LEARNING TO READ: The Great Debate

UPDATED EDITION
1983

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McGRAW-HILL BOOK COMPANY
NEW YORK ST. LOUIS SAN FRANCISCO AUCKLAND
BOGOTA HAMBURG JOHANNESBURG LONDON MADRID
MEXICO MONTREAL NEW DELHI PANAMA PARIS
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PREFACE TO THE UPDATED EDITION

THE INTRODUCTION that follows contains an update of the relevant research and changes in practice during the 15 years since the publication of *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*.

The research update covers a considerable number of studies and experiments on beginning reading methods conducted in the laboratory, the classroom, and the clinic from 1967 to 1982. Also included are recent theories and models of the reading process that are relevant to the issues of *The Great Debate*.

Changes in practice are traced in basal reading textbooks, in standardized reading tests, and in professional textbooks for teachers. Changes in the nature of the debate are traced through the professional literature, correspondence and discussions, and through the proceedings of textbook adoption committees.

It is hoped that this update will be useful to those making decisions about beginning reading methods—teachers, school administrators, reading specialists, writers, editors and publishers of basal readers and other instructional materials, textbook adoption committees, school boards, and parents. It is hoped, too, that the update of the relevant research on beginning reading methods will help researchers design even more useful studies. I have, therefore, reported much of detail of the studies to help both researchers and those who make practical decisions about reading methods to make their own reasoned judgments on the issues.

Finally, I hope the update adds to an understanding of the debate—which although it has changed over the years, seems also to have remained the same.

On that last note, I should like to call to the reader's attention a recent study, *The Reading Group: An Experimental Investigation of a Labyrinth*, by Richard C. Anderson and associates of the Center for the Study of Reading, University of Illinois. It was received after the present manuscript was completed. I report it because of its theoretical relevance to the issues in *The Great Debate*, and because its conclusions may appear, to some, to be contrary to that reported here.

The Anderson et al. experiments were conducted on children in the third grade—children who, Anderson makes clear, are beyond the concerns on whether systematic, direct instruction in phonics should be a component of a beginning

reading program." Instead, it is concerned with "The controversy . . . about whether, once phonetic principles are under control, children will turn their main attention to meaning . . . ." (p. 72)

Their major finding was that at the third grade, an experimental meaning emphasis was more effective than an experimental word identification emphasis. This finding, it would appear, does not counteract the studies reported in *The Great Debate*. As Anderson emphasized, he studied grade 3, when phonics was well under control. The research reviewed here and in the earlier edition was concerned with beginning reading—at grade 1 or 2—and for older students functioning at beginning levels. Indeed, the benefits of a meaning emphasis at about grade 3 has been reported by several researches, and fits a developmental view of the reading process. Anderson's additional finding that the poor readers in the 3rd grade did less well with the meaning emphasis than the good readers is in further agreement with the studies synthesized here. See in this connection *Stages of Reading Development* (Chall, McGraw-Hill, 1983) for a fuller treatment of the relation between instructional emphasis and reading development.

I am most appreciative of the help I received from Steven Stahl on the analysis of the research and from Suzanne Wade on the analysis of the professional method's textbooks. Their careful work made my analyses easier, and their good company made the task a pleasant one.

Special thanks are extended to Mrs. Kathy Diehl who sent me information on various aspects of the debate. I should also like to thank her many associates—too many to name here—for writing to me at her request, about their views on the debate.

I am grateful to James Squire who provided valuable information for this study and who has, over the years, given us his aid and sympathetic support.

To Ann Cura and Joan Dolamore who patiently typed and retyped the manuscript, I extend my warmest thanks.

Many have helped me, but the responsibility for this update is solely my own. I believe a special point needs to be made on this, for the issues considered here and the current findings although they may have changed, seem to be as controversial as they were in 1967 and earlier.

Jeanne S. Chall
Cambridge, Massachusetts
January, 1983

Introduction to the Second Edition: An Update

I PRESENT HERE an update of the major issues in *Learning to Read: The Great Debate*, first published in 1967. The main part of the book was written in 1965–1967, based on a three-year study (1962–1965) of beginning reading methods which was sponsored by the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The highly controversial issues, revealing much difference of opinion, covered the relevant research from 1910 to 1965.

