



Annual Academy Conference Keynote Speakers

By Shirley R. Bate, FIT/AOGPE

Dr. Guinevere Eden and Dr. Nadine Gaab were the keynote speakers at the Academy's Annual conference held in Charlotte, NC on April 13-14, 2018. Both researchers enlightened attendees about historical and current brain research and the neurobiology of those with and without dyslexia.

Nadine Gaab, Ph.D., provided the keynote presentation on Saturday, April 14, 2018. Dr. Gaab is an Associate Professor of Pediatrics at the Boston Children's Hospital, which is part of Harvard Medical School, and is a member of the faculty at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is also an adjunct faculty member at Brandeis University. Dr. Gaab is the principal investigator for research conducted within the Laboratories of Cognitive Neuroscience at Boston Children's Hospital, where she and her colleagues focus on the brain correlates of reading development in typical and atypical children, as well as possible pre-markers of developmental dyslexia in preschoolers and infants. Dr. Gaab uses fMRI and behavioral measures in her studies of the brain in these focal areas of research.

Dr. Gaab's keynote address was titled, *The Typical and Atypical Reading Brain: How a Neurobiological Framework of Reading Development Can Inform Educational Practice and Policy*. Dr. Gaab posed the question, "When does reading development begin?" The answer is earlier than one might think. Reading development begins in utero because that is when neural networks for sound and visual processing are being formed. During preschool years, phono-



Dr. Guinevere Eden



Dr. Nadine Gaab

logical and phonemic processing and letter recognition begin to manifest, followed by phoneme-grapheme mapping, word identification, and reading sentences and connected text in the early primary grades (K-1). By approximately the 2nd – 4th grades, learning to read transitions to reading to learn, while explicit reading instruction diminishes correspondingly. After 4th grade, reading of complex text, reading fluency, and reading comprehension are all goals of skilled reading.

Dr. Gaab provided a walk-through of the major areas of the brain and some of the cognitive functions within those areas. Visual processing of colors, words, and objects occurs in the occipital lobe, and the temporal lobe does auditory language/sound processing by determining the type of sound (environmental, language) and distributing it accordingly. Inside the temporal lobe is the medial lobe, where memory structures are located. The parietal lobe does higher order, multi-modal processing, and it is also where sound-symbol mapping occurs. The frontal lobe, the "CEO of the brain," plans and makes judgments, albeit Dr. Gaab noted that ADHD affects these functions negatively. In the brain's topography, the mountains

or raised portions of the folds are the gyri, and the valleys, or indentations, are the sulci. During the reading process, brain activity begins in the back of the brain in the occipital lobe, and moves forward through the temporal, parietal, and frontal lobes. The fusiform gyrus, or visual word form area (VWFA) that is located in the occipital lobe, is where letter and word recognition occurs. The VWFA develops from read-

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President's Message



Dear Friends,

The Academy is a vibrant organization whose members have their roots in a long history of effective reading instruction while continuing to learn from the most recent research. That was evident at our April conference when our keynote speakers Dr. Guinevere Eden and Dr. Nadine Gaab presented current research on the brain and reading instruction.

Dr. Eden's keynote considered how the brain changes after reading intervention. After effective intervention, the left hemisphere becomes similar to that of typical readers. The right hemisphere also becomes more activated. In addition, she shared recent insights from her groundbreaking research regarding the differences in the brain anatomy of females with developmental dyslexia when compared to that of males. This new research may help us better understand how gender differences in brain structure impact our instruction. The research article is publicly available at <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3775969/>.

Dr. Nadine Gaab spoke to us about how a neurobiological framework of reading can inform our educational practice and policy. Dr. Gaab has done extensive work on how early we can discern differences in the brain structure of individuals with developmental dyslexia (DD). She pointed out that reading development starts in utero because sound processing starts then. Dr. Gaab noted that brain differences in children with Developmental Dyslexia can be seen in babies as young as four months. As both Dr. Gaab and Dr. Eden pointed out, our brains are naturally wired for auditory processing and language, but reading must be intentionally mapped onto those parts of our brain through instruction. In fact, good intervention creates "reading highways" between the parts of our brain we use for reading. Dr. Gaab and her colleagues are working on a screening app that can be used with young children because the most effective time for intervention is in kindergarten and first-grade.

Our next annual conference will be on April 5 & 6, 2019 in White Plains, New York. Fellows and FITs will have a workshop on Sunday morning April 7. I have always found that our conferences have a quality like no other. Be prepared to soak in the information while spending time with colleagues who truly understand how to provide effective reading instruction grounded in Orton-Gillingham principles. Our colleagues from IMSLEC and ALTA will be joining us as well.

The Academy joined The Alliance for Accreditation and Certification of Dyslexia Specialists, known as "The Alliance" because we needed to unite the organizations that have deep roots in Orton-Gillingham. Our combined numbers represent tens of thousands of educators who adhere to instruction that follows Orton-Gillingham principles.

The Academy joins together a group of educators who have met high standards of training and practice. We are uniquely and credibly grounded in those principles for the benefit of our students, and we can be proud to be a part of it.

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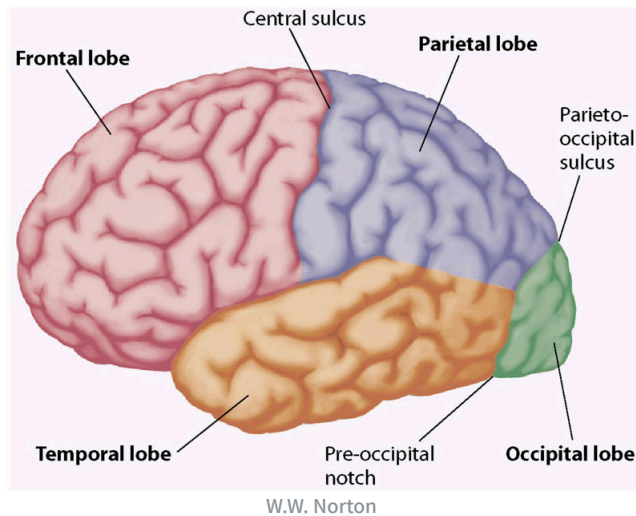
ing instruction and experience. The reading process encompasses the cortical surface, and also employs “highways” in the brain made of white matter tracts (the arcuate fasciculus, or AF) that connect the different brain areas, such as one that connects the VWFA to the frontal lobe.

Dr. Gaab reported that 66% of U.S. fourth graders are not reading at grade level, and that among students from low socioeconomic backgrounds, 80% are reading below grade level. This dearth of literacy is costly to American society at many levels including financial, as the US Dept. of Labor estimates that illiteracy costs about \$225 billion a year in lost labor productivity. Sadly, 70% of poor readers in 1st grade are still reading below grade level by ninth grade.

One of the marked areas of difference between proficient and poor readers is vocabulary. Children enter kindergarten with a vocabulary of roughly 10,000 words. Between kindergarten and fifth grade, children with normal or better reading skills acquire about 40,000 more words, resulting in a vocabulary of 50,000 words. Poor readers do not acquire vocabularies of this size, because the bulk of vocabulary acquisition once a child is in school is due to reading. Good readers read vastly more words than poor readers. Students at the 90th percentile in reading skills read as many words in three days as a poor reader does in a year outside of school.

Given that 10 – 12% of the population has dyslexia, what defines the condition? Dyslexia is a specific learning disability of neurobiological origin characterized by difficulties with accurate and/or fluent word recognition, and poor spelling and decoding abilities. These characteristics cannot be explained by poor vision or hearing, lack of motivation or educational opportunities (International Dyslexia Association, 2002). The clinical and psychological implications for those with dyslexia may include being misperceived as lazy, unintelligent, and lacking in motivation or effort. Lack of reading and related school progress combined with negative social misperceptions can result in greater rates of depression and anti-social behavior, which, when combined with low reading achievement, contribute to lower high school graduation rates and a higher likelihood of being involved with the juvenile justice system.

Dyslexia is heritable, giving offspring with one dyslexic parent a 50% chance of having dyslexia, and identical twins a



68% chance. These are very high probabilities. Although dyslexia is heritable, a single “dyslexia gene” has yet to be discovered, and in Dr. Gaab’s view, will not be. Rather, several genes are reported as dyslexia susceptible, a majority of which are thought to be involved in early development. Lower gray matter volume, differences in white matter in the brain, and migration of neurons beyond their target (ectopias) during brain development result in fewer connecting “highways”

to assemble words. Research has shown that differences in brain structure pre-exist reading instruction and experience and are not a consequence of poor or non-reading. For these reasons, if a child is struggling with learning to read and has a primary family member(s) with dyslexia, that student should be provided appropriate intervention as soon as possible.

