

The Orton-Gillingham Approach and the *SIPPS*[®] Program

Orton-Gillingham is an instructional approach that is seen by many as a beneficial way to support literacy instruction. The Approach, and instructional programs that adapt the OG teaching methodology, have widespread use across the United States. An extensive review by Ritchey & Goeke (2006) revealed that while the Approach is widely accepted and implemented, there is a limited evidence base and research support. A search by Collaborative Classroom for definitive characteristics of the Approach produced varying lists across sources.

The *SIPPS* (*Systematic Instruction in Phonological Awareness, Phonics, and Sight Words*) program, developed by Dr. John Shefelbine, is a multilevel program that teaches the word-recognition strategies and skills that enable students to become independent and confident readers and writers. Dr. Shefelbine's research emphasizes systematic instruction, and in many ways parallels the Orton-Gillingham Approach.

Collaborative Classroom has compiled as many common characteristics of the Approach as can be gleaned from multiple resources. Similarities to these characteristics can be seen in Dr. Shefelbine's research-based approach with the *SIPPS* program. The table below details the similarities between the two.

Characteristics of the Orton-Gillingham Approach	<i>SIPPS</i>
Direct and Explicit Described as deliberate, clear teaching with distinct learning goals.	<i>SIPPS</i> instruction is explicit, with teacher modeling and student practice in every lesson.
Multi-Sensory Defined as instruction that uses all of the learning pathways: visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile.	Visual-auditory-vocal links are stressed in all <i>SIPPS</i> lessons. The <i>Intensive Multisensory Instruction for SIPPS</i> provides enhancements to <i>SIPPS</i> routines for students who may benefit from simultaneous activation of learning modalities. The enhancements include physical movement and tactile sensations.
Systematic and Structured Described as teaching content in an ordered way that builds in a logical progression. OG recommends the use of a systematic scope and sequence to guide instruction.	<i>SIPPS</i> instruction is systematic and structured. Coordinated instructional routines guide progression on a developmental scope and sequence of foundational skills.

<p>Sequential, Incremental, and Cumulative Described as the progression of instruction as students attain mastery of material that becomes increasingly more complex.</p>	<p><i>SIPPS</i> is built on a sequential scope and sequence. Lessons progressively address more sophisticated foundational skills. Cumulative practice and review are part of each <i>SIPPS</i> lesson. Application routines, such as Reading a Story and Guided Spelling, ensure students are applying skills as they read and write.</p>
<p>Diagnostic and Prescriptive Defined as continual monitoring of student problems and progress that is used to inform instruction. OG recommends the use of diagnostic assessment and ongoing progress monitoring.</p>	<p>A one-on-one diagnostic placement test determines each student's point of need and helps the teacher form small, skill-based groups. Mastery tests occur in regular increments depending on the <i>SIPPS</i> level (approximately every 5–10 lessons) to determine whether the teaching pace is appropriate for the group and whether individuals need extra practice. The goal is for students to show mastery of the skills on the mastery tests, which generally cover phonics patterns and sight words that have been taught and reviewed for at least two lessons before the test. Teacher observation during lessons is also essential to informing instruction.</p>

Other resources you may find supportive include:

Blog, Part 1: Dyslexia: What is it and why are we hearing so much about it?

<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/dyslexia-what-is-it-and-why-are-we-hearing-so-much-about-it/>

Blog, Part 2: How can I help my students with dyslexia?

<https://www.collaborativeclassroom.org/blog/how-can-i-help-my-students-with-dyslexia/>

7 Common Myths about Dyslexia

<https://www.understood.org/en/learning-attention-issues/child-learning-disabilities/dyslexia/common-myths-about-dyslexia-reading-issues>

References

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/instructional-strategies/orton-gillingham-what-you-need-to-know>

<https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/>

<https://www.dyslexia-reading-well.com/orton-gillingham.html>

Ritchey, K. D., & Goeke, 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.