



Academy of
Orton-Gillingham
Practitioners
and Educators

AOGPE Fellow Webinar Questions and Answers* October 23, 2014

1. **Question for Norma Jean McHugh: What happens when a teacher doesn't pass the final? Do they come back another time before starting the practicum?**

Norma Jean McHugh: Yes, I make them retake all or any part of the final again. They know they cannot start the practicum until all assignments are complete, and they pass the final.

2. **Question for Dawn Nieman: What decodable text do you recommend for different grade levels? How easy is it to equip a public school with enough decodable text?**

Dawn Nieman: I don't use a lot of decodable text with high school students as most of my high school students can read at least on a second or third grade level. As is typically the case in Orton-Gillingham, I use real literature as soon as possible. Controlled text is typically not all that interesting. For younger students, I do love Primary Phonics. I also use Bob Books, Step Into Reading (stepintoreading.com), and Fly Leaf Publishing's (www.flyleafpublishing.com) books.

Norma Jean McHugh: Some schools use disposable books from www.readinga-z.com they are not perfect for all scope and sequences but for the lower grades they work.

Peggy Price: For lower elementary grades, we suggest Primary Phonics, High Noon Sound Out Chapter Books, PAF (Preventing Academic Failure) uses Merrill Linguistic Readers paired with Explode the Code, ReadingA-Z.com (decodable books), and SPIRE. As part of the OGCE course, teachers have to write their own decodable texts to correspond with two sample lessons they write and teach. Once the practicum begins, I advise teachers to find a decodable text that roughly corresponds to what they are teaching and "tweak" pre-existing text to make it a better fit for their students. I also recommend that one goes on a school scavenger hunt; visit old supply closets and you will find a treasure trove of decodable text from Merrill Linguistic Readers (modified linguistic approach using word families, onset rime), Corrective Reading (SRS), Palo Alto, Modern Curriculum Press, Project Read's Bonnie Kline Stories and many more.

* The answers are from the speakers and other Fellows attending the webinar.

3. Which publishers sell decodable texts that can be used with elementary and middle school students?

Suggestion from the presenters and audience:

<i>Searching for books that match a student's Lexile reading level: www.Scholastic.com is a good resource</i>	www.Scholastic.com	
<i>Early Phonics Readers</i>	https://www.continentalpress.com	<i>PreK - 1</i>
<i>Bob Books</i>	http://store.scholastic.com	<i>PreK-1</i>
<i>EZ2 Read Decodable Set</i>	http://www.ez2read.com	<i>K-2</i>
<i>Flyleaf Decodable Literature</i>	www.flyleafpublishing.com	<i>K-2</i>
<i>Primary Phonics Readers</i>	http://eps.schoolspecialty.com	<i>K-2</i>
<i>SRA Basic Reading Series, A Pig Can Jig, a Hen in a Fox's Den Six Ducks in a Pond, A King on a Swing</i>	<i>SRA/McGraw-Hill.</i> https://www.mheonline.com	<i>K-2</i>
<i>The Garside Readers</i>	http://www.carrollschool.org/professional-outreach/giftt/publications	<i>K-2</i>
<i>Open Court Reading Decodable Takehomes BLM</i>	http://opencourtreading.com	<i>K-3</i>
<i>Bonnie Kline Stories to Read and Take Home</i>	http://www.projectread.com	<i>1-3, 4-young adult</i>
<i>The S.P.I.R.E materials, Student Readers, Syllable Division Practice Pad</i>	http://eps.schoolspecialty.com	<i>K-8</i>
<i>Wilson Reading System (Stories for Older Students, Student Readers)</i>	http://www.wilsonlanguage.com	<i>"...beginning literacy skills through grade six level skills"</i>
<i>Language!</i>	http://voyagersopris.com/	<i>4-12</i>
<i>High Noon's Sound Out Phonics Based Chapter Books</i>	http://www.highnoonbooks.com	<i>ages 7-14+; reading at 1-2nd grade levels</i>

4. What kinds of assessment tools are used throughout the academic year to monitor progress at the elementary, middle, and high school levels?

