



# ALTA NEWS

June 2011

Volume 18

Issue 2



Ingrid modelling directed discovery teaching of spelling rules in South



Practising phonic cards in Belmont

## Scenes from ALTA Tutor Training 2011

Working with wooden alphabets



Learning to play literacy card games on Day 6 in Arima



**BELMONT 624-2582/3442**  
84 Belmont Circular Road

Mon-Fri: 8am-5pm

[altapos@alta-tt.org](mailto:altapos@alta-tt.org)

**SAN FERNANDO 653-4656**  
St. Paul's Anglican Church Hall,  
3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, 12 Harris Promenade  
Patricia Noel/Marilyn Rampersad-Talma

Mon/Wed/Thurs: 9am-2pm

[altasfd@alta-tt.org](mailto:altasfd@alta-tt.org)

**ARIMA 664-2582**  
Arima PTSC Terminal Mall  
Alana Lynch-Gomez

Tues/Thurs/Fri: 9am-5pm

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### MARK YOUR CALENDARS

**Aug-early Sept** (Coordinator to set date) Orientation meetings for all 2011-12 tutors to review student assessment, teaching methods and meet co-tutors.

#### **Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Sept**

Tutors collect class list and supplies at ALTA offices

#### **Mon 12<sup>th</sup> Sept - Fri 9<sup>th</sup> Dec**

Term 1

#### **Sat 1<sup>st</sup> Oct**

Reading Circle training

#### **Sat 29<sup>th</sup> Oct**

AGM 9am - noon

### END OF TERM REMINDERS

- Tell returning students the start date for the new academic year. If your venue usually has many new students so tutors are busy with initial assessment, ask continuing students to return on Day 2 rather than Day 1.
- Tell students going up to Level 3 to bring along their Level 2 cards & Workbook 3.
- Submit class attendance registers and evaluation reports on all students including those who stopped.
- Bring in or scan/email unedited students' writing for practise editing on refresher.
- Return all loan items and remnants of card sets ASAP.

### ALTA TUTOR TRAINING COURSE

In 2011 a record-breaking 127 new volunteers successfully completed the 6-day tutor training. Together with our continuing tutors, ALTA will be ready for our students in September and hoping for a big turnout as we had last year.

Feedback from participants was very positive, with some as always calling for more days of training and a few returning to their observation classes in order to be better prepared for their teaching. We wish them a warm welcome and hope they will spend many years with ALTA.

Our sincere thanks to Bethel Pentecostal in Arima for accommodating us for a fifth year and to Open Bible on Ruth Avenue in San Fernando. ALTA has long sought an accessible venue big enough to host our South course and Open Bible met our needs admirably. The church has also expressed interest in hosting an ALTA class from September so we look forward to continuing partnership. Thanks also to donations of refreshments from Hi-Lo, GlaxoSmithKline (Lucozade & Ribena), Bryden's (Club Social) & Blue Waters.



#### **New facilitators in practise sessions**

Fortunately ALTA was well prepared for the large intake of new tutor numbers having made expansion of the training team a goal for 2011. Experienced trainers Paula Lucie-Smith, Lystra Hazarie, Camille Parmassar, Brenda De Silva and Jeanette Williams conducted a one-day training for 23 facilitators on 2<sup>nd</sup> April.

New facilitators got a taste of how much preparation and reporting goes into an ALTA course, but all declare themselves ready for another round of training. New presenters prepared by viewing unedited footage of 2008 training sessions, which we finally got transferred to DVD thanks to Cliff Seedansingh.

**NEW STUDENT REGISTRATION**  
**Tues 6<sup>th</sup> & Wed 7<sup>th</sup> Sept**  
**at 11 public libraries 9:00AM - 6:00PM**

Following tradition, ALTA celebrates International Literacy Day on 8<sup>th</sup> Sept by having student registration for its new academic year. Do call the library coordinator to offer to do a 2-3 hr shift at the library on Tues or Wed.

Please contact Mariella at ALTA Belmont to submit contact information on tutors and students willing to do radio and/or TV promotional ads for the 2011 literacy awareness campaign.



**JW & Blaze**

This year JW & Blaze are joining ALTA's student registration drive once again! Last year our student enrolment increased to 2,000 due to the endorsement of ALTA by this celebrity duo. We are thrilled that they are committing their time and energy to encourage people to take advantage of the free ALTA literacy classes.

