

Learning about language: issues for primary teachers

Alison Sealey

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This is a book which grew out of the work carried on for the LINC (Language in the National Curriculum) project in the early 1990s. The author was a primary advisory teacher on that project, and in this book she argues the case for integrating language fully into the English curriculum at this level. Her basic principle is that children can learn about language by studying examples of natural language in use. The book begins with some basic linguistic conceptualization and terminology, and goes on to present a view of language as social practice, introducing the core notion of discourse. It then examines how children's awareness of language develops throughout primary school, and discusses some of the reasons why teaching about language is viewed as controversial. Sealey then looks at the range of texts found in the primary school and offers a commentary on a series of spoken and written examples. She reviews a set of principles for including learning about language as part of the curriculum, gives an account of specific teaching activities, and concludes with a bullet-pointed checklist of the issues and practical suggestions made throughout the book. I found this a clearly written and well illustrated book – another excellent offering from the OU's *English, Language and Education* series.