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## We Suggest

Eleanor Buelke

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# WE SUGGEST

*Eleanor Buelke*

Kingston, Albert J., and Rice, Marion J.

*Language*

Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia, 1968, pp. 46.

Emig, Janet A.; Fleming, James T.; and Popp, Helen M., Editors

*Language and Learning*

New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc., 1966, pp. viii +301.

In the study of the nature of man, still a frontier for earnest educators, for adventurous anthropologists, and for sincere sociologists and psychologists, the linguist is a pioneer in his own right. His increasing knowledge of the nature of language, and of the role it plays in the lives of people in any pattern of culture, can be a consequential contribution to the understanding of cognitive processes and sociological relationships in, and among, men.

Perhaps, for teachers, the primary effect of linguistic knowledge has been felt in the area of attitudes. In the past, American public school educators have been proud of the assistance they have given to other national institutions in creating equality of opportunity, and in maintaining a fluid and open society. Now, contrary to previously held middle-class values, a new awareness has arisen. Language and dialect, possible measures of some aspects of human personality, are no longer considered valid measures of human worth. This awareness may help school personnel who must deal with problems in communications, social interaction, and personal relationships. However, concern and caution are voiced by Walter Loban when he states:

To deal with such problems in schools requires sound knowledge, humane values, and great delicacy, for nothing less than human dignity, and the pupil's self image are at stake.<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of expanding knowledge and changing values, teachers search for humane and practical insights to use in an interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of language arts. An ever-growing body of research and volume of publications serve both to help, and to confuse. Serving to clarify some issues for teachers and students are the two paperbacks suggested here. Obviously directed to dissimilar reader

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1. Walter Loban, "Teaching Children Who Speak Social Class Dialects," *Elementary English*, 45 (May, 1968), 592.

audiences, they are similar in one important aspect. Both of them have grown out of a genuinely felt need to translate new discernments about language into classroom practice.

*Language*, a pupil text, is intended for use with young students, probably in junior high school, or early senior high school classes. It has been developed and reported as a curriculum project under a contract with the United States Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Its authors are serious in intent, have organized well, and have written clearly to inform and educate, not to preach and propagandize. In the expository portion, the writers explore the importance of language, and introduce the reader to some significant features about it. At the close of each chapter interesting exercises and activities to reinforce chapter learnings are suggested. Additional features are a selected list of readings and a glossary of possibly new and unfamiliar terms. This book could be of value for junior and senior high school classes in reading, as well as those in English, and other communications skills.

*Language and Learning*, a text for professional reading, revises and expands the 1964 Special Issue of the *Harvard Educational Review*. A theme of dissatisfaction with current teaching practices of a first language runs throughout the book. Aspects considered by individual writers vary from analysis of the child's acquisition of syntax, explanation of causes for abnormal speech and language development, and psycholinguistic theory in teaching concepts, to the development of linguistics in America and its relationship to the teaching of grammar and composition. Examination of traditional concepts of language from these new vantage points may help teachers to understand reasons behind, and need for, proposed major revisions of language curricula at all levels.

Intellectual frontiers and physical frontiers, alike, share the same potentialities for confrontation with challenges to courage, common sense, and compassion. Accompanying the stalwart, wise, rational leaders of any pioneer group are its own peculiar brands of dreamers, gold-diggers, four-flushers, witch-hunters, and impractical or misguided elite. Professional people, true to themselves and to the learners for whom they are opening new paths, choose thoughtfully among a rapidly increasing number of available leaders and resources. They temper the excitement and exhilaration to be found in new paths of language understanding with knowledge that is sound, values that are humane, and a delicate touch, preserving the human dignity of those whom they teach.