

History and Philosophy of The Hutson School

The Hutson School opened in August of 2002 as an independent day school for students with specific language learning differences. Three women concerned about the quality of education and remediation for children with specific learning differences envisioned a school that would appropriately meet the needs of children and families who are seeking an alternative school placement. These women, educators and parents of dyslexic children, know that students with language learning differences, predominantly dyslexia, can achieve success when placed in a safe and supportive atmosphere. The founders incorporated The Hutson School in 2000 to honor Phyllis Hutson, Indiana's first Fellow of The Orton-Gillingham Academy, and to recognize the Orton-Gillingham approach as the foundation of the school's educational program.

After two years of planning and preparation, 5815 East 38th Street in Indianapolis, Indiana, became The Hutson School's first home. Bill and Ethyl Borneman offered this space to the school knowing that all students served would make significant strides toward realizing their potential. The Hutson School's mission is to provide an environment that nurtures each child's development, built upon his/her individual strengths, and offers remediation in areas of weakness. It offers a comprehensive curriculum that incorporates the Orton-Gillingham approach into all areas of instruction. Following Indiana's Academic Standards, the school provides a structured, sequential, multi-sensory educational program designed for students to achieve a high standard of academic excellence. Personalized instruction within the framework of the curriculum is developed for superior to average learners.

The Hutson School has an appreciation of the broader range of diversity that exists in our society. Diversity exists in language, in color, in religion, cultural heritage, financial resources, educational background, in fact, in many different ways that are not easily classified. The Hutson School makes a significant effort to reduce the barrier posed by tuition costs through need-based financial aid.

Two of the founders co-direct with specific roles within the administration of The Hutson School. Janet George is the Head of School and Principal and Martha Robinson is the School Psychologist and Assistant Head of School. The teaching staff includes licensed classroom teachers, art, music, physical education, and drama instructors, speech/language pathologists, and Orton-Gillingham therapists. Attainment of Certification from the Orton-Gillingham Academy of Practitioners and Educators is a requirement for all classroom teachers and tutors.

The Hutson School Board members are active and supportive of the mission of the school. The Trustees' leadership is strengthened by their diverse professional backgrounds, including business, finance, technology, and the medical field. The Board will continue to serve a vital role as the school grows.

The Hutson School currently operates with full-time tuition ranging from \$14,000 to \$15,500. A complete fundraising plan has been developed to increase money available for teacher salaries, need-based financial aid, and general operating expenses. The Hutson School has embarked on a comprehensive fundraising campaign that will result in money for salaries, tuition assistance, equipment, and classroom supplies.

Professional Excellence

By Phyllis C. Hutson, Fellow / AOGPE*

In 1995 the Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators was incorporated by the Board of Regents under New York State education Law through the University of the State of New York. The purposes of the Academy (also know as the Orton-Gillingham Academy) are to certify educators and to accredit exemplary schools and training programs that promote the highest ethical and instructional standards for Orton-Gillingham practitioners. The Academy is the only organization in the country that was established for these purposes.

The training programs are rigorous. We believe that high standards of training are necessary in order to assure mastery of this Approach with resulting consistent, excellent teaching for our dyslexic students.

There are several levels of membership in the Academy based upon academic degrees earned and Orton-Gillingham training completed successfully. To teach dyslexic individuals or groups independently, one must become a Certified member. One must have a Bachelor's Degree, have completed a minimum of 145 hours of classroom instruction in the Orton-Gillingham Approach and 300 hours of practicum with dyslexic children supervised by a fellow of the Academy. In addition, the candidate must have completed extensive assigned readings in dyslexia with written reports on each.

All teachers at the Hutson School are required to earn Certification by the Academy. Each member of the staff either is now Certified or is working toward Certification under my supervision. This is a three-year program.

In order to be certified to train teachers and tutors, a practitioner must become a Fellow of the Academy. One must first attain Academy Certification, have a Master's Degree, complete an additional 90 hours of classroom Orton-Gillingham instruction and an additional 300 hours of supervised practicum, and finish further readings in dyslexia. This training is an additional three-year program, for a total of six years.

Several Certified staff members at the Hutson School are Fellows-in-Training under my supervision. They will be implementing the Hutson School Teacher Training Program beginning in the fall.

In addition, there are two introductory levels of membership in the Academy. Subscriber members have completed ten hours of introductory Orton-Gillingham classroom instruction. These members are not qualified to tutor. An Associate member has completed 45 hours of classroom Orton-Gillingham instruction, 100 hours of supervised practicum and assigned readings. These members may tutor individuals but not groups, under direct supervision of a Fellow.

We can take pride in the high standards of excellence, which have been a part of the Hutson School from the earliest stages of its planning. The results speak for themselves in terms of the success of the students and the lives changed.

* Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators

**What are the Distinctive Features of the Orton-Gillingham Approach?
i.e.: What makes it more effective for the dyslexic student
than the various “methods” which are frequently used?**

Why has it been called the “Gold Standard” for teaching the dyslexic student?

1. Orton-Gillingham is an **approach**, not a method. This means that it is *flexible* and focuses on the needs of the individual student. While the tutor carefully constructs each lesson in advance, he / she is able to make appropriate changes in the moment when needed. This is called *diagnostic teaching*. This requires a highly trained experienced practitioner who has mastered both the *theory* and the *practice* of Orton-Gillingham. A method, on the other hand, 1) uses the same pre-packaged lessons for all students, 2) all students begin at the same point, and 3) they must all proceed at the same pace.
2. Orton-Gillingham is truly **multisensory**, in that both the *visual*, the *auditory*, and the *kinesthetic-tactile* pathways of learning are used **simultaneously**.
3. Another distinctive feature of the Orton-Gillingham Approach is that **reading, spelling, and written language** are taught *simultaneously*. It is not only a reading approach.
4. Orton-Gillingham is **structured**, meaning that the structure of the language is taught and that each lesson is carefully crafted using the same lesson segments each time and the same processes in teaching the student to the point of *automaticity*.
5. Orton-Gillingham is **sequential**, meaning that the language is taught from the simple to the more challenging; from the concrete to that abstract; from short, regular forms to longer and irregular forms.
6. Orton-Gillingham directly teaches **phonics** – the alphabetic *symbol-to-sound* and *sound-to-symbol* relationships.
7. Orton-Gillingham teaches the **logic** of the language; it is 85% *regular* for reading and spelling when one knows the rules and patterns. Only 15% of the language is *irregular* or *non-phonetic*. These words must be memorized for *both* reading and spelling in a logical sequence, using an appropriate multisensory process.
8. Orton-Gillingham teaches for **mastery**. A careful sequence is followed. New learning is connected with prior learning. Much practice is incorporated and the student is taken at his /her own pace to the point of mastery, or life-long learning.
9. The Orton-Gillingham Approach was developed by the neurologist, Dr. Samuel Torrey Orton and, later, his colleague, educator Anna Gillingham, specifically for the dyslexic student. It has withstood the test of time, having been successfully used with thousands of dyslexic students for more the 70 years. In recent years this multisensory structured language approach has been independently validated by modern research using Positron Emission Tomography (PET scans) and functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging (fMRI), as well as studies by the National Institutes of Health at Haskins Laboratory at Yale University and at 17 other universities.