The good news is that pre- and post-intervention studies of children with dyslexia show changes in neural activity that causes their brain activity to look more like that of children without dyslexia. Dr. Gaab noted that although research study interventions may be as little as eight weeks in duration, in real life remedial instruction should continue over a considerably longer period of time. The *Dyslexia Paradox* is the conundrum of the present practice of “wait to fail,” which allows children with difficulty learning to read, spell, and write to struggle over a long period of time, often years, before intervention is provided. In meta-analyses of intervention studies, larger effect sizes for instruction were reported for children in grades K – 1 than in grades 2 – 3. There is converging scientific consensus that early intervention is effective for the majority of children at risk for reading failure, yet it is not the norm.

The READ (Researching Early Attributes of Dyslexia, 2011-2013) study screened 1,433 children and selected approximately 200 to follow for the purpose of determining what the kindergarten predictors are for end of grades 1 and 2 reading ability. The early predictors of poor reading achievement are phonological awareness, pseudo-word repetition, rapid automatized naming, expressive and receptive vocabulary, letter (sound) knowledge, and the home literacy environment. Mounting scientific evidence identifies children with specific characteristics who are arriving for their first day of school significantly less equipped neurologically for reading than their counterparts without those characteristics. The

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Dyslexia Paradox is that these children, who are identifiable before or within several months of their arrival at school, often wait years before intervention is offered, even though it is most effective when delivered in kindergarten and first grades.

As Dr. Gaab remarked that we should be asking ourselves, “What can we do as early as possible for these at-risk children?” Dyslexia is neurobiological in origin and can be screened for at an early age. Dr. Gaab’s research lab recommends that the following areas should be measured in an early K/1 – K/2 screening tool: phonological/phonemic awareness, verbal/phonological short-term memory (i.e., non-word repetition), rapid automatized naming (RAN), letter-sound knowledge, vocabulary, oral comprehension, and family history. A screening tool with these measures should possess these eight important characteristics: short, comprehensive, resourceful, early, ESL/dialect inclusion, neurobiology/genetics, evidence-based response to screening, and developmentally appropriate. No amount of screening, though, is useful unless it is followed by evidence-based intervention when indicated by the screener. Dr. Gaab’s lab is developing a 30-minute screening app (the *Developmental Dyslexia Screening App*, not yet available) for tablets with resources for responding to children with poor screening results.

The research results from Dr. Gaab’s lab have educational and clinical implications. First, early identification of children at risk for dyslexia is possible, and if appropriate intervention occurs immediately following early screening, negative psychological, educational, and social impacts can be significantly reduced or eliminated. Second, the education of teachers, school psychologists, and clinicians should be underpinned with an understanding of the complexities of the etiology of specific learning disabilities, so they can competently identify at-risk children and provide correct recommendations for intervention. Lastly, changes in educational policies and early education IEPs designed to effectively screen and intervene for dyslexia are important.

Dr. Eden provided the keynote presentation on Friday, April 13, 2018. She is Director of the Center for the Study of Learning at Georgetown University, where she is a professor in the department of pediatrics and teaches graduate students in Georgetown’s Interdisciplinary Program for Neuroscience. She and her colleagues use behavioral measures and brain-imaging techniques to understand the neural bases of developmental dyslexia, and the neurobiological correlates of successful intervention.

Dr. Eden introduced her address, titled *Unraveling the Brain’s Role in Reading and Dyslexia: What We Have Learned Since*

Samuel Orton’s Pioneering Work, by referencing Dr. Samuel Orton’s hypotheses regarding the neurological basis for dyslexia discussed in Dr. Norman Geschwind’s article, *Why Orton Was Right*. This was the historical reference point from which she guided conference attendees through the earlier methods of investigating brain structure and function to her current work using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI). MRI is for studying brain structure, and fMRI is for brain activity.

Brain imaging studies show three key areas of the brain that are central to the reading process: 1) the left inferotemporal cortex, where the visual word form area (VWFA) is located, 2) the left temporo-parietal cortex, where phonological assembly and semantics are situated, and 3) the left inferior frontal gyrus, where phonological assembly and semantics are integrated in close proximity to motor coordination for word production. Although these three areas of the brain are identified as crucial to reading, the entire brain engages in the reading process.

When a reader sees a well-known word, it is processed directly by the VWFA. If the reader sees an unfamiliar word, it is assembled phonologically and semantically to confirm its identity. Brains of individuals with dyslexia are underactive in the visual word form area (VWFA) as compared to the brains of typical readers, which is theorized to be due to their difficulty processing text efficiently in the phonological assembly of words, in turn reducing the number of words that can be automatically identified by the VWFA. In typically developing beginning readers, brain activity is greatest in the left temporo-parietal cortex, as they must phonologically compile the majority of the words they read. As those young readers become more proficient, a greater number of words are routed directly to the VWFA, eventually leading to effortless reading after a substantial amount of experience. The differences between less experienced and proficient readers can be seen in brain imaging comparisons between children and adults, where the children’s left temporo-parietal cortex and phonological processing are most active during a reading task, but the adults’ left inferotemporal cortex that houses the VWFA is most active.

Dr. Eden spoke to the importance of understanding the limits of brain imaging and reading research, which is that they are limited to highly specified areas of scientific interest, and results cannot be extrapolated to answer other or broader questions that are beyond the scope of the studies. She also observed that brain imaging is not used for diagnosis of dyslexia in individuals, and that the brain images shown in studies illustrate composites of data, not an individual’s brain.

Annual Academy Keynote Speakers (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4)

There are three areas of phonological processing that predict reading achievement (Wagner & Torgesen, 1987): 1) phonemic awareness, 2) phonological naming, and 3) working memory. Individuals who have both poor phonemic awareness and slow phonological naming are considered to have a 'double deficit,' or more significant dyslexia. Rapid automatized naming tasks activate areas outside of the brain's left hemisphere, which Dr. Eden remarked is an area in need of greater research. Brain imaging shows more activity in the left hemisphere of typical readers, whereas individuals with dyslexia show greater activity in the right hemisphere. This finding is consistent with Dr. Samuel Orton's hypothesis that one must have sufficient acquired competence in the left hemisphere to override conflicting visual information related to mirror invariance (mirror images of visual stimuli) from the right hemisphere. Overriding mirror invariance is part of the process of learning to read. Because our visual system has the capacity to recognize objects from any perspective, we can see a chair from the left, right, front, or back and recognize it as a chair. It is only through instruction and reading experience that our brains learn to recognize letters that are identical or very similar in shape from different perspectives, such as *b*, *d*, and *p*, as being different from the other. Individuals with dyslexia have greater difficulty with this differentiation, as their phonological inefficiency hampers or stalls their capacity to acquire sufficient reading experience to automatically identify these mirror-image letters as unique.

Dr. Eden noted that sex differences in research participants are an area of importance that affect study results and will have to be taken into consideration in future research. Presently, 16% of brain imaging studies regarding dyslexia are those of females, yet results of those studies are published and generalized to both sexes. This is problematic because females' brains are inherently different from males in multiple regards, including that they use both the left and right hemispheres for phonological processing and other language tasks, have greater gray matter volume, and benefit neuro-

logically from the protective effects of estrogen. Females' brains have greater resiliency in some regards, for example they recover from stroke to a greater degree than males. Females' dual-hemisphere processing of language, as opposed to males' reliance on the left hemisphere, may contribute to their comprising a smaller percentage of the dyslexic population. These and other factors necessitate dyslexia brain imaging studies that differentiate structural and functional findings by sex.

Dr. Eden addressed studies regarding the magnocellular deficit theory, which posits that certain differences measured in the visual system at the molecular level are the cause of delayed or inhibited acquisition of reading skills, such as is found in dyslexia. These studies, which investigated whether magnocellular differences cause dyslexia or are only correlates of the condition, yielded results establishing that they were the latter, not the former. Magnocellular differences are a consequence and correlate of dyslexia, not a cause.

Dr. Guinevere Eden and Dr. Nadine Gaab provided AOGPE conference attendees with listener-friendly, comprehensible descriptions of the reading brain and the results of their scientific inquiries using neuroimaging. Due to their dedication and diligence in sharing this important information, as Orton-Gillingham educators and practitioners, we are better equipped to reflect on our own practice, and to engage in and advocate for the critical next steps in improving identification of, and intervention for children at risk for reading failure.