Norma Jean McHugh: The Gallistel-Ellis is easy to give and gives good information. Plus daily dictation is an on- going record of progress since in the classroom the procedure is modified so that the students are working individually. Most of my teachers have created some nonsense word tests to also use a progress monitoring.

Deb Morris: I use the Gallistel-Ellis, QRI-5, and Scantron's Edperformance.com computerized vocabulary and comprehension program.

Dawn Nieman: I use a variety. For norm-referenced tests I use The Woodcock Reading Mastery Test, the GORT 5, and the Test of Written Spelling 5. I also use the Key Math Test. For criterion-referenced tests, I use the Gallistel-Ellis for reading and the Barnell - Loft for Diagnostic Spelling Test.

Karen Leopold: The Morrison-McCall Spelling Scale tests are also good.

5. Question for Deb Morris: How were grade levels measured? How was progress measured?

Deb Morris: We assess students using EdPerformance. It's a computer-based assessment that measures narrative and expository reading comprehension, as well as, vocabulary. Beyond that, we collect data using teacher-created assessments.

6. How do you advise teachers, who may only have 30 minutes, to incorporate all of the elements in an Orton-Gillingham lesson plan which is geared towards a 45 -60 minute session?

Norma Jean McHugh: They only do Association #1 and #3; they skip #2. They give fewer words, phrases, and sentences in dictation. All do the reading part of the lesson at a different time. Most are able to adjust daily to get the elements in. When introducing a new concept and they need more time, they modify the lesson.

Dawn Nieman: I advise them to use one of two different strategies. They can either do the first half of the lesson on Monday and the second half on Tuesday, or they can cut out a few minutes of each section of the lesson category to get through the entire lesson plan.

Peggy Price: Particularly because Stern Center's OGCE course is geared toward K-5 classroom teachers, this is often an issue. In fact, I'd say scheduling logistics is by far the greatest concern OGCE teachers have during the course and at the start of the practicum. One strategy the teachers often use is to devote 20-30 minutes for reading later in the day. The students each have their own box with books selected for their reading level. The classroom teacher will pull the weakest readers (maybe 1:1 or 1:2) to practice reading decodable text. This not only facilitates greater differentiation, but also allows the rest of the OG lesson to fit into the teacher's 30-minute block.

Another strategy is to split their OG lesson in half (with a phonogram drill in both lesson halves). The greater the number of students and the younger they are, the more time everything takes. Therefore, I find shortening each part of the OG lesson often leaves the students (sometimes 16-18 students in a class) with inadequate time to do justice to each element of the OG lesson. On observation days, if the mentor cannot observe the teacher two days in a row, the observed teacher is advised to lengthen their lesson to 40 minutes and shorten each part of the lesson so an entire lesson can be viewed.

One creative second grade teacher this year has divided her class into two groups, a high and low reading group. She separately teaches a daily advanced and a remedial 30-minute OG lesson. During those 30 minutes, the other half of the class independently does handwriting, worksheets, and silent reading.

7. Do you have a preference on the number of people in a training session?

Norma Jean McHugh: Yes, I prefer smaller groups of 10, but have taught larger groups of 20. It really depends on the motivation of the group. If they are motivated, it works very well. If they are mandated to attend, it does not matter how small the group is - the results will not be as good. Doing demo lessons with the larger group is hard to observe since they need to present in groups rather than the whole class. I assign one person in the group to be the observer and give them a sheet to grade the lesson. It has very specific objectives that must be met. Generally they will discuss the lessons and if a concern occurs they have always come to me for clarification.

Dawn Nieman: I usually have contract no more than 20 people per training class. There are a LOT of questions and I am always checking for understanding. Anything more than that, and it becomes a bit unruly. For example, I provide each trainee with the handouts for each day, a set of salmon/white/yellow cards, a cursive writing book, and a few other manipulatives.

Deb Morris: I require at least five people to start a training session in case a couple realize that the coursework is more than they anticipated and drop out.

Peggy Price: Thus far at Stern Center, the OGCE course has not exceeded 14. There are usually two instructors, which provide a lot of direct feedback when teachers partner up to practice teaching OG lessons.

