. P. (2008). Syndrome of Nonverbal Learning Disabilities in adults. In Wolf, L. E., Schreiber, H.E., & Wasserstein, J (Eds.), *Adult learning disorders: Contemporary Issues*. (pp. 159-190). New York: Psychology Press.

Rourke, B. P. (2008). Is neuropsychology a (psycho)social science? *Journal of Clinical and Experimental Neuropsychology*, 30, 691-699.

Rourke, B. P. (2008). Neuropsychology as a (psycho)social science: Implications for research and clinical practice. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 35-41.

Brousseau, G., Burke, B., Rourke, B. P., & Buchanan, L. (2008). Cholinesterase inhibitors: A different kind of antipsychotic? *Experimental and Clinical Psychopharmacology*, 15

Dr. Rourke is also looking for the improvement of his NLD website and would appreciate any suggestions with regard to it (e.g. additions, clarifications, etc.). Please email him [brouke@cogeco.ca](mailto:brouke@cogeco.ca) or check his website at: [www.NLD-BPROURKE.ca](http://www.NLD-BPROURKE.ca).

**Sawyer, Diane:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Sawyer has a book chapter coming up soon in:

Sawyer, D. J. & Bernstein, S. E. (2008). Students with phonological dyslexia in school-based programs: Insights from Tennessee schools. In V. Berninger, A Fawcett, G. Reid, & L. Siegel (Eds.), *Dyslexia Handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

**Thomson, Michael:** *IARLD* Fellow, Dr. Michael Thomson, a Chartered Educational Psychologist and a Fellow of the *IARLD*, runs a

school for dyslexic children, East Court School ([www.eastcourtschool.co.uk](http://www.eastcourtschool.co.uk)). Dr. Michael Thomson would like to inform the Academy members that his school is celebrating its 25th year since he founded it in 1983. *IARLD* members in the UK are very welcome to visit the school and have a look at the work that is done there. Dr. Thomson is very proud of what has been done at East Court School and the achievements children make there. They regularly publish data and analyze their students' progress.

Dr. Thomson has managed to keep some academic work going while running the school, and he is also an Honorary Senior Lecturer at the University of Kent. One of Dr. Thomson's texts, "The Psychology of Dyslexia: A Guide for Teachers" is having its second edition and will be published by Wiley/Blackwell in January of 2009.

**Elik, Nezihe:** *IARLD* member, Assistant Professor at the Education Mount Saint Vincent University in Canada, has completed all the requirements of registration as a psychologist in Nova Scotia, Canada. She is now a school and clinical psychologist in the areas of a) assessment and treatment of children, adolescents, young adults, and families, and b) consultation, research and teaching.

**West, Thomas:** *IARLD* member, author *In the Mind's Eye* and *Thinking Like Einstein*, Washington, DC; advisor to the Krasnow Institute for Advanced Study, George Mason University, Fairfax, Virginia, USA. The second edition of his book "In the Mind's Eye" is due to come out in August of 2009.

**Urso, Annmarie:** *IARLD* Student member, received her Ph.D. from the University of Arizona in May 2008. Her dissertation was entitled "The role of processing speed in poor readers". Dr. Nancy Mather and Dr. Nicole Ofiesh were members of her dissertation committee. Dr. Urso accepted a position as an Assistant Professor in Special Education at the State University of New York at Geneseo.

Dr. Urso was awarded the Council for Exceptional Children's Outstanding Graduate Student Award at the 2008 Annual Convention held in Boston April, 2008. She currently writes a column for Learning Disabilities Worldwide's ([www.ldworldwide.org](http://www.ldworldwide.org)) online newsletter, Strategies for Successful Learning.

Dr. Mather and Dr. Urso completed an entry on Learning Disabilities for Corsini's Encyclopedia of Psychology, 4th ed., to be published by John Wiley and Sons. They also co-authored a book chapter entitled, Struggling Young Readers, in the book *Evidence-based Interventions for Students with Learning and Behavioral Challenges*, edited by Richard Morris and Nancy Mather and published by Lawrence Erlbaum

