

# **Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children**

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## **Abstract**

This research paper is being prepared to develop and evaluate materials for the development of reading readiness skills of preschool children with emphasis on values necessary for their wholesome development, to provide readily made reading readiness materials which are beneficial to both the preschool teachers and the learners which they can use anytime in teaching and learning, and to address the dearth of instructional materials that focus on values formation among children as they acquire reading readiness skills. Five (5) peer evaluators and five (5) reading experts were selected to evaluate the values-based exercises for the development of reading readiness skills for preschool children. The responses of the study revealed the acceptability of the selections as to their content, presentation style, interest of pupils, as to whether the exercises are clear, and the development of basic reading skills for pre-school children are appropriate to their ages. The results of the analysis and interpretation of the responses revealed that the materials were found to be suited to the exercises provided for in the different levels.

**Keywords:** Development of Reading, Readiness Skills, Preschool Children, Values

## **Introduction**

“Great things start from small beginnings.” This line from a TV commercial affirms the child’s realization of the future that small things make up the greatest in his life. The former US President, Franklin D. Roosevelt said that the best wealth of man is his character. The development of virtues at the early stage of the child’s total personality is a product of his environmental experience the way he is reared up by parents, and such other factors that contribute to his total personality development (Mussen, 1984), including one’s interest to enhance intellectual well-being such as reading for academic growth. Learning to read is one of the most important skills that a child should acquire. The initial process in the child’s reading development springs from its early beginnings. Hence, the need to expose children to the different reading materials while they are still young is so important. This enables them to become interested to learn to read. The child’s manifestation to learn how to read is indicative of his reading readiness. As such, he shall be given the opportunity to be accorded with reading readiness materials that will open up an entirely new world for him as he acquires the necessary skills in both literacy and numeracy. As one reads, he is able to get positive attributes which make up one’s human character traits that eventually create his identity as he matures. Because of this, our children shall avail themselves of educational reading materials that not only develop their reading readiness skills but allow them to obtain the necessary values for wholesome development. In the context of the present day world, the changing times characterize a loss of positive virtues among our young generation due to the advent of technological advancements which are indelible and which one cannot live without. The existence of small gadgets such as i-pods, cellular phones, notebooks; and their accessibility to the webpage in the internet have become a common reason for them to divert their attention to other useful academic activities like reading for one’s intellectual enhancement. Prone to these technologies, our children are undeniably infested with misleading practices and contrary beliefs which are basically improper and are fundamentally inappropriate. It is imperative that as the child learns his ABC’s, he shall also learn the virtues he needs to become a self-reliant and responsible citizen of the country. The conduct of this research paper may somehow give light and provide further support to our claim that the

development of the nation rests upon the people specifically among the young, and that, we need to educate them with the virtues worthy of emulation despite the prevailing circumstances and possession of material wealth.

### **Materials and Methods:**

This chapter discusses the process as well as the methods and approaches used in the preparation of Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children. This research paper follows the Johnson's (1973) System Material Design Model which consists of three phases: The Design Phase; Development Phase; and Evaluation Phase as shown in the Schematic Diagram in the last page (Figure 1).

#### **Design Phase**

The researcher made consultations with the special project adviser and other preschool teachers especially those who have expertise in the reading field before the working of this research paper eventually took place. The researcher conducted a thorough research by reading books, unpublished thesis, and some related instructional materials related to the subject of the study. She also made an extensive consultation with the college professors at Philippine Normal University who are teaching Reading about the materials which may be useful in making this research paper. An informal interview helped the researcher get additional insight regarding the study. The interview was done with reading and preschool teachers, and some values-education teachers. The focus of the interview was on how values is specifically taught and learned best by pupils in the preschool as compared in the primary grades. The selections are ascertained through an analysis of the text and supplementary readers, manuals, teaching guides, courses of study, multiple skills/level materials such as PLP, and was paralleled with the learning outcomes in the Minimum Learning Competencies (MLC) for Elementary Level and with the lesson grids indicated in the manual for Early Childhood Development Program (ECDP).

#### **Development Phase**

Children's experiences, interests and levels of understanding were among the factors which were considered in the selection of subject matter.

Selection of subject matter was the first step in the development phase.

The researcher looked for the available selections which correspond with the topics or skills to be included in the research paper.

