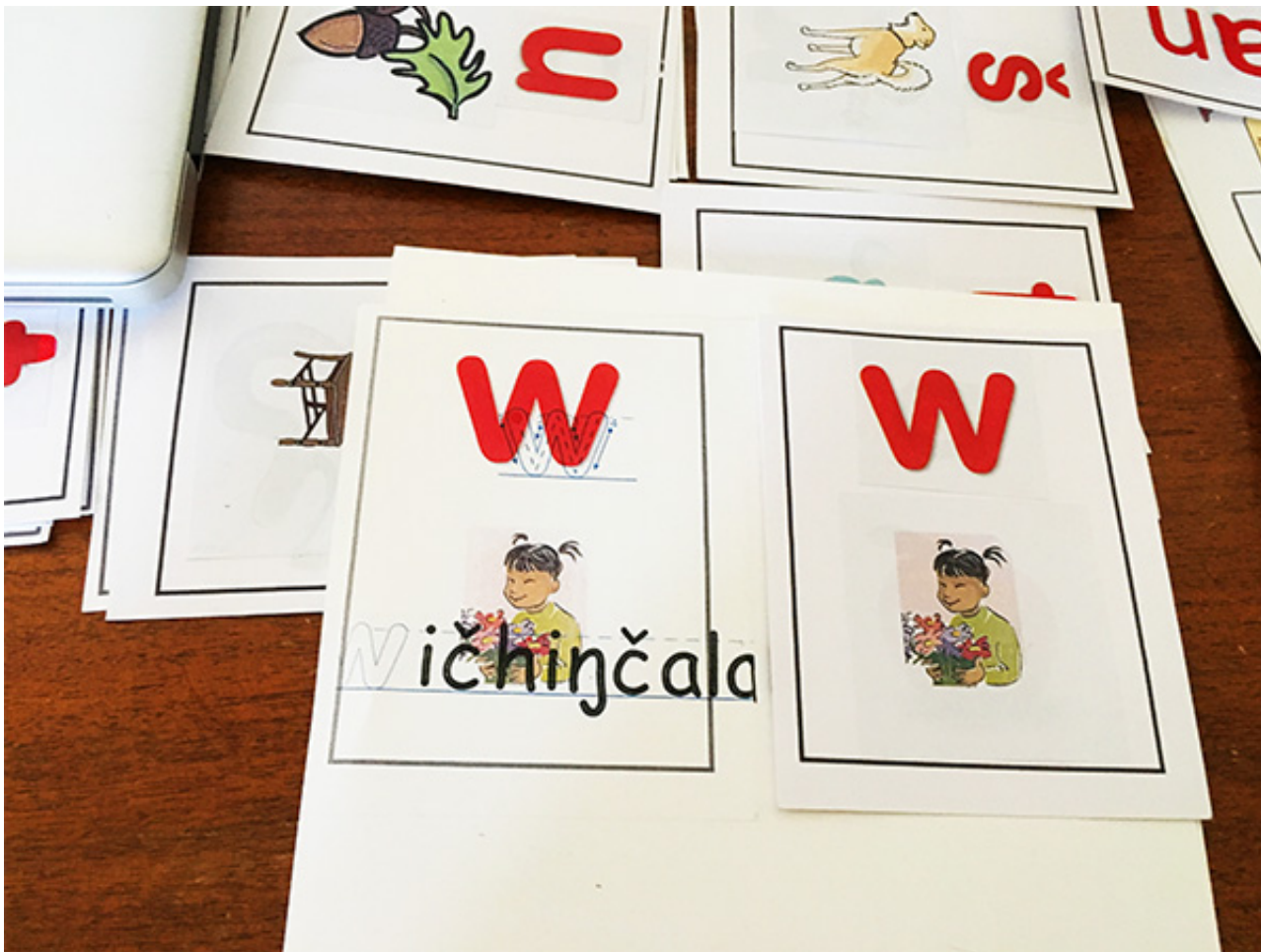


# Lakota Language Staff Learns Orton-Gillingham Teaching Method

Last year we kicked off our pilot year of creating a Lakota educational pathway for the graduates of our Lakota Immersion Childcare. Through this partnership with Red Cloud Indian School, our groundbreaking elementary immersion program, Iyapi Glukinipi, successfully saw 5 kindergarteners through a year of learning, growing, and Lakota Language. Now, the program will progress those 5 kindergarteners to 1<sup>st</sup> grade, and bring in another cohort of kindergarteners.