## **THOUGHTS FROM THE ACADEMY**

### It is Time to Get Serious About the Talents of Dyslexics

by Thomas G. West

"I knew I was different in the way that I thought, but I didn't realize why I was so dumb at spelling . . . and rote memory and arithmetic. . . . The first time I realized how different . . . brains could be . . . was when I bumped into Jim Olds at a dinner party back in the late sixties. Jim . . . was a professor here [at Caltech] . . . famous for his pleasure center work. . . . A speaker talked about the way we think and compared it to holography. Jim was across the table from me. I said, 'Oh, yes. When I'm inventing an instrument or whatever, I see it in my head and I rotate it and try it out and move the gears. If it doesn't work, I rebuild it in my head.' And he looked at me and said, 'I don't see a thing in my head with my eyes closed.' We spent the rest of the evening . . . trying to figure out how two professors -- both obviously gifted people at Caltech in the Biology Division -- could possibly think at all, because we were so different. So then I took this up with [Nobel

Laureate] Roger Sperry and I realized that I had some amazing shortcomings as well as some amazing gifts."

The above is a passage from the oral history project at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena. The speaker is the late William J. Dreyer, Ph.D., who is increasingly known as one of the major innovators in the biotech revolution. A strong visual thinker and dyslexic, Dreyer developed new ways of thinking about molecular biology. Later in his life, Dreyer taught molecular biology to his dyslexic grandson who was clever with computers but was having a very hard time in high school. Working as an apprentice to his grandfather, the grandson skipped the latter part of high school, most of college, all of graduate school and is now doing post-doc level work writing computer programs that use sophisticated scientific information visualization techniques to help link various human traits to sections of the genetic code. When Dreyer died in 2004, one of the enduring passions of his later scientific research was to try to understand the relationships between dyslexia, visual thinking and the high levels of creativity he had experienced in his own life and work.

#### Success Hidden Beneath Failure

The story of the life of William Dreyer and his grandson brings into sharp focus the considerable advantages of the dyslexic kind of brain -- at least in certain variations within the great diversity of dyslexic brains. Those of us who are trying to help dyslexics must understand that academic remediation is only part of the job -- and perhaps not the most interesting or important part. We need to seek ways to help dyslexics find and develop their own talents, large or small, so that they cannot be beaten down -- defensively hiding their talents along with their disabilities.

And I, for one, believe that one of the best ways to do this is to study the lives and work of successful dyslexics to allow other dyslexics to see what can be done as well as showing how it can be done.

From the time of Pringle Morgan and Critchley to Orton and Geschwind, the central puzzle of dyslexia has always been the linkage of high ability in some areas with remarkable and unexpected disabilities in other areas. For more than a century, we have recognized this pattern, but have generally focused on only one aspect. With the best of intentions, we have learned much about how to fix the problems that dyslexics experience, but we have done almost nothing to develop a deeper understanding of the varied and hard-to-measure talents that many dyslexics clearly possess.

### The Other Half of the Job

I believe the time has come to be serious about trying to understand the talents of dyslexics -- to do the other half of the job -- and try to understand the puzzle that so fascinated Bill Dreyer at Caltech to the end of his life. As a dyslexic myself, I feel a growing sense of personal responsibility to dyslexics as a group. I feel the need to substantially change the course of what we are trying to do. I feel we need to seriously embrace a radical change now or there will be no change at all -- allowing generations of dyslexics to suffer needlessly -- wasting talents that are greatly needed by the society and the economy -- as we enter an age of great uncertainty on many fronts. Accordingly, I propose that it is time to build a bold and ambitious program that will focus primarily on talent. The major objectives of this initiative would be:

- ✓ To build a program with its primary focus on understanding and developing the strengths and talents that dyslexics have, rather than focusing on areas of remarkable weakness.

In the late 1980s, talents were often discussed at Orton Society [IDA] conferences. In my view, we need to rebuild that tradition.

Talent is fundamental to the perspectives provided by Samuel Torrey Orton and Norman Geschwind. But most of us have focused on

remediation, on fixing problems, not developing new understandings of special talents.

### Time to Get Serious

I think we need to start dyslexic-centered programs -- as if the talents of dyslexics really did matter. We must not be mainly school-centered, as we are now. It is time for all of us to rethink what we should be doing in schools and colleges to prepare students for today's global economy. Careful investigation of the life and work and accomplishments of highly successful dyslexics will show us how wrong we can be. We need to outreach to occupational groups that include many dyslexics and learn to fully appreciate the kinds of special talents that many dyslexics have. Technological change is redefining the kinds of things that need to be learned, trends often completely ignored by conventional educational debate.