After collecting all the materials, the researcher determined the selections with values to be included in the research paper intended for each reading readiness exercises. An effective teacher must make her teaching styles, strategies, and instructional materials appropriate and appealing to different kinds of learners especially those who are in the kindergarten. The researcher chose selections with values that will develop reading readiness skills of preschool children. The materials consist of different exercises on visual and auditory discrimination, identifying initial sound of the letters, positions, colors, feelings, directions, rhyming words and eye-hand coordination. Selections used in the preparation of this research paper were developed by the researcher while some others were adapted from the different textbooks, workbooks being used in the preschool curriculum.

Some suggestions in selecting materials were taken from the criteria of Kionde and Oho. Among which are the following suggestions:

1. Pictures must be specifically relevant to the main idea conveyed,
2. Pictures should be relevant to the content.
3. Illustrations must help the pupils capture the skills to be developed.

There are many wonderful tools available to guide the teachers on how to help a child learn how to read and appreciate reading more. Phonics, letter sound recognition and reading sight words had helped. This combination helped teachers produce successful and confident readers.

Inspired by these views, the researcher prepared the final framework of her research paper entitled "Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills of Preschool Children."

The framework was outlined according to the selections and the specific skills to be developed for each, and the value that can be taken from the selections. The following page reflects the framework of the research study.

**Table 1 : “The Final Framework for "Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children”**

<b>Title of the Selection</b>	<b>Representational Style</b>	<b>Reading Readiness Skills</b>	<b>Value Focus</b>
1. Grooming Oneself	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloring the picture that shows what you do to make yourself clean and good-looking.</li> <li>• Encircling the pictures that show what you do every day before going to school.</li> </ul>	Neatness
2. Wouldn't it be Funny?	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the correct courteous expression.</li> <li>• Checking the correct greeting for each situation.</li> </ul>	Courtesy
3. Barney Song	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the correct name of each family member.</li> <li>• Writing the name of each member of the family.</li> </ul>	Love of Parents/ Friends
4. Facial Expression	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying happy and sad faces</li> </ul>	Cheerfulness
5. SOLDIERS! SOLDIERS!	Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tracing broken lines from left to right and tracing broken lines from one up to down.</li> </ul>	Discipline
6. The More We Get Together	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matching and identifying things that go together</li> </ul>	Friendship
7. STOP! LOOK! LISTEN!	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloring the balloons correctly by following the color code.</li> <li>• Coloring the rabbits as described in the poem.</li> </ul>	Obedience
8. The Tree	Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coloring big and small plants</li> <li>• Tracing and coloring the leaves</li> </ul>	Humility/ Gratefulness
9. ABC Look and See	Song	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying initial sound of the letters</li> </ul>	Appreciation of the things around us
10. Father, We Thank Thee	Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying rhyming word</li> </ul>	Prayerfulness
11. Me and the Toys I Play With	Short Poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling where the marked object is by underlining the correct expression</li> <li>• Identifying the location of an object.</li> </ul>	Cleanliness and Orderliness

## Evaluation Phase

A peer and expert evaluation was made on the instrument in order to find out how useful and relevant the materials are to the main purpose of the study. These were made by peer and expert evaluators who were selected according to the established criteria/qualification standards set by the researcher herself. The expert and peer validators were chosen on the following: (1) degree earned; (2) teaching experience specifically in teaching Reading and in the preschool. Expert validators are those teachers who are Master's degree holders with specialization in Reading and/or any related field with teaching experience of at least five (5) years. On the other hand, peer validators are reading teachers who have at least two (2) years of teaching experience and have earned at least eighteen (18) masteral units in Reading or any related field, and who have somehow teaching experience in the preschool.

A questionnaire was provided to the validators for evaluating the materials. They had to fill-up a checklist which asks for a "Yes", "Fairly", or "No" answer on questions about the materials. Their answers were tallied and percentages were extracted to determine whether the selections are useful for the target users. The result then served as guide for our Preschool Teachers. The comments and suggestions of expert and peer validators were considered in the process of revision.