People who are illiterate lose out on many opportunities. They are often delegated to menial jobs with no chance of advancement because they lack basic reading and writing skills. In a society where literacy is taken for granted it feels like life and everyone in it, is passing them by, and they often feel isolated. This feeling is further compounded by fear of someone discovering that they don't know how to read. So ALTA along with JW and Blaze are saying to those aged 16 and over who can't read and write:

**Don't hold strain 'cause you feeling shame!**  
**You can't let reading miss you!**

<b>REGISTRATION VENUES</b> Call/email to take a 2-3hr shift	
<b>LIBRARY</b>	<b>COORDINATOR</b>
<b>Arima</b>	Jennifer Antoine 790-2685/398-1263
<b>Chaguanas</b>	Marilyn Rampersad-Talma 798-1656/ 672-5085
<b>Couva</b>	Maureen Richins 712-6298/636-3693 majerich2002@yahoo.com
<b>Mayaro</b>	Agatha Williams 681-7683/630-3259
<b>Pt Fortin</b>	Lynette Frederick 777-1219/371-3524
<b>Port of Spain</b>	Camille Parmassar 742-0946/632-1162 Janet Joseph
<b>San Fernando</b>	Inga Crichlow 684-2671/652-2980 iriches27@gmail.com
<b>Sangre Grande</b>	Marsha Scott 668-3219 mainhouse67@yahoo.com
<b>San Juan</b>	Andrew Neehall 389-0077/675-3866 lawrence9@tstt.net.tt
<b>Siparia</b>	Jean Rahaman Lutchman 362-1688/498-6300
<b>Tunapuna</b>	Margo Malcolm 767-5788
<b>Warrenville Regional Complex</b>	Deanmattee Rambally 481-7895/672-4173

**REFRESHERS FOR  
2011-12 TUTORS**

Tutors - we want you teaching at ALTA next year! Experienced tutors build stability and expertise in the classroom. Tell your coordinator as soon as possible if you are continuing or returning and hold one of the dates below to attend your refresher.

**Time: 8am – 4pm**

**POS ALTA office, Belmont:**

Level	Dates
<b>Beg.</b>	Fri 19 <sup>th</sup> & Sat 20 <sup>th</sup> Aug Must attend both days!
<b>Levels 1 &amp; 2</b>	Tues 23 <sup>rd</sup> Aug Sat 27 <sup>th</sup> Aug Sat 10 <sup>th</sup> Sept
<b>Level 3</b>	Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept

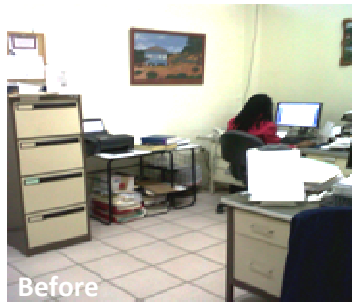
**San Fernando, Naps (Girls):**

<b>Levels 1 &amp; 2</b>	Sat 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sept
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**SPONSOR-A-STUDENT**

Sponsoring an ALTA student will enable ALTA to continue offering free classes to the national community benefitting existing and potential students. It also fosters a better understanding of literacy issues. The real cost of providing instruction for one year is TT\$500/US\$100.

**ALTA RECONFIGURES BELMONT OFFICE**



ALTA's head office in Belmont has a vibrant new look. As ALTA'S programme expands, so do our administrative needs. The addition of three new members of staff meant five people had to fit where we had three.

Our accountant Giselle Baylis proved just as skilled with organizing space as she is with numbers, creating the illusion of more space in the new 5-person layout.



Special thanks to MDC-UM for extending its 25% discount promotion into March for ALTA and donating three task chairs.

**SNAPSHOTS**

*National Consultation on the Primary School Curriculum Apr 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>* Paula was part of a panel on literacy development and her 10-minute presentation from the ALTA perspective was well received.

The *Retraining Programme* Cycle 24 contracted ALTA to deliver an abridged ALTA Level 1 and Level 2 at 3 locations.

*LIPS Course 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Aug* The Dyslexia Association (625-5869) will host a Lindamood Phoneme Sequencing course by Dr Tim Conway at ALTA Belmont, 9am-5pm, \$2,500.

*Dyslexia Action* offers an online International Teaching Diploma in Dyslexia and Literacy. Part A of the three-part programme takes 3-4 months, starts in January, May or September and costs £875. More information on <http://training.dyslexiaaction.org.uk/international>.

ALTA extends 'get well' wishes to South tutors Tinasha Farrow and Jennifer Pierre.