We need a serious and systematic study of the highly varied but distinctive talents among dyslexics. We will have to deeply reconsider what we think we know about intelligence, talent, ability and creativity. We need to develop new assessment tools beyond conventional measures, using new technologies, new insights, and new perspectives to measure capabilities not possible to measure before. It is likely that we will come to measure things we thought unimportant previously.

An example of recent developments in this direction is a study now being conducted (with National Science Foundation support) by the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics. As noted on their website:

"Could people with dyslexia be predisposed to science? The Laboratory for Visual Learning [at the Center for Astrophysics] is investigating a hypothesis that people with dyslexia, because of differences in neurology, may be predisposed to certain forms of visual processing that are useful in science. We are currently carrying out research to test this hypothesis, specifically looking at how dyslexia affects abilities of

astronomers to analyze image-processed data." (See [www.cfa.harvard.edu/dyslexia/](http://www.cfa.harvard.edu/dyslexia/))

Clearly, there is much to gain by looking at dyslexia from the other side.

#### References

Initial quotation from Caltech interviews: Dreyer, William. Interview by Shirley K. Cohen. Pasadena, California, February 18–March 2, 1999. Oral History Project, California Institute of Technology. Archives. Retrieved from the World Wide Web: December 6, 2007, <http://resolver.caltech.edu/Caltech>  
OH:OH, Dreyer\_W.

### EDITORIAL COMMENTARY

by Rosemary Tannock

#### Does dyslexia predict a pathway of despair or creativity?

The central thesis of Thomas West's article is that dyslexia may confer an opportunity to develop special talents (e.g., visual thinking and creativity) and that this should be the focus of educators rather than solely on the deficits of dyslexia.<sup>1</sup> A similar thesis has been argued by Julie Logan, a British Professor of Entrepreneurship at Cass Business School, City University: her study found that adults with dyslexia were over-represented amongst small-business entrepreneurs (35% self-reported having dyslexia and claimed to excel in oral communication and problem solving, perhaps as compensatory strategies for their dyslexia).<sup>2-3</sup> This 'bright-futures' perspective stands in stark contrast to frequent reports of poor outcomes of dyslexia in adulthood (e.g., low self-esteem, under-employment).<sup>4-5</sup> These contrasting perspectives highlight the need for: i) investigation of visual thinking skills (e.g., spontaneous categorization<sup>6</sup>) in youngsters with dyslexia; ii) investigation of predictors of successful outcome of dyslexia in adulthood (i.e., of resiliency and protective factors); iii) neuroscientific investigation of brain function in 'talented' adults with and without dyslexia, compared to dyslexics with similar intellectual potential; and iv) delineation of the key characteristics of educational learning

environments which promote success in students with dyslexia.

<sup>1</sup> West TG: It is Time to Get Serious About the Talents of Dyslexics. *IARLD Newsletter*: this issue.

<sup>2</sup> Logan J: Are we teaching potential entrepreneurs in the best way to enhance their career success?

[www.cass.city.ac.uk/media/stories/resources/Julie\\_Logan\\_abstract.pdf](http://www.cass.city.ac.uk/media/stories/resources/Julie_Logan_abstract.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Bowers B: Tracing business acumen to dyslexia. *The New York Times* (Dec 6, 2007)

<sup>4</sup> Ingesson SG: Growing up with Dyslexia: Interviews with teenagers and young adults. *School Psychology International*. 2007, 28(5): 574-591

<sup>5</sup> Singer E: Coping with academic failure: A study of Dutch children with dyslexia. *Dyslexia* 2008, 14: 314–333

<sup>6</sup> Nikolopoulos DS, Pothos EM: Dyslexic participants show intact spontaneous categorization processes. *Dyslexia* DOI: 10.1002/dys.375; 2008.

## IARLD MEMBER INTERVIEWS

### LD Member – Heikki Lyytinen

Professor of Developmental Neuropsychology Center of Excellence of Learning and Motivation Research of the Academy of Finland University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Chair of the board of the Agora Center and Niilo Mäki Foundation



Nominated by Malka Margalit (2007).

***What are your current research interests?***

After completing a follow-up study of dyslexia where children at familial risk for dyslexia were followed from birth to school age (Jyväskylä Longitudinal study of Dyslexia, JLD), I have concentrated my effort to develop preventive methods to help these children.

