

The Canadian Academy of Therapeutic Tutors (Orton-Gillingham)

CATT (OG) News

Issue 22

Fall, 2009

Message from the Board

As the fall season begins, the CATT Board would like to welcome all of our new members and congratulate those members who have achieved 'Tutor-Associate' status in the last few months. It is heartening to see that so many tutors feel it is important to upgrade their skills to provide the best 'Orton-Gillingham' Tutoring possible for their students.

The CATT (O-G) summer course taught at Surrey College by Corey Zylstra, with the trainer-aides supervised by Marilyn Thorpe, was well attended. The fall O-G and O-G Math courses are presently in progress, however, due to the Olympics there will be no winter course offered in 2010.

This fall 2009 edition of the CATT newsletter will mark the first newsletter by our new editor, Donna Cole. After publishing 21 informative issues, Corey Zylstra has stepped down from the position of editor. The CATT board would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Corey, in appreciation of her many hours of dedicated work, and also to Donna, for stepping in as editor.

A new tutoring term is underway and for many of our CATT members this means continuing with returning students as well as starting anew with others. Best wishes for successful O-G Tutoring!

Journeys

How fortunate I was to be volunteering for the Learning Disabilities Association, Surrey and to hear about Orton Gillingham from the Chapter's past president, Marilyn Wardrop. With Marilyn's encouragement, I enrolled in Tutor training and then applied to be a Tutor Associate Interim member. Another volunteer opportunity presented itself and it was terrific to help out with Pro D and member to member events. Volunteering isn't a true math equation – input equals output. Instead, new relationships are forged and priceless, the lack of selfishness of the Board of Directors is inspirational and volunteering is richly rewarding.

As newsletter editor, there are new beginnings to realize – working with a great wordsmith, Pam Brun, and with Karen Nyland, who scrutinizes the newsletter and coordinates the mailout to the membership. Respectfully submitted, Donna Cole

Board of Directors

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Seeking newsletter contributions

Orton Gillingham is an approach, not a program – and it is adaptable. Every day you are applying OG techniques, and your lesson plan is individual to your student. Your experience is invaluable to another tutor. We invite you to submit articles via email to seasweptbc@yahoo.ca

A Walk down Memory Lane...

Many years ago, Caroline Kline in her continued efforts to support CATT (O-G), made herself available to attend meetings at the Bonsar Centre in Burnaby to present new members with their Tutor-Associate Interim certificates.

Published here is her letter of thanks, addressed to the Board, April 13, 2000. The sentiments expressed can be appreciated almost a decade later. They represent the joy felt when the new Tutor Associates Interim are congratulated and welcomed. Her letter also brings to mind the Code of Standards and Ethics which governs members. To read our Statement of Standards in full, please visit www.ogtutors.com and click on “Resources” and then “Standards Document”.

Dear friends,

I felt honoured to be the presenter of certificates to those dedicated women (there were no male members at that time) who have achieved their newly acquired CATT (OG) status. Hearing Marilyn read out the requirements for the various levels impressed upon me once again the very high standards which have been established.

Also I am truly appreciative of the thought and consideration that went into the choice of virtually every word. It could not have been easy to agree on exactly the right wording in exactly the right sequence and context, but in my judgement you have achieved absolute success.

Congratulations to you all.

Affectionately,

Carolyn Kline

Carolyn Kline is deeply missed for her warm personality and the legacy of her work with Dr. Kline and the tutors she encouraged.

CATT Training and Presentations

Members regularly provide presentations in the community, spreading the word about Orton Gillingham. Please email seasweptbc@yahoo.ca with any information regarding upcoming events.

Please check the CATT website for the most current information regarding training

Past CATT O-G Events

Last Spring, Michael Hardt presented “Universal Learning Through Structure” – Part 3. Attendees were entertained by Mr. Hardt as he explained the rudiments of essay development

Upcoming Events

CATT O-G Member to Member	Tuesday, January 26, 2010
CATT O-G Spring Fling and AGM	Saturday, April 24, 2010

With the excitement and drama of the Olympics, the Professional Development Day usually scheduled during the winter will take a break.

The 6th Annual International Dyslexia Conference will take place in Disneyland, Florida, from November 11 to November 14, 2009. Check out the website for details. www.interdys.org

Hot off the press....

