

What is the International Dyslexia Association?

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March 16, 2007

Good morning. I'd like to welcome you to the annual conference of the Inland Empire Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. I'm delighted to be with you here today really for many reasons. First all of, because it's been in the 20's in Baltimore and California is always a better place to be in March! But also because I get to talk to you this morning about what it is we do at the International Dyslexia Association. I think its always a bit of a mystery figuring out just exactly what it is associations do. I never really knew until I worked for one. But many associations are really very helpful and very much needed and IDA is definitely ranked in that category.

So What is IDA?



I think I'd begin by saying IDA is many different things to many different people. But before I get too immersed in what we are and who we serve, I'd like to give you just a short history lesson on why the organization was founded.

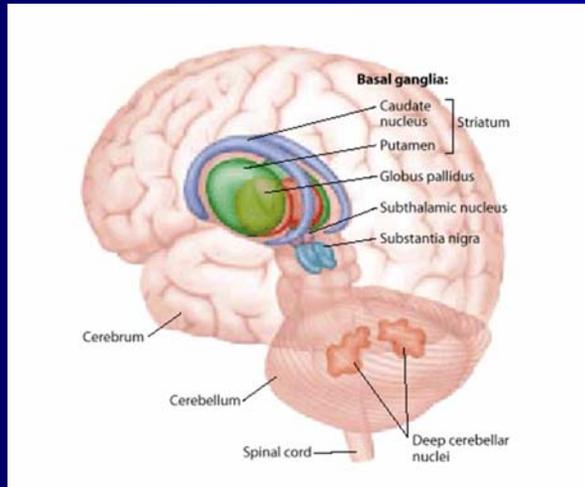
The History

Dr. Samuel T. Orton



IDA is the oldest learning disabilities organization in the nation -- founded in 1949 in honor of this gentleman right here, Samuel T. Orton. Dr. Orton (a pathologist by training but foremost a scientist throughout his career) was the first to figure out that dyslexia was not a perceptual problem or a problem with vision but a problem with language – a specific reading disability – a phrase he used for the first time in 1928.

A Disorder of the Brain...



Dr. Orton was also the first to see so clearly what others had failed to see for centuries – that this mysterious and distressing disorder lay in the brain. Now there are many researchers today who can give you a very detailed explanation of exactly where in the brain the difference occurs – in fact I've seen from Dr. Lovett's handouts that she will be enlightening you later this morning – however the best and easiest explanation I've heard so far is that the brain of a dyslexic is simply "wired differently". People seem to understand and accept that concept.

Anna Gillingham, the "Mother" of Dyslexia



If Dr. Orton is known to be the father of dyslexia for his accomplishments :
identifying the disability,
separating it from mental defect,
offering a physiological explanation
and outlining the principles of remediation,

than certainly this lady - Anna Gillingham should be known as the mother. It was at the New York Neurological Institute that Sam Orton and Anna Gillingham became acquainted, working together on a Research Project. Gillingham, a psychologist but also a teacher, had read of Orton's theories and his interest in diagnosis and instruction. They began a professional collaboration in 1931.

Anna was an outstanding "teachers" teacher. Early on in her career, she set about creating methods and materials for bright students who just could not learn to read. She and another teacher, Bessie Stillman, began developing a multisensory technique. No better way to teach children with disabilities in language has been found in all the years since Gillingham encountered the problem.

The Orton-Gillingham Approach

- How a letter or word looks
- How it sounds
- How the mouth or the hand feel when producing it

All of you are familiar with the term OG or you would not be here today. Simply put, the technique is based upon the constant use of association of all of the following:

How a letter or word looks

How it sounds

And how the mouth or the hand feel when producing it

There are many, many offshoots of OG method teaching materials - but their common conceptual background can always be traced back to Orton Gillingham.

The Birth of the International Dyslexia Association

-formally know as The Orton Society...

And so it began... on October 28, 1949, a year after Dr. Orton's death, his wife, June Orton, invited a group of his former colleagues and friends to a memorial dinner in New York City in his honor. It was from this group of physicians, teachers, speech therapists and parents that the Orton Society was born. The objective – to learn from each other and to share their experience with others who had not known Dr. Orton personally.

June Lyday Orton First Chair of the Board



And so, June Orton, a social worker by trade, accepted the chairmanship with the insistence that both a physician and an educator share the responsibilities with her. And so it was that a research foundation was laid down along with a workable organizational structure. Annual meetings would be devoted to business and professional stimulation; a careful balance would be maintained between the theoretical and the practical, as well as the medical and the educational aspects of specific language disability.

IDA is Made up of Many Constituencies...

- Parents 32%
- Researchers 10%
- Educational Community 40%
- Practitioners in the Field 18%

... And IDA Provides Services for Each

So, as it was in 1949 our membership today is still incredibly varied.

