

Marjorie Bussmann Gillis, Ed.D.

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EDUCATION

1998 Ed.D. Special Education, University of Louisville
1990 Academic Language Therapist, Teachers College, Columbia University
1975 MA, Special Education; Learning Disabilities, University of Connecticut
1973 BA, Sociology and Elementary Education, Connecticut College

EMPLOYMENT

2014-present Research Affiliate, Fairfield University, Fairfield, CT
2009-present President, Literacy How, Inc., North Haven, CT
2009-present Research Affiliate, Haskins Laboratories, New Haven, CT
2002-2009 Senior Scientist, Haskins Laboratories, New Haven, CT
2006-2009 Project Director, Haskins Literacy Initiative, New Haven, CT
2006-2009 Project Director, Hartford Foundation Grant, Hartford Public Schools, CT
2003-2007 Co-Principal Investigator, Mastering Reading Instruction, Haskins Laboratories, New Haven, CT

2002-2009 Project Leader, Early Reading Success, Haskins Laboratories, New Haven, CT
2000-2002 Haskins Early Reading Success Fellow, State of CT and Haskins Laboratories
2001-2006 Educational Consultant, Bethel Public Schools, Bethel, CT
1998-2001 Educational Consultant, Weston Public Schools, Weston, CT
1998-2001 Special education and reading teacher coach/mentor (*Preventing Academic Failure, Wilson Reading System*), Bridgeport Public Schools, Bridgeport, CT
1995-2000 Academic Language Therapist (ALTA certified), Private Practice (Students with Reading Disabilities), Independent Reading Evaluations, Westport, CT
1993-1994 Educational Consultant, Summit Academy (School for Students with Learning Disabilities), Louisville, KY
1992-1993 Adjunct Instructor, Special Education, University of Louisville, KY
1990-1995 Academic Language Therapist (ALTA certified), Private Practice (Students with Reading Disabilities), Avon, CT; Louisville, KY
1987-1990 *Alphabetic Phonics*, Teachers College, Columbia University, NY; Completed Year 2 coursework and the remaining 400 hours of 900 practicum hours required for certification
1986-1987 *Alphabetic Phonics*, Dean Learning Center and Scottish Rite Hospital, Dallas, TX; Completed Year 1 coursework and 500 hours of 900 required practicum hours
1981-1986 Private Practice (Students with Reading Disabilities), Chesterfield, VA; Dallas, TX
1980-1981 Resource Teacher, Elementary School, Chesterfield, VA
1978-1979 Resource Teacher, Monnig Middle School, Fort Worth, Texas
1976-1978 Resource Teacher, Elementary School, Austin, TX
1975-1976 Resource Teacher, Elementary School, Auburn, ME

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

Board Member and Former President, *Connecticut Branch of International Dyslexia Association*
Board Member, *Dyslexia Society of Connecticut*
Former President and co-founder, *Smart Kids with Learning Disabilities*
Executive Board Member, *Academic Language Therapist Association*
Executive Board Member, *The Alliance*

Board Member, *New Alliance Foundation*
Member, *Society for Scientific Study of Reading*

PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Gillis, M.B. (1998). *The Evidence for the Language Basis of Learning Disability in Preschool Children*. Doctoral Dissertation
- Gillis, M.B. and Miller, S. (2001) *Helping Children Achieve Reading Fluency*. CD-Rom Version of Proceedings of the British International Dyslexia Conference
- Gillis, M.G. and Miller, S. (2000). *The Language Puzzle: Connecting the theory of linguistics with a multisensory language instructional program in foreign language learning*. In *Multilingualism, Literacy and Dyslexia: A Challenge for Educators*, eds. L. Peer G. Reid, and D. Fulton. London, England.
- Gillis, M. B. (2003). *Haskins Early Reading Success Demonstration Project*. Poster session presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading Conference, Boulder, CO.
- Brady, S., and Gillis, M. B. (2006). *Assessing and Building Teacher Knowledge: The Haskins' Mastering Reading Instruction Project*. Poster session presented at the Institute of Education Sciences Conference, Washington, DC.
- Brady, S., and Gillis, M. B. (2006). *Assessing and Building Teacher Knowledge: The Haskins' Mastering Reading Instruction Project*. Poster session presented at the Society for the Scientific Study of Reading Conference, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- Gillis, M., Lavalette, M., Marinelli, M., and Blanchard, E. (2006). *Explicit and Differentiated Code Instruction*, a Trainer-of-Trainer Module written and delivered for the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- Gillis, M., Liss-Bronstein, L., Lowe, E., and Nuzzo, P. (2007). *Oral Language: A Pathway to Deep Literacy*, a Trainer-of-Trainer Module written and delivered for the Connecticut State Department of Education.
- Brady, S., and Gillis, M. B. (2006). *Mastering Reading Instruction*. Invited session presented at the International Dyslexia Association (IDA) Conference, Indianapolis, IN.
- Pugh, K.R., Frost, S.J., Sandak, R., Gillis, M., Moore, D., Jenner, A.R., and Mencl, W.E. (2006). What Does Reading Have to Tell Us about Writing?: Preliminary questions and methodological challenges in examining the neurobiological foundations of writing and writing disabilities. In *Handbook of Writing Research*, eds. C. A. MacArthur, S. Graham, and J. Fitzgerald. Guilford Press. London.
- Brady, S., Gillis, M., Conway-Palumbo, L., Lavalette, M., Liss-Bronstein, L., Lowe, E., North, W., Russo, E., Smith, T., and Wilder, T.D. (2008). Assessing and Building Teacher Knowledge: The Haskins' Mastering Reading Instruction Project. *Reading & Writing: An Interdisciplinary Journal's Special Issue on Teacher Knowledge*.
- Gillis, M., (2008). *The Science of Teaching Reading: What We Know (and Still Need to Know) about Comprehensive Literacy Instruction*. Invited Keynote Presentation, Wilson Language Training Summer Institute.
- Gillis, M. & North, W. *Working Smarter Not Harder: The Haskins Mentor Model*. IDA National Conference. Seattle, WA.
- Gillis, M. (2008). *Empowering Teachers: The Key to Early Reading Success*. Invited Presentation, Fordham University, Summer Institute.
- Gillis, M. (2009). *Rationale for a Dedicated Reading Licensure Test*. IDA National Conference, Orlando, FL.
- Gillis, M. (2010). Gillis, M. (2012). *Closing the Reading Achievement Gap: A Two-pronged Approach*. Invited keynote presentation, New Jersey IDA Conference.
- Gillis, M. (2010). Training K-2 Teachers to Teach Reading: Results from a Three-Year Project, IDA National Conference, Phoenix, AZ.
- Gillis, M. (2011). *Get Kids Talking! How to Enrich and Enliven Classroom Discourse*, Invited presentation, PA IDA Conference.
- Gillis, M. (2011). *Professional Development Fostering Pedagogical Discourse: The Art and Science of Mentoring Teachers in Evidence-Based Reading Instruction*. IDA National Conference, Chicago, IL.

- Gillis, M., and Lowell, S. (2011, 2012). *Demystifying Dyslexia: Talking to Parents, Students, and Teachers About Dyslexia*. IDA National Conference. Chicago, IL; Baltimore, MD.
- Gillis, M. (2012). *IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards*. Invited presentation, Reader's All Regional Conference, Illinois.
- Gillis, M. (2012). *Closing the Reading Achievement Gap: A Two-pronged Approach*. Invited presentation, Reader's All Regional Conference, Illinois.
- Gillis, M. (2012). *Creating Language-Rich Home and School Environments for Young Children*, Invited presentation, Reader's All Regional Conference, Illinois.
- Gillis, M. (2013). *Supporting the CCSS for ELA & Literacy: What do Teachers Need to Know and Be Able to Do? A Two-Pronged Approach to Closing the Teacher Knowledge Gap*. Invited Presentation, IDA National Conference, New Orleans, LA.
- Gillis, M. (2014). *A Two-Pronged Approach to Closing the Teacher Knowledge Gap*. Keynote Presentation, Iowa IDA Conference, Cedar Rapids, IA.
- Gillis, M. (2014). *Bringing the Science of Teaching Reading into Higher Education*. Invited Presentation, IDA National Conference, San Diego, CA.
- Gillis, M. (2015). *It's Never Too Late to Read*. Keynote Presentation, Houston IDA Conference, Houston, TX.
- Gillis, M. (2015). *Bringing the Reading Research into Higher Education: IDA's Knowledge and Practice Standards at Work*. Invited Presentation, IDA National Conference, Grapevine, TX.
- Gillis, M., and Eberhardt, N.C. (2015). *A Word Selection Grid: Choosing Vocabulary to Teach*. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy* 41 (3): 49.
- Gillis, M. (2016). *IDA Knowledge and Practice Standards: What Teachers Must Know and Be Able to Do To Teach High Quality Standards*. Keynote Presentation, Southwest Branch of IDA Conference, Albuquerque, NM.
- Gillis, M. (2016). *It's All About the Teacher: Empowering Teachers with the Knowledge and Skills to Apply the Science of Teaching Reading*. PA Dept of Ed, Bureau of Special Education Annual Conference.
- Gillis, M. and Tolis, J.M. (2016). *You Can't Make an Omelet Without Breaking a Few Eggs: The Trials, Tribulations and Triumphs of Retraining Tenured Teachers in Scientific Research-Based Approaches to Teaching Reading*. *Perspectives on Language and Literacy* 42 (4): 49.
- Gillis, M., and Eberhardt, N.C. (2016). *The Intersection of Vocabulary Learning and Syntax: A Teachable Relationship to Reading Comprehension*. Presentation. IDA National Conference, Orlando, FL.

