

## THE ORTON-GILLINGHAM APPROACH

The Orton-Gillingham Approach has been rightfully described as language-based, multisensory, structured, sequential, cumulative, cognitive, and flexible. These characteristics can be easily amplified and extended as they are in the following attributes.

### PERSONALIZED

Teaching begins with recognizing the differing needs of learners. While those with dyslexia share similarities, there are differences in their language needs. In addition individuals with dyslexia may possess additional problems that complicate learning. Most common among these are attention deficit disorder (ADD) or attention deficit disorder with hyperactivity (ADHD).

### MULTISENSORY

It uses all the learning pathways: seeing, hearing, feeling, and awareness of motion, brought together by the thinking brain. The instructor engages in multisensory teaching in order to convey curricular content in the most understandable way to the student. The teacher also models how the student, by using these multiple pathways, can engage in multisensory learning that results in greater ease and success in learning.

### DIAGNOSTIC AND PRESCRIPTIVE

An Orton-Gillingham lesson is both *diagnostic* and *prescriptive*. It is diagnostic in the sense that the instructor continuously monitors the verbal, non-verbal, and written responses of the student in order to identify and analyze both the student's problems and progress. This information is the basis of planning the next lesson. That lesson is prescriptive in the sense that will contain instructional elements that focus upon the resolution of the student's difficulties and that build upon the student's progress noted in the previous lesson.

### DIRECT INSTRUCTION

The teacher presentations employ lesson formats to insure that the student approaches the learning experience understanding what is to be learned, why it is to be learned, and how it is to be learned.

### SYSTEMATIC PHONICS

It uses systematic phonics, stressing the alphabetic principle in the initial stages of reading development. It takes advantage of the sound/symbol relationships inherent in the alphabetic system of writing. Spoken words are made up of individual speech sounds, and the letters of written words graphically represent those speech sounds.

### APPLIED LINGUISTICS

It draws upon applied linguistics not only in the initial decoding and encoding stages of reading and writing but in more advanced stages dealing with syllabic,

morphemic, syntactic, semantic, and grammatic structures of language and our writing system. At all times the Orton-Gillingham Approach involves the student in integrative practices that involve reading, spelling, and writing together.

#### LINGUISTIC COMPETENCE

It increases linguistic competence by stressing language patterns that determine word order and sentence structure and the meaning of words and phrases. It moves beyond this to recognizing the various forms that characterize the common literary forms employed by writers.

#### SYSTEMATIC AND STRUCTURED

The teacher presents information in an ordered way that indicates the relationship between the material taught and past material taught. Curricular content unfolds in linguistically logical ways which facilitates student learning and progress.

#### SEQUENTIAL, INCREMENTAL, AND CUMULATIVE

Step by step learners move from the simple, well-learned material to that which is more and more complex. They move from one step to the next as they master each level of language skills.

#### CONTINUOUS FEEDBACK AND POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT

The approach provides for a close teacher-student relationship that builds self-confidence based on success.

#### COGNITIVE APPROACH

Students understand the reasons for what they are learning and for the learning strategies they are employing. Confidence is gained as they gain in their ability to apply newly gained knowledge about and knowledge how to develop their skills with reading, spelling, and writing.

#### EMOTIONALLY SOUND

Students' feelings about themselves and about learning are vital. Teaching is directed toward providing the experience of success. With success comes increased self-confidence and motivation.

The basic purpose of everything that is done in the Orton-Gillingham Approach, from recognizing words to composing a poem, is assisting the student to become a competent reader, writer and independent learner.