As the next school year gears up, our staff has been busy working curriculum development, teacher training, and their own language immersion. And to help them maximize their potential to do all three, the Margaret Byrd Rawson Institute (MBRI) provided a week long training in the Orton-Gillingham method of teaching. This multi-sensory method of teaching reading helps students understand the “how” and “why” of letters and their corresponding sounds, building up their reading comprehension in whichever learning style suits their needs. It has been proven to be effective in teaching children with dyslexia and other reading issues commonly faced in the classroom how to read at the same levels as their peers.



“This method feels more in depth because it focuses on the letters and sounds and how to apply them,” says team member Elyssa Sierra Conch. “Plus, with children’s attention spans it is good to know how to apply more hands on material and know other teaching techniques.”





MBRI's board voted to have the institute cover the costs of a week's worth of training, bringing two Ortmann-Gillingham trainers to Pine Ridge. Trainers Marcia Mann and Teresa May believe this method of teaching should be utilized on Pine Ridge, especially because one of the creators of this method actually grew up on Pine Ridge in the late 1800s. Anna Gillingham was the daughter of a Quaker, who later in life began working with Samuel Orton, a neurologist who worked with Helen Keller during his career. Together they created a multisensory approach to learning language that would assure any child could develop their reading comprehension.



“English is a really complicated language to learn, and I feel like Lakota is simpler,” says Grace Giago, one of the teachers in our Lakota Language Initiative. “But this method really helped me to learn to use the Lakota orthography and understand how it is going to be taught to the kids.”

The trainers expressed that because the Orman-Gillingham method doesn't rely on things like grammar or sentence structure, it can be utilized for any language and that language's corresponding rules. However, the more in-depth the teacher's knowledge of the language

is, the better the Ortman-Gillingham method will serve as a teaching tool. It is for this reason that the trainers were so glad to have fluent speakers Darlene Helper (below, left) and Martha American Horse (below, right) attend the training.



“It was a privilege to take part in training the teachers in the Lakota Language Initiative,” said Teresa May. “These smart, dedicated and creative teachers were amazing to work with. And the elders, the grandmothers, are the heart beat of the program.”

Martha and Darlene working to create a better future for Lakota people is no surprise — it is part of their families’ history. Both Martha’s great grandfather, Chief American Horse (highlighted, front row), and Darlene’s great grandfather, Chief Hump (highlighted, third row), went together to as part of a delegation to Washington DC in 1891. Although in the century since that delegation the erosion of Lakota culture was a main goal of the United States government, the perseverance of our ancestors has allowed for people to continue



sustaining our language and culture. Martha and Darlene now continue their great grandfathers' work of being a voice for the people as they help both children and adults learn to speak Lakota.



## I'm Curious and Want to Learn More (learn-more/)

[Our Story \(learn-more/our-story\)](#)

[History and Progress \(learn-more/history-and-progress\)](#)

[Visit Us \(learn-more/visit-us\)](#)

[Our Team \(learn-more/our-team/\)](#)

[Accomplishments \(learn-more/accomplishments\)](#)

**[News & Media \(learn-more/news-headlines/\)](#)**

[Radio \(learn-more/news-headlines/radio\)](#)

## Find out more

### Who to Contact



#### **Greg Montgomery**

Greg@thundervalley.org (mailto:Greg@thundervalley.org)

6054552700 (tel:6054552700)

Subscribe to our mailing list

First Name

Last Name

Email Address


Zip Code

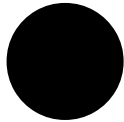
SUBMIT

"They have decided as a community to take ownership of their future. That makes me hopeful."

- President Barack Obama



 (<https://www.instagram.com/thundervalleycdc/>)

 (<https://www.facebook.com/thundervalleycdc/>)

 (<https://twitter.com/tvalleycdc>)

Thunder Valley CDC

P.O. Box 290 Porcupine, SD 57772      P (605) 455-2700      F (605) 455-2970

Copyright 2016. All Rights Reserved. Site by The Numad Group