In the original study I sought to determine the best methods for teaching beginning reading through an analysis of the research on phonics and look-say, and the effects of knowing the alphabet. I analyzed selected published reading programs. I also visited classrooms which used different beginning reading programs, interviewed teachers and authors, and evaluated methods found effective in laboratories and clinics. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made on these various questions with reference to research and practice.

Soon after the publication of the report, people began to ask whether my conclusions had remained the same, particularly in the light of new studies published after 1967. I published updates in the *Instructor* (1974), in a Phi Delta Kappan Fastback (1977), and in a research volume on early reading (Resnick and Weaver, 1979). The present update, based on the research evidence from 1967 to 1981, is the most complete. Some of this research is more extensive than that available for the original edition of *The*

Great Debate. A separate update for the years from 1967 to 1981 seemed more useful than a revision of the original because the first edition had become a standard work in reading research and practice.

Therefore, the original study, as is, with this new introduction covering relevant research and theory from 1967 to 1981, constitutes the second edition. This update includes analyses of the studies which compared different beginning methods using the same schedules as in the original study. For evidence of changes in basal readers, we used appropriate published studies. This update, then, covers theory, research, and practice on the issues studied and reported in *The Great Debate*. A final section concerns changes in the ideology in the debate and presents conclusions and recommendations based on the new evidence.

Before presenting the new research, let us first attempt to summarize impressions of the impact of *The Great Debate*.

Impact of Learning to Read: The Great Debate

It is not easy to be objective about the impact of one's own work. At the risk of seeming immodest, however, I should note that within the first year the book became an educational best-seller.

Within one year of publication, it provided the subject for two all-day professional conferences and symposia (Burrows, 1968; Versacii and Larrick, 1968) and was reviewed widely in scholarly, professional, and general adult magazines and newspapers. The reviews tended to be favorable in the general trade press and the scholarly and general educational journals. The professional reading and language arts journals did not find it so favorable. Overall, the book was "controversial" during the first few years after its publication. Then it seemed to settle down, becoming required reading for graduate students in reading and language arts courses and for undergraduates preparing to be teachers. It also was included in the professional book collections of most elementary schools.

Generally, as we shall later see, in less than ten years after publication, the basic recommendations and even the terminology, had become so much a part of the theory and practice of beginning reading that most journal articles and books began to omit the attributions. The terms *code-emphasis* (or decoding) versus *meaning-emphasis* became part of the theory, research, and practice of beginning reading. One must also realize that other research studies published about the same time such as the *USOE First Grade Cooperative Research Studies* (see page 6) were part of the same general trend in research, curriculum development, and classroom practice.

The impact of the book seemed to be strongest, and it came earliest, to users of research knowledge—authors and publishers of basal reading programs and authors and publishers of reading tests. Soon after the late 1960s, basal reading programs introduced more phonics, and test developers began to test decoding skills in standardized achievement tests for the early grades.

Another group that paid quick attention was the researchers. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, probably few grant proposals for research in reading did not cite *The Great Debate*. It played an active role in the rationale and, I believe, the planning of the U.S. Office of Education's *Targeted Research Studies in Reading* (Corder, 1971; Davis, 1971). Although some of the widely used research and development programs on reading began earlier than 1967, I believe that *The Great Debate* had an impact on the more recent ones. Generally, the programs developed in R & D centers in the later 1960s and early 1970s focused on a code-emphasis for beginning reading.

The book's impact on teacher education came later (see pages 42–43). The number of pages devoted to decoding (phonics) in the newer textbooks on the teaching of reading and in the revisions of older, standard textbooks increased. A shift toward code-emphasis in the 1970s from an almost unanimous preference for meaning-emphasis in the textbooks published before the 1960s also took place. Another effect was the inclusion of a variety of different methods and approaches to beginning reading in textbooks on methods of teaching reading. The textbooks before the late 1960s tended to present only one approach—that of meaning-emphasis. Since *The Great Debate*, a methods textbook devoted solely to different approaches to beginning reading (Aukerman, 1971) has appeared. Generally, the strong consensus for a single-process, meaning-emphasis approach to early reading characteristic of the 1960s had been broken.