References

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Gaab, N., *It's a Myth That Young Children Cannot Be Screened for Dyslexia!*, Examiner, February 2017, International Dyslexia Association

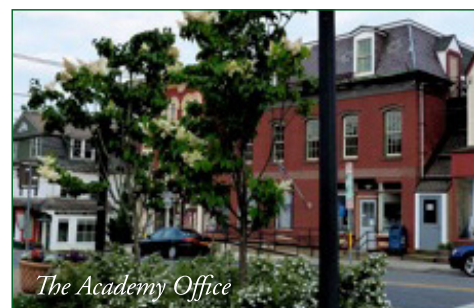
President's Message (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

I am honored to serve as the Academy's new president for the next two-year term. I have been a member of the Academy for 21 years, so it has been an important part of my life for a long time. I am a teaching principal at a charter school I helped to found in New Hampshire twelve years ago. We use Orton-Gillingham to teach all students the structure of the English language, both in the regular education classroom and for special education reading and spelling instruction. Hopefully, we will have an opportunity to meet at future conferences.

My best to you and your students,



Beth McClure, M.Ed., FAOGPE
President, AOGPE



The Legendary Diana Hanbury King | September 2, 1927 - June 15, 2018

Diana Hanbury King (1927-2018), pioneer and legend in the field of dyslexia, passed away at her home on June 15 after a short illness.

Under the aegis of mentor Helene Durbrow, Diana began her nearly seventy-year career in the field of dyslexia at Sidwell Friends School in Washington, D.C., where Anna Gillingham visited regularly to supervise teachers. Prior to that, she had spent time in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) on her uncle's farm, Kildonan; both her uncle and his daughters had what she later realized was dyslexia. Her first teaching job—at Ruzawi—came about by pure chance while she lived there, and thus began a lifelong passion.

In 1955 Diana established Dunna-beck, a summer camp in Pennsylvania, designed to meet the needs of dyslexic students. She served as the camp's director for 35 summers. In 1969, with the help of Kurt Goldman, she established The Kildonan School, first in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, then in Amenia, New York. Both programs continue to flourish. Schools, camps, and training programs around the world, including Fraser Academy (Canada) and Camp Spring Creek (North Carolina), have been established with her vision and guidance. Durango Mountain Camp was also inspired by Camp Dunnabeck, and The Diana Hanbury King Academy for training teachers opened recently in Australia.

Diana mentored dozens of leaders in the field of learning difficulties--authors, school administrators, dyslexia rights advocates, and international presenters who acknowledge her as a driving force behind their work. She authored some fifteen important teaching books and continued to write up until a few weeks before her death.

A gifted presenter, Diana trained thousands of teachers in both public and independent schools. Never one to suffer fools gladly, she expected only the best of teachers--because, as she often said, our students "do not have any time to waste." It was rare to win an argument with Diana. You needed to come prepared, and sometimes with research done, usually to find that she was correct in her initial position. Even so, she gave of herself selflessly to her students and her trainees, never unwilling to share her time and



advice, her suggestions, and her passion for teaching.

A Founding Fellow of the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners & Educators and a member of the International Dyslexia Association (formerly known as the Orton Dyslexia Society) since 1951, Diana received the New York Branch Annual Award (1985), the Samuel T. Orton Award (1990), and the Margaret Byrd Rawson Lifetime Achievement Award (2013) for her work on the national level. In 2016, she received the National Teachers Hall of Fame Lifetime Achievement Award, only the second time in 25 years that they have bestowed this honor.

When asked, Diana was always quite clear that her first passion and best

skill was tutoring students with dyslexia. At her passing, a former student wrote, "Mrs. King was the best teacher I ever had. She was always hard but gentle with me because she knew the potential of her students." She was a gifted instructor who understood deeply the notion of diagnostic-prescriptive teaching and used her almost limitless knowledge to inform her instruction in each session with her students, who ranged in age from five to adult. She taught at schools and camps, in public and private school settings, and even for a time at a prison.

Diana was born in England and was a naturalized American citizen. She held a B.A. Honors degree from the University of London, an M.A. from George Washington University, and an honorary doctorate from New England College. She knew to some degree five languages, including French, German, Italian, Spanish, and Russian. She was a passionate gardener, a vodka drinker, a world traveler, and a lover of words and their origins. She read extensively across a wide variety of disciplines. She was an avid horseback rider and downhill skied well into her sixties. By the age of 80, she had two tattoos, including a full color dragon, which adorned her shoulder.

Diana was devoted to her extensive family as well. She is survived by her son, Christopher King; grandchildren Ian Michaels, Sol Michaels, and Eliana Ballen; sisters Jillian Poole, Anna Larkin, and Josephine Coatsworth; ex-husband

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The Legendary Diana Hanbury King | (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

and lifelong friend James Cecil King; nephews Tony Poole (Elizabeth) and Colin Poole (Kristine); two grandnieces, Natalie and Alison; and first cousin, Ashley Hanbury, in South Africa. She was predeceased by her parents, Una and Anthony Hanbury; her daughter, Sheila King; and her son-in-law, Murray Michaels.

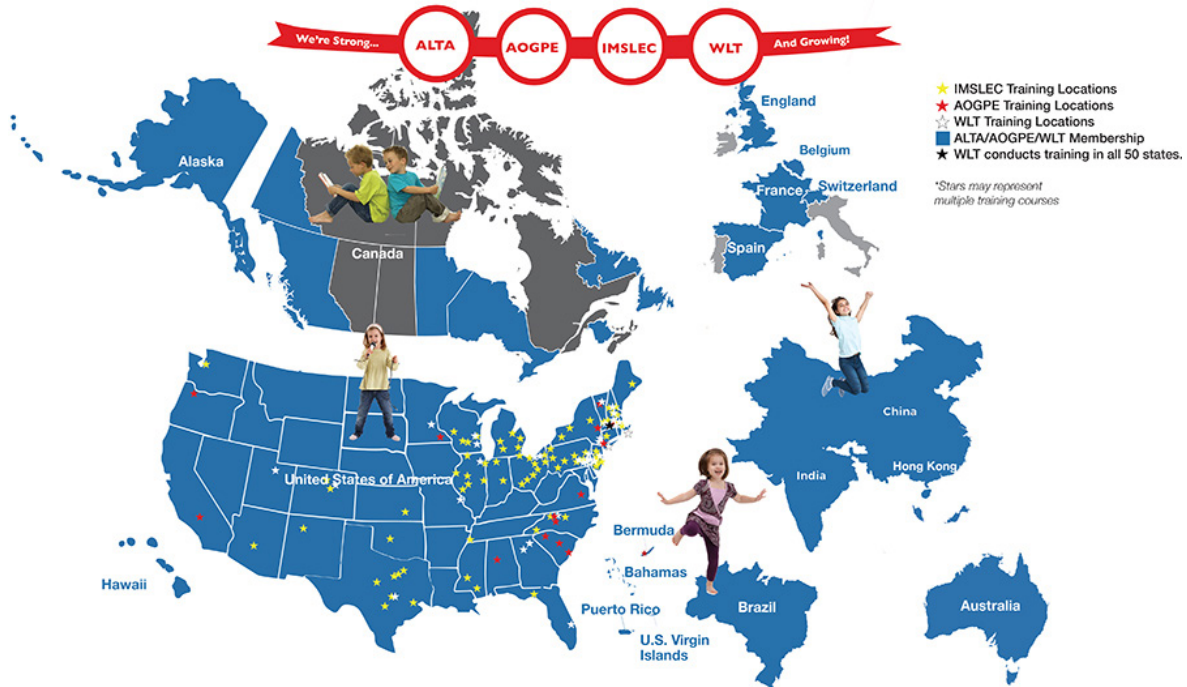
A lifelong teacher and learner and a force to be reckoned with, Diana leaves behind an enormous legacy in the programs she built, the teachers she inspired, and the students she taught. Those who work in the field of dyslexia have benefited from her wealth of knowledge and her passion for teaching. Her legacy lives on through them.

In lieu of flowers, Diana's family asks that donations be made to The Kildonan School Pool Fund (kildonan.org), the International Dyslexia Association (dyslexiaida.org), or the Academy of Orton- Gillingham Practitioners & Educators (ortonacademy.org).



the Alliance

for Accreditation and Certification
of Dyslexia Specialists



Our Mission: 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.

<http://www.allianceaccreditation.org>

Golden Rules for Teachers | By Diana Hanbury King

If you are currently working with students, the “Golden Rules” in this guide are meant to help you both reflect upon and, where appropriate, modify your teaching practices. It will be useful to reflect upon the ways in which you incorporate these rules into your teaching and how your students respond to them.

Over the next several newsletters, an excerpt of Diana’s rules will be presented. Stay tuned in future newsletters for more practical and timely advice.

RULE #1: YOUR VOICE

A leading speaker will vary and modulate his voice, raising and lowering it and deploying the full scale of tones. He will avoid extravagant gestures and stand impressively erect. He will not pace about and when he does so not for any distance. He should not dart forward except in moderation and with strict control.... He should control himself by the way he holds and moves his entire body... He should control his eyes with great care, for as the face is the image of the soul the eyes are its translators.

- Cicero (103- 43B.C.)