Dyslexic Individual/Family	32%	
Medical/Academic/Research		10%
Educational Community		40%
Professional/Consultant		18%

IDA Serves Many Purposes

Mission

- Conduct and promote good research
- Educate the public
- Advocate in large numbers for those who cannot be heard on their own

Sure, we've grown a lot since 1949 but the mission has not changed much since Mrs Orton and her friends decided to share their experiences with others. Today our focus is three fold:

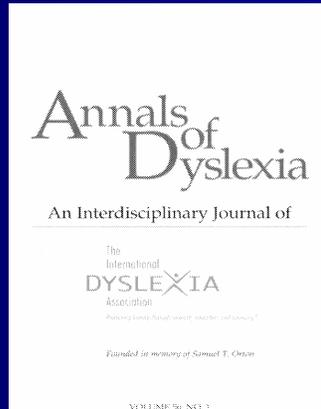
Conduct and promote good scientific based research

Educate the public about dyslexia

Advocate in large numbers for those who cannot be heard on their own.

So, how do we do that?

Research, research, research



So how do we do that? Good scientific research is really the base and is what IDA is well known for. Having a research base is what gives us credibility and why legislators and agency heads listen to our advice. It's also why we've been able to prove to a good portion of the world that dyslexia is simply a learning disability that if remediated correctly can be helped. Annals of Dyslexia, our quarterly scholarly journal is where much of the research can be found. We also provide opportunities to grant money to researchers each year right out of our operating budget. And our National Conference is where much of the cutting edge research is presented.

And based on this research, we educate the public

- Conferences
- Media contacts
- Publishing books and materials
- Perspectives on Language and Literacy

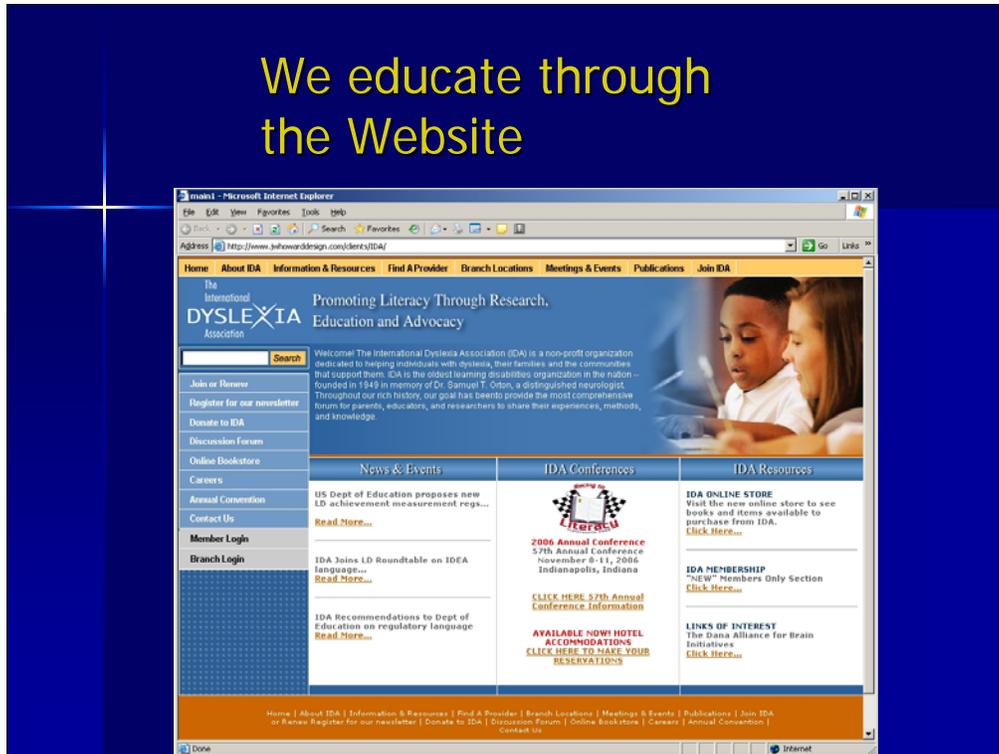
Using research as the base, we strive to educate the public. One of the ways we do this is through conferences just like this one today.

Our PR office at Headquarters also helps to educate the public through our connections with the media. Just last summer we got a lead that Rosie O'Donnell was doing a piece on dyslexia as part of her new position on the morning talk show, "The View" By providing ourselves as a resource of information, we were able to place an IDA speaker on her show. Often, using public spots like this we are able to touch hundreds of thousands of people in one short 10 minute spot.

Other ways we touch the public is by publishing books and other resource materials.

We also have another quarterly publication called Perspectives on Language and Literacy. This is a mid level journal geared towards teachers and educators which helps translate research into practice.

We educate through the Website



Another way we touch the public is through our website www.interdys.org. IDA's website gets in the neighborhood of 15,000 hits a week. If we've had a large mention in the media, these hits can go up to 100,000 a week.