Where Are We Now on Issues in The Great Debate

On the issue of code- versus meaning-emphasis, I concluded in *The Great Debate* that in spite of the shortcomings of the individual research studies, if one examined them developmentally, the code-emphasis programs produced the better results, at least through Grade 3, where the evidence stopped. With qualifications and some reservations, I recommended a change from a meaning- to a code-emphasis for beginning reading instruction. By 1977, ten years later, the amount of phonics included in most commercially published reading programs increased considerably. Most basal reading pro-

grams also introduced the teaching of phonics earlier than they had in the 1960s. Heavier and earlier phonics programs also became the pattern that most of the major R & D centers followed for their beginning reading programs (Chall, 1977).

Research evidence on these changes comes from Popp's (1975) analysis of beginning reading programs published after 1967 as compared to those published in the early 1960s. She found, in general, a stronger code-emphasis in the post-1967 programs than in earlier programs. That is, the first-grade basal readers published in the late 1950s and early 1960s introduced consonant sounds and blends, and perhaps consonant digraphs. The first-grade reading programs published in the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, taught all of these, along with vowels, vowel digraphs, diphthongs, vowels controlled by *r*, *l*, and *w*, and high-frequency compound words. This does not, of course, mean that meaning-emphasis programs had disappeared by 1975. There were still strong proponents of meaning-emphasis beginning reading programs. One of these proponents, Goodman (1969), who also served as one of the several authors of the then most popular meaning-emphasis reading program, the Scott, Foresman *Reading Unlimited*, emphasized the meaning aspect of beginning reading:

> Instead of word attack skills, sight vocabularies, and word perception, the program must be designed to build comprehension strategies. . . . Children learning to read should see words always as parts of larger, meaningful units. In that way they can use the correspondences between oral and written English within the semantic and syntactic contexts. (p. 32)

Although Scott, Foresman's *Reading Unlimited* had a strong meaning-emphasis, it provided some instruction in decoding. However, as Popp observed, this may not be readily apparent because exercises that most reading programs classify as decoding exercises, were, in Scott, Foresman, indexed under comprehension. Thus, "letter-sound relationship cues" were listed there under "comprehension strategies."

The almost universal acceptance of decoding as a major objective for the primary grades was seen as well in the revisions of the widely used standardized reading achievement tests. In the 1971 revisions of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests, Primary I and II, each had a subtest called "Word Analysis" added to the traditional subtests of "Word Meaning" and "Paragraph Reading" of the earlier editions.

Perhaps *The Great Debate* had the greatest impact on *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company*. Both of these TV shows, produced by Children's Television Workshop, after much discussion and deliberation by advisory committees, accepted decoding as a major focus for teaching beginning reading. Millions of preschoolers and children in the primary grades have learned

the names of the letters, the relation of letters to sounds, and how they are combined to form words. The popularity of these shows (about 7 million watch *Sesame Street* and about 5 million *The Electric Company*) and their wide use in schools (particularly *The Electric Company*) have helped, in turn, to legitimize the teaching of letters and sounds among parents and teachers.

It also seems tenable that these shows, particularly *Sesame Street*, have helped to put an end, for the time being at least, to another controversy current during the 1960s: whether it is better to give earlier or later reading instruction. It would seem that the results of early reading instruction given on *Sesame Street* and *The Electric Company* were satisfying enough to be accepted by the millions of parents who saw them. This in turn affected the schools. With the exception of some Piagetian theorists (e.g., Elkind, Larson, and Van Doorninck, 1976; Furth and Wachs, 1974), there seem to be few serious proponents of delayed reading instruction at the present time.

I cannot emphasize enough that changes in educational practice do not come from one research report alone. Indeed, other research in the late 1960s contributed to the general ferment and to the impact of *The Great Debate*. The *27 USOE First Grade Cooperative Reading Studies* (Bond and Dykstra, 1967) comparing various methods in the first grade (many were continued in the second grade and somewhat fewer through the third) drew similar conclusions, although there was much difference of opinion on this (Stauffer, 1966) (see pages 6–7). One of the findings of the Coordinating Center (Bond and Dykstra, 1967) was that basal reading programs supplemented by separate phonics programs produced better results in reading at the end of first grade. There was some loss in the advantage at the end of the second grade and, for the few studies that continued until the end of third grade, few if any differences were reported.

However, after a reanalysis of the data, Dykstra (1968), one of the project coordinators, found an advantage for the code-emphasis methods through second grade. In a later report, he concluded even more strongly for the efficacy of a code-emphasis, compared to a meaning-emphasis, in beginning reading (Dykstra, 1974):

> We can summarize the results of sixty years of research dealing with beginning reading instruction by stating that early systematic instruction in phonics provides the child with the skills necessary to become an independent reader at an earlier age than is likely if phonics instruction is delayed and less systematic. As a consequence of his early success in "learning to read," the child can more quickly go about the job of "reading to learn." (p. 397)

The following sections contain more detailed research evidence on these issues.