Your voice is the most important instrument in your repertoire, and you need to give it as much attention as a musician does to his instruments. Is it strident? Pitched too high? Indistinct? Regional dialect where you grew up rather than standard English? Are there still sounds that give you trouble?

No musician ever starts to play without first tuning his instrument, nor should you be teaching without a tuned voice. Record your voice and listen to it. Engage the help of a speech teacher. I have friends whom I have met after an absence of several years, and when I commented on their newly acquired, beautifully modulated voices, two of them told me they had taken a Dale Carnegie course in public speaking. I was fortunate to be able to join classes taught by Hester Provinsen, who worked with newly elected congressmen and their wives.

Actually, every day that you face your class, public speaking is exactly what you are doing. There are many courses available these days; I have seen the results of only Dale Carnegie and, in my case, of Hester Provinsen.

Pacing is another thing. Young children need time to process what you are saying. Avoid rattling on the way you might in a conversation with a friend. You may be good at multitasking, but do not assume your students can listen to you as you write on the board and talk at the same time. This is especially the case if you are expecting them to copy from that board.

Another aspect of pacing, which I discuss in Rule #8 is allowing adequate response time.

RULE #8: PACING

Don’t be so intent on your lesson plan that you fail to pay attention to your students.

Young children need time to process language and to think before responding. Do not rush them. Never use a stopwatch when working on developing language skills.

Perhaps your student or class has had a bad weekend and is not ready for the new concept you had planned to introduce today. In that case you might do better to review material, to spend the time in oral reading, or in reading to them.

Thank you for your continued support!

Every contribution helps the Academy fulfill its mission of setting and maintaining professional and ethical standards for the practice of the Orton-Gillingham Approach and to certify individuals and to accredit instructional and training programs that meet these standards.

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The Underdog, the Educator, and the Champion: How Orton-Gillingham Made Me a Better Evaluator

By Stefanie Waite, M. Ed.

We all love to root for the underdog in part because we all know how it feels to lack the advantages necessary to best an opponent. We know the hurt, disappointment, and even anger at our sense of injustice. Conversely, we are elated to see the least likely person take the prize, especially if demons are laid to rest in the process. As varied as my career opportunities have been, my professional life has been dedicated to one sole outcome: to change the odds for those unlikely to succeed without the helping hand of a knowledgeable, well-trained educator. My most powerful tool in this quest? Brain science.

My area of expertise is reading. If reading came as easily for you as a child as it did for me growing up, you might have trouble imagining how it feels to be unable to read your textbooks, signage, instructions on forms, or even the back of a box of cereal. What kind of life would follow, what doors would close, what shame would you endure, often in secret? It is stunning to consider how many children and adults know this pain. The National Assessment of Educational Progress 2017 test results show that fewer than 40% of U.S. students can read at or above a “proficient” level. In other words, we are failing 60% of our kids. It is a national travesty that so many students struggle with a task so essential to success as reading, especially when advances in brain science have shown us an effective way to teach this basic yet complex skill.

We cannot claim that we lack the knowledge required to solve the problem of illiteracy. We can identify those children at risk for reading failure before they wake up on their first day of kindergarten: children born in poverty, those with limited exposure to books, children whose parents did not graduate from high school, survivors of trauma, minorities, children with neurological differences, and those with learning disabilities such as dyslexia. (You can learn more about early predictors for dyslexia by reading the article on Dr. Nadine Gaab’s keynote lecture at the Academy’s conference.) While I cannot change the factors I listed above, I am not without resources. I can bring the science of the Orton-Gillingham Approach (OG) to students in need and watch their confidence build as they learn the skills to unlock the mystery of reading.

My own introduction to OG took place more than two decades ago. An English major, fresh out of college, I landed my dream job as a newspaper reporter in California but soon realized that I wanted to do more than just write about other

people—I wanted to have a meaningful, positive impact on others. I enrolled in a graduate program for teachers. To earn money to support my studies, I worked as a high school para-educator and was given a small classroom of ninth graders whose reading level was at about third grade. There I was, completely inexperienced, and expected to assist fourteen to fifteen-year-olds who were reading at the level of eight-year-olds. I was terrified. I’d never taught anyone how to read, and now I was responsible for teaching these bright but angry, frustrated adolescents about great books. I adored reading, but my passion did not translate into classroom skill. I knew plenty about the great books but next to nothing about how to help my students access them. Like many pre-service teachers, I never considered how reading develops. The old notions of sitting side-by-side, sounding out words, and murmuring encouragement simply did not work. Not for these students, not for many students—not for a whopping 60% of them! I left determined to understand the mystery of reading.

My next job was a life changer. The principal of Pine Ridge School in Williston, Vermont, a private boarding school accredited with the Academy, hired me to teach English to students with learning disabilities, such as dyslexia. Orientation involved intensive training in OG with experts in the field, including Founding Fellow Jean Foss and Fellow Marcella “Cookie” Fulmer. I was quickly immersed in the study of phonology, syllable types, syllable divisions, spelling rules, word origins, morphology, and the history of our language. I went from knowing nothing to realizing how much there was to absorb and how impactful this knowledge could be for the child who struggled to read. Why hadn’t anyone taught me this before, and why didn’t all teachers receive this training?

Equipped with this knowledge, and well mentored by titans in the field, I worked with small classes of teenagers with dyslexia. I also tutored individual students using the OG Approach. My underdog students started to excel. Their eyes brightened, and their dreams grew. The scores showed it—proved it—and their grateful parents were beyond overjoyed.

I also began a training program at the Stern Center for Language and Learning, also located in Williston, Vermont, so that I could provide comprehensive assessments for clients of all ages. The simple beauty of OG, of course, lies

continued on page 10...

The Underdog, the Educator, and the Champion... | (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9)

in its systematic, multisensory, explicit way of laying the foundation for reading and writing. OG provided me with deep knowledge of our language and keen awareness of how it develops in young brains, essential for anyone providing comprehensive assessment. Supported by decades of research on how speech maps to print and bolstered by the latest brain science, this flexible approach works with all students, not just those with learning disabilities. It turns out that our brains are wired for speech, not reading. The OG Approach is aligned with research on explicit, systematic phonics and morphology instruction to produce literate, confident readers and writers. My multidisciplinary training in OG and assessment helped me pinpoint the areas of language and literacy that caused problems for the struggling readers that came to the Stern Center for an evaluation, and I was able to make specific recommendations for teachers to target the areas of oral language and written language that needed attention.

One example of how my OG knowledge informed my assessment was when I worked with a bright 10-year-old who struggled with dyslexia and dysgraphia. Intellectually gifted, this boy had received support in structured literacy at school from a reading specialist a few times per week, but his progress was lackluster at best, and he was getting frustrated and anxious. His parents worried that if he didn't start making measurable gains soon, he would drop out of school eventually. My evaluation revealed subtle phonological processing problems, significant rapid naming speed deficits, superb phonological memory capacity along with fine motor weaknesses, poor decoding ability, weak reading fluency, and profound spelling challenges. His evaluation informed his OG instruction, which featured intensive work in phonological awareness and sound-symbol correspondence/decoding, along with fluency work, explicit handwriting instruction, and SOS spelling. Fast forward to today, and he is gainfully employed in the world of artificial intelligence and **Google Brain**, building artificial neural networks. Many of the underdogs I worked with have gone on to higher education and brilliant careers, enjoying personal success they never dreamed were possible because they couldn't read as children.

Underdogs can now achieve academic and personal success. Most of my former students at Pine Ridge have gone on to higher education and brilliant careers. These are the same students who could have so easily dropped out of school, frustrated and demoralized. Today, they are employed or in graduate school, drawing healthy salaries and making use of their brilliance while managing just fine with their so-called deficits.

Once upon a time, dyslexia was called "word blindness," but today we know how to turn on the lights so that individuals with dyslexia can "see." More importantly, the instructional methods that help those with dyslexia benefit all beginning readers. To ignore the science and stand by helplessly as the literacy rate in this country remains stagnant or worsens is to my mind professionally irresponsible.

My direction clarified: promote teaching brain science to educators, and spread the message on the science of literacy. Sharing this knowledge with classroom teachers and other interventionists, we could drastically shrink our nation's literacy problem.

When I share a psychoeducational report with a student's family and school, my hope is that the child's teachers will better understand the student's learning profile and implement recommendations. My experience is that educators are hungry to do whatever they can to help their students succeed. Sometimes, it can be a difficult task convincing professionals to change deeply held opinions about reading instruction. As educators, we owe it to our children to equip them with the reading skills required to hold a job, pursue higher education, participate in our democracy, and feel positively about themselves as learners. Underdogs can be champions, at least with regard to reading, and all it takes is an educator rooting for them, armed with science.

Stefanie Waite is the Communications Director at the Stern Center for Language and Learning, where she served previously as an instructor and an evaluator, performing 850 diagnostic evaluations with learners of all ages.



