

Orton-Gillingham & Wilson Reading System® : What's the Difference? Frequently Asked Questions

What's the difference between "Orton-Gillingham (O-G)" and Wilson Reading System (WRS)?

Orton-Gillingham is an **approach** to instruction. [WRS](#) is a **program** based on this approach.

The O-G **approach** is an educational philosophy that prescribes teaching literacy in a direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, and diagnostic way (Academy, 2019). This approach comes from scientific evidence about how people learn to read as well as a body of knowledge and practice.

WRS is a Structured Literacy **program** based in the science of reading. It contains a curriculum that follows an established scope and sequence of concepts and skills for teachers to use with students. It provides day-by-day guided lessons and assessment tools to track student progress and guide future instruction. WRS **applies** the O-G principles of instruction, which the science of reading has shown are effective for all students and essential for students with dyslexia.

How are the O-G approach and WRS similar?

Because the WRS program is based on the O-G approach, there are similarities in the instructional principles, which are the basis of Structured Literacy. Both teach how the English language works.

Both WRS and the O-G approach focus on the learning needs of individual students. WRS is a program containing a specific curriculum and scope and sequence of concepts and skills for teachers to follow.

How do the O-G approach and WRS differ?

The O-G approach is a set of instructional principles that apply to any age and grade and various classroom configurations. WRS is a specific program with a curriculum designed for students from Grade 2 to adult who have a language-based learning disability, such as dyslexia.

Teachers applying the O-G approach focus on the individual strengths and weaknesses of learners. Teachers using the WRS program do this through a systematic, cumulative, and sequential curriculum with comprehensive student and teacher materials and assessment tools that allow educators to plan and teach each lesson diagnostically. Lessons are based on student mastery of concepts taught and areas that need additional focus.

Teachers who use an O-G approach create or compile their own materials. WRS, on the other hand, provides the materials for each lesson within a formal curriculum that has been validated by research studies as effective with the target population.

What is the "O-G training" people are talking about?

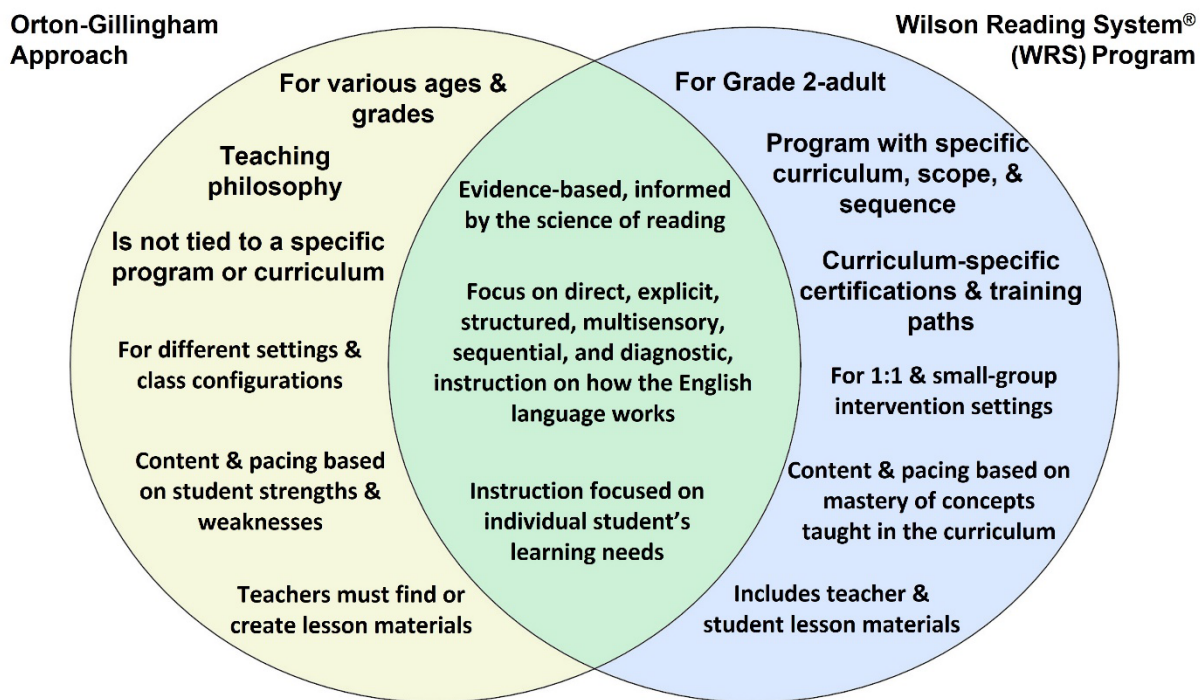
The term "O-G training" refers to training that helps educators understand what it means to provide direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, and diagnostic instruction. O-G training teaches the "how" of this educational philosophy—how the English language works. The term "O-G training" may

also refer to training offered by the [Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators \(AOGPE\)](#) or others. Wilson Language Training® also offers curriculum-specific [credentials and training paths](#) to prepare educators to teach WRS with success to challenged readers.

Can an O-G trained educator teach WRS?

An educator who has “O-G training” has learned how to provide direct, explicit, multisensory, structured, sequential, and diagnostic instruction. However, because it does not train educators on how to implement a specific program, it is different from WRS training.

Wilson highly recommends that educators using the WRS program participate in WRS-specific training, particularly the WRS certification training. Students are most successful with the WRS program when their instructors are WRS certified. Research has found that pairing an evidence-based and research-based program like WRS with high-quality program-specific training is the most effective at improving student performance (Short & Hirsch, 2021). Wilson offers WRS Level I and Level II Certifications which involve coursework and supervised practicums to prepare educators to work with the most struggling readers.



Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. (2019, February 19). *What is the Orton-Gillingham approach?* Academy of Orton-Gillingham Practitioners and Educators. <https://www.ortonacademy.org/resources/what-is-the-orton-gillingham-approach/>

Short, J. and Hirsh, S. (2021, Spring). *How curriculum-based professional learning can boost student outcomes: Professional learning for educators.* Carnegie Corporation of New York. <https://www.carnegie.org/our-work/article/how-curriculum-based-professional-learning-can-boost-student-outcomes>