Code- versus Meaning-Emphasis Studies: 1967–1981

CLASSROOM COMPARISONS: THE 27 USOE COOPERATIVE RESEARCH STUDIES

The most extensive comparisons of beginning reading approaches were the *27 USOE Comparative First Grade Studies* conducted during 1965–1966. Some of the studies were completed early enough to be cited in *The Great Debate* in 1967, but not all had been analyzed fully.

Separate research centers conducted these 27 studies independently. They used common pre- and post-tests and had their results analyzed both independently and in a coordinating center. All studies continued to the end of Grade 1, some to the end of Grade 2, and a few until the end of Grade 3. The comparisons involved a variety of different approaches to beginning reading, most of which also provided evidence regarding the benefits of more or less phonics. Summaries of individual reports were published in *The Reading Teacher*, (Stauffer, 1966) and reports from the coordinating center of the 27 studies appeared in the *Reading Research Quarterly* (Bond and Dykstra, 1967). Each of the studies was carefully carried out, as was the coordination by the center.

The coordination center reported that some methods made a difference by the end of Grade 1. Those research sites that supplemented their regular basal reader program with a separate phonics program did better than those centers that used only the regular basal readers. This confirmed, in essence, the conclusions in *The Great Debate* regarding the benefits of a heavier phonics emphasis than that found in the basal readers of the late 1950s and early 1960s. A reanalysis by Dykstra (1968), one of the two coordinators of the USOE project, also concluded for a code-emphasis after analyzing only those studies of the 27 that lent themselves directly to a comparison of a meaning- versus a code-emphasis. A later review of Dykstra (1974), which included other studies besides the 27, also concluded in favor of a code-emphasis beginning (see earlier, page 5).

Yet many of the summaries of the USOE studies, and particularly the interpretations of their findings, contradicted this conclusion. Only a few indicated that the results showed an advantage for a heavier code-emphasis. Several, in fact, concluded that the USOE findings contradicted those of *The Great Debate*. This would mean that the USOE studies pointed to a meaning-emphasis as the advantageous approach. Yet this was not reported either. Indeed, most reviewers seemed to conclude that the 27 USOE studies found no method superior to any other. Superior results, if any, were attributed to the teacher.

No one can deny the importance of teachers in reading achievement outcomes, especially with young children. But to conclude from these studies that it is the teacher who makes the difference is highly questionable, since

only one, or at most two of the studies (Chall and Feldmann, 1966; Harris and Serwer, 1966) observed and rated teacher effectiveness in relation to pupil outcomes. And yet many of those who interpreted the findings seemed to focus on the teacher factor rather than the method factor that was under study and that related to achievement. (See Stauffer's editorial in *The Reading Teacher* on the Cooperative Studies, 1966.)

Why was there a reluctance to accept methods differences? One explanation may be the tendency to view reading programs of given publishers as different methods. This was unfortunate because *program characteristics* rather than specific published programs seemed to be crucial. When different published programs are grouped by similar characteristics, such as more or less phonics, differences do appear (Dykstra, 1968).

Although the immediate interpretations of the USOE studies did not accept the advantage of a heavier code-emphasis, later interpretations tended to see an advantage in the program with heavier, more systematic, and earlier teaching of phonics (Guthrie and Tayler, 1975).

After the almost monumental coordinated USOE studies, few large-scale comparisons were undertaken. The hope that coordinated studies would avoid uncertainties in results did not materialize. Much of the research energy and funds turned to basic research on reading and to comparisons on the kind on phonics that is most effective (See pages 7–9). The broad classroom comparisons of the Follow Through studies undertaken for other purposes than beginning reading methods, provide important recent data (See pp. 9-11).

Reviews of Phonics Studies

THE CORDER REPORT, 1971

An extensive review of beginning reading research was carried out by an ETS research team as part of the Targeted Research Studies on Reading (Corder, 1971). Funded by the U.S. Office of Education, the purpose was to review the relevant research on beginning reading methods and materials, and on certification of teachers. An extensive procedure was used to select the articles to be reviewed in terms of quality and the methods to be used in analyzing the articles.

