



I hope this edition of our Orofacial Myology News finds you healthy and prospering in all of the important ways. As our associates or friends, we know that you consider “prospering” to be a lot more than merely financial. Our articles in this issue are uplifting and encouraging in various ways, something that will benefit you as you continue your important work.

The article, “The Unruly Mouth,” will spark your interest and even add some humor to your day as it reveals information about our tongues that is new to most or all of us! Other articles encourage you to establish reasonable goals and march forward to attaining them. Certain questions are posed and answered regard-

ing the ideal order for implementing business objectives into an orofacial myology practice. The different settings and professions among all of us require different approaches and the article on when to implement business training will shed some light on this popular question.

Accomplished therapists are highlighted, including Jessica Sweeney, who describes the boost to her practice that orofacial myology training provided; and Sara MacPherson who explains the advantages that myo training had upon her treatment programs for certain clients.

Enjoy your Orofacial Myology News and don't forget that your input is always welcome and we appreciate your wonderful feedback and suggestions.

to identify his opponent's weaknesses, but instead he observed Becker's tongue would point in the middle of his mouth if he were serving down the middle of the court; the tongue would point off to the side if he were to serve out wide. Agassi used Becker's tongue's movements to cue him where to successfully return the serve. Agassi then went on to repeatedly beat Becker. Years later, after Becker's retirement, Agassi disclosed this “secret” to his opponent. Much to Becker's surprise he was unaware his unruly tongue was disclosing his game tactics.

Charles Darwin documented his observations of the Unruly Mouth in his 1899 work, ‘The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals’: “...thus persons cutting anything with a pair of scissors may be seen to move their jaws simultaneously with the blades of the scissors. Children learning to write often twist about their tongues as their fingers move, in a ridiculous fashion.” Darwin seemingly described the “hand-mouth connection”. This hand-mouth synergy is evident from early life: in the palmomental reflex (stroking of a part of the palm activates contraction of the mentalis), Babkin reflex (pressure applied to palm when infant is supine activates mouth opening and head flexion), and grasp reflex (the baby's grasp tightens around your finger during sucking). Babies suck their digits and thumbs, explore their environment by grasping items and mouthing them. They begin to integrate hand-mouth movements and patterns when developing eating and drinking skills, and eventually use hand movements to assist verbal communication (Diane Bahr, 2010).

[Continue reading on next page](#)

## The Unruly Mouth by Zohara Nguyen, CCC-SLP, CPSP, QOM

I don't know about you, but when I'm folding dry ingredients into wet cake batter I find my tongue swirling around my mouth, mimicking the concentric actions of the tool in my hand. I quickly lightly suction my tongue to the palate with the tip on the incisive papilla like a good Orofacial Myologist. I recently learned to ski and surprisingly found my lips parted, my tongue propped forward while gripping tightly on the ski poles and “snow plowing” at speed. I've also found myself resisting the urge to pop open my lips when applying eyeliner, “Tongue on the spot, lips closed!” my myo brain commands my Unruly Mouth.

The Unruly Mouth not only gives dental hygienists and dentists a battle in the dental chair as it follows every tool during a routine cleaning, but it can and has also given away secrets at the betrayal of its owner! One of the greatest examples includes the story of tennis players Andre Agassi and Boris Becker. After numerous defeats, Agassi watched videos of Becker



## Thinking it Through: How should we respond to this question?

**Q:** If a patient comes with TMJ-D and you find something abnormal during your myo evaluation but the only reported symptom is TMJ-D discomfort, can you treat even though TMJ-D isn't in the scope of orofacial myologists?

**A:** This would depend upon several factors:

- How did they happen to come to you in the first place? Was it through a referral from someone who often sends you clients? That makes it easier to reach out and ask more questions of the referring professional.
- What, exactly, did you find that was not “normal” during your evaluation? We can certainly assess and then treat the areas of weakness found during our myo assessment. We only deal with the actual “myo” part to protect ourselves from going outside of our scope of practice. During examination, it is also common to find that there are additional symptoms that the patient (and perhaps the referral source) had not realized are myo-related.
- We assess and then treat myo symptoms. The TMD specialist who referred the patient is in charge of changes related to TMD pain/symptoms.
- As an added note, remember that upon taking a patient with TMJ-D, it is very important to use care with stabilizing the mandible and selecting various exercises so as not to exacerbate any pain or discomfort.

