



Academy of  
Orton-Gillingham  
Practitioners  
and Educators

**Bridging the Gap – the Gap Between Knowing and Going**  
**October 4, 2016**  
**Questions and Answers**

1. Q: I'm about to do my first public school teachers training. How can I train them to fully utilize what I teach them?

**The person that asked the question provided some details:**

**It will be a group of 5, weekly sessions, followed by practicum**

***A: There are some details that I need: How large is the group? How often are you going to be there? How much time do you have? The teachers must be motivated. You must get them to tell you their burning issue. Once you note the burning issue, that is almost where you begin, it may be a phonics issue or a classroom behavior issue, at some point you must address the issue even if you put it to the side. To fully utilize what you teach them is going to take some time, 3-5 years, 5-7 years. Research now says that there's initiation, implementation and institutionalization. Not enough time is taken in planning the initiation of how it is going to be rolled out. Implementation is the workshop itself. Institutionalization is when you no longer call it anything because this is just what we do. It takes 7-9 years to get to the institutionalization. Plan to take your time, roll it out slowly.***

2. Q: Could you share examples of the types of proposals you have created?

***A: The proposals I've created are unique to every context. I start with asking why they are contacting me, what is their burning issue, if they had a magic wand, what would it look like? From there I have a 2 pronged approach.***

***1. For example, I find out what reading skills they are seeking. Maybe they want all of their 1st grade teachers using OG. The knowledge and skills are outlined through the Academy.***

***2. The second prong is to put in place support or processes that will support a cycle of continuous improvement and sustainability through the 7 Standards for Professional Learning. The year 1 strand is to develop a Professional Learning Community (PLC) around the reading initiative. These components are: engage in continuous***

***improvement, develop collective responsibility, create alignment and accountability to the goals to the reading problem of practice. It's a collaborative process.***

3. Q: Have you facilitated critical partners within the practicum component and how did this work?

***A: I asked the principal to select the critical partners as opposed to letting them self-select. Then I put in place a protocol for teacher A to observe teacher B for a classroom observation. I developed my own check sheet on observation criteria. The person being observed gets to select what she wants the person observing to look at. For example, I want you to see how I hold the cards and do I give all children a turn? I give the teachers a checklist to choose from and I also selected from the checklist, for example is she making eye contact with students, or do students seem confused? That's how I integrated critical friends in a school with observations with trusted peers when I couldn't be there.***

4. Q: How have you dealt with the cost of two instructors?

***A: I've chosen to take less money so there could be 2 of instructors.***

5. Q: What are some suggestions you have for helping a struggling teacher that is overwhelmed by the approach and having trouble implementing it?

***A: You as the professional need to thin sliced and back off and find out exactly the point of the problem and where did you lose her. That goes back to the slide in terms of knowledge and attitude. Which change are you putting her through? Knowledge and skills for a change in behavior? Does she not have the knowledge? Does she have too much knowledge. The OG approach requires the teacher to have in-place effective management of his/her classroom.***

Someone commented: Could the teacher be struggling herself with language difficulties? If this is the case, do you have any suggestions?

**As the Coach/Mentor it is one's responsibility to be diagnostic and prescriptive in teacher behavior, in addition to the delivery of the intervention. Therefore, if the teacher is struggling with Language Difficulties, it is the coach's responsibility to support the teacher. Language difficulties contains a wide-range of issues. An example of a solution: Teachers who speak with a strong accent, often have a the para-model the phonology component of a lesson.**

6. Q: Ultimately implementing OG within a school is a behavioral change. What is your advice for those who are resistant to change?