The Corder Report on beginning reading methods concluded that overall, no conclusion could be drawn. Past research was found by this research group to be so lacking that ". . . it is not particularly useful or interpretable." (p. 135)

Aside from the fact that their selection criteria might have eliminated

too many useful research studies,[1] one should ask why they found so little of value in the past research? A review of some of their procedures leaves many questions open. It is not usually possible to refer back to the particular classroom studies to verify the reviewers statements (p. 80). Nor do summary tables of research results give the names of the specific studies reviewed. Only the number of studies within specific classifications is reported (Table 18, p. 70).

In spite of their rejection of the research interpretations in *The Great Debate* and the 27 USOE Studies, they concluded for an eclectic method, when even that approach does not, according to their strict standards of research evidence, have the necessary research support.

It would add little new to an understanding of the phonics issue to analyze in greater detail the questions raised by the Corder synthesis. It is best considered of interest as a historical document, one that captures the intense feelings that too often accompanied the beginning reading debate in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

THE DIETERICH (1973) REVIEW OF THE RESEARCH, 1960–1970

In 1973 Dieterich prepared a "digest and interpretation" for an ERIC "Survey of the Literature on Methods and Materials in Reading," based on the methods and conclusions from the Corder report, *Learning to Read: The Great Debate,* the Bleismer-Yarborough study, and studies on ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet). Although Dieterich did not explicitly reject the Corder report conclusion with regard to beginning reading, he does seem to do so in the following statement: "One of the few conclusions of reading research in which we can have a high degree of confidence is that earlier and more systematic instruction in phonics is essential." (p. 7)

Dieterich also cautions against returning to the Twenties, being "on guard against the fallacy that, if a moderate amount of phonics from the start is advantageous, a large amount will be still better." (p. 7)

DYKSTRA'S REVIEWS OF 1968 AND 1974

In 1968, shortly after the 27 USOE studies were published, Dykstra, one of the two coordinators of the studies, published a paper titled "The Effectiveness of Code- and Meaning-Emphasis Beginning Reading Programs." The study drew together specific data from the Cooperative Research Program pertinent to the issue of the relative effectiveness of code-emphasis

[1]It is interesting to note that the more recent technique of metaanalysis for synthesizing existing research tends to find similar trends when only highly selective articles are used and when less strictly designed studies are included.

programs in initial reading instruction. It compared the results for eight different programs representing a code- or meaning-emphasis. Dykstra's conclusions were: "Data from the Cooperative Research Program in First-Grade Reading Instruction tend to support Chall's conclusion that code-emphasis programs produce better over-all primary grade reading and spelling achievement than meaning-emphasis programs." (Dykstra, p. 22)

In a later review of the literature on beginning reading instruction, Dykstra (1974) supported the benefits of a code-emphasis for beginning reading even more strongly. As in his 1968 review, he uses the classifications of programs from *The Great Debate* for the 1974 review.

Recent Classroom Comparisons: The Follow Through Studies

Follow Through, a large-scale compensatory education program extending Head Start services through the third grade, was started in the late 1960s to test the effectiveness of different approaches to teaching these children. One of its "planned variations" used a direct teaching method which, for reading, included a systematic code-emphasis approach. Contrasting instructional models were those with a cognitive emphasis and others with an affective emphasis. Each program was implemented in a variety of settings.

An early analysis of the Follow Through data by Stallings (1975) reported higher achievement in reading (on word recognition, vocabulary, and comprehension on the Metropolitan Achievement Test) at the end of Grades 1 and 3 for those using the Direct Instruction model. Similar results were found in the Abt study (1977). Thus it would appear that where differences in reading achievement were found, they favored those who used the Direct Instruction model—which used a systematic phonics program.

An evaluation by Kennedy (1978) of the U.S. Office of Education of the meaning of the 1977 Abt study outcomes is of special interest. She cautions against simple acceptance of the achievement differences found for the different models. Yet she wrote:

> The three models showing a negative effect all advocate the child as the curriculum planner and the teacher as a facilitator of the child's growth, while the two models showing a positive effect hold the opposite philosophy—that the teacher is the planner and controller of the children's progress. . . . The teacher-centered models are oriented toward the basic skills, and these are the areas in which their positive effects occur (p. 7).

She further notes that although most of the models produced different results for different populations and almost every model had lower effects in the larger cities, the Direct-Instruction model was an exception. No

decline in achievement occurred in the large cities as it did with the other models.

