

Comparing the 3-Step System to Orton-Gillingham

One noun definition of 'phonics reading programs', "Is a method of teaching elementary reading and spelling based on the phonetic interpretation of ordinary spelling;" or, "Method to teach reading by training students to associate letters with their sound values." Phonic reading program methods teach, "Read and pronounce words by learning the phonetic value of letters, letter groups, and especially syllables." The emphasis for letter/sound control in phonic reading programs follows these definitions. To accommodate the phonic definition, a large number of rules, exceptions and generalizations have been developed and used for basic word decoding guidelines. Notice that speech is not included in the definition because phonic reading methods have very limited relationship to normal speech. There are 160 syllables that have no relationship to how a word containing them is naturally pronounced. Phonics and syllables have been taught for basic decoding skills; and by their very definition they are based on "interpretation" or, "sound values" , not on natural speech and normal speech of word clusters (reading), having ordinary spelling. Orton-Gillingham is a phonic-syllable method with questionable methods to mark vowels and word clusters.

An adjective definition is, "Of, or relating to, or having the nature of sound, especially speech sounds." This identifies the 3-Step System as 47 letter clusters replacing syllables and each one is natural speech with corresponding spelling. This unique feature is what makes the 3-Step System so easy to teach and learn. Every type of learner is provided with a method that enhances their natural learning style. The 3-Step marking system is extremely accurate based on 47 Combinations (letter clusters), and 8 rules to control and mark the C, G, and Y and vowels. After marking a word, the student knows precisely how and why that word is to be pronounced. This direct spelling-to-speech greatly enhances word fluency and spelling skills.

The number of illogical flaws in teaching phonics and syllables is demonstrated by 2 practices at different 'levels of phonics instructions'. Two of the letter sounds taught in kindergarten and grade 1 are short and long vowels. Numerous

classrooms have large pictures of animals above the chalkboard or depicted in reading lessons. An elephant is used to teach a short **e** sound in the **el** letter clusters. **This practice is incorrect because the e in el is silent, not short and pronounced as the letter L. Orton-Gillingham uses the picture of an elephant for a short e in their program teaching initial sounds.**

Another example is the **ugh** sound. Phonic workbooks have dozens of lessons using the **ugh** in a variety of words to teach the sound. **UGH is either silent as in thought - pronounced thot; or says the F sound as in tough.** Both spellings, **el** and **ugh** are 2 of the 47 letter clusters taught in the 3-Step program like the alphabet to eliminate reader confusion and to mark a word correctly while learning to read. The **ugh** is an example of controlling a letter-cluster rapidly with the correct sound-spelling found in the 3-Step System.

Orton-Gillingham has problems in their marking system. They teach the separation of syllables in words and then mark vowel sounds based on rules that are also difficult to understand because they are not accurate or reliable. For example, on their website, they mark 3 words on their homepage:

institute – multisensory – and education.

INSTITUTE - (As marked on their home page)

ĩn/stĩ/tũte

The **i** in **ti** is marked short. While this works for this word, 3-Step System teaches **ti** as a 2 sound Combination that also says the **sh** sound in about half of the words. **Ti** and **sh** are two of the 47 Combinations in 3-Step System taught by underlining them to represent a specific sound each time. A third sound for **ti** is when the **i** is controlled by a long vowel rule.

Same word marked using 3-Step System.

ĩn s t i tũte

MULTI-SENSORY - (As marked on their home page)

mũl/tĩ-sěn/sor/ȳ

The **i** in **ti** is marked long as in the prefix **multi-**, why is it not marked short as the **ti** in institute? There is no reason to mark it long as other words with the

multi- prefix have a short **i** sound as in multiple. **Ti** may also say the **sh** sound. **Ti** is one of 47 Combinations in 3-Step System taught as a 2 sound Combination, a **t** sound followed by a short **i** unless there is a long vowel rule; or as the **sh** sound. **Multi-** is one of 12 prefixes taught in 3-Step System that has a long vowel sound without a long vowel rule to follow as one of the 12 prefixes as a sight-to-sound control of the **i**.

Another inaccurate mark is the **e** in **en**, where the **e** is marked short. The **e** is silent in **en** and **en** is one of our 47 Combinations pronounced as the alphabet sound of **n**; an inconsistent approach by Orton-Gillingham to vowel control that only confuses emerging readers and is emulated in nearly every phonic-syllable decoding program.

More confusion for the student using Orton-Gillingham is marking the **y** as a long vowel. **Y** is a vowel at the end of a word and says an **i** or an **e**, both pronounced long **after marking the y with an i or e over it. The y itself does not have a long vowel sound and it is confusing to mark it long when teaching an emerging or special needs student.** **Y** is a consonant when the first letter of a word and may take an **e** or an **i** sound when in other word locations. 3-Step System teaches **y** as a consonant when the first letter; as an **i** sound in the middle of a word and may be long or short; and as an **e** or **i** sound at the end, try **e first**.

An important sound neglected by Orton is the **or** in multi-sensory. Readers see the **or** and try to recall the sounds it takes because of the vowel O. The 3-Step System teaches readers to underline it as one of the 47 Combinations having a consistent sound and users are taught to automatically underline when located in a word.

Same word marked using 3-Step System:

multi-sensory^e

education – (As marked on their home page) **ēd/ū/cā/tion**

In this word, **u** is marked long without any reliable reason. 3-Step System has the reader **mark all isolated vowels short unless proven long by the double**

vowel or final e rule. The reading brain will change the vowel long as taught by 3-Step System, if the word does not sound correct as marked. (**Changing a vowel sound from short to long or long to short is taught as a skill in 3-Step System.**)

The **c** is a letter that confuses the decoding process for students, especially older students grades 4 and above because it is taught as a soft or hard sound in primary grades. 3-Step System has a very accurate rule for controlling the **c, g, and y** letters we call Borrowers. If a **c** is followed by an **e, y, or i** it will say **s**; if not, it will say the **k** sound; accurate about 97% of the time. Most exceptions to any of our 8 rules for vowels and Borrowers are controlled in one of the 47 Combinations.

The long vowel **a** is isolated as a single phoneme and marked long. **Tion** is not marked at all and is left without any help for the reader. The **tion** is not pronounced the way it is spelled; **tion** says **shun** and is underlined while learning to control sounds in 3-Step System; one of 47 Combinations. However, 3-Step System teaches **ation** as a Combination pronounced with a long **a** sound blended to the **shun** sound of **tion**. If there is no **a** before the **tion**, 3-Step System teaches **tion** as having a **shun** sound. Letter clusters are taught like the alphabet eliminating numerous sound-letter control problems that are incorrectly taught by the phonic-syllable method as practiced by Orton-Gillingham and most other decoding programs. **Same word using the 3-Step System:**

education