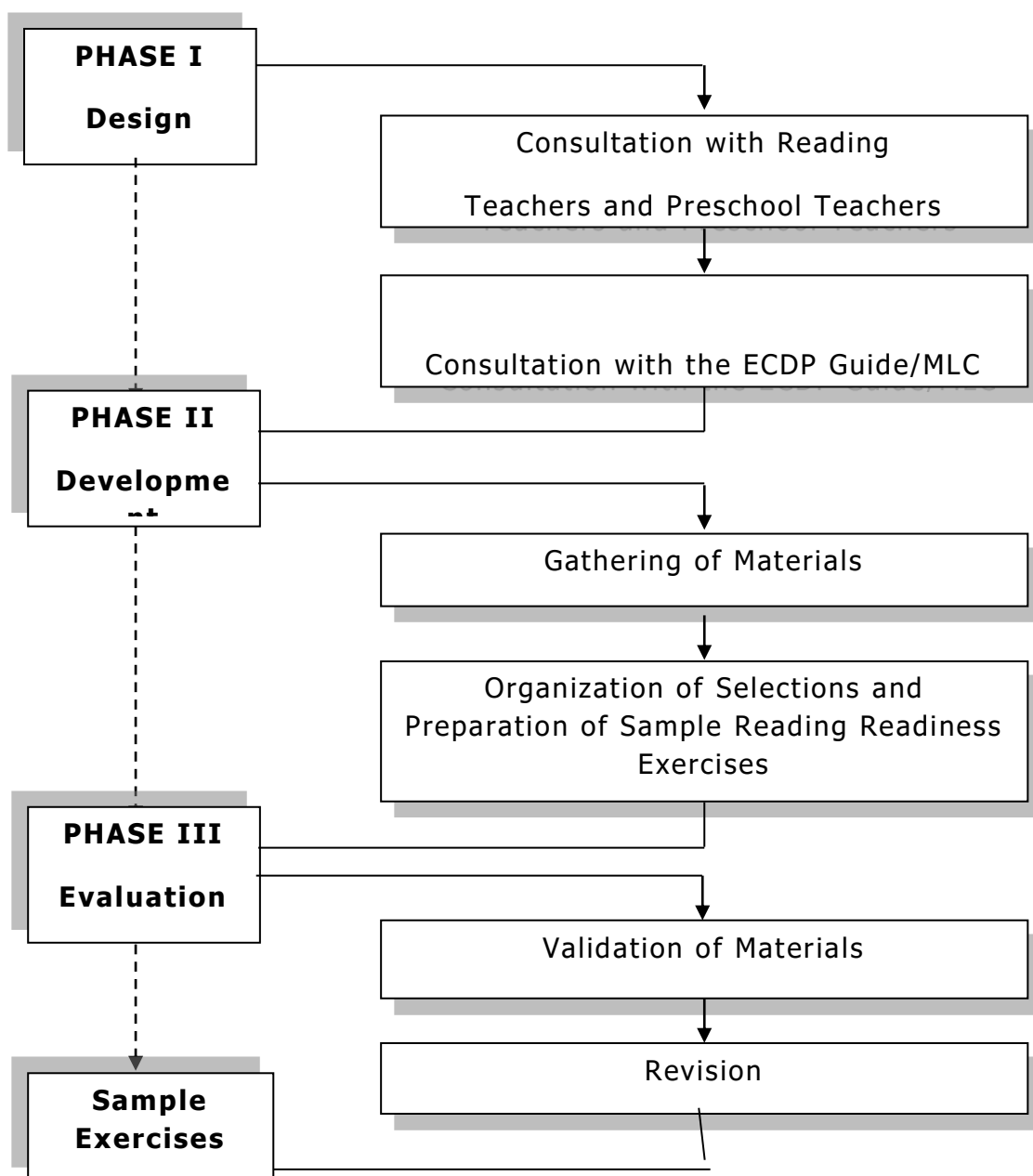


Figure 1 : Schematic Diagram Illustrating the Preparation of Values Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children

## **Development Phase**

Determining the topic was the first step that the researcher did. After the survey of the materials, the researcher prepared the materials with enthusiasm. The materials were supplemented by the reading readiness exercises provided by some textbooks and workbooks. Then the selections were composed for each reading readiness exercises.

## **Selecting the Materials**

The researcher had chosen several books, references, textbooks and workbooks that contain reading readiness exercises. These exercises were adapted and modified by the researcher according to the skills needed by the preschool children and the specific value that they need to acquire in each of the selection. The reading readiness materials consist of different activities on visual and auditory discrimination, initial letter identification, eye-hand coordination, shapes, positions of objects, things that go together, learning about parts of the body and plants, colors and feelings expressed in each event. The criteria suggested by Kionde and Oho was considered in the selection of the materials. Suggestions taken are the following: selections shall be organized appropriately corresponding to the sample exercises. The relativity of the selections with the exercises must be synchronized. Emphasis on the given selections shall be given so that children will get curious about them. Other pictures and illustrations shall be changed accordingly to the level of understanding of the children. Interesting illustrations helped pupils develop the skills more easily. Materials used in the preparation of reading readiness exercises for preschool children were personally developed by the researcher with corresponding selections and some exercises adapted from textbooks and workbooks being used in preschool curriculum as based on the ECDP guide. Some available and effective tools guided the researcher on how to begin initial reading successfully. Suggestions and comments from peers and experts were incorporated in the final reading readiness exercises. The researcher prepared the final framework of her research paper entitled “Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children.” The framework was outlined according to the skills to be developed, number of exercises and the sources. The formal presentation and outlining were adapted from other materials.

