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**“THE ORTON-GILLINGHAM APPROACH
TO TEACHING READING & SPELLING
A LA BENNETT”**

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The Orton-Gillingham Approach (O-G) is the foundation for the methodological category of reading instruction known today as Multisensory Structured Language Education. Programs that fall into this category teach reading and spelling through multisensory, cognitive, systematic, and diagnostic instruction in the structure of written English. O-G was developed by neuropsychiatrist Dr. Samuel Orton and remedial teacher Anna Gillingham. Dr. Orton revolutionized thinking about the causes of reading failure in otherwise intact individuals, establishing that it has nothing to do with brain damage, but rather with a brain that processes language differently. This difference is known as dyslexia. Anna Gillingham worked with Dr. Orton and developed teaching methods based on Dr. Orton’s principles. She and colleague Bessie Stillman wrote and published the first Gillingham Manual in 1936; it is now in its 8th 1997 edition. It has stood the test of time and is still considered the gold standard for literacy instruction for those struggling to learn to read due to dyslexia.

The Orton-Gillingham Approach is appropriate for learners of any age, individually or in groups, as all content and procedures can be adapted for either format. It was originally developed for the specific instructional needs of those struggling to acquire literacy skills due to dyslexia. However, the content is also relevant to beginning readers and to readers of any age who have shaky reading and spelling skills in spite of motivation and intelligence. Thus, this 60 hour course is relevant for anyone who is involved directly or indirectly with teaching reading: classroom teachers (especially foundational learning-to-read grades K-3 and middle reading-to-learn grades 4-8), special educators, SLPs, para-educators, parents, administrators, and anyone who is interested in the research supported

information about the steps involved in becoming a skilled reader and how dyslexia, the most common cause for reading and spelling difficulties, interferes with that process.

The reason for the “a la Bennett” part of the title of this course is that since the development of the Orton-Gillingham Approach, decades of scientific research have provided a clear understanding of dyslexia, and what it takes to become a fluent reader and speller. Therefore, in addition to the necessary prerequisites of alphabetics and syllabication, information about phonemic awareness, strategy use to facilitate storage in and retrieval from long term memory and comprehension monitoring strategies have been added. There is also emphasis on student demystification: having a conceptual understanding of the material in terms of how written English works, how the reading process works, and how dyslexia interferes with that process.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

For participants to acquire knowledge about and actual practice in:

- a) the components of the reading process and best instructional practice;
- b) dyslexia, the most common cause for reading and spelling difficulties;
- c) the components of spoken & written language, & their relationship;
- d) phonemic awareness, alphabetics, syllabication, fluency, spelling, comprehension monitoring;
- e) Orton-Gillingham curriculum, teaching procedures, lesson planning, practice teaching. This includes videos of actual lessons and, if possible, a live demonstration lesson with a current student.

COSTS

Tuition: \$1595.00 pp (\$26/hr)

Materials Fee: \$85.00 pp (provided readings and materials)

Mileage: Federal rate; billed to the course sponsor, not individual participants.

GRADUATE CREDIT

An optional 4 graduate credits are available through Castleton Center for Schools at Castleton University, Rutland, VT. Castleton charges its own per credit fee of \$125 (\$500 total). This is an additional and completely separate fee from the tuition and materials fees. If graduate credit is desired, a direct link to this course at Castleton is provided.

There is no additional work assigned in order to earn the graduate credit; the only difference between taking and not taking the course for graduate credit is the additional fee charged by Castleton. However, the grade earned will be based on the following criteria:

- a) attendance and participation in all 60 hours of class time; instructor must be notified of any class that will be missed, and arrangements made to make up the missed information;
- b) completion of all article and book chapter readings (there are no writing assignments!)
- c) participation in all individual and group activities.

There is no homework per se between classes - “just” studying and practicing everything covered in each completed class in preparation for more information in the next class! Each class builds upon the previous class. However, a lot of the information is presented multiple times in multiple formats.

COURSE LOCATION AND SCHEDULE

Location: Barre Unified Union School District, Barre, VT

Course Sponsor: Stacy Anderson, Director of Special Services, BUUSD
sandebusu@buusd.org 802 476-5011

Contacts: To register for the course and graduate credit, contact Stacy Anderson .
For questions about the course itself, contact Katharine Bennett.
You do not need to be an employee of BUUSD. All are welcome!

Schedule:

Summer: Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 9-4. July 13, 14, 15, 20, 21, 22.

21-22 School Year: TBA

Note: The course is divided into 3 parts.

Part 1: 5 3-hour classes (15 hours) covering Course Objectives a, b, and c

Part 2: 8 3-hour classes (24 hours) covering Course Objective d

Part 3: 7 3-hour classes (21 hours) covering Course Objective e.

The summer portion will cover Parts I and II. Part II will be during the school year.