The Academy's application process is online!

Go to <https://orton-gillingham.fluidreview.com/> and set up your account. Make sure you select the correct "stream" based on the certification for which you are applying. After creating an account, check out the Resource Section for information on each application stream.

Questions? Email info@ortonacademy.org

Horizon Academy: A Newly Accredited AOGPE Instructional Program

By Amanda Sessler, Communications Manager

When a group of dedicated parents in Kansas City were concerned that their children were being left behind in school, they decided to create their own. They opened Horizon Academy in 1999 under the leadership of Sharyl Kennedy with just 12 students. Through the years, Horizon Academy has expanded and currently serves 77 students in grades 1-12 diagnosed with dyslexia or other learning disabilities. Students travel from within a 75 mile radius of the school located in Roeland Park, KS.

Horizon Academy has recently extended its reach beyond just being a day school. Now offering programs including a tutoring center, free early reading screenings, professional development opportunities for educators, and free community lectures, they are able to help even more students with dyslexia and other diagnosed learning disabilities. Vicki Asher, Head of School at Horizon Academy shares why she felt it was important to expand programming. “We understand that not every student is able to attend Horizon Academy. Through these additional resources, we hope to impact and assist even more students with learning disabilities in our community.”

Students arrive at Horizon Academy often feeling dejected and unsuccessful. They remark that learning was challenging, they didn't feel like they could ask for help, their school couldn't help people with dyslexia, and they felt overwhelmed. When students arrive at Horizon Academy, they find that their confidence grows. Often, it is the first time students feel successful. “Before I was a really bad reader and I've learned how to read a lot better now and more fluently and write paragraphs and sentences the proper way.”
-Mason

Horizon Academy equips these students with the tools they need to be successful learners. A low student to teacher ratio ensures students are receiving individualized instruction. As a newly accredited instructional program through the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators, they are qualified to deliver an effective education to students with dyslexia and other language-based learning disabilities.



Vicki Asher, Head of School and Gerilyn Semro, OGCE/AOGPE, Middle School

As one 5th grade student puts it, “They give me lots of OG tools and different ways to help me in reading, writing, and spelling.” Horizon Academy is delighted by their new affiliation with the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators and recognizes the impact this partnership has had on their students. Teachers also use a multisensory approach in math instruction, which is ideal for reaching students with learning disabilities. Ultimately, students transition back to a traditional school or work environment equipped with the skills necessary for academic and social success.

Parents have noticed the difference these strategies make in their students' lives--and in their families'.

Homework battles begin to disappear, students get along better with their siblings, and parents see their children regain confidence. One parent commented, “Not only did we get our family time back in the evenings, but we saw our children smile again and feel proud of themselves. Both kids look forward to school and never want to miss.”

Horizon Academy has seen transformations occur in students with dyslexia. Thanks to that dedicated group of founders and the staff that have carried on their mission, students are rediscovering their love for learning. A seventh grade student said it best, “I used to hate school, but now I love it. Horizon Academy is one of the very few schools that appreciates every single one of the students.”



Teacher Colby Horn, A/AOGPE with Horizon Academy students

Win the Case, Lose the Child: Why Lawyers Need Your Expertise

By Alexis L. Greenberg, Esq.

Once upon a time, I received a call from a thoughtful, passionate, and intelligent education law colleague of mine. “I know you’ve done a lot of work with dyslexia both as a teacher and as a lawyer,” she said. “I have a new client, and I’m wondering if you can help me understand the difference between Orton-Gillingham (OG) and a program based on OG.” In that moment, I realized how little even well-meaning and dedicated attorneys understand about the Orton-Gillingham Approach. It also occurred to me that most attorneys do not know where to go to educate themselves. OG professionals and lawyers tend to work in parallel, not together.

Attorneys who practice special education law encounter a vast range of student needs including medical concerns, sensory issues, learning disabilities, physical conditions, genetic syndromes, behavioral patterns, and emotional challenges. Lawyers recognize that it is the job of the evaluator and of the other experts to opine on the recommended course of action for an individual child. However, if the attorney lacks a basic understanding of the child’s considerations, it will be difficult for that lawyer to have a thoughtful conversation with parents and to argue competently for an appropriate education.

For example, if an attorney does not understand that students with dyslexia have a unique neurological processing pattern, that lawyer will not know why the Orton-Gillingham Approach is essential. Even if the attorney does know this but cannot accurately recognize OG itself or a program based on OG, the lawyer will not have a basic sense of whether the offered reading services are appropriate. The attorney may end up arguing in good faith for reading support that will not help a child with dyslexia.

Imagine an extreme situation: A tutoring center offers a whole language program (which does not systematically teach literacy and has been disproved in the research community) that it claims will remediate dyslexia. The parent believes the tutoring center could be helpful. The attorney has no real knowledge of dyslexia or reading research, so cannot suggest any other resources to the parent. The lawyer ends up diligently arguing for compensatory hours at this tutoring center. Though the attorney may win the case and secure tutoring hours funded by the Department of Education, in reality we have lost the child in a serious and life-altering way if she or he spends hours sitting in a whole language program.



This is why lawyers need outreach from YOU.

Every time I have the privilege of presenting at an Academy conference, I look around the room and think about the incredible amount of expertise before me. At the end of every presentation, I implore the attendees to return to their home communities and find out who the attorneys and advocates are in their local areas.

I ask them to be bold, and I ask all of you now to do the same. Introduce yourself to local lawyers! Email and ask if their firms are interested in receiving information from you about dyslexia and Orton-Gillingham. Start a local outreach group and develop a mailing list. Create a basic information sheet to which attorneys can refer. Offer presentations about OG at libraries and community centers, and specifically invite lawyers and advocates. Call law firms and offer to come right to their offices for a lunch ‘n learn session. Encourage attorneys at all times to reach out to you with questions. You might be surprised at how willing and grateful lawyers and advocates will be to learn more. In turn, when their clients need qualified tutors, attorneys will know to trust you and your recommendations.

One brief note to keep in mind. Attorneys do not necessarily need to know the in-depth nuts and bolts of OG to argue diligently for their clients (though any who are interested should be encouraged to attend or even just observe an Academy Accredited training!). What lawyers really need is to understand in general:

- WHAT Orton-Gillingham is,
- WHY it is appropriate for students with dyslexia,
- HOW to identify an instructor who is trained in OG
- HOW to identify a program that is actually based on OG, and
- WHERE to turn for help and information when the lawyer is uncertain.

The children you teach are the clients we serve. We all share the goal of helping these students achieve and progress. I hope that each and every one of you will take up the mantle of responsibility and reach out to attorneys and advocates in your area. You are truly a gold mine of knowledge, information, and professional skill. We, as lawyers, need your expertise, and we need your help. Let’s work together to brighten the futures of students with dyslexia.

Success Story: Orton-Gillingham in Our Third Grade Classroom

By Kathleen Rowland and Kimberly Wells

When we first became co-teachers in a consultant third-grade classroom at Mooers Elementary in upstate New York, we thought we had all the bases covered between the two of us. The consultant classroom model was developed to provide special education students a mainstreamed experience, while still being in their least restrictive environment.

A consultant classroom has one special education teacher and one general education teacher to provide dual instruction. We each had extensive classroom experience as a general education teacher (Kimberly) and a special education teacher (Kathleen). We had been trained to instruct reading with a whole language approach using small readers. We would hand out those little readers and say, “Okay children, read.” We would go around our small group and listen to each student read a small portion of the text. When students came to a word they did not know, we would coach them to look at the picture or wait while they struggled to sound it out... just as we had initially been trained to teach. This was great for the students who could read, but in our consultant classroom we quickly realized this was not working for most of our students. They did not know how to sound out words, and in third grade most text will not have a picture. We began to question how to best address our students’ poor reading. How could we build accuracy, automaticity, and fluency with our struggling readers?

We began researching different programs and found information on the Orton-Gillingham Approach. We were unfamiliar with the OG Approach at the time but soon realized that it was exactly what we needed. We were fortunate to find the Stern Center for Language and Literacy in Vermont. The Stern Center provides OG training relatively close to us and offers grants through the Cynthia K. Hoehl Institute for Excellence to make professional learning more accessible to educators and schools. During the OG Classroom Educator course in August 2016, our eyes were opened to a whole new world of reading instruction. Sitting in the training, we realized how little we knew about teaching literacy. Syllabication, SOS, phonemic awareness, and what do you mean ‘r’

doesn’t say “er”? That week was inspirational. We left the OG Classroom Educator course excited and energized, and we still feel that way over a year later.