**CALL FOR ALTA-TRAINED SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS - POSSIBLE FORM 1 ALTA PILOT**

Paula Lucie-Smith and Chairman Hetty Sarjeant met with Minister De Coteau and Chief Education Officer Sharon Mangroo on Thurs 24<sup>th</sup> April. The latter expressed great interest in ALTA and in the suggestion to teach two ALTA levels in a foundation year for Form 1 students scoring less than 30% in SEA. The proposal was submitted on May 4<sup>th</sup>.

On June 15<sup>th</sup>, Minister Gopeesingh requested a meeting and is considering the proposal. As a first step, letters will be sent to principals to source teachers in the school system who are ALTA certified and would like to teach a full ALTA timetable to two groups of students. Call Joanne if you are interested and hold an A or B+ ALTA certificate.

**LOOK OUT FOR RAMONA'S WORKSHOP NEXT YEAR**

Ramona Khan's Apr 16<sup>th</sup> workshop *Creating the Best Learning Environment in the ALTA Classroom* was excellent. 25 tutors attended and we hope to repeat the session early in 2012 as Ramona's psychology expertise and experience add what we don't have time for on the training course.

**NEW ARRIVALS**



Teheli Sealey

Teheli Sealey joined ALTA in May assuming the post of Office Manager. She has spent over 8 years in senior administrative positions over her career in various industries. She welcomes the responsibility of managing ALTA's head office in Belmont.

Mariella Garcia joined the ALTA team in April as the Communications Officer. She looks forward to working with everyone at ALTA to help spread awareness of the ALTA organization and to support ALTA's literacy awareness campaign.



Mariella Garcia

**TUTORS -**

**ALTA NEEDS YOUR INPUT**

ALTA celebrates its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary next year and a committee of tutors headed by Brenda De Silva has begun to work on our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary magazine.

The magazine will feature student success stories, so contact past or present students and email mariellag@alta-tt.org to set up a meeting between the student and one of the magazine writers.

Tutors and students are invited to submit anecdotes of their experience at ALTA, especially any light or humorous happenings.

We are having two contests open to tutors, students, anyone!

1. Design a 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary logo incorporating the existing ALTA logo (black and white colours of logo are not to be modified).
2. Create a cartoon illustrating an aspect of the ALTA experience.

**ARIMA OFFICE NEEDED**

Since our rental payments to the PTSC for our office at the Arima Terminal Mall have not been accepted for the last three months, ALTA is actively seeking an alternative location. If you know of any viable options, let Teheli at ALTA Belmont know.

### NEW CLASS VENUES

- Cedros/Icacos
- Debe
- La Brea
- Princes Town AC School\*
- San Fernando Open Bible
- St Helena / Las Lomas\*

*\*To be confirmed*

### VOLUNTEERS WANTED: FOR COMPUTER PRACTICE

ALTA is looking for volunteers to manage practice sessions in Belmont for students who have basic computer literacy training. Call Joanne at Belmont if you are:

- Computer literate in Microsoft Word and know how to use the Internet;
- Have 2-3 hours free on evenings/Saturdays for 10 sessions or know a someone who does.

In the San Fernando office, due to disappointingly low interest, Vernon has shelved Saturday computer classes for students and tutors until the new academic year. South tutors, let students know of this opportunity.

### FOR OFFICE ASSISTANCE

Over July-August, ALTA needs help to prepare for the new academic year and student registration, e.g. sorting and compiling incomplete card sets, packaging class materials. This is a good opportunity for teens to get work experience and clock up volunteer hours for their CV.

### ALTA OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

**RBTT Volunteer Week** In April RBTT invited ALTA to participate in their Volunteer Week to raise awareness of volunteer opportunities available to employees and the general public. ALTA Ambassadors Olive Brizan-Wilson, Saheeda Roopnarine, Pearl Austin, Linda Blackwell, Marilyn Jordan-Romany and Janet Joseph were kind enough to give their time and service in this event.

**Damus Limited '300 Million Man-Hours Celebration', La Brea.** In May ALTA was able to spread the word of our free adult classes available at 4 locations in the South Western Peninsula. We wish to thank Gloria Ferdinand and her team who made the trip to La Brea and promoted ALTA to the 900 individuals who attended the celebration.



**From Left: Marilyn Jordan Romany, Olive Brizan-Wilson, Rubina Roberts, Donna Charles at the World Peace Festival**

**Trinidad and Tobago World Peace Festival, Sat 11<sup>th</sup> June, NAPA, POS.** ALTA was invited to host a booth at this fun-filled day.