And we advocate for those with dyslexia

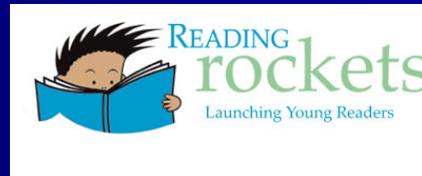
- Testimony
- Policy papers
- Class action law suits
- Seminars and symposia for parents
- Grassroots lobbying

And we advocate...because each struggling reader cannot be heard on his own. It takes all of us, speaking with one voice to really be heard. We start at the legislative level both in Congress and in the state legislatures. We advocate at Dept of Ed and also at the judicial level when laws aren't being implemented as they've been written. We've been involved in several lawsuits when folks w/ disabilities are not being given the accommodations they deserve. And we bring members to Washington to meet in person w/ their Member of Congress. We also work in concert with other like minded organizations to accomplish common missions..

PARTNERSHIPS

Providing Benefits to All Our Constituencies

- Disability Rights Advocates
- Reading Rockets
- Recording for the Blind & Dyslexic



We also don't try to accomplish everything on our own – we often partner with other organizations.

Just signed a partnership agreement w/ Reading Rockets allowing us to use their list serve and share our information with 100K teachers in the field

And we are working closely with Recording for the Blind and Dyslexic to create a joint membership and spread our benefits to an even larger community.

IDA Headquarters... works in concert with the branches



What is great about being an Association is that IDA is not simply the 4th floor of this building in Baltimore with my 12 staff – its is a network of 47 branches made up of 12,000+ people across the country all working to further this mission. These Branches, just like Inland Empire, do an incredible amount of work with nothing but volunteers. They give up their free time to arrange conferences, publish newsletters, provide outreach to schools and teachers, and answer calls from distraught parents and educators looking for help. I'd certainly be remiss if I didn't recognize Regina and her board for all of their hard work and dedication. They are truly the backbone of the organization.

IDA NATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS



And of course we have a national board of incredibly hard working people from all over the county – each serving on at least 3 working committees.

IDA's Organizational structure is made up of 14 committees all meeting by conference call monthly to move initiatives forward, create our annual conferences and educational materials and advocate for those in need.

Some committees include

Research

Teaching and Learning

Information Services

Government Affairs

Branch Development and Relations

Membership

Program Committee

Finance

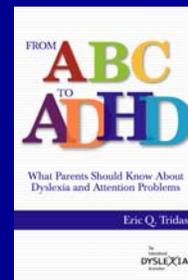
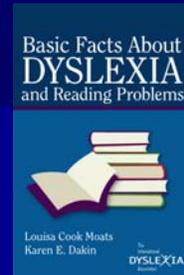
And we have made a difference

- Over 20,000 people attended more than 250 public activities held by local branches
- More than
 - 18,000 emails were answered
 - 9,000 calls received
 - 75 support groups held for parents and adults with dyslexia
 - 49 public awareness events held to promote IDA and dyslexia

And together we do make a difference. Just last year, over 20,000 people have attended more than 250 conference across the US. More than 18,000 e-mails and 9,000 calls were answered by volunteers in the branches.

PARENTS

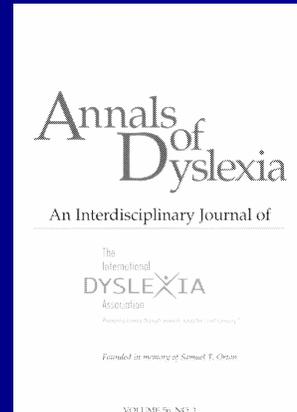
- Informational Fact Sheets
- Referral Services
- Branch Activities (support groups, public activities)
- IDA Publications
- Advocacy



So what do members get for their 70 dollars a year? Parents tend to focus in on support they get from their local branch, the advocacy provided by the branch and the headquarters office at the national level and the publication geared directly to them.

RESEARCHERS

- Research Grants
- Scientific presentations at National Conference
- Annals of Dyslexia



Its pretty easy to understand why researchers join the organization...

SPECIAL AND GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

- Perspectives
- National & Local Conferences
- Branch Workshops
- Partnerships with other organizations
- Research based info



Special and general education teachers use our resources and attend our conference to learn about the latest research and remediation techniques for their students.

PRACTITIONERS IN THE FIELD

- Referral Services
- Annals of Dyslexia
- ASHA Credits
- CMEs
- CEUs
- Discounts on Professional Liability Program

IDA offers practitioners continuing education credits, referrals and will soon be offering a discounted professional liability insurance.

We Are Here Because of You

Without interested individuals like you, IDA wouldn't have a constituency to serve.

So really we're here because of interested people like you. In the audience today we have 13 special ed teachers, 11 regular ed teachers, 4 SLPs, 7 ed resource folks or tutors, 5 reading specialists, 2 parents 1 dyslexic adult, 1 student and 1 administrator. You're all here for different reasons but you all share the same basic idea as June Orton and her friends. We all want to share the secret and spread the news that dyslexic can be helped and kids don't have to grow up thinking they are stupid because they can't read. No one should have to go through that today thanks to our good friends Sam Orton and Anna Gillingham!

I appreciate the opportunity to be here with you today and I wish you all a good conference.