Our thinking about our consultant students (students receiving special education services) changed. No longer could we do what we had always done. We got rid of old materials and old ideas. We planned lessons that were multisensory and engaging. We learned to build more repetition into our class lessons and incorporate movement. We gave students extended time once we understood how important specific accommodations are for students with dyslexia. Visual aids were displayed around the room. We began looking at text with critical eyes to see how truly decodable it would be for our students who needed decodable text.

Spelling became a time for students to think about spelling patterns and also practice accurate sound production, so that stop consonant sounds are clipped to drop an unnecessary “uh” sound in the sound dictation and Simultaneous Oral Spelling (SOS) of our OG lessons. For example, our students now said /d/ and /g/ instead of “duh” and “guh” for the sounds of ‘d’ and ‘g’. There was

no more memorizing a list of words for a test on Friday only to be forgotten the following Monday. Rather, our students learned to think about the structure of the English language, including consonant blends, consonant digraphs, short and long vowels, and syllable types. Students who could not pass spelling tests in the past were now excelling and building confidence in their spelling skills because spelling was taught as a critical thinking skill and not as rote memorization. We would see students tapping out sounds while they were independently writing, and then they would check with us. Our students learned syllabication to break apart and decode multisyllabic words. One of the most exciting moments for us was hearing two girls debate whether the word they were working on was a Tiger (V/CV) or Camel (VC/V) word and reading the word both ways before determining the correct pronunciation. Yes!



Kathleen Rowland, third grade special educator

continued on page 14...

A parent of one of our students, Doreen LaBelle, shared “I am so grateful that our teachers from Mooers Elementary were able to expand their horizons with the Orton-Gillingham Approach last summer. This school year, 2016-17, my daughter Jolie was in the classroom in which the teachers had received OG training. Jolie made amazing strides this year. She started at a first grade reading level at the beginning of third grade. She has come so far as she just tested in the third grade reading level and has done amazing. She has been so successful due to being in the classroom with the teachers who had OG training. This Approach has made a difference in her life. She will continue to benefit from all that she has learned for years to come. This Approach prepared her to be more successful in her future.”

We both decided that we wanted our OG Classroom Educator training to continue to OG Associate Level membership so that we could continue to learn more about the OG Approach. In addition to teaching whole group instruction, we each tutored a student after school for our practicum. We selected students who were reading far below third grade, and they did not like reading! Utilizing the Orton-Gillingham Approach, both students made great strides in their reading and writing abilities. They looked forward to staying after school and actively participating in each activity we thoughtfully planned in each individualized OG lesson. Their confidence skyrocketed as their decoding skills and spelling grew. One of our young men even felt confident enough to read aloud in class. It was a wonderful, tearful moment for both of us as we listened to him read with fluency... and enthusiasm. The boys' parents were amazed with their progress and excitement. The boys now wanted to come to school every day, and there were no more arguments about homework. What more can we ask for as teachers than to have students who are confident and happy?

We are proud to share testimonials from our two practicum students, now in their second year of after-school OG tutoring. Parents Jessica and James Wells (no relation to the author) shared, “My husband and I cannot imagine what we would have done without OG being offered to our son, Jordan. When he started in third grade in the fall of 2016, he was so far behind that I didn't think he would be able to catch up to the rest of his peers. He hated reading, doing his homework, and was just not interested in school. Since starting OG he has excelled in so many fields that we could not be any prouder! Jordan started at a first grade reading level in the fall of 2016 and is now reading at grade level. He only knew very few sight words, and now he seems to know pretty much all of them. He would have a hard time spelling small words, such as *catch*, and now he can spell *administrate*! Jordan has done a complete 360 since starting OG. We

have been so fortunate for Jordan to have been selected to stay after school for OG tutoring! Both of Jordan's teachers, Mrs. Wells and Mrs. Rowland, have implemented Orton-Gillingham so smoothly throughout the school day that Jordan loves to stay after school to do more work with Mrs. Wells. I cannot say thank you enough for our school and teachers receiving this grant from the Stern Center. We will always be forever grateful for this and hope we can see OG implemented for all of our students that struggle.”

Another parent, Jessica Badger shares, “Our ten-year-old son Camden has struggled with reading his entire school career. After four years of little progress at his former school, we made the difficult decision to transfer Camden to the third grade consultant classroom at Mooers Elementary. We knew prior to the start of the school year that his teachers, Kathleen Rowland and Kimberly Wells, had spent that summer receiving training in the Orton-Gillingham Approach. What we didn't know at the time was the impact that training would have on our son's reading abilities. We noticed progress early in the year. As the months went by, Camden became more comfortable while reading. When Camden would come across a challenging word, he would utilize the many different strategies he had learned to decode a word, and would be able to read the word correctly most of the time. It was amazing to watch the progression from someone who strongly disliked reading to the boy that would read every sign he could while on vacation during school break. We are extremely grateful that Camden was able to benefit from Kathleen and Kimberly's OG training, and we are hopeful that other students who struggle with reading can benefit from this Approach, too. Without Orton-Gillingham, Kathleen, or Kimberly, Camden would most definitely not be where he is today. The results of the Orton-Gillingham Approach to reading, coupled with the instruction of Kathleen and Kimberly, have been absolutely remarkable!”

As general education and special education teachers, we can attest without a doubt that Orton-Gillingham training, including the combination of coursework and practicum mentoring, has made us better teachers. Just as students must keep learning, we as educators must adapt to the needs of our students. The world is changing and so are our students. Strong reading and writing skills are essential in an increasingly digital world. We must meet those changes and OG has given a way to do so. While we originally began this with the intention of receiving OG Classroom Educator certification, we knew we needed to continue onto the Associate Level. We are currently in the process of applying for Associate Level Membership and look forward to sharing what we have learned with our colleagues.



UPCOMING EVENTS

IDA Conference

VISIT US AT THE 2018 IDA CONFERENCE

OCTOBER 24-27, 2018 | FOXWOODS RESORT, MASHANTUCKET, CT

AOGPE Booth 525 & ALLIANCE Booth 527

Academy Sponsored Reception

Thursday | October 25th | 5:30 pm -7:00 pm | Location: Aspen

AOGPE Fellow Webinar

October 11, 2018 | Thursday | Online 6:00 pm - 7:30 pm EST

Writing a Certified Level Profile and Annotated Lesson Plan

Presented by: Lisa Brooks, F/AOGPE and
Deb Morris, ATF/AOGPE, Commonwealth Learning Center, Needham, MA

Open to Fellows, Fellows-in-Training and Certified Members

[CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

The webinar will be available to all AOGPE members in the member section of the website by October 19, 2018.



AOGPE Online 10-hour Subscriber Course (\$49) **Dyslexia: An Introduction to the Orton-Gillingham Approach**

This course is appropriate for teachers, parents of children with dyslexia, individuals with dyslexia, school administrators, advocates, tutors, speech and language pathologists and other professionals who wish to learn about this multisensory teaching approach.

Click on the following link to get started:

<http://courses.ortonacademy.org>

This information is also available on the Academy's website: www.ortonacademy.org
under Training & Certification, Subscriber Member.

The Past Six Years

By Alicia Sartori, MPA, Executive Director, AOGPE and Peggy Price, F/AOGPE

The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators' membership has grown tremendously and started several significant new initiatives in the last six years. The AOGPE membership has doubled during this time from 932 members to over 1,900 today. These efforts would not have been possible without the work of many people, including Sheila Costello, ATF/AOGPE who served as the president of the Academy for the past six years. A few of the initiatives outlined below share the commonality of increasing access to Academy training without compromising the Academy's high standards and commitment to excellence.

One new initiative under Sheila's leadership is the online application process through [FluidReview](#). Instead of photocopying and shipping approximately twelve copies of lengthy applications to the Academy's main office, applicants can now easily upload documents using FluidReview. As Sheila stated in an earlier issue of this newsletter, the Academy is not only streamlining the application process for its members but saving thousands of trees!

A second new initiative is the annual Fellow Webinar. Each fall, different Fellows present on a meaningful topic via webinar to all Fellows, Fellows-in-Training, and Certified Members for only \$25 to attend live or to later watch for free on the Academy website's member section. The webinar format brings greater access to all Fellows wherever they may live.

A third initiative is revision of the Academy's assigned reading lists at each level of Academy certification. A scientist by training, Sheila is deeply committed to the Academy always being current with the latest research. An Academy subcommittee, led by Concha Wyatt, F/AOGPE, has already updated the Associate and Certified reading lists and is currently updating the Fellow reading list. For the Associate reading list, the subcommittee's priority was not only updating many of the articles but improving access and affordability for those seeking Associate Level membership.

