But as you say, it's in accord with the principles of mastery learning. I doubt that Benjamin Bloom and other advocates would quarrel with your design.

Yes, but another problem with some mastery programs is that they chop knowledge into little pieces, and that's unnecessary. What is critical about mastery learning or any other program is how it's done. Another good example is individualized instruction. Nobody would quarrel with giving kids instruction suited to their needs; but in the '60s and early '70s, when educators made individualized materials and had the kids work on them all by themselves, the effect on achievement was disastrous. The concept was correct, but the way in which it was operationalized was foolish, because while you were accomplishing one goal—adapting instruction to individual needs—you were interfering with other goals, such as providing students with explanations by qualified teachers and motivating students to learn.

Some of the things that you say don't work have been advertised as based on research. How would you describe the state of educational research these days?
Copyright © 1988 by the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. All rights reserved.