The festival celebrated unity in diversity and peace by linking like minded people and organizations. The

event was well attended with sales of a few ALTA items and many enquiries on becoming an ALTA tutor. ALTA thanks all present at these outreach events for their excellent representation of our organization.

### CONDOLENCES

ALTA extends condolences to trainer, coordinator and dedicated tutor Earlyn Wilson on the death of her husband.

## BELMONT READING CIRCLE FIELD TRIP

Reading Circle guides and students left the classroom behind and had a fun filled day. First stop was “The Soap Kitchen” where they received an informative and interesting demonstration on the art of soap making.



Students making soap

The group then visited the Lopinot Historical Complex. There the group relaxed in the beautiful landscaped gardens and enjoyed lunch. After a presentation on the history of different musical instruments, they decided to take matters into their own hands! Soon enough they were paranging like it was Christmas morning! Perhaps ALTA should look into having parang functions with our very own ALTA Reading Circle Paranderos!



Los Paranderos de ALTA at Lopinot Historical Complex

## DONATIONS

On Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> May, ALTA Chairman Hetty Sarjeant, accompanied by M'aisha Thomas, attended the UK Women's Club's General Meeting at Cascadia Hotel, in which donations for the year 2010-2011 were distributed, with ALTA being a recipient.

In June ALTA received a generous donation from Republic Bank to continue their sponsorship of ALTA Port of Spain classes and Reading Circles at Arima Rehab and Cheshire Home in Pleasantville.

## STRATEGIES TO DEEPEN STUDENT THINKING

- **Wait Time**

Provide at least five seconds of thinking time after a question and after a response.

- **Scan the room to include all students**

Avoid looking only at those students who know the answer.

- **Use Probes and Follow-Ups**

Why? Can you explain? Give an example? Tell me more...

- **Accept all valid responses to open-ended questions**

There is not a single correct answer to this kind of question. Consider alternatives.

- **Ask students to unpack their thinking**

Describe how you arrived at your answer.

- **Advocate**

Require students to defend their reasoning against a different point of view.

- **Pose Reflective Questions**

How do you know what you know? How might you show that you understand this?

- **Encourage Student Questioning**

Provide opportunities for students to generate their own questions.

- **Use think-pair-share**

Allow individual thinking time and discussion with a partner, then open up for class discussion.

*Carol Ann Tomlinson & Jay Mc Tighe  
Integrating Differentiated Instruction*

## **LITERACY AND TEXT MESSAGING**

Critics question the future of literacy in the age of text messaging, where words are reduced to nonstandard abbreviations and symbols.

But experts point out that, in fact, technology has put new emphasis on reading and writing. "A generation ago, a teen who couldn't read well could still participate pretty fully in the social conversation among peers," says Timothy Shanahan, president of the International Reading Association. "But with so much written chatter, being able to read and write have become definite social advantages. There is simply much more pressure to know how to read than in the past."

Scientists have claimed that children who are fluent at text messaging have better literacy skills than youngsters who do not use mobile phones.

Researchers discovered that rather than destroying their use of English, texting improves children's ability to recognise rhymes and speech patterns. The ten-year study, examined the effect of the use of text messages on 8 to 12-year-olds.

Psychologist Dr Clare Wood, who led the study at Coventry University, said the use of abbreviations, commonly used in text messaging, helped in the development of children's reading and writing skills. "We were surprised to learn that not only was the association strong, but that text use was

actually driving the development of phonological awareness and reading skills in children," the Daily Mail quoted Wood as saying.

Dr. Beverly Plester, the lead author of the report, laid the blame for the negative views of text messaging squarely at the feet of sensationalist media outlets: "The alarm in the media is based on selected anecdotes but actually when we look for examples of text speak in essays we don't seem to find very many".

According to Jeff Gabrill at Michigan State University, students are writing more than any generation in human history, and one reason for that is the pervasiveness of writing technologies in their lives. Cell phones have become a writing technology.

We have been witnessing an explosion of writing activity driven by networked computing devices for some time now, and so we are living through a period of particularly rapid changes in how we write. In many respects, the cell phone is the new pencil. Digital writing matters, and the challenge in education is to figure out precisely how in order to ensure that we can be useful to those interested in leveraging these new writing platforms with thoughtfulness and power.

*Adapted: Kids who SMS more have 'better literacy skills' [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com) & Literacy and Text Messaging by Kate Baggott*