



A Program of National Language Instruction

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I. Basic Considerations:

The national language, of all school subjects, has the distinct advantage of being spoken and understood by the people in the community. This fact should be exploited to the maximum if the school is to ensure child growth and development, and improve community living. The power of the national language as an instrument of education can be fully realized under the following considerations:

1. Never before has the school, through the teaching of the national language, identified itself with the community. This is so because the school and the community have now a common medium of communication. Interaction therefore becomes direct, intimate, and is on the basis of mutual understanding.
2. The education of the children becomes also the education of the adult, a condition that ensures greater chances of behavior changes for the improvement of living.
3. The learning of the children in the school has a ready reception at home and in the community because such learning is identified with home and community conditions, needs, and problems.
4. Learning for the children becomes meaningful, hence effective

and functional not only because the barrier of language has been removed but because the subject matter of instruction is the life the children and their parents live.

II. Guiding Principles:

In the light of the foregoing considerations, the following principles become manifest:

1. The scope of national language instruction should include the home and the community life.
2. The subject matter of instruction should be geared to educate also the people.
3. The subject matter of instruction should be drawn from the life of the children and of the people in the home and in the community.
4. The subject matter of instruction should be directed to the improvement of personal and social behavior to the end that life may be improved.
5. The knowledge of the language, the skills, the mechanics, and the like should be achieved and mastered through activities and projects arising from the foregoing items.

III. Implementation of the Objectives:

The foregoing principles can be resolved into two inter-related major objectives namely:

1. The development of the child in terms of knowledge, information, skills, and attitudes within the framework of the principles listed above; and

2. The projection of the education of the child from the school to the home and the community, and vice versa, to the end that the adults may share in that education as learners and as contributing agents.

As regards the development of the child, Curriculum Project No. 1 NL (Resource Units in National Language), Division Bulletin No. 2, s. 1951 should be used as the *basic curriculum guide*. It is to be noted that the core of this material is the social studies, which has been chosen for its functional value, its interest, and flexibility for purposes of correlation. The new project which teachers are called upon to undertake is to distribute among the units the purely language skills, such as conversation, composition, dictation, kinds of letters, letter forms, punctuation, abbreviation, contraction, sentence construction, functional grammar, and the like. The new textbooks in language for Grades III and IV, which may soon become available, indicate the language skills more comprehensively, which should serve the teachers as their guide in teaching skills in the grades. Much as teachers want the pupils to learn the necessary language skills, it should be observed that these are learned best through the study of the units in the basic curriculum guide for National Language. Available texts and references are to be tied up with this guide.

With respect to the second category, the subject matter of instruction should be consciously and determinedly geared to reach the home and the community. Since the units are of high functional value and are taught in the language the home can understand, teachers should enable the children to communicate their learning to their parents. The new understanding between the school and the home, through community school activities, makes the knowledge which the children bring home readily acceptable to the parents. This is not only for their benefit but also for the children whose new behavior patterns and modes of thinking thrive best with sanction and cooperation of their parents.

The following specific activities are suggested to satisfy the two major objectives:

1. Starting points of interest for conversation, study, and the like may begin in the classroom and/or from the observation or report of some children on house activities.

2. Plans for study, observation, manual activities, etc. should be worked out by the pupils within the framework of the curriculum guide.

3. Children visit places in the community under well-developed plans in which the children participate under the guidance of the teacher. Such places are the home, the church, the market, the municipal building, not as they are but as they are used by men. The purpose is to see what people do, what they say, how they behave or interact so that children may

not only know life activities in the family and in a social organization but also understand the various uses of language and its various forms as a medium of communication.

4. Language projects such as programs, broadcasts, simulated or real, making posters, preparing invitations, letters, corresponding with pupils in other schools or abroad, organizing clubs, holding debates, declamation, *balagtasán*, *dupluhan*, etc., are rich sources of knowledge and offer opportunities for developing skills and personality.

5. Classes or schools should put up programs for special days according to the patriotic calendar, and participate in community programs.

6. Social clubs and class organizations should practice and study how to conduct meetings; follow the order of business, how to make a motion, how to second it, how to put it to debate, to vote, etc. The proper behavior, the manner of talking, the use of appropriate language should be studied, including how to conduct nominations, elections; how to debate, how to campaign not only for elections but also for certain movements like to build a school, a plaza, a reading center, irrigation system; for better health and sanitation, for literacy, peace and order, for better municipal administration, etc.

IV. Grade Allocation:

This is a unitary program of National Language instruction

and, for this reason, teachers should not be found by the specific allocations of the units to the different grades. This view is adopted because of the considerable overlapping of the units. The secondary schools are not listed in the curriculum guide, but it will not be difficult to extend the difficulty and the scope of the elementary units to meet the maturity, interest and social needs of secondary school students. Out of this experience the secondary school teachers should be able to evolve a curriculum guide of their own. In fact the secondary schools should take the necessary steps toward this end.

V. Evaluation:

Since evaluation is a continuing process, it will only be necessary here to suggest some criteria for judging the progress of child development in terms of knowledge, skills, and social usefulness.

Evaluation should embrace two important phases of language instruction, namely: (a) An understanding and command of the content of things which interest children and adult, and for which language plays an important role; (b) A command of the skills, forms, usages, mechanics used in oral and written language.

Teachers should be able to work out specific criteria for the grades they teach within the framework of the two major phases of language instruction.

The Secret of JCL

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"Come over. I shall help you transfer to my school even if I have to see the Superintendent myself about it." Thus wrote Juan C. Laya, Principal of Arellano High School, in answer to my letter of inquiry. Very stiffly, in the most formal language that would hide hesitation and timidity and lack of self-confidence, I had written to the Principal of Arellano High School, without ever having met him before. I had inquired how an elementary school teacher about to finish her B.S.E. course should go about for a teaching position in the high school. Perhaps he saw through the stiffness and the formality and discovered the hesitation and the timidity and the lack of self-confidence and so wrote me the above reply.

It was with some nervousness that I approached a clerk in the school and asked who Mr. Laya was. But it was with trepidation that I introduced myself to the stern-looking school official pointed out to me by the clerk. However, when he spoke to me, I knew at once he was a kindly man who understood people, especially timid people. It was later, while working with him in the same school, that I would discover why he had a knack for drawing shy people out of their shells, often

going out of his way to do so: He was once timid himself, retiring within his shell. It must have been a long, lonely fight before fulfillment. And he had never forgotten that fight in spite of the successes and the affluence that came later.

He was patient in the process, perhaps because he remembered so well the pain and the anguish before he could break the wall and extend a hand to a friendly world—which is, after all, really kind and friendly, in spite of what timid people think. He told me I would demonstrate lessons on the Tagalog translation of the "Rubaiyat" of Omar Khayyam. He had barely finished saying that when I grew pale and began feeling faint. He asked why and I told him in all candidness of my unholy terror of observers entering my room, let alone demonstrate. I begged and implored and even thought of absenting myself from school, but he kept on smiling his easy smile and repeated slowly and calmly but firmly that I would demonstrate. And demonstrate I did — for three successive days. How I did it is still a wonder to me now. But survive it I did and with the experience came a knowing: one must not fail the faith entrusted; one must