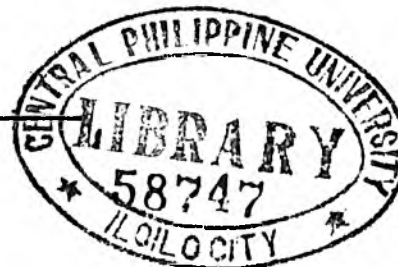


A BEFORE AND AFTER STUDY OF READING DIFFICULTIES
OF FIRST YEAR TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS
OF ILOILO SCHOOL OF ARTS AND TRADES

A Thesis
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today there are many questions facing teachers, curriculum workers, and school administrators which need to be answered. Recent developments in school organization have posed many questions while new media are emerging almost daily. Many assumptions have been made about media such as television and programmed learning. These assumptions need to be challenged and supported.¹

Problems are arising in terms of the deterioration of the reading skills of college students which requires extensive inquiry and careful study. Many teachers are concerned with home work, pressures on students and other school policies. This complex age is a time when skill in reading is a necessity for present-day society depending upon information for progress. Hence, the formulation of a school policy based on sound assumptions and successful experience is needed.

Careful research on many fronts in the curriculum field is urgently needed. Efforts toward the use of various disciplines could be continued and extended; facilities for

¹ Robert S. Fleming, Curriculum for Today's Boys and Girls. (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Books, Inc., 1966), pp. 557-563.

research projects are needed, and care should be taken to encourage school systems to provide resources and support for research.

Although research should be encouraged on all fronts, it is felt that there is a significant potential among teachers and school administrators which might be released. Explorations are needed regarding ways of relating research to on-going activities, especially to present pertinent problems in schools.

Every teacher is a potential researcher. Teachers could constantly formulate plans to help their students by collecting data, organizing, summarizing and interpreting information to describe progress. They can try to evaluate their students, project outcomes and seek ways of removing learning blocks, plan ways of their learning experiences. Good teachers can make judgments, make decisions by studying new materials, developing new materials, adapting their teaching to today's ever-widening world.

Without realizing it, many teachers are using a research approach in some aspects of their teaching. To be sure, neither teachers nor curriculum specialists are satisfied with the status of research. Yet, it would be unfair to say that it is being ignored by curriculum workers.

Numerous description of efforts to improve curriculum practices have been made. Even here in the Philippines

many efforts have been made by the Ministry of Education and Culture to engage in programs of curriculum construction or revision. These programs were efforts at formulating more meaningful bodies of content, of correlating subject scores, and of giving particular grade levels significant emphases based on assumed interests of students. A variety of experimental activities emerged in which individual teachers of school faculties attempted to modify curriculum in many ways. Yet, not enough attention was given to personal contacts with teachers designed to help them become more efficient in improvement activities.

Recent programs stress more utilization of the same techniques of learning in the curriculum development programs as teachers employ with students. Now it is held that teachers can improve their techniques. Indeed, there is a great need for greater involvement of teachers in improving their work.

By 1950, Caswell² was describing the growth of action research concept when he emphasized that there is a highly encouraging movement toward fundamental revision of research procedures in the curriculum using the action research approach which may contribute to the revival of interest in

²
Hollis L. Caswell, "Research in the Curriculum," Educational Leadership, Vol. VIII (April 1950), 441-442.

curriculum research. The significance of the research is highly related to the generalizations which are developed. Even a case study is significant because of what it may suggest about other similar cases and the importance increases as added cases begin to provide a sound basis for generalization.

Since 1950 interest in research as a means of improving the curriculum has become widespread. The potential power of the use of the action research approach to school improvement has been recognized.

Stephen Corey³ says: "This type of research is conducted in local school situations and is designed to help the people working there know whether what they are doing is right or not. Investigations are undertaken to determine the consequences of specific educational practices in actual school situations."

Teachers' problems are important beginning points for inquiry. It is reasonable to provide help for teachers in using a systematic, scientific approach to the solution of their problems. Their curriculum research can lead to genuine improvement.⁴

³Stephen M. Corey, "Curriculum Development Through Action Research," Educational Leadership, Vol. II (December 1949), 48.

⁴Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1957 Yearbook, Research for Curriculum Improvement, 27-32.

For example, it is not uncommon to find a teacher who is working on ways of improving reading or trying to identify more effective materials for use in her teaching. Frequently, teachers are found with a specific plan for working with a given child who has special concerns.

One of the special and the most significant hypotheses about school improvement is that as teachers engage in research activities, their teaching will improve.

The action research concept offers a reasonable approach to the use of research as a means of improving school practices. "The process by which practitioners attempt to study their problems scientifically in order to guide, correct, and evaluate their decisions and actions is what a number of people have called action research."⁵

With action research, the teacher is in a position to immediately put his findings in operation. As he sees more clearly factors involved in his setting, he tends to improve them. As new insights are secured about a given group, those who work with the group could immediately use them and there is no reason why the findings of a given study cannot be used until the study has been finished. The real power of the action research is in the immediacy of the action in a particular situation.

⁵Stephen M. Corey, Action Research to Improve School Practices (Columbia: Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1953), p. 6.

In an action research a particular teacher is working on a particular problem in his school. He does not set out to solve his problem universally but merely sets out to improve it in the situation in which he works. Too often, critics of action research are concerned with the limited sampling, the variations in the group, and perhaps the simplicity of the problem. It is at these points, however, that school improvement can be brought about.

English teachers of the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades have found that most students, even those in first year college, have reading difficulties. They feel the need for diagnostic and corrective measures as early as possible to help students cope with the numerous reading activities they do in their classroom work.

This problem of student's reading difficulties is one of immediate local concern for ISAT teachers. There is the need to survey factors related to the problem to help understand its limitations. All available relevant information concerning the problem should be investigated. Collection of data and work on the problem should be continuous. Evaluation activities at every phase of the project should be carried out; findings should be immediately recognized and used to modify subsequent actions. The project should be summarized and the results shared

with appropriate groups in the school and or community. However, findings cannot be generalized and assumed to be widely applicable in other situations.

The action researcher does not seek to change education outside his place of work. He is immediately concerned with improving education practice in the local situation where he works. The potential value comes about as other teachers recognizing situational factors deal with problems in a similar manner, and develop comparable results. Emphasis is placed on the fact that the action researcher is not trying to solve a universal problem, but if a variety of action research undertakings could be coordinated, the findings would have meaning for a larger number of situations.

A. DEFINITION AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

This is a before and after study of reading difficulties of first year teacher education students of the Iloilo School of Arts and Trades. The following were the questions which this study sought to answer.

1. What are the major reading difficulties and weaknesses of first year teacher education students of ISAT?
2. Will a simple but organized remedial reading program, easily set up with the facilities available in schools like ISAT, bring about

some significant improvement in the reading abilities of first year teacher education students?

3. What changes will be noted after this remedial reading program is carried out?

4. Will the students be benefited by the remedial techniques and strategies of reading introduced?

This study is the beginning of an attempt to find out which remedial measures may be used to remedy the reading difficulties of ISAT teacher education students.