***How did you hear about the IARLD? What made you decide to join?***

I met Professor Malka Margalit in an EU meeting and she suggested that I apply for the membership in IARLD. After reading and learning about this organization I decided to apply.

***Tell us something about your professional background and what you are doing now.***

My original interests focused on psychophysiology, but I have been extending my work to learning disabilities during the last 20 years. It has resulted in publication of more than 100 journal papers associated with my colleagues. The recent focus of my research has been in early identification of dyslexia and opportunities to minimize its consequences with preventive training.

***What are your personal hobbies or special interests?***

I am interested in new technology in general. My long-time hobbies are also reading (science and everything related to history and world events) and photography.

***LD Member – Kristen McMaster***

Kristen Lee McMaster, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Minnesota, Assistant Professor

Nominated by Asha Jitendra (August 2008).



***What are your current research interests?*** My research interests include creating conditions for successful response to intervention of students at-risk, students with disabilities, and students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

My current specific research focuses on (1) promoting teachers' use of data-based decision-making and evidence-based instruction and (2) developing individualized interventions for students who for whom generally effective instruction is not sufficient.

***How did you hear about the IARLD? What made you decide to join?***

My colleague, Asha Jitendra, told me about the IARLD. I decided to join because I thought it would be a great opportunity to share ideas and research with others in the international community.

***Tell us something about your professional background and what you are doing now.***

I received my undergraduate degree and special education teaching license at Vanderbilt University, and taught for two years as a special-ed teacher in Nashville, TN public schools. I returned to Vanderbilt for my masters and doctoral degrees, and became heavily involved in Doug Fuchs's research on Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) in reading. When I joined the faculty at the University of Minnesota, I continued working on PALS research in collaboration with colleagues at Vanderbilt and the University of Texas Pan American. We have been investigating ways to "scale up" PALS by examining the role of fidelity, professional development and support, and other variables that may have an impact on PALS effectiveness. I have also been involved in more basic research examining reading comprehension processes of struggling readers, and in research focusing on the development of curriculum-based measures (CBM) to monitor students' progress in reading and writing.

***What are your personal hobbies or special interests?*** My husband Eric and I are cavers, so we spend a fair amount of our free time underground. I also enjoy camping, hiking,

reading, needlework, and spending time with my dog, Ellie Mae.

***IARLD Member – Jade Wexler***

The University of Texas at Austin & The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk, Senior Research Associate (United States)

Nominated by Sylvia Linan-Thompson (August 2008).



*What are your current research interests?* My research interests focus on adolescent reading disabilities and dropout prevention, intervention research and Response to Intervention.

*How did you hear about the IARLD? What made you decide to join?* I heard about it through Dr. Thompson and went to the conference last year in Slovenia where I presented a fluency intervention study I did with high school students (as a poster session). I wanted to join because I liked being a part of a community of professionals from across the world interested in researching areas related to LD (my primary interest). I believe it is important to have a broad perspective related to these issues which I hope will make me a better researcher and educator.

*Tell us something about your professional background and what you are doing now.* I was a high school Reading and English teacher

for students with LD for about 6 years and I got my Masters in Reading while teaching. I then moved to Austin and completed my PhD last year in Special Education (LD and BD and specializing in adolescent reading disabilities). Currently, I primarily direct the Texas Center for Learning Disabilities funded by NICHD looking at models of RTI with Sharon Vaughn (UT) and Jack Fletcher (UH). <http://www.texasldcenter.org/>

I also work on several other federally and foundation-funded grants as part of The Meadows Center for Preventing Educational Risk (including an efficacy study of CSR with Janette Klingner at University of Colorado-another IARLD member -and a dropout prevention and individualized reading intervention for adolescents with reading disabilities), I am writing two grants, and consult and present often around the nation with different districts and present at conferences.

*What are your personal hobbies or special interests?* Running with my 3 year old black Labrador and travelling

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## MANUSCRIPT SUBMISSIONS

***THALAMUS*** is the official journal of the *IARLD*. *Thalamus* contains primarily articles contributed by the membership (and colleagues) and focuses especially on issues related to learning disabilities in a global context. In 1994, after the death of *IARLD* Founder, Bill Cruickshank, the *IARLD* initiated the Cruickshank Memorial Lecture at conferences and began publishing the keynote address in *Thalamus*. For further information about submission guidelines, contact Dr. Nicole Ofiesh [[nofiesh@ndnu.edu](mailto:nofiesh@ndnu.edu)] or Dr. Charles Hughes [[cah14@psu.edu](mailto:cah14@psu.edu)].