### Continue reading from Page 1

Even 120 years after Darwin's writings, if you peek into any preschool room you will still observe children with their mouths propped open, their tongues protruding to the side of the mouth as they grasp crayons or carefully build structures using blocks. This is also a curious behavior observed in some adults. Is it just the mouth being “unruly” again? Is it part of the hand-mouth connection? Is it the “downfall” of correct oral-rest postures, possibly due to airway issues? Well, one hypothesis is “motor overflow” where muscles not directly related to the performed action are engaged. The hypothesis is that there is “overlapping” of the regions of the brain responsible for dexterity with those responsible for speech production; when the hands are involved in manual tasks involving precision, the electrical signals can accidentally spill over from the “dexterity” region of the brain to engage movements of the mouth (Forrester & Rodriguez, 2015; Vainio, 2019). Another hypothesis disseminated online is that we suspend motor activity to the tongue to reduce interference to the brain power in order to precisely execute fine-motor hand movements (Villazon, n.d; Duncan, 2021)... hence, the tongue poking out or light biting on it when we are doing tasks such as carefully handwriting or threading a needle.

I can't help but query from a myo perspective if optimizing the airway could also sometimes be at play. Could propping open the mouth and moving the tongue out of the way hypothetically open up the airway more to assist precision? I found that my theory is echoed in the book 'GASP' where similar positioning of an open mouth with the tongue poking out has been observed in world-class sportspeople, such as Boris Becker, since it “...allows for more oxygen and strength while increasing balance and flexibility” (Gelb & Hindin, 2016). In a way isn't this what mandibular-advancement devices do for our airways, and these athletes are just using a subconscious low-tech option?

Whether it is for airway optimization, due to “motor overflow” or due to our innate hand-mouth connections, the strange movements of the mouth while concentrating might not seem so “unruly” after all.

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# Grads Corner

## FOMO: Fear of Missing Out!



**Karen Masters**  
MS, CCC/SLP, COM, QOM

Yup. I dodged it for two years. Two weeks into the relaxed mask regulations, and COVID found me! I was pretty miserable but the hardest part was the serious case of FOMO I had! Yes, that's right! Fear of Missing Out. The weather was gorgeous here in NJ and I was missing opportunities to join friends on hikes, bike rides and weekend plans while I was holed up and symptomatic.

I was missing work and that brought a different kind of FOMO and the fear of catching up!

While I was on the couch I was trying to capitalize on down time between fevers and planning for upcoming Myo Masters meetings. These monthly meetings are created for the growth and enhancement of Neo-Health members of Myo Masters. We carefully select content based on questions and requests. We spend a good amount of time preparing materials, graphics, videos etc. After every meeting there are the messages of "oh no, I forgot" or "oh no, I meant to come to our monthly virtual meeting". If there is something you *should* have a healthy dose of FOMO about, it is these incredible meetings!

Recently we provided an evaluation of a patient. We split up into break out rooms and asked everyone to look over the eval and the first three session notes. We wanted the attendees to use those MYO EYES and find inconsistencies in treatment choices and in the original eval! It was a great exercise especially for those working on their clinical component of the QOM journey! The discussion was lively and participants said they really learned a lot. Honestly, I even saw some holes in my *own* evaluation process! So, for sure even our seasoned therapists were able to benefit from this kind of experience. In past months, we have done live virtual evaluations and even a "speed relating" meeting to connect with colleagues on a more personal level. I am super proud of what we are doing and want EVERYONE to benefit from the content. There truly is something for everyone!

So, turn on your Facebook notifications for Myo Masters and don't miss the invitations we send. You don't want any FOMO on this!

