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Editorial Comment

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Many teachers of reading are blown about by every wind of doctrine and are vulnerable to the pretentious claims made by advocates of so-called *new* methods. This uncertainty on the part of teachers is detrimental to the professional image they wish to create. We, as teachers, cannot afford to be little red riding hoods in a confused educational world. There are many false prophets in our midst who prey upon the naive and uncritical. Even if a method is new, it is not necessarily superior to the old until it has been proven so by well-designed and well-controlled research. Revelations and testimonials are not sufficient even though they come from publishers and Boards of Education. Teachers can investigate any method but they should hold fast to those which are proven.

In order to separate the wheat from the chaff, teachers need an acceptable educational philosophy and a scientific point of view. Teachers need answers to several questions. For example, they should ask: Is this program sponsored by leaders in the field of reading? Is it psychologically sound? Is there objective proof of its effectiveness? Has the original research been repeated and verified? Does the program have educational significance? Will its success contribute to the realization of the school's accepted educational philosophy? If the answers to these questions are satisfactory, the plan *may* have merit in the local situation and exploratory trial is justifiable.

Methods are only means to an end. Some contemporary research suggests that "Given a good teacher, other factors in teaching tend to pale to insignificance." Will this inference be substantiated by other investigations? A consistent and well-defined philosophy, critical thinking and a scientific attitude on the part of teachers are imperative. Let us not be deceived.

Homer L. J. Carter

Editor