**PLEASE SEND YOUR NEWS BRIEFS**

to the Editor of *IARLD* Updates,  
Olga Jerman  
[olga@frostig.org]

Pertinent news include:

Grants received; current research and publications; new positions; award or scholarship announcements; book “briefs” from members; upcoming conferences; manuscript submissions.

**DOCTORAL AWARD COMPETITION**

Doctoral students will have an opportunity to participate in *IARLD* doctoral award competition that will take place in Miami, Florida in January 2010. The awardee would present his/her paper at that conference.

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR  
33<sup>RD</sup> *IARLD* CONFERENCE  
JANUARY 15-17, 2009**



Don't miss the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual *IARLD* Conference! It will be held in Wellington, New Zealand. The program will include three presentation formats: interactive posters, symposia, and roundtable discussions. Take advantage of this southern summer that will provide a wonderful opportunity to mix academic activity with a visit to a beautiful country. Stay tuned to the *IARLD* and conference websites for further information. [www.eenz.com/iarld09]

**Earn a Ph.D. in Literacy Studies!**

Do you believe that literacy instruction should and can be improved? Join those who are enrolled in a unique interdisciplinary program at Middle Tennessee State University! This program is designed to prepare educators who will transform literacy instruction in Tennessee and beyond. Four different specializations support those interested in professions in school systems, state education departments, teacher education, or publishing. If you have a master's degree and at least 3 years of successful experience in education, or related fields, go to [www.mtsu.edu/~literacy](http://www.mtsu.edu/~literacy) for details. Assistantships are available for full-time study.

**NEW!!! Dyslexia Course On-Demand**

**Improving Instruction for Students with Dyslexia** offers an in-depth introduction to identifying and teaching students with dyslexia. Course consists of four (4) parts or modules—identifying dyslexia, testing for dyslexia, interventions for dyslexia, accommodations to support learning. Developed by the staff at the Tennessee Center for the Study and Treatment of Dyslexia at MTSU, this Online/On-Demand course is convenient to learn at your own pace. Earn four (4) CEU's upon successful completion. \$150 per person; special discounts for schools and college classes. For details go to [www.dyslexiaprofdev.org](http://www.dyslexiaprofdev.org)

**LDA/RSTAQ/SPELD (Qld)  
Joint Conference 2009  
Brisbane, 18 -19 September**

**Consult and Collaborate: a holistic approach  
to learning needs**

**Call for Papers and Workshops**

The Biennial 2009 Joint Conference for Learning Difficulties hosted by combined associations SPELD (Association for Specific Learning Difficulties), RSTAQ (Remedial and Support Teachers Association of Queensland) and LDA (Learning Difficulties Australia) is planned for 18 - 19 September 2009. This conference will be held at the premium location of the Brisbane Convention and Exhibition Centre, South Bank, Brisbane, Australia.

In past years, up to 300 attendees ranging from academics, classroom practitioners, and parents have attended these conferences. A “hands-on” approach which is supported by keynote speakers has proven successful. The conference keynote speakers are Professor Maggie Snowling (Director of the Centre for Reading and Learning, University of York) and Professor Charles Hulme (Department of Psychology, University of York). For 2009, the theme for the conference will be “Consult and Collaborate”.

The conference will consist of both formal presentations and a series of interactive workshops. The Joint Planning Committee is seeking submissions that align with this theme or related themes. Typical topics include, but are not restricted to theory and practice in the following areas:

- ✓ How is consultation and collaboration facilitated between stakeholders
- ✓ What frameworks are in place to ensure effective systems
- ✓ Reporting to parents
- ✓ The role of consultation in planning student programs
- ✓ Creating collaborative environments for professionals and students

- ✓ Consultation and collaboration to improve literacy/numeracy outcomes

We welcome submissions directed at issues of current and local importance, as well as topics which may have a wider interest in the literacy/numeracy and behaviour management areas. The Joint Planning Committee will select papers and workshops based on their potential to enhance learning for practitioners as well as parents. All papers and workshop notes will be published in the conference proceedings.

For full submission guidelines and important dates go to the website [www.ldaustralia.org](http://www.ldaustralia.org)

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