

PREPARATION OF SPEED AND COMPREHENSION
READING MATERIALS FOR GRADE V



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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Reading plays an important role in society. It is a key that opens the door to the world of enlightenment and enjoyment, a means of getting information, a means of interpreting feelings and ideas, a basic tool for learning in the content fields; in short, reading adds to an individual's reservoir of knowledge and experience for the attainment of a useful and enjoyable life.

In this modern world one needs to be proficient in reading. Proficiency in reading enables an individual to to achieve more satisfactorily in school and to be more successful in his job; thus, it increases his potentials for economic efficiency, broadens his cultural outlook in life, satisfies his emotional and intellectual needs, helps him meet his spiritual and aesthetic needs, and eventually helps him become the kind of citizen who understands more about the events and problems all people must face in this fast-advancing world. For this reason, proficiency in reading has to be developed and nurtured during a person's lifetime.

Reading is a complex process; so it is a challenge to the reading teacher. According to De Boer and Dallman¹,

¹John De Boer and Martha Dallman, The Teaching of Reading (New York: Holt, Rhinehart and Winston, Inc., 1960), p. 9.

reading is not a general ability but a composite of many specific abilities. It is not only a process of recognizing a printed page but also a meaning-giving and meaning-getting process. The end product of reading is comprehension of what has been read. To comprehend means not only to understand the meaning of a single word or sentence but also the interrelationship among sentences in a discourse. It also involves all the higher mental processes such as recall, reasoning, evaluation, imagining, organizing, and problem solving.

According to Gray², the child who does not learn to read in the elementary school runs the risk of becoming an adult handicapped in many phases of living. The ability to read serves as the foundation for effective and independent learning.

It is sad to note that many elementary school pupils, high school students, and even college students in almost all schools are non-readers or experience great difficulties in learning to read. Malmquist states that as of 1973, 40 per cent of the world's adult population -- about 800 million -- were estimated to fall below the level of functional literacy, i.e., their reading ability would not enable them to read properly, given the fourth-grade level of reading ability

²Lilian Gray, Teaching Children To Read (New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1963), p. 3.

as criterion.³

Project SOUTELE, or Survey of Outcomes of Elementary Education, reported that, regarding scholastic achievement, the sixth graders all over the nation had achieved the least in the areas of the 3Rs.⁴

Furthermore, teachers in the field, no matter how efficient and effective they would like to be, cannot perform their job well because of the dearth of instructional materials. There are textbooks in the field, but it is not certain that they have taken into consideration the needs, interests, and abilities of children; hence, these reading materials may not be appropriate for the children for whom they are meant.

The use of suitable and appropriate reading materials will enable pupils to learn effectively and experience success. This was stressed by McCullough when she said that children will learn to read more easily when the material is meaningful to them, if they are interested in the ideas and/or the way the ideas are expressed.⁵

³Eve Malmquist, "Retardation" *The Teaching of Reading* ed. Ralph C. Staiger (UNESCO/Ginn, Paris: Ginn and Company, 1973), pp. 104 - 105.

⁴Philippine (Republic) Department of Education and Culture, "Report on the Survey of the Outcomes of Elementary Education" (Manila: May, 1976) p. 5 Mimeographed.

⁵Constance McCullough, *Preparation of Textbooks in the Mother Tongue* (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1974), p. 9.

Sensing the problems and needs in the field and imbued with the desire to make the teaching of reading more effective, the officials of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Region VI, felt the need to develop the speed-and-comprehension skills of children in the region. They therefore launched a project, which was the preparation of speed-and-comprehension materials, by MECSRO VI Reading Grantees for 1984 - 1985. This was part of their training for their role as remedial-reading teachers or reading specialists in their respective schools.

It is hoped that these reading materials, prepared with pupils' interests and reading levels in mind, will enhance their reading skills and, consequently, improve their proficiency in reading as well as their scholastic achievement.

Statement of the Problem

This study was an attempt to produce speed-and-comprehension reading materials that would reflect the interests of Grade Five pupils in Region VI and would be appropriate for their reading levels. The materials prepared and validated by the researcher are for the purpose of supplementing the basic readers being used and of improving pupils' speed-and-comprehension. Specifically, this study sought answer to the following questions:

1. Do the reading materials reflect the interests of the pupils?

2. Are the selections appropriate for Grade V?
3. How valid and reliable are the test exercises?