Teaching Parents How To Teach (Book)

Author: Jill Whitehouse

What is so terrific about *Teaching Parents How to Teach*? Jill’s beautifully illustrated book gives parents the benefit of plain language and offers an understanding of the concept of multi-sensory techniques, guiding parents to activities they can begin with the very young . The concepts of early phonemic awareness as well as other language and math concepts for the pre-kindergarten age are offered sequentially. This colourful book has become a recommended resource for the Learning Support Teachers of Surrey school district.

On a personal note, the staff at Brookside Elementary were so pleased to have Jill come and talk about her book last spring. As a tutor, I purchased several copies for use by the families to whom I provide O-G support. Jill’s book is a great guide for parents and a good start for younger siblings.

By Donna Cole

Congratulations!

CATT, O-G would like to congratulate and warmly welcome the following new members of the Academy at the Tutor Associate-Interim level:

Shaima Abdel Sabour Talal
Al-Bakkour,
Catherine Bensley
Alice Brock,
Anne Ellis Clarke
Sendes Al-Ghannam
Salwa Al-Ghazle,

Dawn Johnson
Susan Hunt,
Shannon Kari
Leane Lachner,
Christina Mears
Cecilia Murphy
Jodi Nelmes

Faye Paulson
Katheryn Redmond
Kari Tunbull
Daniel Vallee
Christina Watson
Robin Wood

CATT, O-G would like to congratulate the following Therapeutic Tutors who have successfully completed evaluations and have been granted membership at the tutor Associate level:

Rebecca Brunson
Diana Carthwithen
Laura Chapman
Heather Chitty
Paul Dowler,
Alexandra Elworthy

Lynn Farwell
Micheline Kamber
Moyna Laing,
Janice Meehan
Linda Mills
Karen Mortimer

Ellen O'Brien
Malia Orr
Karen Ouellette,
Moira Quinn

Congratulations to these tutors upon successfully completing the requirements for the Math Specialty Certificate:

Lise Ensom
Glen Alexander
Merlene Alon
Katherine Chuabio

Donna Garcia-Castelo
Sylvia Lim
Lizbeth Pascual
Rita Tapales

Maria Tiongson.

For details on how to achieve any of the levels of membership, please refer to the CATT (O-G) website.

About Corey Zylstra, Past Newsletter Editor

For more than a decade, Corey has been the editor for the CATT newsletter. Her commitment and dedication to CATT has been incredible and is greatly appreciated by the Board and the membership.

As I reviewed some past correspondence, I thought I would share this tidbit that was reported in the minutes of our 2000 AGM:

From the Archives, fall 2000

"Corey Zylstra was absent when she was to be presented with her certificate of Tutor-Trainer - her excuse??? Why giving birth to her daughter Trinity! "At that time Corey was also recognized for her commitment to CATT, carving out time for family, the newsletter and tutor training!

And now to the future, fall 2009

Today we celebrate Corey's many years as newsletter editor and thank her for that long-term commitment. She has managed to include this volunteer work in her busy life amongst many other projects. Since that archive newsletter, Corey has had a second child, a new rescue puppy named Lucy, has opened an Orton- Gillingham tutoring centre (Reach Centre in North Vancouver) and is training domestically and internationally. Corey represents Orton-Gillingham at its best.

Thank you, Corey!

Useful websites

Listed below are some websites that you may find useful to help in your preparations of upcoming lessons.

www.easycbm.com

www.fcrr.org/publications/publicationspdf/files/hudson_lane_pullen_readingfluency_2005.pdf

Websites mentioned in this article are not affiliated with CATT (OG). CATT (OG) does not endorse any product that may be available, nor information linked to these sites. These sites are listed as a resource only and should be viewed at the discretion of the user.

The Road Less Taken: Orton-Gillingham Home Schooling

“One of the biggest challenges for home schooling parents is the Co-ordination of the “project.”

Parents and practitioners engage in a constant search for the right school environment for LD students. The blend of understanding and supportive teachers and classmates, multi-sensory lessons, untimed tests, individualized projects, various accommodations, emotional stability, and most importantly one-to-one support is difficult to find. I faced the challenge of finding a school that could offer all these elements for my youngest son Ethan two years ago. After attending Fraser Academy for his dyslexia and dyscalculia since grade 3, Ethan was approaching grade 7. He had experienced amazing success in the remediation of his learning issues with a steady diet of O-G since kindergarten and even in his grade 6 year when he did Arrowsmith education in order to attempt to improve his difficulty with math symbols and recall, his O-G tutor did multisensory math with him three times a week. However, Ethan was feeling weak in certain areas of the curriculum. He had a plan, endorsed by our family, to attend the Langley Fine Arts School for secondary education so as to expand his passion for filmmaking and drama. Also his dedication to a future in zoology or animal study of some kind meant higher education would be in the cards. How best to make this happen and begin to prepare him for the rigors to come?

