PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF READING MATERIALS FOR GRADES FIVE AND SIX PUPILS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a meaning-giving and a meaning-getting process. It must begin and end with an understanding of the printed page. Bonnie and Smith pointed out that "reading without understanding is verbalism, word calling, or merely barking at print."[1] Yet, teachers in the public elementary grades found these practices to be predominant among elementary grades children. Learners could recognize words but could not get meaning out of them. The basic reading skills needed for independent learning, especially in the content subjects, were not properly developed. These basic reading skills include vocabulary, word attack, and comprehension skills.

Basic reading skills can only be developed if teachers place emphasis on the teaching of reading through meaningful, purposeful, and relevant social experiences. Teachers of Reading should remember that "the child learns to read by reading, and that the ability to read does not consist of

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[1] Harris Smith, et. al. Teachers, Tangible, Techniques, in Comprehension of Content in Reading Michigan; (Central Michigan University, International Reading Association, 1975) p. 59.

a collection of mechanical skills."[2] As teachers, "they could do little to change the reader's capacity to learn to read, but they can do much to stimulate and direct reading activities so as to insure maximum progress," says Virgie M. McIntyre.[3]

One of the factors that constrained classroom teachers from providing for the development of these basic reading skills is the lack of interesting and suitable reading materials to use in teaching. Danipog,[4] in his study "A Survey on the Reading Levels of Grades I - VI," made these statements:

> On the basis of findings, one of the problems was the lack of appropriate reading materials and devices. It was recommended that the Department of Education and Culture, now the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports (MECS), appropriate enough reading materials and devices for all grades.

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[2]Ellen Lamar Thomas and H. Alan Robinson, Improving Reading in Every Class: A Sourcebook for Teachers, (Boston: Allyn & Bacon Inc. 1974), p. 13.

[3]Virgie McIntyre , Reading Strategies and Enrichment Activities for Grades 4 - 9. Columbus, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1977.

[4]Felciano S. Danipog, "A Survey on the Reading Levels of Grades I - VI in the District of Burgos - San Manuel," The Modern Teacher XXVI: (August, 1978) pp. 137 - 138.

Most materials available for teaching Reading were dated as far back as twenty years ago. Examples of these materials are Doorways to Reading (Grade V), Pathways to Reading (Grade VI), The Philippine Language Series (Books V & VI), and English for Filipino Children (Books V & VI)

Strang and Bracken[5] emphasized that the content of the reading material should be well-written and relevant to the pupils with whom it is used. Thomas and Robinson[6] said that there is no substitute for a good material. Interesting character, vivid descriptions, unified and coherent paragraphs will lead students to emathize, visualize, and think through an idea with an author. Furthermore, Bonnie and Smith declare that materials for developing the basic reading skills must be of genuine interest to the pupils. The content can be interpreted by them in the light of their previous experiences, genuine emotions, true-to-life characters and plots, and a fine style which is easy to read.[7]

For vocabulary development, provisions should be made to enhance the gradual acquisition of the learners. Thomas et. al. say that because vocabulary skills are important,

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[5]Ruth Strang and Dorothy Kendall Bracken, Making Better Readers (Boston: D.C. Heath & Co., 1957), p.42.

[6]Thomas, loc. cit.

[7]Bonnie, loc. cit.

direct attention should supplement vocabulary growth through reading.[8] Major research studies indicate that consistent, systematic instruction results in considerable gains. Teachers of reading should exert effort in giving vocabulary development emphasis in their lessons.

Planned instruction is considered to be definitely superior to the casual or incidental approach. Wide reading alone, especially of the less able readers, does not insure an adequate vocabulary. All teachers can encourage students to read widely and to approach their reading with conscious effort to notice unfamiliar words and to make selected ones their own.

The present project is an attempt to provide grades five and six pupils, especially of the barrio schools in the Division of Guimaras, with reading materials that would help them acquire proficiency in vocabulary, word attack, and comprehension skills. The selections are to be based on their felt needs, interests, and abilities. A Teacher's Manual is further to be provided teachers who will be using the materials with their pupils.

The Problem

This project is focused on the following objectives:

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[8] Thomas, loc. cit.

1. To prepare three reading materials for grade five and three reading materials for grade six, which are based on the interests, needs, and abilities of children in these grade levels.

2. To provide the reading materials with test exercises that would strengthen the vocabulary, word attack, and comprehension skills specified in the Elementary Learning Continuum of Skills.[9]

3. To test the reliability, validity, and usability of the reading materials, with a trial group.

4. To prepare a manual to guide and help reading teachers in the proper use of the materials and test exercises, for the development of the desired reading skills.

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[9]Philippines (Republic) Ministry of Education and Culture, Department of Elementary Education, The Elementary Learning Continuum of Skills (Manila: 1980), pp. 42-45; 50-53.