

10-1-1972

We Suggest

Eleanor Buelke

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons

 Part of the Education Commons

Recommended Citation

Buelke, E. (1972). We Suggest. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 13 (1).
Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol13/iss1/8

This Book Reviews is brought to you for free and open access by the Special Education and Literacy Studies at ScholarWorks at WMU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts by an authorized editor of ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact wmu-scholarworks@wmich.edu.

WE SUGGEST

Eleanor Buelke

Yamamoto, Kaoru, Editor

The Child And His Image

Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1972, pp. ix + 235.

Gardner, John W.

Self-Renewal

New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1963, pp. xiv + 142.

For teachers of the young there is no greater task, no goal more worthwhile, than helping their pupils to develop knowledge, acceptance, and appreciation of themselves as human beings of value. It is from a position of wholesome self-esteem that the learner is able to use his power to learn; to stand sturdily and grasp for life's rich, unknown experiences; to meet others with openness and depth of feelings, without fear of being destroyed; to function within his own value system, with sensitivity and integrity.

What kinds of teachers can truly teach for such objectives? Only those who see and believe the connection between language and experience can offer children human wholeness.¹ Only those who practice living traffic with their students can move beyond merely leading their minds to quickening them.² Most especially, only those who have the capacity, concern, and zest for their own self-renewal can help to establish a hospitable environment for growth of creative young men and women, with spontaneity and strength of mind and spirit.

In response to the need for concrete, useful, and practical information about the development and nurture of the self-concept in childhood years, *The Child And His Image* has been written to serve college students, teachers, paraprofessionals, and others with child-service roles. In the first chapter, the editor, Yamamoto, introduces the reader to "The Concept of Self." In the following chapters, six other authors cooperate to expand and to define this theoretical construct, presenting materials and proposals that can be understood and utilized by educators. They deal with such aspects as "The Developing Self: World Of Communication;" "The Developing Self: Nurturance In

¹ Bill Martin, Jr., *The Human Connection: Language and Literature*, p. 35. Washington, D. C.: National Education Association Department of Elementary-Kindergarten-Nursery Education, 1967.

² Sir Rabindranath Tagore, From an inscription on the administration building at Santiniketan, a famous school established by Tagore at Bolpur, India.

School;” “To Fathom The Self: Appraisal In School;” “The Bruised Self: Mending In Early Years;” and “The Developing Self: The Parental Role.”

Perhaps, one of the most interesting chapters in the book is the final one, “The Self In Early Years: Discussion.” It is exactly that, a partially edited record of a discussion held by the seven authors of the book. The intellectual interplay of these authors’ fine minds, in the reader’s vicarious presence, is stimulating, indeed. One finds himself nodding in agreement with the final quotation:

Self-knowledge is the Forgotten Man of our entire educational system and indeed of human culture in general. Without self-knowledge it is possible to be erudite, but never wise.³

In his significant book, *Self-Renewal*, John W. Gardner, writes of the wisdom in considering a reasonable objective view of self, an accessibility of the self to consciousness, and an acceptance of self as inextricably bound up with the concept of mental health. He suggests some additional clues to identify the mature, creative individual, with the capacity for continuous self-renewal. Such a person pursues the full range of his potentialities, avidly, all of his life. He is willing to risk failure to keep on learning. He is capable of accepting love, and capable of giving it, maintaining fruitful relations with other human beings. He is highly motivated, spending at least part of his time doing something about which he cares deeply.

Individuals who are, themselves, sources of renewal are receptive to the external world and open to their own inner experience. They are independent, but not adrift; they possess “extraordinary capacity to *impose* order on experience,” but are not immobilized by learned rigidities. For each person, teacher and learner alike, the renewal of self proceeds from a self, understood, and consciously engaged in enterprises of on-going daily life.

If teaching, as we know it in today’s classrooms and schools, is to have influence, and to mean anything of worth for ourselves, our worlds, and the future of both, it must promote the process of self-understanding and self-renewal. The tasks in such a process are endless. “This will strike some as a burdensome responsibility, but it will summon others to greatness.”

³ Lawrence S. Kubie, “The Forgotten Man of Education,” *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, p. 71. New York: Harper and Row, 1967.