POLICY WORK

- 2004-09 Member of the CT State Department of Education (CSDE) Reading First Management Team, representing Haskins Literacy Initiative
- 2007 Served on the Advisory Committee for Governor Rell's Early Childhood Cabinet "Ready by 5, Fine by Nine."
- 2008-09 Member of the state's Advisory Task Force to write Guidelines for Response to Intervention
- 2008 Member of the state's Advisory Task Force to re-write LD Guidelines for state Special Education Regulations.
- 2011 Member of the CT's Striving Readers Comprehensive Literacy Advisory Committee
- 2012-13 Member of the state task force to advise the Commissioner of Education on literacy legislation
- 2014- Member of the state working group on Specific Learning Disabilities/Dyslexia to advise the present State Department of Education on policy decisions for CT school districts regarding dyslexia

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Administrative: Managing and assisting in training team of mentors, coordinating training programs for teachers, directing professional development for school administrators to complement professional development for teachers, monitoring and managing budgets for large-scale projects, coordinating purchase of assessment and instructional materials for professional development projects, serving on

state education committees, interfacing with local and state education officials, legislators, and policy-maker.

- Reading Instruction: Expertise in direct methods of reading instruction supported by quality research in the areas of phonological awareness, code instruction, fluency, vocabulary, oral language, and reading comprehension; skilled at interpretation of student errors, differentiation of instruction according to student level of achievement with knowledge of how to provide student-friendly explanations of abstract concepts; extensive knowledge of instructional activities, appropriate pacing; expertise in the administration and interpretation of formal and informal assessment tools to support instructional decisions, experience and expertise in teaching this knowledge to students both with and without reading disabilities
- Reading Research: Knowledge of research on nature of reading acquisition and causes of reading difficulties, research on language development in early childhood, applied research on development of reading and writing skills in children, research on teacher knowledge and professional development
- Professional Development for Teachers: Fifteen years of experience providing workshops, creating modules for training purposes, working individually with teachers in their classrooms including modeling lessons, observing teachers' conducting lessons and providing feedback, helping teachers interpret assessment results and identify appropriate instructional goals, helping teachers understand the bases for students' errors in phonological awareness, reading, spelling, re-telling, and comprehension. Expertise in coaching with sensitivity to differences in teacher receptivity, readiness for change and how to support effective professional development depending on teacher attitudes and knowledge
- Educational Evaluations and Consultation with Schools: Experience in providing record reviews, administering extensive reading evaluations, participating in PPTs, and interpreting assessments for students with learning disabilities, language learning disabilities, reading disabilities (i.e., dyslexia) and writing difficulties

GRANTS

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| 2000-2004 | Research Fellow and Co-Project Director, <i>Haskins Laboratories: Early Reading Success Demonstration Site Project</i> , \$2.4 Million Award from US Department of Education, CT State Department of Education, and the University of Rhode Island |
| 2005-2006 | Project Director, <i>Early Reading Success: A Mentor Model of Professional Development</i> : \$248,000 Award U215K050209 from US Department of Education |
| 2003-2007 | Co-Principal Investigator, <i>Haskins Laboratories Teacher Quality Grant: Improving First Grade Reading Instruction</i> : 2.9 Million Award R305M030099 from Institute of Education Sciences, US Department of Education |
| 2006-2009 | Project Director, <i>Haskins Literacy Initiative and Hartford Public Schools</i> : \$875,000 Award from Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, Brighter Futures Initiative |
| 2010-2011 | Principal Investigator, Tremaine Foundation. <i>Pre-K Response To in Connecticut: Building Teacher Knowledge About Language and Literacy</i> . The goal of the project is to conduct a pilot study in 30 pre-school sites. Teachers are mentored or provided professional development in the implementation of Pre-K RTI. |
| 2011 – 2013 | Principal Investigator, Grossman Family Foundation, K-3 Reading Assessment Pilot Study. |
| 2012 – 2013 | Principal Investigator, Tremaine Foundation, <i>PreK RTI in CT: A Focus on English Language Learners</i> . A Literacy How Mentor will provide site-based professional development for preschool teachers focused on identifying at-risk English Language Learners and providing supplemental literacy instruction. |
| 2012 – present | Research Partner, Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Kindergarten-Third Grade Literacy Initiative (CK3LI), Center for Behavior and Education Research at the University of Connecticut, Hill for Literacy. A literacy initiative focused on multi-tier system of support in five Connecticut schools. |
| 2015 – present | Research Director, <i>Talking Shapes</i> NIH-SBIR Phase 2 study to further develop the <i>Talking Shapes</i> apps and research the effectiveness of the interventions used in combination with the apps. |