



THE OG UPDATE

APRIL 2026

COGNITIVE OVERLOAD

(submitted by Andrea Riccobono, OG Tutor)

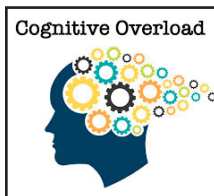
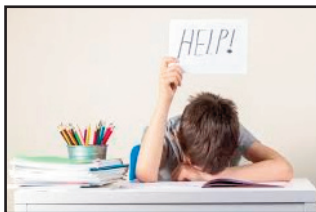
Have you ever felt so overwhelmed that you just want to shut down and cry? As parents, we know this feeling all too well. The baby is crying, the dog is barking, the phone is ringing, the kids are fighting, breakfast needs to be made, dishes need to be cleaned, and everyone must get dressed and ready for the day. Then, you still have to pull yourself together and head off to work, knowing there are many other responsibilities waiting for you there. You begin your day already exhausted and overwhelmed, experiencing brain fog and sometimes forgetting what task you need to tackle next.

This same sense of overwhelm can also occur in children when they are faced with academic tasks. Have you ever noticed that when your child is doing homework, they seem to understand something one minute and then suddenly look at you like a "deer in the headlights," zoned out, confused, and unable to complete the work as if they have never learned it before? They may become lethargic, withdrawn, or emotionally upset, and may say things like, "I can't do this."

Cognitive overload occurs when the brain is asked to process more information than it can manage at one time. It affects the brain's working memory, causing it to become overloaded. When this happens, learning slows down or may stop completely. This is a challenge that children with weak working memory, dyslexia, or other coexisting conditions often face. Unfortunately, these moments are sometimes misinterpreted as noncompliance or behavior problems when they are actually signs that a child's brain simply needs support.

Some common signs of cognitive overload include:

- Sudden inattention or zoning out
- Shutting down during a task
- Lethargy, slumping posture, or eye rubbing
- Task avoidance
- Statements such as "I can't do this" or "I hate school"
- Emotional meltdowns
- Minimal or incomplete responses



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APRIL IS NATIONAL POETRY MONTH

We will be working together to create an acrostic poem about Literacy Nassau.

Each time you come in, we will have a letter displayed. You will think of a word/phrase that starts with that letter and that describes Literacy Nassau. Write your word on the letter.

By the end of the month, we will put all the letters together to spell Literacy Nassau and build our acrostic poem.

A form of poetry
C arefully pick your words
R hyming or not
O h what fun!
S ubject is vertical
T hink of how to describe it
I love writing!
C ool idea

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!



OFFICE CLOSED
on the
following
Saturdays:
April 4 & 11

DAYTIME Tutoring
Hours Only:
Wednesday, April 1
through
Friday, April 10

Literacy Nassau's OG Summer Intensive Program
HAVE FUN OPEN HOUSE
Learn all about our Orton-Gillingham program and tour our center.
MONDAY, APRIL 13
6:00-7:00PM
To sign up email Kate at:
kquijano@literacynassau.org
Literacy Nassau
1 Ivy Lane in Wantagh
(516) 867-3580

COGNITIVE OVERLOAD (CONTINUED)

Parents and educators can take proactive steps to support a child experiencing cognitive overload. Helpful strategies include:

- Observing changes in the child's body language and responses, such as blank stares, eye rubbing, fatigue, or confusion. These are often early signs that a child is becoming overwhelmed.
- Offering breaks to allow the brain to rest and reset.
- Listening to what the child is communicating. If a child asks to do fewer problems, allow them to choose which ones to complete. Quality of work is more important than quantity.
- Being flexible and responsive to the child's needs in the moment.
- Teaching children to advocate for themselves by asking for a break to "refresh their brain."
- Providing predictable routines that help reduce anxiety and mental strain.
- Eliminating unnecessary visual and auditory distractions and using clear, concise language.
- Presenting a limited amount of information at one time.
- Using the instructional model "I do, we do, you do" to gradually build independence.
- Making learning meaningful and enjoyable by incorporating games and interactive activities.
- Connecting new information to concepts the child has already learned.
- Offering specific praise to reinforce effort and progress.

For children with underlying diagnoses such as autism, ADHD, or dyslexia, cognitive overload can significantly impact their reading journey. When literacy tasks become overwhelming, frustration can build and confidence may decline. At Literacy Nassau, literacy tutors use the Orton-Gillingham (OG) approach to support all types of learners. This structured, multisensory, and individualized literacy method was designed specifically for dyslexia education and emphasizes explicit, phonetic instruction within a predictable routine. OG tutors understand the importance of prescriptive and diagnostic teaching, meaning lessons are continually adjusted based on the child's developmental level and individual needs.



The OG approach not only strengthens literacy skills, but also supports a child emotionally. By providing structured guidance, manageable learning steps, and consistent routines, students are able to build confidence and experience success. When children feel supported and capable, learning becomes less overwhelming and more empowering.

Ultimately, understanding cognitive overload allows parents and educators to respond with empathy rather than frustration. When we recognize the signs and provide the right support, we help children feel safe, capable, and ready to learn. By reducing cognitive overload and building strong literacy foundations, we give children the tools they need to succeed not only with their literacy skills, but in their overall confidence as learners.

JOIN US THIS SUMMER!

(submitted by Kate Quijano, Senior Program Director)

We are offering an OG based summer program for our students. It is open to all students entering 1st through 6th grades who want to work on their reading skills. The goal is to prevent summer regression in a fun, relaxed atmosphere and to continue to introduce new OG concepts to improve their reading skills and set them up for success in their next school year.

The program meets Mon-Thurs 9:15 am-12:00 pm from July 6th through 30th. It includes a daily OG lesson, arts & crafts, games, snack time, and gross motor activities. All activities are related to OG concepts being studied. Students will be grouped based on age/ability level (6:1 student to teacher ratio).

Some highlights from our program include painting an underwater mural and labeling all the sea creatures with lists of words from the syllable type we were studying that week, a water-balloon toss where a word was dictated and students had to toss the water balloon to their partner while segmenting the sounds in the word, and a scavenger hunt around the grounds looking for specific words and then sorting them.

Students enjoy practicing reading and spelling skills with their friends and working together in their small groups. We have many students who return year after year. We hope you can join us this year. Feel free to refer a friend who is new to OG; it's a great introduction to the methodology and many students have started in our summer program and then gone on to take OG tutoring with us the next year.



Students take an assessment on the first day of the summer program and again on the last day so that families have data related to the specific skills they worked on over the summer. Teachers also send weekly email updates and we share photos and comments about our activities on social media for you to keep up with our day to day activities.

The summer program is \$2100 for a 4 week program, but we are currently offering an early bird rate. If you pay in full by April 20th, the cost is only \$1900. Space is limited; please submit an application ASAP. For any questions or to request an application, please email me at kquijano@literacynassau.org.

