

Sent to the Guardian, June 27, 2019

**Re: Michael Rosen, “Dear Damian Hinds, you must be dying to correct Jeremy Hunt’s nonsense about children’s reading,” June 25, 2019.
<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2019/jun/25/correct-jeremy-hunt-nonsense-about-children-reading-michael-rosen>**

Michael Rosen asks the right question and gives the right answer: How can it be that children do very well on tests of “decoding” but don’t do as well on tests that require them to understand what they read? Maybe, he suggests, they don’t spend enough time “enjoying real books.”

The research supports Mr. Rosen’s suggestion. First, the situation he describes is typical: Several studies have shown that heavy phonics instruction impacts only performance on tests in which children pronounce words presented in isolation, but does not contribute to performance on tests of reading for meaning.

Second, the best predictor of reading comprehension test performance is, in fact, the amount of reading that children do, the time they spend “enjoying real books.”

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Reference: Krashen, S. 2009. Does intensive reading instruction contribute to reading comprehension? Knowledge Quest 37 (4): 72-74. http://www.sdkrashen.com/content/articles/decoding_&_comprehension.pdf

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