



Scientific Research Information

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ABC The Key—Based on Scientific Research

ABC The Key is patterned after the scientifically proven methodology generally known as an Orton-based Method. Through extensive research, Miss Jones adopted the principles found in one particular version of the Orton Method called *The Spalding Writing Road to Reading*. She uses the *Orton-Gillingham* phonogram system.

Miss Jones' personal phonics tutor and mentor was a student of Ramalda Spalding.

In addition to these scientifically proven methods Miss Jones uses her own adaptations which she has developed through the years.

Miss Jones' success in the classroom with children and adults using her researched and proven ABC The Key method, coupled with her creative abilities makes ABC The Key a unique product in today's market.

All the names and programs listed in this section can be easily researched and their success verified.

(Research Addendum available upon request.)

Samuel T. Orton 1879-1948

Dr. Samuel T. Orton, a renowned neurologist, worked with patients who had lost some measure of brain function due to accidents or other incidents. He studied the way the brain functions as skills are relearned.

From his work with brain-damaged adults, Samuel Orton attempted to explain the occurrence of language disabilities in children who had not suffered brain injury yet displayed symptoms similar to those exhibited by the adults who had sustained language loss. Orton's hypothesis was that children who do not establish hemispheric dominance in particular areas of the brain display specific developmental language disabilities such as reading disability ((Myers & Hammill, 1976, p. 258).

Dr. Samuel Orton isolated the 70 most used phonograms of the English language. A "phonogram" is either one letter or a combination of letters which represent one or more single 'voiced' sounds in a given word. The phonograms are the 26 alphabet letters and 46 multi-letter combinations consisting of 2-4 letters. Each phonogram has 1-6 single sounds.

The English alphabet is a sound/symbol system. It contains 26 letters that singularly and in combination represent the 45 sounds heard in English speech. The 70, often called Orton-Gillingham Phonograms represent the common spelling patterns of the 45 sounds. With these phonograms and the 29 Spalding spelling rules, 93-97% of the English language is phonetically accurate. See Spalding.org

Samuel Orton developed a reading and spelling approach that was later elaborated upon by **Anne Gillingham**.

Anne Gillingham

Anne Gillingham worked with Orton at the Neurological Institute, Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, NY. (See: Myers & Hammill, 1976, p. 263-264).

The Orton-Gillingham Method—The Institute for Multi-Sensory Education

(See: Orton-Gillingham.com)

Orton-Gillingham techniques have been in use since the 1930's and have been proven with thousands of students around the world. An intensive, sequential phonics-based system teaches the basics of word formation before whole meanings. The method accommodates and utilizes the three learning modalities, or pathways, through which people learn--visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The Orton-Gillingham method teaches to the student's strengths while seeking to improve his or her weaknesses.

The Orton-Gillingham Method uses the following instructional elements:

Multisensory: Instruction involves immediate, intensive, and continuous interaction between what the student is seeing, hearing, and feeling in the speech mechanisms and the writing hand. All the language elements taught are reinforced by having the student listen, speak, read and write.

Alphabetic/Phonetic: Sound-symbol associations along with linguistic rules and generalizations are introduced in a linguistically logical and understandable order.

Synthetic/Analytic: The student is taught how to blend sounds together. Students learn how to segment words into separate speech sounds before beginning to spell.

Structured: The student learns one sound association, linguistic rule, or non-phonetic word and practices using it with previously taught material before learning the next language concept.

Sequenced: Linguistic concepts are taught in a sequence which minimizes potentially confusing elements.

Cumulative: The student is asked to use each newly introduced element while reinforcing others that have been taught.

Repetitive: The concepts are repeated until the student gains mastery.

Cognitive: The student will understand the "linguistic logic" underlying word formations and patterns and be able to demonstrate that understanding while writing words.