Approaching grade 7, it seemed evident that the time was now to focus on curriculum and prepare him for entry into a large school with diverse personalities and pressures. So where would I find the ideal school described above which would focus on curriculum and engage the academic and creative interests of a gifted yet challenged learner? The perfect solution was to dedicate the grade 7 year to home learning. I have coordinated and taught distance learning programs to special learners and know what a positive element this can be in the curriculum of a student who is struggling in a school environment. I am all for removing the school from education when the situation demands.

Once my husband, Ethan and I decided to explore home schooling, we asked ourselves a number of questions. What did we want Ethan to accomplish academically? What did he want to learn? Was O-G going to shape his learning or merely fit in? How were we to deal with the shortage of social interaction with peers? Practically speaking, could I offer Ethan a rich learning experience with a large houseful of animals and children to manage as well? Would we ever have ironed shirts again? The financial consideration was less of an issue. Like most parents who have LD children, we are prepared to pay what it takes to provide the support required. We reasoned that a year of intensive O-G support would be comparable to what we had been paying in school tuition. As it is believed that writing down goals is the

first step to accomplishing them, Ethan and I crafted a mission statement to define why we were going to do school at home and what we needed to accomplish. This is what we came up with:

“Grade 7 will be a year to use multi-sensory learning and fascinating subject matter to create extraordinary expressions of the curriculum learning outcomes, using Ethan’s animals, film and music when possible. Socials, science, writing, music, and computer animation will all cross fertilize. Math will be treated as a separate and fun subject where rapping and dancing is encouraged when doing work.”

Ethan and I both signed this document and after enrolling him up with Surrey Connect Distributed Learning, I sat down to plan the year ahead.

One of the biggest challenges for home schooling parents is the coordination of the “project.” It can be overwhelming! I decided to take the learning outcomes for the year and work backwards, chunking the goals in manageable pieces. As we had the good fortune to be working with a creative and enthusiastic O-G tutor who had been working with Ethan for six years already and who embraced the customized learning plan with gusto, it was decided that she would handle O-G language arts and math studies. For language arts, the traditional O-G spelling, comprehension and writing/output methods could be used. The curriculum was heavy on creative writing and three large novel studies. Ethan’s tutor and I decided to share those projects. My teaching duties were also to include social studies, science, music, art, P.E., computer science and CAAP. As Ethan did not play any team sports and was on a break from archery, it was important to build the P.E. requirements into our lifestyle. Fortunately, dog walking counts as cardio exercise and mucking out our duck and chicken pens is weight training! Consistent with our mission plan to involve Ethan’s love of animals, ancient civilization, nature, filming, and writing scripts into as many aspects of the curriculum as possible, we embraced the adventure of frequent field trips to museums, wilderness reserves, and parks. The goal was to weave creativity and nature into the work as much as possible. This reflects my belief that home schooling, although it is an independent “project,” needs to be part of family lifestyle and student interests as much as possible.

The Distributed Learning program we applied focuses on the portfolio as a means of communication and grading. Three portfolio meetings were scheduled during the year so deadlines were firmly established. However, students and parents are free to divide the work up as they like. As I mentioned, working backwards from the outcomes and the topic areas of each subject formed the foundation for my planning. For some classes, such as socials and science which have a subject-based textbook/curriculum to follow, it was easier to schedule the plan. Math and language, being skill based, were more challenging to schedule. However with basic guidelines designating the amount of time that was to be spent on those subjects, a successful balance was reached.

Our week was scheduled and predictable, a necessity for Ethan’s comfort with structure. Ethan had language arts and math with his tutor four afternoons a week in three hour sessions. Since she came to the house, this added structure to the day and provided me with some time for the practicalities of life and professional commitments, not to mention, being mum to Ethan’s three siblings. Weekday mornings started with “P.E.,” which was an energizing outing for our four dogs following by the cleaning of the poultry yard. Ethan then moved inside to tend to his large collection of reptiles and small animals while I prepared for the morning class which alternated between science and socials. A trip to the PBS store in Seattle while at the IDA conference had resulted in a loot bag of amazing resource DVDs which complemented our on-line learning beyond the textbook. After lunch, O-G and math took place until 3pm, followed by either a music class or time on one of Ethan’s stop motion film projects. The sunny days took us to Campbell Valley Park where his ongoing study of barn owls meant a lot of fresh air in the autumn and winter winds. Reading and “catch-up” (you really can’t call it “homework” can you?) completed the “school” portion of the day once the prescribed “classes” for the day were done. Thus core academics were accomplished in a Monday-to-Friday period. Since Friday was the only day without the

three-hour O-G block, the early afternoon was used for CAPP and other subjects that required less time than the core academics.