8. Can an administrator, who has been OG trained and attends Fellow observations, provide the second letter of recommendation for the Classroom Educator candidate?

AOGPE: Yes. An administrator who is familiar with the candidate's work as an Orton-Gillingham practitioner can write the second letter of support. This is also true for letters of support at the Associate, Certified and Fellow levels.

9. Does the instructor of the 30-hour coursework also do the observations for the practicum?

Norma Jean McHugh: I think it is important that the instructor also does the practicum in order to keep the continuity of what was taught.

Dawn Nieman: I think that it is easiest to do it that way since you have already built a rapport with that person, and you essentially already know what they know; however, they do not HAVE to do the practicum with me.

Deb Morris: That would depend on the model that people are using. At my school, yes, I don't have a Clinical Supervisor on staff, so I do all of the observations. However, Fellows at other schools or facilities may divide the instruction and observations.

Peggy Price: Not necessarily. Stern Center works with several Fellows who will provide mentorship, but not all the Fellows are the primary course instructor(s). We do believe that if a group of teachers are at the same school, it is helpful for them to all have the same person conducting the observations to provide further teacher collaboration

10. Is everyone teaching the Classroom Educator course in one 30-hour block during the summer?

Norma Jean McHugh: I have taught it that way and taught it weekly during the school year. There are pros and cons to both. If taught in a block for a week in the summer, they can begin the following school year. If taught weekly, they can begin to teach parts of the lesson as they learn each part. Doing it this way, they can come back the following week and ask questions that might occur. Asking a question in front of the whole group generally helps the others in the class.

Dawn Nieman: No. I just finished a five-day, 30-hour course in Buffalo, NY. It was each day from 8:00-3:30, and all 21 of the kindergarten teachers from that district were provided with a substitute for the week. When I teach it at a university, I typically do two Friday/Saturday blocks. The weeks are not necessarily back-to-back.

Deb Morris: Thus far, I've only offered it in the one, 30-hour block. I have to be honest – I'm not a fan of offering training like that, namely because I feel as if candidates can't fully absorb and understand the OG Approach until they begin the practicum. Plus, numerous questions are generated during the practicum. However, school districts are generally using grant money for training, and the grants often mandate a timespan for training. Plus, schools generally only have a specific amount of time available to offer this professional development.

Peggy Price: Stern Center teaches the course in one 30-hour block in the summer. If there is a group of teachers from the same school or supervisory union (school district), we offer a 2-3 hour end-of-year practicum meeting, but this is in addition to the 30-hour course. The one exception to this model was last year when Jean Foss and I traveled to Montpelier, VT and taught the 30-hour course divided up over four days across two months based on the school's request.

Karen Leopold: I generally offer a 35-hour OGCE course if the course is one week long (Monday-Friday). I have also broken the 35 hours up, spreading it out over a number of weekends. In the summer, I divide my training up into three modules. Each module is 3 days and consists of 21 hours of instruction. I find that after the first 3 days of the course, where many of the phonics concepts are introduced, most participants need a break; I

give them time to absorb the information and make materials. After a few weeks, I teach Modules 2 and 3. Those taking the Classroom Educator coursework take Modules 1 and 2. Those taking the Associate coursework take all 3 modules. Additional information and coursework is provided as needed when a participant takes the practicum.

11. Can trainees get continuing education credits for Classroom Educator?

Deb Morris: My educators can get professional development credits for both the Associate Level and Certified Level. I haven't researched offering continuing education credits for Classroom Educator.

Peggy Price: At Stern Center, the Orton-Gillingham Associate Level course is offered for 3 graduate credits. When Jean Foss and I taught an Orton-Gillingham Associate Level course in Massachusetts at The Reading Institute, the course was designed for 6 graduate credits (3 credits for the course, 3 credits for the practicum). The OGCE course and practicum is such a time commitment from the teachers, it would be wonderful to somehow give them graduate credit. It would also entice enrollment because teachers need graduate credit to move up a pay scale at public schools.

Karen Leopold: The University of Colorado at Boulder offers Graduate Continuing Education credit for each Module (see question #10). At this time I do not offer credits for the practicum, since it is spread out over a minimum of 8 months.