What Works Clearinghouse

Students with Learning Disabilities

Orton-Gillingham–based Strategies (Unbranded)

Effectiveness

No studies of unbranded Orton-Gillingham–based strategies that fall within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of unbranded Orton-Gillingham–based strategies for students with learning disabilities.

Program Description

Orton-Gillingham is a broad, multisensory approach to teaching reading and spelling that can be modified for individual or group instruction at all reading levels. Teaching sessions are action oriented with auditory, visual, and kinesthetic elements reinforcing one another. The approach targets persons with the kinds of language processing problems (reading, spelling, and writing) associated with dyslexia. This report focuses on unbranded interventions that are based on general Orton-Gillingham principles and interventions that combine multiple branded products based on Orton-Gillingham principles. For individual branded products based on Orton-Gillingham principles, please refer to the Students with Learning Disabilities topic area page.

1. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III), as described in protocol Version 2.0.

2. The descriptive information for this approach was obtained from a publicly available source: the approach’s website (www.ortonacademy.org, downloaded March 2010). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Although there is no developer for this approach, the WWC requested that the Orton Academy, which certifies Orton-Gillingham teachers and maintains professional and ethical standards for the practice of this approach, review the description for this report. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this approach is beyond the scope of this review. The literature search reflects documents publicly available by October 2009.

3. Other WWC intervention reports related to the multisensory Orton-Gillingham approach include Alphabetic Phonics, Barton Reading & Spelling System®, Fundations®, Herman Method™, Wilson Reading System®, Project Read®, and Dyslexia Training Program.
The WWC identified 31 studies of unbranded Orton-Gillingham–based strategies for students with learning disabilities that were published or released between 1989 and 2009. None of the 31 studies meet WWC evidence standards with or without reservations.

Six studies are within the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol but do not meet WWC evidence standards.

- Four studies use a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.
- For two studies, the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention since there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.

Twenty-five studies are out of the scope of the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol and are ineligible for review.

- Eleven studies were not primary analyses of the effectiveness of an intervention.
- Eleven studies do not use a comparison group.
- Three studies have samples that are not aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

References

Studies that fall outside the Students with Learning Disabilities review protocol or do not meet evidence standards

Alexander, A. W., & Slinger-Constant, A. (2004). Current status of treatments for dyslexia: Critical review. *Journal of Child Neurology, 19*(10), 744–758. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Arndt, E. J. (2006). Orton-Gillingham approach. Tallahassee, FL: Florida Center for Reading Research. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Bas, O. (2008). Teaching literacy with multisensory approach to a dyslexic child who has hearing difficulty and attention deficit disorder (ADD): A case study. *Cagdas Egitim Dergisi, (351)*, 21–27. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.


Bentum, K. E., & Aaron, P. G. (2003). Does reading instruction in learning disability resource rooms really work?: A longitudinal study. *Reading Psychology, 24*(3), 361. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.


Gray, E. S. (2008). Understanding dyslexia and its instructional implications: A case to support intense intervention. Literacy Research & Instruction, 47(2), 116–123. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Hammill, D. D., & Swanson, H. L. (2006). The National Reading Panel’s meta-analysis of phonics instruction: Another point of view. Elementary School Journal, 107(1), 17–26. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Hishinuma, E. S. (2000). Parent attitudes on the importance and success of integrated self-contained services for students who are gifted, learning disabled, and gifted/learning disabled. Roeper Review, 22(4), 241. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Hook, P. E., Macaruso, P., & Jones, S. (2001). Efficacy of Fast ForWord training on facilitating acquisition of reading skills by children with reading difficulties—A longitudinal study. Annals of Dyslexia, 51, 75–96. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.


Kutrumbos, B. M. (1993). The effect of phonemic training on unskilled readers: A school-based study. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver, 1993). Dissertation Abstracts International, 54(07A), 309–2520. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.


elementary mathematics: Theory and practice. *Journal of Theory & Practice in Education, 4*(2), 239–252. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Ritchey, K. D., & Goek, J. L. (2006). *Orton-Gillingham and Orton-Gillingham–based reading instruction: A review of the literature.* *The Journal of Special Education, 40*(3), 171–183. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Scheffel, D. L., Shaw, J. C., & Shaw, R. (2008). The efficacy of a supplemental multisensory reading program for first-grade students. *Reading Improvement, 45*(3), 139–152. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.


Stahl, S. A. (1998). Teaching children with reading problems to decode: Phonics and “not-phonics” instruction. *Reading & Writing Quarterly: Overcoming Learning Difficulties, 14*(2), 165–188. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Swanson, H. L. (1999). Reading research for students with LD: A meta-analysis of intervention outcomes. *Journal of Learning Disabilities, 32*(6), 504. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.


Troia, G. A. (2003). Auditory perceptual impairments and learning disabilities: Theoretical and empirical considerations. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal, 1*(1), 27. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Turner, H. M. (2008). This systematic review empirically documents that the effectiveness of *Orton-Gillingham and Orton-Gillingham–based reading instruction remains to be determined.* *Evidence-Based Communication Assessment and Intervention, 2*(2), 67–69. The study is ineligible for review because it is not a primary analysis of the effectiveness of an intervention, such as a meta-analysis or research literature review.

Van Hell, J. G., Bosman, A. M. T., & Bartelings, M. C. G. (2003). Visual dictation improves the spelling performance of three groups of Dutch students with spelling disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 26*(4), 239–255. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample aligned with the protocol—the sample includes less than 50% students with learning disabilities.

Young, C. A. (2001). Comparing the effects of tracing to writing when combined with *Orton-Gillingham methods on spelling achievement among high school students with reading disabilities.* (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 2001). *Dissertation Abstracts International, 63*(09A), 127–3157. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because it uses a quasi-experimental design in which the analytic intervention and comparison groups are not shown to be equivalent.