

**Published in the Sydney Morning Herald, June 19, 2019**

**I agree that teachers should “ignore ‘NAPLAN-style’ phonics tests for six-year-olds”. Tests of this kind typically ask children to pronounce words presented in a list. The use of such tests will, as others have pointed out, result in “a focus on phonics at the expense of other reading strategies”. This is a serious error. There is a great deal of evidence showing that the ability to pronounce words in isolation does not “turn into” real reading ability. In her book, *Beginning to Read and the Spin Doctors of Science*, literacy expert Denny Taylor concludes that the assumption that “training children to read words and pseudowords will enable them to read cohesive texts” is “scientifically indefensible” (p.395).**

**Distinguished researchers Kenneth Goodman and Frank Smith, among others, have argued that it is the other way around; we learn to read by understanding what is on the page, and acquisition of the rules of phonics is the result of reading.**

**Those who read more read better, write better, have larger vocabularies, spell better and generally have no trouble pronouncing individual words. Let’s invest in providing more access to interesting reading: libraries and librarians, not phonics tests. –**

**Stephen Krashen, Professor Emeritus, University of Southern California**

Original article: <https://www.smh.com.au/education/naplan-style-test-for-six-year-olds-teachers-told-to-ignore-new-phonics-check-20190617-p51yio.html>