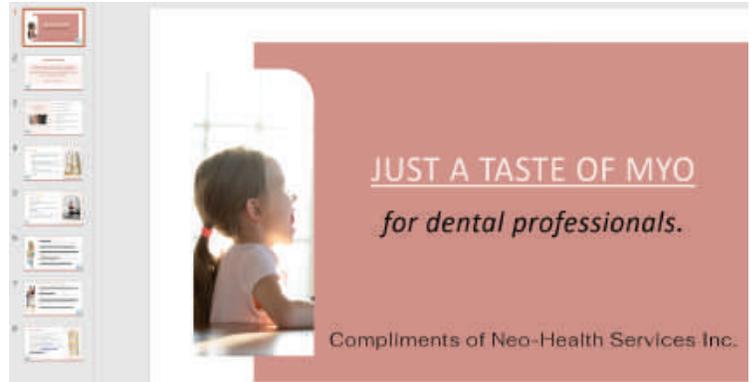
Hope to see you at the next meeting!

Sincerely,  
Karen

## Just a Taste of Myo

You asked and we listened. Our grads are often contacted to enlighten other professionals about orofacial myology disorders. We've created a short presentation that you will be able to use as a powerful marketing tool to get referrals to your practice.

Presented as an editable PowerPoint or as a PDF document, all our grads can download this for free to help create awareness of our specialty area.



*It is with great sadness that we announce the untimely and sudden passing of our precious grad, **Del Nyberg**, at Victoria General Hospital after a sudden onset of illness. Del attended our 2019 Boston class. She was actively involved with our Myo Masters meetings.*

*Del lived a purposeful life full of things that brought her joy and made a difference in the world. She was a devoted wife, sister, stepmother, grandmother, and friend. She also found great fulfillment in helping children and adults achieve their potential through her private speech-language pathology practice.*

*A lifelong volunteer, Del dedicated her efforts in recent years to the P.E.O. Sisterhood, of which she was a past Provincial and Chapter president. She also volunteered for many years with Victoria Hospice and other groups. A donation in her memory can be made to the Victoria Hospitals Foundation or the P.E.O. STAR Scholarship.*



*She will be greatly missed.*

# Orofacial Myology: From Basics to Habituation

Due to requests from professionals throughout the world, this course is brought to you wherever you are!

This 3-day course begins each day at 5 PM US ET.

**May 11-13, 2022 U.S.**

(Dates may vary based on location)



## Featured Graduate **Jessica Sweeney, M.S.Ed, SLP**



Five years ago, when I started my Orofacial Myology journey, owning a small business with more than one employee was the furthest thing from my mind. By trade, I am a Speech Language Pathologist with over 20 years experience. I had a small business that I created for part time work from home. I provided services for friends and word-of-mouth referrals only. I continued to do so after I took Sandra and Becky's Neo-Health course in 2018. The best decision that I could have made was sending one of my Orofacial Myology reports to a local orthodontist regarding a shared patient. She loved the information in my report and started referring. My very small business exploded, in a great way. I had to find a way to manage the rapid increase in referrals and my time. This is when Christine, my now business partner and OT extraordinaire, came into my life.

Christine and I found a space to rent and started what is now Two River Pediatric Therapy. Since that fateful day two and a half years ago when we signed on the dotted line to rent space, we have moved to a bigger office and now, need even *more* space! Our two-person office has tripled by adding another OT, a PT and 3 more SLP's! The SLP's have all taken the Neo-Health training. I pay for them to go to the training with a promise, and a contract, indicating the number of hours a week at a certain rate to continue their journey as Orofacial Myologists at my office. I am happy to guide therapy, assist with evaluations and teach strategies

to help build the new therapists' therapeutic skill sets. The SLP's here are thirsty for information and learning. I enjoy building them up from the fundamentals that they learned from the Neo-Health team. We have fun and enjoy the challenges. Because no two cases are alike, we have many problems to solve and obstacles to hurdle with our patients and their families. Bi-weekly planning meetings help facilitate an atmosphere of learning, sharing, and open problem-solving. The therapists know that I am always available when situations and questions come up outside of those planning meetings.

Growing this business from the ground up has been an amazing, frustrating and enlightening experience. Two River Pediatric Therapy is growing and flourishing because we make a difference in how our patients' bodies function, and we make sure the function carries over into everyday living and their communities. Running this business, planning for my caseload and steering other SLP's toward a bigger outcome than fixing sounds and eating more foods is much more work than I anticipated. It is an overwhelming, but very rewarding undertaking. I love what I do, the people I do it with, and the team who taught me how to do it! I only hope I can be as effective as they are when I teach my team members.

