DE LA SALLE UNIVERSITY

INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS ON READING
COMPREHENSION SKILLS DEVELOPMENT FOR SOPHOMORE
STUDENTS OF THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AT WIDYA
MANDIRA CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY IN INDONESIA

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to design and provide reading comprehension skills development materials for the sophomore college students who enroll for Reading IV (Reading Comprehension Course) at the English Department, Widya Mandira Catholic University in Indonesia.

In order to design the said materials, the writer did the following procedures. First, he studied the prescribed syllabus for Reading IV of the English Department, Widya Mandira Catholic University. Second, he studied, read, and consulted several books on reading theories and on materials design. Third, he selected the reading text/materials to be used in the study based on textual familiarity, that is, texts within the students' realm of experience; textual universality, that is, texts that have universal themes' and computed grade of textual difficulty, that is, the difficulty level of the selected texts were determined using Fry's Readability Graph. Fourth, he devised a reading comprehension skills development

model based on Devine's (1986) model which consists of the following: Prior Knowledge Activation (to activate the students' relevant knowledge), Stimulus (to refer to the reading texts), Comprehension Tasks (to underline comprehension processes), Language Exercises (to focus on linguistic devices from the reading texts to reinforce comprehension), and Integrating (to adapt the knowledge gained from the texts and store it as part of students' stock of knowledge).

The designed instructional materials have a total number of 27 exercises which are grouped under four units based on the reading skills prescribed in the Syllabus for Reading IV: Unit I - Scanning (4 exercises), Unit II - Skimming (7 exercises), Unit III - Guided Reading (8 exercises), and Unit IV - Interactive Reading (8 exercises). These exercises are designed to correspond to the 62 hours, the time allotment given to Reading IV Course in a term. The units and the exercises within these units have been arranged from easy to difficult. A Syllabus for Reading IV Course and a Teacher's Guide come with the prepared instructional materials.

From the study, several conclusions and implications were drawn:

a. Instructional materials suitable to the level of students' reading ability can be an important key to an effective and successful reading comprehension interaction.

b. Adequate and varied use of teaching procedures and strategies for Reading IV will make the lessons easier for the students to internalize and apply in later situations.

c. As manifested in these designed instructional materials, the shift of attention from reading aloud to reading for meaning is a new trend that reading teachers in Indonesia should deal with.

Because the present study is the first attempt on the designing of Reading Comprehension Skills Development Materials for the sophomore students taking Reading IV Course at Widya Mandira Catholic University, it is recommended that:

1. A try-out of these materials should be done. The try-out will provide the writer the necessary feedback of the materials difficulty, teachability,

and effectivity. In addition, the feedback will help the writer determine which part of the materials will be retained, improved, reinforced, or completely changed in the process of revision in order to make these materials suit the level and the knowledge of the students enrolled in the course.

2. An empirical study on the reading level of the students who enroll in Reading IV should be done. Knowledge of the students' reading level can be used to correlate the difficulty level of the instructional materials being used in this study.
3. The reading ability of the Indonesian students taking English should be determined through the use of an appropriate standardized reading test as well as through a local Indonesian reading test.
4. An empirical study should be done to find out how the schemata of the Indonesian students can be activated effectively to improve their reading comprehension skills.

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