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PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF READING MATERIALS
FOR GRADES FOUR AND FIVE

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by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a part of language acquisition which one needs in his daily life. This avenue of communication is essential to his complex social arrangement. According to Deboer and Dallman,¹ reading becomes synonymous with education itself. It includes all perceptive observation of the real world around us. Fitzgerald and Fitzgerald,² further pointed out that reading is a guide to achievement and progress on the job and the avenue of enrichment off the job.

Reading is a complex process. It is not a general ability but a composite of many abilities.³ It is not a simple mechanical skill, the sounding out of printed words either with or without comprehension of meaning. It is neither the ability to read aloud, assuming that good oral readers automatically make good readers. The process depends on what the readers bring to the printed page, thus giving meaning to what is read. It is an activity which involves

¹John Deboer and Martha Dallman, The Teaching of Reading (New York: Holt Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 19.

²James E. Fitzgerald and Patricia C. Fitzgerald, Fundamentals of Reading Instruction (Milwaukee, Bruce Publishing Co., 1975), p. 18.

³Deboer, et. al., op. cit., p. 9.

comprehension and interpretation of ideas symbolized by written or printed language.

The reading teacher has the task to help pupils acquire basic skills in reading, word recognition, and comprehension; and develop their interest in, and genuine love for, reading.

Interest is a great motivating factor in teaching the child to read. Interests, according to Tumaob,⁴ are powerful in directing the children's reading behavior. When pupils are interested in the reading selection, they enjoy reading. This pleasure motivates them to read more.

A child who lacks interest in reading fails to bring meaning to printed symbols and fails to comprehend what the writers say. These failures are indications that he is not reading, so he runs the risk of becoming an adult handicapped in many phases of learning.

Children learn to read more easily if material is meaningful and if they are interested in the ideas and/or the ways ideas are expressed.⁵ Furthermore, children are most likely to read with comprehension materials that

⁴Delia I. Tumaob, "Reading Interests of Pupils and Its Implication to the Reading Program," The Philippine Journal of Education, LXI, No. 6 (November, 1981), p. 44.

⁵Deboer, et. al., op. cit., p. 9.

deal with topics of interest to them. Sutaria⁶ states that, interest is an intangible aspect of a reading, text. Ideas that can be related to a student's own experience will more likely interest him, and when material is interesting to the reader, he develops a concern which helps carry him over difficulties of interpretation.

A wealth of reading materials is needed to avoid disappointment among pupils and prevent them from becoming retarded readers when they reach higher grades. Canciolo,⁷ says that the quality of reading materials pupils were first exposed to will influence their reading tastes, values, and appreciation of literature. Pupils who have been encouraged to read worthwhile materials acquire good reading habits and interest and further motivation to do independent reading and learning throughout their lives.

Statement of the Problem

One of the causes of poor reading instruction in the elementary schools is insufficiency of reading materials.

⁶Minda C. Sutaria, Basic Reading for English Teaching, PCLS Monograph, series No. 4, Donald Bowen ed. (Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House) n.d., p. 101.

⁷Patricia Jean Canciolo, "The Library and the Reading Program," The Education Digest, VII (January, 1978), p. 78.

Alano,⁸ states that the need for adequate reading materials has always been a problem in public schools. It is a particular problem in areas in the Philippines where children and teachers are bilingual and where much of the schoolwork is done in the children's second language.

The findings of Soutele reveal the same reason for pupils' difficulties with reading and writing. A major cause is the shortage of instructional materials. This problem was first earlier expressed by a former Minister of Education and Culture, Juan L. Manuel, when he said that 45 per cent of grade six pupils in the public elementary schools could hardly read with understanding.⁹

Reading materials in public schools are limited. Books, workbooks, and other ready-made materials are expensive and few. Some of these materials do not fit the reading level of school children now using them. Because of limited and inappropriate reading materials, children are divested of the anticipation, delight, and enjoyment of discovering new things in print. On their part, teachers allow

⁸Angeles Alano, "Collect Adopt and Use Varied Reading Materials," The Reading Teacher, XXX:8 (March, 1972), p. 15.

⁹Emmanuel Magubat, "Who Is Accountable for Pupils Who Cannot Read?" The Filipino Teacher, XXXVII (November, 1982), p. 291.

materials to dictate what would be taught. Admittedly, a few teachers do what a text tells them to do because following a book page by page is an easy way to conduct a class. Clearly, this is a confusion in roles. This problem could be remedied if reading teachers are aware of their role in improving our educational program. Teachers will be benefited if their classrooms have enough reading materials to develop skills in vocabulary building, pronunciation, structural analysis, and comprehension. These materials are needed to meet individual needs of pupils in public schools as well. The acquisition and utilization of these materials can help children acquire reading skills which are useful in their adjustment to their changing world.

Beset by this problem but imbued with the desire to help strengthen the Reading Program of the Division of Iloilo, the researcher attempted to prepare and evaluate reading materials based on the interests and reading levels of the pupils.

In addition, the researcher sought to establish the readability, validity, reliability, and usability of the reading materials for the intended grades.