I think all parents will agree that the tracking and recording of activities and time spent on recreational reading is in itself more of a nuisance than anything ... and so I thought until I began to prepare for the first portfolio. It was then that this element of "cross-fertilization" we were committed to use -- of stop-motion animation (art) being used to demonstrate simple machines (science) in a drama script set in ancient Egypt (socials) that had to be written and edited (language arts) before being set to music composed on garage band (music) -- benefited from the diarizing of our days. Of course all people (especially multi-taskers!) naturally fuel more than one fire at a time in daily activities. Generally this is done unconsciously. However I discovered that in the home schooling context, it was beneficial to keep notes (however tedious) and notice how the fruits of tracking, list-making, and photo-taking could count towards meeting a learning outcome.

Was our home schooling experience successful? Aside from the frustrations that arise when a parent/teacher is trying to ensure deliverables while at the same time promoting a relaxed and creative learning experience, our mission statement was fulfilled thanks to cultivating the grace to retire from each other's company when we had just had too much of each other. Ethan was able to continue to learn from the foundation of O-G language and multi-sensory math and overcame many personal and academic hurdles. Because I knew that Ethan had some academic goals in mind in order to progress to the new environment of high school and I had the spectre of the grade 7 learning outcomes haunting my waking (and dreaming) hours, ours was not always a serene home school experience. In order to achieve success, my eye had to be on the clock. It was, however, creative, interesting and expansive. We both learned so much! Without the support of Ethan's O-G tutor I would not have directed his learning in the same way. The confidence that an LD student gets from acquiring new skills learned in a comfortable multi-sensory manner spills over to their other learning in a way that goes beyond simply mastery of those new skills. O-G is a touchstone to learners, a "rabbit's foot" that they know they can refer to when faced with new learning situations. As the only teacher in your child's life for the moment, one cannot rely on the input of other staff and specialists. A student who can use a measured, predictable approach to problem solving or decoding learned from the repetition of O-G is a godsend.

The last chapter of this O-G/home school story is that Ethan and I completed his curriculum ahead of schedule and we were able to branch out beyond grade 7 for the remainder of the school year. For us that meant medieval history and more ecology! A postscript to our grade 7 journey is that Ethan was accepted to the Langley Fine Arts School for grade 8 where he is now learning the ropes of a non-LD-specific school ... and interacting with more classmates than he's ever had. Thanks to an understanding learning resources counselor, I was permitted to teach Math 8 at home with the support of his O-G tutor. That is Distributed Learning at its best: individualizing education and in this, providing the perfect environment for a learning methodology that helps challenged students flourish.

Submitted by Victoria Blinkhorn, B.A., M.A.S.

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Three cheers for a supportive teacher- what a difference it makes!!

As we work with our students teaching them language skills using the Orton – Gillingham approach, it is rewarding to see progress.

Sometimes, if we are lucky, our tutoring efforts are multiplied through the synergy of OG plus a supportive teacher at school.

In a Richmond high school one teacher deserves accolades for going the extra mile to support the LD students that are in the Resource room.

What does this teacher do??

- Has a set routine in the Resource Room
- Has the students use their agendas and checks them
- Uses the Kurzweil** program, uploading novels and texts onto the student's laptop. . The student can highlight text, make notes and answer science questions
- This teacher puts novels on an iPod using Kurzweil** so that the student can listen while going to and from school
- Is aware of personalities and deals with disruptions
- Encourages use of the Resource Room for test-taking
- Liaises with classroom teachers to get accommodations for students
- Understands the benefits of Orton-Gillingham
- Lets the students know that she likes and cares about them

HIP HIP HOORAY! What a pleasure to have a teacher like this on the team.

Go to** www.kurzweiledu.com to learn more about this reading, writing and studying software.

** *Kurzweil 3000* provides multi-sensory access to virtually any text or curriculum, including print, electronic, and Web-based documents, so students learn from grade-appropriate content, develop valuable study skills, and become independent learners.

By Allyn Rodden

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