

# Why Phonics is a Flawed Strategy for Countless Poor Readers - How to Fix It

*While many children respond to phonics, what happens to those who don't? More of the same?*

CLOVERDALE, CALIFORNIA, UNITED STATES, October 12, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- According to Matthew Glavach, Ph.D., the most difficult part of learning to decode is hearing individual speech

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*Matthew Glavach*

sounds, something the brain is not designed for. While many children respond, some do not. Children who do not respond typically struggle with more of the same instruction. If reading becomes associated with negative thought patterns, even the best instructional programs may not work. Children who do not learn to read in the first couple of grades face a dilemma; they are not likely to be fluent readers by grade four. While on paper, phonemics and phonics look to be the perfect fit for

reading, why do some children not respond? The author is a proponent of phonological instruction for children who respond. However, learning to read is too important to rely on one approach, one that for many children may not be compatible with the way they learn.

While searching for interventions for struggling readers who had not responded to phonics, the author and special education teacher Warren Pribyl developed a novel approach that was the basis for a published study, A Whole Language Reading Intervention, published in their book Learn to Read Without Phonics available on the author's website listed below. The study eventually included over six-hundred children not responding to or struggling greatly with phonics. The reading intervention included leveled readers and repeated readings. Most of the children made dramatic reading progress. This research suggests repetition helps some children's brains develop a letter-sound recognition system - much like that which occurs with the practice of phonics. Another explanation is that real books have something typically not found in phonics instruction, prosody, the melody of language. There was also an unexpected outcome. After some successful reading, children were now able to benefit from phonics instruction. This was opposite from the way most children learn phonics.

The research led the author to find ways to improve phonics instruction by including prosody. It would be through songs. Songs offer advantages for children learning to read, especially children from challenged learning environments who have been found to have delayed language and difficulty discriminating sounds, important for reading. Music with lyrics helps develop

reading skills. The rhythm in songs is slower than speech and there is more separation of sounds. This helps children develop the sounds for letters and improves auditory discrimination for sounds. The melody of songs, prosody, can help fluent reading skills and the words in songs help in the development of language.

Music is in almost every part of the brain. If one pathway is weak, music can help open others. With practice, songs build stronger connections between the right and left sides of the brain and can bring many to reading. Learning to read requires attention, engagement, and repetition, all a part of singing.

The author's program PHONICS SONGS plus for grades one and two is based on original instructional song lyrics written by the author with the music and songs by Donny and Marie Osmond. PHONICS SONGS plus has important phonics skills embedded in each song and hundreds of high frequency reading words appropriate for grades one and two. The program is based on a first-grade study using only songs and chanting that showed significant improvement in reading and attitude over traditional phonics.

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A difficulty with using songs for reading is that children often memorize the songs, and the words are in sequential memory. The author uses a finger-point reading activity with each song that has students identify words quickly putting the words into long-term memory and available for reading. A difficulty with songs on a computer screen is that many children cannot follow the bouncing ball. Children need to point to each word.

PHONICS SONGS plus is for all students, including students with reading difficulty and English as a Second Language. The program is easy to use by parents and teachers and can be used as a phonics program or to supplement a phonics program, and for those of us who go back a few years, Donny and Marie bring fond memories. The program is available at the author's website: [StrugglingReaders.com](http://StrugglingReaders.com). and Amazon for 7.95 for the Songs and Instruction Book and 14.95 for the CD of Songs for each grade level.

Matthew Glavach

Glavach & Associates, [StrugglingReaders.com](http://StrugglingReaders.com)

+1 707-894-5047

[email us here](#)

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Glavach & Associates, [StrugglingReaders.com](http://StrugglingReaders.com)

+1 707-894-5047

[email us here](#)

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