A fourth initiative is the Academy joining the [Alliance for Accreditation and Certification of Dyslexia Specialists](#), which brings four organizations together: the Academy (AOGPE), Academic Language Therapy Association (ALTA), International Multisensory Structured Language Education

Council (IMSLEC), and Wilson Language Training (WLT). The mission of the Alliance is 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 those courses. Sheila recognized that all four organizations trace their roots back to Orton and Gillingham and share a similar commitment to ensuring highly trained educators who can teach our students with dyslexia. All four organizations believe both coursework and a practicum are necessary training components. Together the Alliance represents over 30,000 members. Sheila's role in AOGPE joining the Alliance was instrumental.

A fifth initiative was the upgrade and launch of the Academy's new and improved user-friendly website led by the Academy's Executive Director Alicia Sartori. I think everyone can agree that with Sheila's guidance and support, the final

result was an organized, easy to navigate site full of important Academy information.

A sixth initiative was the administration of the Subscriber course by AOGPE. Initially the course was given by EPS, but in 2015 the Academy began administering the course through Moodle. Currently, the Subscriber course is being updated to be a more interactive experience for the user.

While Sheila may say she served as the president of the Academy in "retirement," in actuality, she skillfully juggled the demand-

ing role of president while providing OG trainings in the southeast of the United States, including Savannah, Georgia and Charleston, South Carolina, and mentoring Fellows in Training, Certified, and Associate Level trainees. Beyond her official trainees, Sheila has a larger circle of past trainees who continually reach out to her for guidance in OG training and teaching.

Similar to her role as Director of Language Enrichment and Development at Trident Academy, Sheila always makes time to help a school, teacher, or parent in need. Deeply humble and unassuming, Sheila is driven to train as many Academy members who can in turn meet the needs of our struggling readers. We thank Sheila for her commitment to the Academy and to individuals with dyslexia.

AOGPE MEMBERSHIP								
Level	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Fellow	161	161	151	151	154	150	153	150
Certified	226	235	225	221	227	238	288	273
Associate	342	359	391	454	463	543	727	872
OGCE	0	0	0	9	46	96	413	405
Sub Total	729	755	767	835	890	1,027	1,581	1,700
Subscriber	260	267	165	220	187	178	169	163
Total	989	1,022	932	1,055	1,077	1,205	1,750	1,863

There are 63 Fellows-in-Training

Fun and Fellowship: OG Learning Doesn't End When the Conference is Over | By Joanne O'Sullivan

On a cold and rainy evening in April 2018, a group of Fellows (and one Fellow-in-Training) gathered in the cozy den of Camp Spring Creek outside Bakersville, North Carolina to share their knowledge and experience. Coming straight from the learning-packed annual Academy conference in Charlotte, these women were not quite ready to stop the professional learning. They presented to each other until 1 am!

This was the first annual Fellows Retreat hosted by Susie van der Vorst and attended by Suzanna Greer, Susan Nolan, Peggy Price, and Karen Sunday. Designed to be an extension of the conference in a more casual and personal setting, the retreat allowed these educators to reflect on their own teaching practices. The retreat was the realization of a long-time dream of van der Vorst. The participants shared, learned from one another, and got ready to return to work re-energized.

“Working with Orton-Gillingham is a lot like being culinary chef,” says van der Vorst. “There are certain constants in the field, but like a chef, each Fellow has certain specialties. One person might be good at Mediterranean, one might be a good at baking. Or we all make chocolate mousse from a different recipe. It’s all delicious; it’s just different.”

Karen Sunday agrees. “It’s not that one way is right or wrong; it could be a matter of a student’s preferences. It’s good to know more than one way.”

Nolan says that while she already knows the content of a certain lesson, observing the way another educator implements it is helpful. After watching van der Vorst’s presentation on handwriting, she had the revelation that she needed to engage her university students in hands-on activities in class, rather than just present a PowerPoint. “When you try something new, and you see the impact on the students

you’re working with or with your trainees, you see how valuable it is to learn from others.” After having the opportunity to tutor at Camp Spring Creek last summer, Nolan says she incorporated new approaches when she got back home to Ohio. “Now when I do professional development for local school districts, I take these strategies with me. I have a greater sphere of influence to work from.”

“That makes sense within the context of Orton-Gillingham,” says van der Vorst. “Each new generation of practitioners should strive to use the Approach in their own context. It’s not meant to be static.

“We encourage teachers to be lifelong learners,” says Nolan. “And we need to be, too.” Each Fellow and Fellow-in-Training prepared a topic to present to the group, discuss, and receive feedback. A few of the topics presented and discussed were: different training models for Classroom Educator, Associate, and Certified courses, techniques to add more hands-on activities for trainees throughout OG courses, teaching strategies to challenge advanced students within the OG lesson plan, variations on teaching the doubling rule and e-dropping rule, and neuromyths about dyslexia and literacy.

All the participants agreed that although they were all trained slightly differently, their training allows them to be open to one another’s teaching methods and approaches.

“The Academy’s strength is its diversity,” says Price. “We help teachers develop critical thinking skills, and that’s why OG is an approach, not a program. Bringing us together that weekend embodies that approach. I’m taking away a great deal from this weekend to help me be a more flexible OG practitioner and teacher trainer.”



The Academy was established in 1995 to set and maintain the highest professional standards for the practice of the Orton-Gillingham Approach for the treatment of dyslexia. We certify individuals and accredit practitioner training programs and student instructional programs that meet these standards. The Academy is a nonprofit 501(c)3 organization.

For comprehensive information regarding training opportunities, requirements, and applications for Academy membership at all levels, visit our website at: www.ortonacademy.org



Expert Perspectives on Interventions for Reading: A Collection of Best-Practice Articles from the International Dyslexia Association

Edited by Louisa C. Moats, Karen E. Dakin, and R. Malatesha Joshi

Review by Lisa Nivin, F/AOGPE

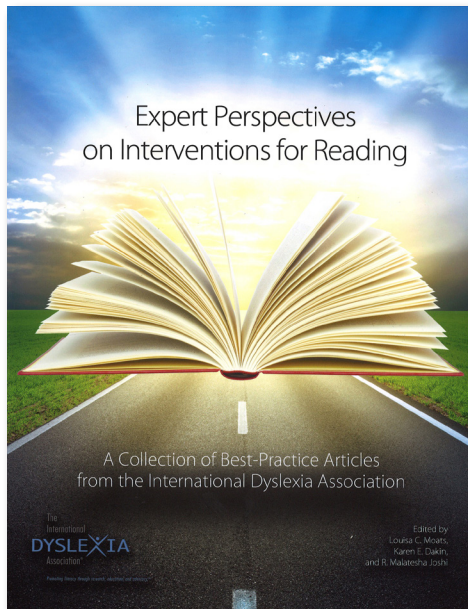
Have you ever wished you had a committee of reading researchers who would advise you while you designed lessons for your students? Well, this anthology of best-practice articles is the next best thing. As I read this collection of articles from the International Dyslexia Association journal, *Perspectives on Language and Literacy*, the learning profiles of past and present students came to me. “Oh, this would be perfect for Johnny’s vocabulary lesson! I love this idea for improving Amy’s writing!”

An indispensable resource for reading specialists and language arts teachers, *Expert Perspectives on Interventions for Reading* is a treasure trove of practical research-based approaches for teaching children and adults who struggle with learning to read. This anthology was assembled by leaders in our field, including Louisa C. Moats, Ed.D., Karen E. Dakin, M.Ed., and R. Malatesha Joshi, Ph.D. They carefully selected articles from more than fifty experts in literacy, with the goal of delivering a collection of research-based, classroom-tested interventions specifically written for educators. These articles are grouped into seven sections. Sections 5 and 6 are required reading for the Certified level of Orton-Gillingham training and will be discussed first.

Section 5 - Vocabulary and Comprehension of Written Text

The authors of this section provide educators with valuable information on the research and practice of teaching students vocabulary and reading comprehension. In the first article, Kate Cain studied the underlying factors that predicted later reading comprehension in young children, specifically knowledge of story structure, comprehension monitoring, integration, and inference.

In the second article, the late Steven Stahl recommends creative approaches for teaching vocabulary to children with learning disabilities. For example, he proposes creating scenarios, both dramatizations and written anecdotes, to



define and impart the connotations of unfamiliar words. These activities would likely inspire enthusiastic participation in our literature and content area lessons.

In the third article, Danielle S. McNamara describes Self-Explanation Reading Training (SERT), a six-strategy program to improve reading comprehension. The six strategies of SERT are comprehension monitoring, paraphrasing, elaboration, using logic, prediction, and bridging inference. McNamara also offers a free online program that instructs students in SERT (iSTART <https://www.adaptiveliteracy.com>). Assistive technology specialists, please take note!

