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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. –

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