***A: If one has been hired by a school or school system to provide knowledge and skills around OG, focus your resources on the larger group of teachers – the community of learners.***

***Individual professionals who are not available to derive benefit from the trainings are accountable to their supervisor. In several cases, I have reported to the administrator who hired me, that “Attending the OG trainings is not the best use of Ms. Smith’s time.” I recommend starting OG in a school with a small, committed group of teachers. The subsequent student success often speaks the loudest in favor of OG training.***

7. Q: I like your idea of regionally based professional learning communities that might evolve into training teams. I think we can start with developing a PLC among the Fellows and FITs that is a little more organized than our current way of sharing information. I would like to get to know more Fellows, in and out of my region, and one way is to be involved in discussing our trainings and choices we make, best practices that work, etc. There aren't many other Fellows and FITs near me-somehow I need to strengthen my connection with my colleagues.

***A: We all need Critical Friends to continue to improve our craft. Thankfully, in this age of technology we are no longer limited by geography. I am hoping to explore the shared interest among Fellows and FITs to identify like-minded professionals during the upcoming Spring AOGPE Conference. See you there!***

8. Q: Do you include regular quizzes during your training sessions?

***A: I provide regular opportunities for participants to practice, question, apply and learn from each other.***

9. Q: I have been training public school teachers for 3 years now and this is my first class using an assistant teacher to give the balance of two people reinforcing ideas!

***A: That is wonderful! When your partner is the Lead Teacher, watch the faces of the students. Team Teaching provides an opportunity for the Second Teacher to support, ask additional questions, thin-slice an answer, etc.***

10. Q: What is a "hybrid model"?

***A: Not sure what context “hybrid model” was used – but I am guessing that I was referring to weaving together the AOGPE Knowledge and Practice Standards with the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning (<https://learningforward.org>).***

11. Q: Have you developed a hybrid training for public school teachers?

***A: It is not about “developing a hybrid training” - but rather about weaving together both AOGPE Knowledge & Practice Standards within the context of high-quality professional learning, that complements the needs and culture of the targeted school.***

12. Q: Any advice for schools that are investing training staff in OG and philosophically different reading programs, like Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) (Fontas and Pinnell)? Staff are then pulled in opposite directions within the same time allotted in their school day.

***A: "Start with the "why". What need exists that LLI obviously has not addressed, or maybe even created? TIME is a school resource. If one is going to ADD something, how does the administration desire to re-allocate the TIME resource? Start with a conversation with the administration or professional responsible for the decision to bring in OG with LLI. Seek to understand – not criticize.***

#### **Questions asked after the Webinar.**

13. Q: I would like to know more about how to establish reading PLCs.

***A: Most schools are familiar with forming Professional Learning Communities (PLC's) around a targeted topic/concern/issue. Learning Forward organization is an excellent resource, or simply go on-line and Google PLC, for more information.***

***<https://learningforward.org>:***

***Suggested Resource: Leading Professional Learning Communities: Voices from Research and Practice (2008) Shirley Hord & William Sommers.***

14. Q: Would love to see how you make your instruction so interactive.

***A: Thank you! It has been quite a learning journey!***

***Suggested Resource: The Presenter's Fieldbook: A Practical Guide (2005) 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed. R.Garmston***

15. Q: Isn't there a need to include administration and social work in the PLC to accomplish sustainable new learning for staff. These school programs need a coordinated approach for success.

***A: An administrator must have a "presence" for a PLC to effectively function. That "presence" can be an assistant principal, specialist or a designated professional who is responsible for representing the administration in the PLC. However, the administration may not hold a LEADER position within the PLC. PLC is a community of professionals with SHARED responsibility and accountability. The individuals that comprise a PLC establish their own Norms, Trust and shared responsibility.***

16. Q: You also mentioned multi-year proposals that are beyond the OG courses. It would be great to have a webinar on how Fellows are extending the OG courses to also include consulting on school assessment and other systems-approach.

***A: Actually, the multi-year proposals do not go "beyond the OG courses". The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has identified six specific criteria with a Federal definition***

*of high quality professional learning. One criteria is “Job embedded – a part of ongoing regular work of instruction and related to teaching and learning taking place in real time in the teaching and learning environment”. For the OG knowledge and skill to be part of a teacher’s ongoing regular work of instruction and embedded in their daily work, the OG course must also extend over several years for a teacher to have the time to embed the learning into their own professional practice.*