

PREPARATION AND EVALUATION OF READING
MATERIALS FOR GRADE TWO

A SPECIAL PROJECT IN LIEU OF A THESIS

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MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION
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by

PERLA C. HABANA

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

The importance of reading as a skill and a tool has been clearly established and recognized. To start, every day one is faced with innumerable reading matters to interpret--street signs, traffic signals, labels, leaflets, books, magazines, newspapers, flashing neon lights. All these require of him considerable reading ability, and the lack of it will shut him off or alienate him from the rest of the world. Today an individual has to be equipped with reading skills to enable him to live and cope with the complexities of modern life.

There is a wider horizon than the concerns of everyday living that awaits a skillful reader. Sutaria and Bowen express it this way;

Reading unlocks the doors of that vast storehouse of knowledge--the world of books--and offers a satisfying as well as edifying form of recreation. It brings people into contact with the enormous amount of experience which has become essential to an understanding of our complex civilization.¹

¹ Minda C. Sutaria and J. D. Bowen (ed) Basic Reading for English Teaching, PCIS Monograph, Series No. 4 (Quezon City: Phoenix Publishing House 1982), pp. 1 - 2.

Through reading, people may probe into the past and revel in its glory and splendor. They become participants in the unforgotten dramatic events of history.

What other benefits may a reader enjoy? Reading also takes the reader into the unknown realms of the future. As he follows the continuous experiments in space exploration, he becomes an eager spectator in the race that would help him understand the universe, life on earth, and other planets. Reading, likewise, enables him to appreciate the present--to enjoy the life he has and give tribute to his Maker, to make use of the things He has created for him and preserve them for the generations yet to come. In other words, reading makes him aware of the things happening around him and helps him become a better citizen. Finally, it also provides therapy that releases the strain of everyday living. It offers a balm that leads him closer to God as he meditates on His Word.

Reading ability then is essential to success in all school work and in life outside of the school. A MECS publication states: "Reading abilities and habits have **social** significance as well as individual value. If a child fails in learning to read, he loses the self-esteem he needs for his own comfort and progress." 2

2
Philippine (Republic) Ministry of Education,
Culture and Sports and Development Academy of the Philip-
pines, "Module in Instructional Management" (Manila: 1985),
p. 17.

Thus, it is imperative for a student to be a good reader in order to attain success in his studies.

A person's reading ability, however, is not developed overnight. It is acquired through years of patient practice beginning with the early years of childhood. The reading habits developed during childhood determine, to a great degree, the adult reading patterns of the future.

Because of all that has been said, the development of the child's reading ability is one of the major responsibilities of the school; educators and curriculum planners consider it a vital part of the school program.

The reading program of the school curriculum has the pupil as the central figure and the teacher as the single most important factor in the development of reading skills. The great responsibility of teaching children develop reading ability lies in the hands of the teacher. Developing a wholesome attitude and interest in reading is an important objective and has a tremendous long-term significance. Juanino stressed that "teachers and parents must help create in children the desire to read for recreation and personal development, to learn more about the world, and to increase their understanding of people and society." 3

3
 Esther P. Juanino, "Let's Encourage Children to Read," The Modern Teacher, XXXIII: (June, 1984), p. 6.

It is sad to note, however, that many of the grade six pupils from the public elementary schools in the Philippines today can neither read, write, nor compute. Because of this finding, the cry of the 1980's is "back to the basics."⁴ It has become the guidepost of the New Elementary School Curriculum (NESC), in which, in the first three grades, the pupils' studies revolve only around the three R's and the new subject "Sibika at Kultura." It is hoped that, with this program, pupils would read with understanding, write legibly and correctly, and be able to add, subtract, and divide accurately. It is also hoped that a pupil who leaves school at any grade will be equipped with enough knowledge, skills, and attitudes to make him a productive member of society. The teacher has a very important role to play in the accomplishment of this program.

In order to carry out the important role of the teacher and to help provide the school with the needed materials for the new reading program, the researcher, together with the other MECS RO VI Reading Grantees of 1984-85, undertook the preparation of reading materials from pre-primer level up to grade two.

Statement of the Problem

This project is an attempt to prepare and evaluate reading materials for grade two. It, specifically, will seek to determine the answer to the following questions:

1. What type of stories appeal to grade two pupils?
2. How valid and usable are the reading selections prepared by the researcher?
3. How valid and reliable are the test exercises on each reading selection?