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NSLAB completes its fifth year

By Erica Anderson

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The AGS Publishing National Speech-Language Advisory Board (NSLAB) met on July 7, 2005, prior to the ASHA Schools Conference in Indianapolis, IN. The tagline for the city of Indianapolis, "It's so easy to do so much!" was certainly appropriate for the 5th annual NSLAB meeting, where the goal was making things easy-easy to discuss, easy to focus, easy to address a wide range of topics in an in-depth way.

NSLAB is a group of speech-language pathologists and audiologists who practice in diverse areas of the professions. They represent the field in a number of respects, including geography and setting. The Board officially began in 2001 and meets annually to discuss current trends, issues, and needs in the field. The group also provides feedback to AGS Publishing on product or service initiatives. "This group of people is exceptional in so many ways," says Tina Eichstadt, MS, CCC-SLP, AGS Publishing Product Manager and meeting facilitator. "We are honored to have their talents, expertise, and wisdom for a focused day of listening on our end and talking/thinking on their end. It makes what we do at AGS Publishing all the more relevant and in touch."

As an example of the partnership between AGS Publishing and NSLAB, a past Board meeting led to the development of the intervention tool, Vocabulary with Educational Activities for Student Effectiveness (Vocabulary with EASE). This tool helps students build vocabulary skills as directed by the results of the PPVT-III and EVT assessments. This is a direct outcome of the valuable feedback of NSLAB members.

Board member Sheila Ward, MEd, CCC-SLP reinforces the value in the diverse membership of NSLAB: "Serving on NSLAB is a very satisfying experience," she says. "The Board members have all been trained in the unique blend of science and art that we know as speech-language pathology. Members come from all over the country, and work in various settings, including academia, schools, and private practice—each brings a special perspective to the needs and challenges of our field."



NSLAB welcomed two new Board members this year—Frank Bender and Laura Justice. Their names should sound familiar to many of you, as they have been thought leaders in their respective parts of the SLP field for a number of years. NSLAB members include:

Board Members	Affiliation
Frank Bender	Consultant, National CEU (private practice), Gladstone, OR
Bertha Clark	Professor, Communication Disorders, Middle Tennessee State University, Murfreesboro, TN
Gayle Daly	Coordinator and Instructor in Communication Disorders, Longwood University, VA
Donna Geffner	Director, Speech and Hearing Center Director, Graduate Programs in Speech-Language Pathology and Audiology, St. John's University, Jamaica, NY
Laura Justice	Assistant Professor, Curriculum and Special Education, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA
Judy Montgomery	Professor, Special Education and Literacy, Chapman University, Orange, CA
Barbara Moore-Brown	Director, Special & Alternative Education, El Rancho Unified School District, Pico Rivera, CA
Sarah Sweeney	SLP, St. Paul Public Schools, St. Paul, MN Private Practice SLP
Kathy Swiney	SLP, Aldine Independent School District, Houston, TX Private Practice SLP
Sheila Ward	Director, Communication Disorders and Allied Health, Detroit Public Schools, MI

The agenda for this year's NSLAB meeting was full, and began with a breakfast that allowed NSLAB members to socialize before the activities began. The first order of business was to summarize the activities of AGS Publishing over the past year, and to update Board members on our Speech-Language line of products and services.

Following this brief summary, it was time for the day's discussion topics. These sessions were designed as an open dialogue between Board members and AGS Publishing staff. Participants discussed various angles and opportunities related to each topic, in both small and large groups. This year's discussion topics were:

1. Professional Development and Training
2. Literacy and SLPs: Past, Present, and Future
3. AGS Publishing Marketing Communications
4. Hot Topics and Trends in the Field

Each session resulted in active discussion, productive exchange of ideas, and valuable feedback about the topics. Sheila Ward was pleased with the direction of the forum. "AGS Publishing encourages our honest opinions on everything—testing/assessment/therapy issues, training programs, style and organization of materials, marketing—everything. Meetings are full of lively conversation, humor and good food. I look forward to participating in this progressive think tank every year!"

Frank Bender stresses the importance of SLPs coming together in a forum like this. "It is professionally rejuvenating to be in a room of leaders, brainstorming strategies to help improve services in the field of speech-language pathology."

The day was an affirmation to how engaged Board members are in their field. Board member Donna Geffner, PhD, CCC-SLP/A, and past president of ASHA agrees: "What was most exhilarating about the NSLAB meeting was the exchange of ideas and listening to colleagues who have their finger on the pulse of current practices and future trends. Seeing how attentive AGS Publishing representatives were made us feel that they really care about product relevancy and quality. They listened to our needs."

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