# Should business planning be part of an orofacial myology training course?

This question comes up often enough that it warrants being shared with our readers.

While there are those who claim to teach business preparation within introductory courses, there is *no adequate way to do so within a solid training course in orofacial myology*.

I will touch upon only a few of the reasons:

First, there is barely enough time to complete training for the “how-to assess and treat” portions of a course, to review each of the barriers and to cover oral habits, while setting the historical background and foundation of this specialty area. We are always delighted with the variety of participants: RDHs hoping to set up their own offices, dentists adding a new division within their practices, speech pathologists in schools, hospitals, offices, and universities incorporating orofacial myology... people in Canada, various U.S. States, and from other countries worldwide. If a training organization were to teach business, then it would take several additional days because what is needed by an RDH “newbie” to start up in the U.S. is very different from what is needed by an SLP in Canada whose is in private practice. And to develop the program within a dental office would certainly require far different information and suggestions than for those SLPs working in hospitals, schools, etc. Even touching upon insurance aspects would not be useful with all of the different settings. Although the idea of adding more hours or days to courses has often been presented, attendees are given so much information in a solid course that they need time to “digest” the information and are in no condition to be attentive for *additional days*. Business considerations require some “space” after training, assuring that the participant can make sensible plans using the wealth of important information received. Only after training will they be in a position to understand the physical needs such as equipment/furnishing, typical expenses to be incurred, the referral sources and patient/client populations they will likely be attracting, and the time involved. THEN the business information *will* make sense. We have had people in class who did it backwards and were very confused upon realizing that they *put the cart before the horse*. A good business plan must rely on learning myo first...and then deciding how you want to implement it, possibly taking advantage of short business courses or exceptional FB groups with others in similar circumstances. It certainly makes far more sense to approach this sequentially, systematically and sensibly!



## with Sara MacPherson, MS, CCC-SLP

### What did you learn while doing the QOM process?

I learned so much about application of the treatment tenets to specific clients.

### What does it mean to you to be a QOM?

To me, it feels like a big honor. It represents all of the learning I received from OM specialists, and the hard work I put into learning all I can to best help my clients.

### How has attaining the QOM helped you professionally or helped your practice?

It has given me a new perspective with my articulation clients, and improved their outcomes as a result.

### What qualities should a QOM have?

Humility, willingness to work hard, curiosity.

### What advice do you have for your peers who are doing/want to do the QOM process?

I recommend it to my friends/colleagues! I received so little instruction in graduate school, and I know this has boosted my knowledge of how to help my articulation and feeding clients.

### Testimonial:

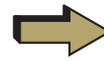
*Since graduating from school eight years ago, I never felt like I had a clear direction with how to best treat my articulation clients, an area which is often the bread and butter of speech therapy. I now feel so much more competent and grounded in my assessment and treatment, and I find my clients making sustainable gains now that I have a better understanding of how the articulators work together and separately. This has increased my confidence as a clinician, and given me better clinical eyes when meeting a new client. Thank you so much for all who have helped me in my journey!*



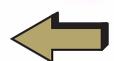


Where is the best place to learn about myo???

Let's click below & find out!



[OrofacialMyology.com/testimonials](http://OrofacialMyology.com/testimonials)



## Outside of the “mouthbox”

### What Are You Waiting For? by Becky Ellsworth, AAS, RDH, BS, QOM

There are many auspicious occasions in life that are causes for celebration. How about when you earned your first driver's license, graduated from high school and/or college, got married or had a child? There are many more such occasions throughout our lives and each of them has something in common – a license or a certificate is granted.

That being said, as a member of the Neo-Health Services QOM Examiners Committee, it is a pleasure to have a part in granting the official certificate of Qualified Orofacial Myologist to everyone who completes the qualification process! Just like every other event that has made a profound difference in our lives, completing the exam and clinical portions is quite an accomplishment that helps us become well-trained, confident and solid therapists who impact many lives on a daily basis. There is no better way to demonstrate dedication to the field.

