

7-1-1967

We Suggest

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Recommended Citation

Buelke, E. (1967). We Suggest. *Reading Horizons: A Journal of Literacy and Language Arts*, 7 (4).
Retrieved from https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/reading_horizons/vol7/iss4/8

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WE SUGGEST

Eleanor Buelke

Carter, Homer L. J., and McGinnis, Dorothy J.

Reading, A Key To Academic Success

Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C. Brown Company Publishers

1967, Pp. vii-156.

The appearance of this new book with its "broad approach to the building of reading performance at the college level" is a paradoxical cause for concern and consolation. The need for such a book to be written for use in our institutions of higher education is cause for concern. The writing and publication of this text by two authors with years of successful experience in educating graduate and undergraduate students, as well as in-service teachers at different levels, is reason for reassurance.

In the first chapter, Carter and McGinnis state that two of the main reasons students fail to complete college are *poor study habits* and *inability to read*. This appears to be true even though present standards for college entrance have been up-graded to provide bases for higher selectivity among student applicants. Further, these authors continue, the ability to read is a factor which often differentiates superior and inferior students who remain in college. Authorities in other fields similarly recognize the grave importance of effective reading skills. Conclusions reached in a readability survey conducted recently by personnel of forty-seven newspapers represented in the Associated Press Managing Editors Association cause some leaders in the communications media to question the ability of the college-trained, so-called "literate" public to understand and to absorb the true meanings in printed news coverage. Inherent in this lack of ability are concomitant dangers to democratic society. It is a little frightening to realize the lack of understanding in those who are described as:

. . . not sixth-grade drop outs or illiterate laborers unused to the daily reading habit, but people for whom the printed word has long been as much a part of their routine as brushing their teeth or driving their automobiles.¹

The authors of *Reading, A Key To Academic Success* believe that college students can learn to read effectively to become successful in their academic lives, their personal lives, and their lives out in the modern world.

1. *Saturday Review*, May 13, 1967, p. 83.

Examination and study of this book suggest that its creators view reading not merely as a technical skill, or a professional tool, but as an art. In the total organization of the book, in the precise, unmistakably clear language of the text of each chapter, and in the well-coordinated study exercises for each subject, is concurrence with Fromm's statements concerning the learning and mastery of an art. An art requires both *knowledge* and *effort*; the process of learning an art can be divided conveniently into two parts: the mastery of an art is a blending of the results of theoretical knowledge and practice; the art must be a matter of ultimate concern for the one who is striving to become proficient in it.² Contents of the book are devoted to knowledge of practical procedures, presented in a direct, specific manner. Guided activities, requiring the student's involvement and effort, and providing meaningful, related practice in these procedures, are included for each of the topics stressed. These topics cover skills such as identification of main ideas, knowing what to accept and what to reject, skimming, and adjustment of rate and comprehension. They also include techniques for learning to read different kinds of literature and content material effectively. A final, significant chapter explores and expands upon ways to read creatively.

Philosophies here expressed, then delineated and integrated into patterns to help students work out satisfactory and unique solutions for themselves, also seem to agree with that set forth by the retiring editor of *The Reading Teacher* in his final editorial:

On the instructional front, all teachers must understand how reading as a cognitive process is akin to thinking.³

Carter and McGinnis say:

Ask *why* and *how*. Maintain your objectivity. Be sensitive to problems. Ideas are important if they can become your property, your tools, and your treasures.

This book should prove to be of value to teachers of reading in institutions of higher education. Perhaps, it will prove most valuable for the reader who recognizes his own need for reading improvement, and who makes the mastery of the art of reading his ultimate concern. He may find in his own possession that key to academic and personal success.

2. Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, p. 5. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1956.

3. Russell G. Stauffer, "Time for Amendment," *The Reading Teacher*, May, 1967, p. 685.