The Orton-Gillingham Method is endorsed by:

- **Passaic Public Schools (Passaic, New Jersey)**, Deborah Adams, Ed. D., Director of Curriculum and Staff Development
- **South Redford School District (South Redford, Michigan)**, John A. Baluci, Director of Student Services
- **Memorial Elementary School (Riverview, Michigan)**, Laurine VanValkenburg, Ph.D., Principal
- **School District City of Pontiac (Pontiac, Michigan)**, Edwina C. Borovich, Curriculum Resource Consultant

Romalda Bishop Spalding and *The Writing Road to Reading*

(See: Spalding.org)

Romalda Spalding, was a student of **Dr. Samuel Orton**. She discovered that her learning disabled students, using Orton's methods, were learning to read better than her other students. Using Orton's methods and phonograms, and the Extended Ayer's Spelling Word List, 29 simple spelling rules and word markings, she developed the highly successful multi-sensory, phonetic language arts method known as the "Spalding Method", set forth in the teachers textbook "The Writing Road to Reading" which is designed for all students. The multi-sensory method is taught by seeing, hearing, and saying the phonograms and spelling words while writing them from dictation.

Using Orton's methods to teach normal primary students was designed by one of his last teacher-collaborators, Romalda Spalding, who authored *The Writing Road to Reading* in 1957. She believed that her method represented Dr. Orton's final conclusions that this method should be used for primary children, both to prevent and correct learning disorders, and most importantly to **establish high literacy in virtually all primary children.**

Research

1. During the 2002-2004 academic years, "Spalding Schools" (designated to schools whose teachers had been trained in and used exclusively the Spalding Method) outperformed local district and state scores by significant margins (roughly 16 percentile points, approximately 30%, better than their local district counterparts.) Three Spalding Schools were the top performing of the state's 1130 public and charter schools.

After investigating over 100 different approaches to beginning reading chronicled in his book, "Approaches to Beginning Reading, (1984) Dr. Robert Aukerman validated the Spalding Method citing national test scores from schools using the Spalding Method in 12 states.

Schools evaluated were of varied types, public, parochial, and private

Located in Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, New Hampshire, Texas and Virginia

Class size ranging from 8 to 50

120 different teachers

All were given standardized achievement testing

Results:

The 1st to 3rd grade students **tested 2 to nearly 2 1/2 years ABOVE their grade levels.**

Romalda Spalding cont.

2. **Two longitudinal studies** involving the Spalding Method were reported in The Clinical Studies of Multi-sensory Structured Language Education for Students with Dyslexia and Related Disorders.
 1. A three-year study 2002-2004 in the El Paso, TX Independent School District involved 500 students grades 1-5 who met the Texas Education Agency eligibility criteria for a handicapping condition.
 2. A second 7-year study with 111 students at the Middletown, Delaware High School with students who were behind in their literacy skills.

Students were given Brigance Diagnostic Comprehensive Inventory of Basic Skills, a written composition, and the Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale (North 1995). The high school students received tests in word recognition, passage comprehension and spelling skills. (Hoerl and Koons 1995)

Results:

- In both cases the testing showed that students had significant improvements in their reading ability
 - Convincing evidence was found that with appropriate instruction, literacy skills of most special education students can be improved even in high school.
3. **In the early 1980's** the Peoria, Arizona Unified School District was experiencing standardized achievement test scores at or below 50 percentile rank. A Spalding Method Pilot program was instituted in grades K – 3 in five schools.

Results:

By the end of the 1985-86 pilot year the Peoria Spalding class percentile rank scores for reading comprehension was in the upper 80's to high 90's while the control classes remained at or below 50 percentile rank. The complete study was reported in the Annals of Dyslexia (North 1991) published by the Orton Dyslexia Society (now International Dyslexia Association), a peer-reviewed journal.

4. **Similar studies** have been conducted in 1983 in Tucson, Arizona and in 1999 in Australia.
5. **The Spalding Method** has been cited in no less than 18 Scholarly Works between 1982 and 2004.

(See: Spalding.org)

The Riggs Institute

The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading and Thinking

(See RiggsInst.org)

The Writing & Spelling Road to Reading & Thinking method begins by teaching manuscript letter formation through dictated instructions together with a sufficient set of sound/letter relationships (the alphabetic principle).