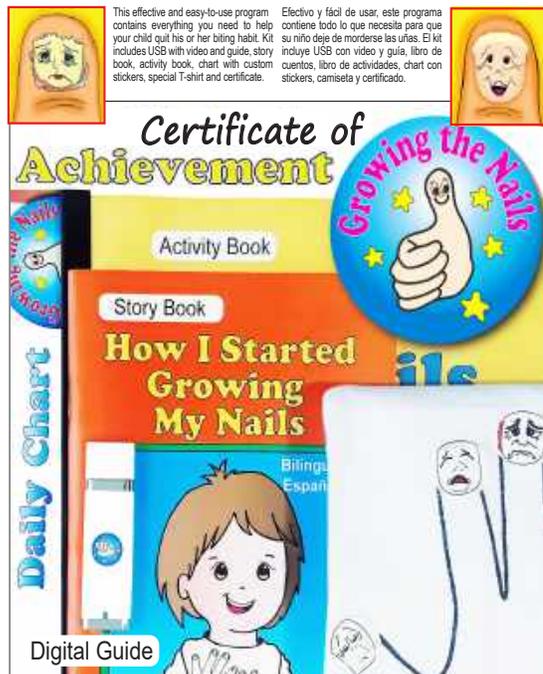
While Neo-Health has been in existence for many years, the Qualification process was initiated only 3 short years ago. In that short span of time, hundreds have entered into the qualification process. These dedicated professionals include speech language pathologists, dentists, dental hygienists, orthodontists and select medical specialists.

To those of you reading this who are in the process, hang in there and don't give up! To those of you reading this who have never taken a course or feel you can benefit from an additional one, there is no time like the present. We'd love to welcome you into our Neo-Health Services family! What are you waiting for – make it official.

Til next time,  
Becky



## Growing The Nails The stress-free method to stop nail biting



Unlike forceful or invasive methods found on the market, this program utilizes only concepts that are kind and draw the best out of each child.

Used by parents, therapists, and other professionals, Growing The Nails provides a positive atmosphere for the child and adult, leading to a sense of accomplishment and gratitude.

The kit includes the following:

- USB audio visual presentation.
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- Certificate of Achievement
- T-shirt with sad nails that become happy nails during the 10 day program.

**Buy Now**



# What Should I EXPECT From an Orofacial Myology Training Course?

The following checklist will help you determine which Orofacial Myology course is most suitable for your needs. Please feel free to use the guide below to evaluate any courses you are considering.



## Course Evaluation Form Checklist

### Organization Considerations

- Organization's main purpose and function is training
- Entire team is involved with your training and support; instructors, administrators, executives
- Free website listing is provided
- Instructors undergo intense training

### Training Course

- Prepares you to begin assessment and treatment immediately
- Virtual, real time learning from highly sought after instructors representing SLP, DDS, RDH professions
- 100% respectful of all professionals in attendance
- "Safe" environment to ask questions
- A good blend of science and the "art" of therapy
- No additional, hidden or yearly fees.
- All course tools, treatment manual, and materials sent to you; no need to print anything

### Support System

- An exclusive Graduates Group that is always supportive and 100% kind
- Ability to participate in a future "refresher" course for "cost only" fee
- Free downloads of brochures, educational pamphlets, forms and more
- Monthly virtual meetings that are useful and participatory
- Free website listing provided
- Free assistance, samples, and marketing tools to promote yourself

### Credentialing Process

- Course fee covers entire credentialing process
- Examination is relevant to what you learned in class
- Clinical component provides an opportunity to grow rather than be judged or dropped as a candidate
- In-depth feedback and input regarding your examination and clinical component
- Certificate and permission to use credential logos on your website
- Feeling of pride to be associated with the training organization and its entire team

## Psst...having trouble piecing it together?

What to do?

I'm Lost

I need a Treatment Plan...



Who can help me?

Where can I Find Support?

**Make 2022** the year you're going to grow like never before!

Neo-Health Services has a special offer for those who have taken previous training from other organizations.

You will be guided step-by-step through a detailed treatment program that you can implement immediately.

Phone us to answer your questions and help you fill the gaps.

**Call 954-461-114**

This course is presented by real-time virtual instruction and provides an online learning environment that offers **LIVE INTERACTION** between the instructors and you. By participating in group discussions, individual/partnered opportunities during evaluation and treatment training, and lively Q&A sessions, you will feel as though you are in a live classroom setting!

# Orofacial Myology: From Basics to Habituation

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