

IMSE Certification in Action: Stephanie Sawhney

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The Journal talks to veteran teacher, Stephanie Sawhney, about her experience taking IMSE's [Comprehensive Training](#) and Practicum. While many educators conduct their practicum in a one-on-one setting, Stephanie's Practicum was unique as she worked in a small classroom of English language learners.



Stephanie Sawhney, Emerson Community School

Teaching children how to read and write has always been the focus of educator Stephanie Sawhney's career. But with more than 22 years in the classroom, before finding IMSE's Orton-Gillingham, "I always felt something was missing," Stephanie tells the Journal. "I wanted to find a better way to teach these children to unlock the code of our spoken and written language. And even though I had heard of Orton-Gillingham, I hadn't had the opportunity to see it in action with young learners."

That all changed in January 2015 when, along with other teachers from New Jersey's Plainfield Public School District, Stephanie took the [IMSE 30 Hour Comprehensive Training](#). Initially, Stephanie went into the training just looking for one new skill or strategy to use in her teaching.

"But I immediately saw that the structure of IMSE's OG could help me reach students who need direct, systematic instruction in letter sounds, symbols and word chunks. As an educator, I was never satisfied with the way that any of the reading programs I had experienced handled this piece. I felt like I'd just been handed a powerful tool that would reach all learners."

Stephanie followed up the Comprehensive Training with the 45 Hour Practicum. While most instructors conduct their Practicum in a one-on-one setting, Stephanie used the OG techniques in her classroom at Emerson Community School in Plainfield, New Jersey. "I worked with 14 first grade English Language Learners. Spanish was the first language for all of the children. Spanish is a phonetic language, so this phonetically structured program helped the students make the transition from Spanish to English."

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“Assigning the color green to phonetically regular words, and the color red to those words that don’t follow known rules enabled the children to visually discriminate the difference between them and further associate their spelling patterns as being regular or irregular.”

Stephanie relates that the impact of OG instruction on the children at Emerson School has been huge. “We would see the students pounding and tapping out words. They were using the multi-sensory components to help them figure out what the words were...it was exciting!” she tells the Journal.

Moreover, IMSE’s OG has empowered both Stephanie and her students. “This is a system that really works and the confidence of the children has really gone up. That helps me as an educator know that we’re using strategies that will help every student get where they need to be in their reading. It’s inspiring to see them become stronger learners, too,” Stephanie says.

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