An evaluation of the Abt Associates findings by House, Glass, McLean, and Walker (1978) emphasized the statistical weaknesses and the fact that the greater variations from site to site within the same model rather than from model to model made the differences found between models questionable. They also noted that the individual condition of a site had a strong influence on the outcomes, concluding that "no model can dependently claim superior results. . . . Unique features of the local settings had more effect on test scores than did the models." (p. 156)

An evaluation by Wisler, Burns, and Invamoto of the U.S. Office of Education, noted, however, that

> With a few exceptions, the models assessed in the national follow through evaluation did not overcome the educational disadvantages poor children have. The most notable exception was the Direct Instruction model. Though not successful everywhere, and not uniformly successful for all outcomes, that model showed the best pattern of success. (1978)

Hodgen (1978), noting that his views are similar to those of others (Kennedy, 1979; Stallings, 1975; Abt Associates, 1977) argues that the data support only highly structured educational approaches as effective in teaching basic academic skills.

Overall, these evaluations are reminiscent of those for the *27 USOE Cooperative First Grade Studies*. In spite of similar design problems, significant differences were found for the USOE studies in favor of the same kinds of programs as were found more effective in the Follow Through evaluation—those with a more direct and systematic emphasis on phonics and "basis skills." Many analyses and discussions of both studies referred to the differences by site, seeming to conclude that those made for the differences found, not the methods. For the Follow Through studies as for the USOE studies, some concluded that the teacher made the real difference, not the methods. The following excerpt from Wisler et. al (1978) makes this point for Follow Through

> The identification of successful sites, combined with the often weak or variable model effects, suggests that local conditions such as children whose needs match especially well what the model can provide, local variations of the model, or especially skilled teachers were more apt to determine success than the models used. (Wisler et al., 1978, p. 180)

A later follow-up on one of the Follow Through sites is relevant here. Becker and Gersten (1981) followed a Direct Instruction model using a highly structured systematic beginning reading program. They followed up low-income children in fifth and sixth grades who had completed the full program during the first through third grades. The Metropolitan Achievement Test

(word meaning and comprehension) and the Wide Range Achievement Test (word recognition) were used for the retest.

The results of the Follow Through children at fifth and sixth grades, when compared to local comparison groups, indicated consistently that decoding and spelling held up for the fifth and sixth graders, but not word knowledge and reading comprehension on the Metropolitan Achievement. The authors cite earlier evidence, however, that low-income fifth graders in a New York City cohort were still outperforming comparison groups, and that a group of ninth-grader Follow Through graduates were about .8 grade equivalents above expectancy on the California Achievement Test.

But, the authors conclude, "Without effective instruction which continues to build on these skills in the intermediate grades, the children are likely to lose ground against their middle income peers." Their concluding note is reminiscent of the hypothesis in *The Great Debate* with regard to continued gains or possible losses after the third or fourth grade—that after Grade 3 more emphasis is needed on the meaning and language aspects of reading. (See p. 138)

Another study from the Oregon Follow Through group suggests a similar interpretation. Upon noting the unusual success of the Direct Instruction model in one school, an investigation revealed that this highly successful school introduced the reading of basal reader stories along with the highly systematic phonics program very early, with some classes as early as Grade 1 (Meyer, 1980). It would appear, then, that an early opportunity to do meaningful connected reading in addition to learning how to decode is needed to integrate both abilities.

The Follow Through studies have not generally been included as evidence in the continuing debates on the effectiveness of different beginning reading methods. Yet, in many ways, these extensive studies are highly relevant to the main issues in the beginning reading debate. Because the Follow-Up Study population consisted of low SES children, the finding that direct instruction (with a code-emphasis) is most effective is particularly important. Indeed, this finding tends to be similar to the conclusion I drew from the earlier studies for *The Great Debate* in 1967. Although the data in 1967 were limited, I proposed that they tended to indicate that a code-emphasis would be particularly more effective for children of low socioeconomic background. Logically, too, it seemed more helpful because it would provide earlier independence in word recognition for children who had less assistance at home than middle-class children (see page 138). The Follow Through data seem to confirm this.

It would appear, then, that the Follow Through studies, although planned for different purposes has produced results similar to those of reading researchers. It has also produced similar debates, with some accepting and others strongly rejecting the findings.