

The Phonics Dance![™]
See It. Say It. Dance It. Read It! Write It!



The Phonics Dance Philosophy

By author and creator Ginny Dowd

The Phonics Dance was inspired by my inability to read my first graders' stories. Decoding their words was almost impossible for me. In addition, helping first and second graders decode words such as *neighbor* or *flower* while they were reading was often a difficult task, especially if a student was not a sight word reader. Many times the curriculum did not dictate that I teach certain diphthongs or digraphs, yet I found a majority of the words I was asking my class to read contained them. Knowing how young children love to get up and move I decided to teach EVERYONE in the class the variant sounds kinesthetically.

The basic premise became this: I cannot teach something in a week and expect it to become part of my classes thinking process. Repetition, repetition, repetition became the motto of my classroom. Once we were introduced to a variant sound we reviewed it each and every day of the school year. This allowed the learning process to take place at different times for different children. Some students might immediately recognize that *ow* made its own sound, while other students would need to hear it and work with it over and over again before the light bulb went off and a connection was made. As first and second graders "dance" their way through the chants and rhymes they start a journey through sound, continually looking for "hunks" and "chunks" that are part of our language. The decoding process is made easy because of the kinesthetic movement in the learning. Children of all developmental ages benefit from the daily reinforcement.

Phonics Dancing is a spiral approach to language arts. Initially you will see huge gains in each child's writing. As the students in your classroom learn how to "hunk" and "chunk" the carry over into reading will be an easy one. As children become expert decoders their fluency rates increase and as their fluency rates increase so does their ability to comprehend. The Phonics Dance gives young children six more strategies to use in their journey towards literacy. Dancing all the way of course!

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