

Characteristics that Make OG Unique and Effective: Why OG in the 21st Century?

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OG is multisensory – simultaneously – visual/auditory/kinesthetic/tactile. This is the characteristic that distinguishes OG from phonics programs as well as some of the OG-based programs. Every part of the OG lesson utilizes multisensory procedures for inputting and reinforcing or reviewing information – card drill, decoding words, spelling, introduction of concepts, dictation of sentences, reading fluency, and reading comprehension. All of these procedures are also neurologically sound.

OG is phonetic/alphabetic/morphemic/syntactic/semantic. Most of the basal reading programs cover components of phonics but differ in the way they address the syllabic, morphemic, syntactic and semantic levels. Additionally, the emphasis of these programs is on reading and not on spelling. If they do address spelling, their scope and sequence causes more confusion. Overall, programs are not structured and sequential.

OG is linguistically sound. This is a broader view of the complexity of OG and how it differs from other programs. It looks at the grammatical, phonological, and the morphological components of language. As such, OG is ideal for teaching ELL children and adults (and general education students) and represents a more comprehensive and multimodal way of addressing the reading and spelling needs of dyslexic students.

OG is neurologically sound. Multisensory techniques are derived from an understanding of the neurological basis of learning, and more specifically, reading and spelling.

OG is based on best teaching practices or principles. OG differentiates for learners and their styles of learning. OG provides a structured and sequential format, moving from concrete to abstract, and from simple to complex. There is sufficient repetition until a certain level of automaticity is demonstrated. OG has built-in scaffolding techniques throughout the instructional process. Because of this characteristic, OG is applicable for ALL students. Teachers can also use the principles of OG to teach science, math, social studies, etc.

OG is not a program but an approach. This is a critical difference between OG and other phonics programs or OG-based kits. A program is not geared to the needs of an individual student. It tends not to be diagnostic/prescriptive (and, hence, it is not clinical). There are very few multisensory procedures incorporated into most other {phonics} programs. The flexibility of OG practices /instruction/techniques/etc. is also not evidenced in these programs.

OG is flexible. OG is inherently flexible, as it must be, when one considers the needs of the dyslexic student. It can be used in one-on-one settings, small group settings and whole classrooms. As a result, it is an excellent approach for the RTI model. It should be used in Tier One for all children. If some students evidence problems, OG in small groups can provide additional help in Tier Two. At times, a few students need more intensive help which OG will provide in Tier Three.

OG is emotionally and socially sound. As the students achieve success in learning, not only does their self-esteem improve, but also their way of interacting with peers and adults. They begin to look at themselves differently. OG helps students to identify their areas of strengths, and helps students develop compensatory strategies which give them a sense of empowerment. In other words, every part of the OG framework is geared to the enhancement of self-esteem – multisensory procedures, correction procedures, teacher verbalizations during instruction, structured and sequential progression, and integration with other areas of reading/spelling and writing.

OG is structured, sequential, cumulative and repetitive. OG is different from other phonics programs because it provides structured and sequential learning experiences. There is also sufficient repetition to enhance automaticity, and the practice is provided in many different formats to prevent boredom.

OG is clinical. OG is diagnostic/prescriptive. OG trained teachers are somewhat analogous to doctors who must assess the symptoms, plan a treatment program and then implement the treatment program. The treatment program may change based on how the patient has responded to the treatment. OG requires that practitioners assess, plan a lesson based on this assessment, then implement the lesson while noting issues/concerns, and revise the lesson and lesson implementation based on what has happened previously. Also, a new lesson plan is developed based on what happened in the preceding lesson.

OG is a vehicle for integrating thinking skills, vocabulary development, writing skills, and content subjects. OG can be used to enhance thinking and writing skills, as well as reinforce concepts in math, science, and social studies.

OG is efficient. From one activity, such as decoding words in isolation, a teacher can differentiate, teach tracking skills, nurture vocabulary development, reinforce grammar skills, and promote development of analogical skills. From the learned word section of the lesson, a teacher can teach far/near point copying and help students to identify the unfamiliar parts of the words. Dictation provides an opportunity not only to reinforce spelling skills in the sentence level, but also to teach punctuation, capitalization, grammar, sentence structures, paragraphing skills, and creative writing.

OG makes connections between reading, spelling, writing and oral language. This is not the case for many of the other phonics or basal programs. The basal programs may impact decoding skills, but are not structured well for spelling. For many basal and phonics programs, the focus is on reading and not spelling. OG sees the connections between reading and spelling. There is little recognition that spelling is dependent on reading for building visual memory. By the same token, spelling instruction reinforces reading skills.

OG is a powerful instructional approach for teaching reading and spelling. It is the grandfather of all other multisensory structured language programs, and has been proven to be effective for over 80 years. Because of the above characteristics, it empowers both students and teachers. For the students, immediate progress is seen in language arts, thereby enhancing self-esteem. It does not just teach a series of strategies or discrete skills, but helps the students to look at learning and themselves in an integrated and holistic manner. For the teachers and tutors, OG provides a comprehensive, multi-modal, systematic, and multisensory framework and philosophy for teaching reading and spelling to ALL students.

OG is financially or fiscally sound. Schools do not need to spend so much money on basal programs or other multisensory structured language program kits. With the exception of teacher training expenses, the cost of the OG reading and spelling instructional approach is very reasonable. It is important for schools to invest in OG teacher training and provide support to the teachers.

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