This phonetic system and the rules of English were regularly taught in colleges of education and were incorporated in orthography student texts during the pre-"Dick and Jane" era (the 1920's and before), in a time when children who were privileged to attend school became highly literate.

Research

The 120 collective years of research and experience that have produced this updated method began with **Dr. Samuel T. Orton**, the earliest neuroscientist to research the functioning of the human brain in learning language skills (1923-1948). **Dr. Orton** used a very similar phonics base and collaborated with successful classroom teachers to combine his non-discriminating **multi-sensory techniques** with Classical Direct and Socratic instructional approaches to teaching. His first successful applications went to re-establish language-skills memory in brain-damaged World War I veterans. Other physiological organic or trauma-induced brain-damaged individuals (i.e. stroke patients) were treated similarly until his death in 1948.

Using **Orton's** methods to teach normal primary students was designed by one of his last teacher-collaborators, **Romalda Spalding**, who authored ***The Writing Road to Reading*** in 1957. She believed, and we believe, that her method represented **Dr. Orton's** final conclusions that this method should be used for primary children, both to prevent and correct learning disorders, and most importantly to establish high literacy in virtually all primary children.

Documents Supporting Phonetic Instruction

The Research Building Blocks for Teaching Children to Read

September 2001—This publication was developed by the Center for the Improvement of Early Reading Achievement and was funded by the National Institute for Literacy through the Educational Research and Development Centers Program, U.S. Department of Education. (See complete report)

Introduction

In today's schools, too many children struggle with learning to read. As many teachers and parents will attest, reading failure has exacted a tremendous long-term consequence for children's developing self-confidence and motivation to learn, as well as for their later school performance.

The National Reading Panel issued a report in 2000 that responded to a Congressional mandate to help parents, teachers, and policymakers identify key skills and methods central to reading achievement. The Panel was charged with reviewing research in reading instruction (focusing on the critical years of kindergarten through third grade) and identifying methods that consistently relate to reading success.

The Panel reviewed more than 100,000 studies.

Results:

Phonemic awareness is...the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds--phonemes--in spoken words.

Phonemic awareness can be developed through a number of activities, including asking children to

- identify phonemes,
- categorize phonemes,
- blend phonemes to form words,
- segment words into phonemes,
- delete or add phonemes to form new words, and substitute phonemes to make new words.

Phonemic awareness instruction is most effective

- when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet.
- when instruction focuses on only one or two rather than several types of phoneme manipulation

Conclusion: **Phonemic awareness is important because**

- **it improves children's word reading and reading comprehension.**
- **it helps children learn to spell.**

Phonics vs. Whole Language

The following information has been taken from studies supported by the National Institutes of Child Health and Human Development and documented in a paper entitled "Research in Learning Disabilities at the NICHD". For the full report, contact NICHD.

This article is adapted from testimony given by Dr. Reid Lyon before the Committee on Education and the Workforce in the U.S. House of Representatives on July 10, 1997.

Conclusions:

The ability to decode single words accurately and fluently is dependent upon the ability to segment words and syllables into abstract individual sound units (phonemes).

The best predictor of reading ability/disability from kindergarten and first grade test performance is phoneme segmentation ability.

Reading disabilities (dyslexia) affect at least 10 million children or approximately 1 child in 5.

Studies show that of the children who are reading disabled in the third grade, 74 percent, remain disabled in the ninth grade. Reading disability reflects a persistent deficit rather than a developmental lag in linguistic and reading skills.

Disabled readers do not readily acquire the alphabetic code when learning to read due to deficiencies in the processing of phonological processing. As such, disabled readers must be presented highly structured, explicit and intensive instruction in phonics rules and the application of the rules to print.*

Conclusion:

Systematic structured phonics instruction results in more favorable outcomes in reading than does a context-emphasis (Whole Language) approach.

*ABCThe Key addresses and corrects these deficiencies!