I am certain that many of us have discussed whether we should invest more time on teaching strategies that may be useful for all reading experiences, or provide authentic discussions based on text content. Margaret McKeown, Isabel Beck, and Ronette Blake compare strategy instruction versus content-based instruction. In the words of McNamara, strategy instruction “... builds on the notion that less skilled students should learn strategies that mimic those exhibited by skilled students.” The content approach uses questioning and interactive discussion to work through the text without teaching a specific strategy. McKeown, Beck and Blake (2008) completed a two-year study with fifth graders to compare strategy and content-based instruction. In a strategies approach, the teacher would teach students how to summarize and ask students to summarize a text, reviewing what constitutes a good summary. In the content approach, the teacher might ask, “What just happened? Why might that be important?” Results showed that while both the strategy and content groups performed similarly on some basic measures of reading comprehension, the content group outperformed the strategy group on measures that required higher level comprehension. Their findings also revealed that students contributed to class discussions twice as long as with content instruction than strategy instruction. These

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results may be due to more class time having been spent discussing information in the text than discussing strategies. While this study does not settle the debate on strategy and content-based instruction, particularly for students with more significant learning disabilities, it sheds new light on how best to build reading comprehension.

McKeown and Beck offer an additional article on designing questions that elicit higher-order thinking, using a technique they developed called “Questioning the Author.” As they wrote in the fifth article, “To be truly productive of students’ comprehension of what they read, questions have to leave room for students to build meaning rather than directly pointing them to the answers.” Open-ended questions challenge students to struggle with ideas, leading to growth in understanding. While pondering these methods, I wondered how classroom teachers could ensure the participation of all students, including those who are less verbally adept, or who struggle to attend and comprehend during class discussions. It would have been helpful if the authors had included methods for differentiating this approach for these students. To learn more, you can read Beck and McKeown’s book, *Improving Comprehension with Questioning the Author*.

In the sixth article, *Tactics to Help Students Use Writing to Express Their Comprehension of Content Area Texts*, Gary Troia suggests teaching students to summarize texts by identifying topic sentences, eliminating redundant and trivial details, and using category words as substitutes for related details.

Section 6 - Developing Written Expression

The authors of this set of articles explore the range of skills required for effective writing, starting with listening and speaking, and extending to paragraph and essay-writing using assistive technology.

The first article, *Listening and Speaking - Essential Ingredients for Teaching Struggling Writers*, is written by Charles W. Haynes and Terrell M. Jennings, authors of *From Talking to Writing: Strategies for Scaffolding Expository Expression*. They detail strategies to encourage participation of all students in order to improve language at the word, sentence, and paragraph levels. Their suggestions for cues, scaffolds, and graphics will be beneficial to all teachers who work with students struggling with speech and language and written expression.

Those of us who have worked with adolescents would agree with Dolores Perin and Steve Graham when they state,

“writing difficulties extend well into the regular middle school population.” In their article, *Teaching Writing Skills to Adolescents*, they describe their meta-analysis of research and arrange the strategies by effect sizes as follows:

1. Strategy Instruction in planning, revising, and editing
2. Summarization
3. Peer assistance and collaboration
4. Setting product goals
5. Word Processing
6. Sentence Combining
7. Process Writing with teacher training
8. Inquiry Approach
9. Pre-Writing
10. Use of Models of writing

In the third article, Bruce Saddler offers powerful methods to help students compose more complex and interesting sentences by using sentence combining. Saddler suggests using events or activities in the students’ lives to add motivation. In fact, teachers can include sentences from literature or content area lessons, thus reinforcing vocabulary and content while simultaneously improving their written expression.

Using color-coding and clear dramatizations, Suzanne Carreker introduces how to teach parts of speech in the fourth article, *The Parts of Speech: Foundation of Writing*. In a logical, sequential manner, she proceeds to apply these concepts to create increasingly complex sentences and eventually paragraphs.

Assistive technology can help struggling students to produce written work. Charles A. MacArthur describes tools, such as word processing and word prediction, that can help students to spell and edit their work. I was particularly impressed by MacArthur’s study in which high school students with learning disabilities learned to use speech recognition software. After six hours of training, the students were able to compose and edit essays with satisfactory accuracy. MacArthur concludes that, “For most writing technologies, the main question is not whether they work, but how to design effective instruction to make the best use of them.”

Remaining Sections

Section 1 addresses research on interventions for students with dyslexia and related difficulties. The authors of all three articles in this section stress the importance of explicit and systematic instruction in word reading and comprehension “by first identifying the weak component” in the students’ learning profiles.

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Section 2, “The Principles of Multi-Component, Structured Language Teaching,” is a wonderful resource for teacher trainers and beginning teachers. Judith Birsh clarifies the rationale for each part of the classic structured language lesson. Suzanne Carreker offers lessons to help students discover each type of syllable, accompanied by hand movements that aide retention. Carol Tolman assembles a primer on knowledge that reading teachers need to know in order to teach effectively. She uses extensive graphic organizers and charts to delineate phonological and phonics skills. Furthermore, she offers sections on vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension, defining each concept, clarifying its impact on reading, and offering suggestions for instruction. Finally, Maryanne Wolf and colleagues describe their comprehensive reading program, RAVE-O, which explicitly teaches all of these linguistic systems in an inviting and effective manner.

In **Section 3**, “Phonological Awareness, Word Recognition, and Spelling,” Benita Blachman and colleagues describe a program for kindergarten and first grade students and include specific activities that helped these students with segmenting and blending sounds. Other articles stress the importance of discovery learning by having students sort words, discover patterns, and derive generalizations. Additional ideas include teaching older students to use word origins to master the spelling of words derived from Anglo-Saxon, Latin, and Greek languages.

In **Section 4**, “Fluency in Basic Skills,” stresses the importance of early detection of reading difficulty by using benchmark measures of reading of unpracticed grade level material. Additional articles describe word-level and sentence-level techniques to automatically decode by using pattern recognition, and by scooping phrases within

sentences. Research on repeated reading is also reviewed, emphasizing the need for short, frequent periods of practice combined with direct, explicit instruction.

Section 7 describes the often-neglected subject of **Adolescent and Adult Literacy Instruction**. The authors describe the profile of skills often shown by adolescents, in order to enable educators to identify the required components of literacy instruction. Other authors give suggestions for training secondary teachers in teaching reading in their classrooms. A review of research on adult literacy shows that many approaches used with children can also be effective with adults, with modifications.

Conclusion

The compilation of research discussed in *Expert Perspectives on Interventions for Reading* provides further validation for the Orton-Gillingham Approach and why it is effective for teaching reading and writing. This anthology is a valuable addition to the curriculum for the Certified level membership. In fact, I recommend that this volume be placed on the bookshelf of any educator who instructs students with learning disabilities. The review of recent research directly relates to the recommended practices for all instructional settings — class-wide, small group, and one-on-one teaching. Most articles include easy-to-understand charts and diagrams, step-by-step lessons, and references for additional resources or online tools.

As Maryanne Wolf wisely stated, “The onus is upon us, their teachers, not the children, to find ways that work.” When we encounter those students who challenge us, we can open this book for a wealth of ideas to meet their needs.

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Academy Conference 2018

By Dawn Nieman, Fellow/AOGPE

The Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators held its spring conference at the Charlotte Marriott City Center in Charlotte, NC On April 13-14, 2018. The conference title “Unraveling the Mystery of Dyslexia” was a huge success. Many in attendance were excited to listen to and learn from the keynote speakers Guinevere Eden, Ph.D. and Nadine Gaab, Ph.D.

The 370 registrants were able to choose from twenty-four different sessions on both Friday and Saturday. Topics ranged from morphology and grammar to psychological reports and the law. Participants could also choose from comprehension strategies and technology sessions or making math accessible as well as learning to play games.

[Click here](#) for a list of Speakers and Exhibitors.

Some of those registrants were fortunate to receive the many scholarships available. The Ruth Harris Professional Development Award went to LaJoy Collins of Ewing, NJ and Christine Smith of Greenville, SC.

The AOGPE scholarship was awarded to Greta Skaggs of Savannah, GA.

The Emi Flynn Scholarship was awarded to Meredith Black of Florence, AL.

Traveling from Nassau, Bahamas, Nina Clews received the Jean Osman Scholarship.

The Marcia Mann Scholarship for an SLP was awarded to Jennifer Higgins from Lawrence, KS.



LaJoy Collins



Christine Smith



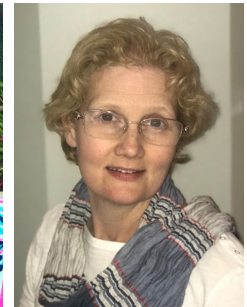
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Mary Briggs

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Training Scholarship Opportunities

The Academy is looking forward to being able to provide training scholarship opportunities. In the Spring of 2018, we were able to help 12 individuals with the cost of their practicum fees.

Please check the [website](#) for updated information.

New Members | Fall 2018

The Academy congratulates the following new members

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Brianna Buckler, Walden, NY
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Marian Arnista, Torrington, CT
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