## **Evaluation Phase**

Sear, Foss and Readence (1989) claimed that assessment helps teacher choose materials and techniques to come up with ample examples and quality exercises to enhance and enrich pupils’ study habits and so with their various reading skills. Peer Evaluation There are five (5) peer evaluators who were chosen to evaluate “Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children“. These peer evaluators are teachers in the preschool and reading teachers in the elementary. The researcher personally requested the peer evaluators to validate her materials. They were requested to browse over the materials and give their comments. Ratings were done on basis of Yes, Fair and No System. Expert Evaluation To establish accurate assessment for reading readiness materials, expert evaluators play a very significant role. Experts were selected according to their expertise in the field of reading and years of experience in teaching in the preschool. Ratings done by indicating Yes, Fair, and No System questionnaires. Comments and suggestions as to the improvement of the materials were expected. Questionnaire and the Rating Process Questionnaires adapted from the evaluation of peers and experts were made as the basis for revision or modification. All comments and suggestions were accepted for the improvement and refinement of the reading readiness materials. Results of the Evaluation The researcher then gathered the checklist questionnaires from the peer and expert validators after they had given ratings, comments and suggestions. These were then tallied, and reflected on the tables that follow: Table 2 is the result from Expert Validation; Table 3 is the result of the Peer Validation; and Table 4 is the result of both the Peer and Expert Validation. Their comments and suggestions were the basis for the revision of some parts of the exercises for the development of reading readiness skills for preschool children.

**Table 2 : Expert Evaluation of “Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children”**

Questions	Responses							
	Yes	%	Fair	%	No	%	Total	%
1. Are the exercises in terms of content appealing to the pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
2. Can the exercises in terms of presentational style elicit interest among pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
3. Are the exercises within the interest of pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
4. Are the exercises appropriate for the reading readiness levels of pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
5. Are the instructions of each exercise clear?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
6. Are the exercises effective in developing the skills of the pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
7. Will the reading readiness exercises enhance other language and reading skills of pupils?	3	60	2	40	0	0	5	100
8. Will the writing exercises develop the writing skills of pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
9. Are the selections suited to the exercises of the different levels?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
10. Do the selections emphasize the value being conveyed?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100

Table 2 shows the responses of the expert validators as to the appropriateness and suitability of the content, exercises, reading readiness skills intended for preschool children. All experts agreed that the exercises are appealing to the pupils in terms of content; the exercises are also within the interest of pupils; the instruction of each exercises are clear; the selections are suited to the exercises of the different level; and that the selections emphasize the value being conveyed in each selection. Some of the items in the selections were rated eighty percent (80%) which indicates that the exercises in terms of presentational style elicit interest among pupils; the exercises are appropriate for the reading readiness levels of pupils; the exercises are effective in developing the skills of the pupils; and the writing exercises develop the writing skills of pupils. One of the items was rated sixty percent (60%) which indicates that the reading readiness exercises enhance other language and reading skills of pupils.

They made several comments and suggestions in the improvement of the selections and exercises.

**Table 3 : Peer Evaluation of “Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children”**

Questions	Responses							
	Yes	%	Fair	%	No	%	Total	%
1. Are the exercises in terms of content appealing to the pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
2. Can the exercises in terms of presentational style elicit interest among pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
3. Are the exercises within the interest of pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
4. Are the exercises appropriate for the reading readiness levels of pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
5. Are the instructions of each exercise clear?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
6. Are the exercises effective in developing the skills of the pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
7. Will the reading readiness exercises enhance other language and reading skills of pupils?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
8. Will the writing exercises develop the writing skills of pupils?	4	80	1	20	0	0	5	100
9. Are the selections suited to the exercises of the different levels?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100
10. Do the selections emphasize the value being conveyed?	5	100	0	0	0	0	5	100

Table 3 presents the results of the evaluation of peer validators. All five (5) peer validators were able to rate in the evaluation checklist. Two of the peers are actually teaching in the pre-school and three of the peers are teaching reading in the elementary gave observations on the selections and exercises prepared by the researcher. They almost responded to “Yes” or “Fairly” to some items, they gave valuable suggestions in to the improvement of the selections.

**Table 4 : Expert and Peer Evaluation of “Values-Based Exercises for the Development of Reading Readiness Skills for Preschool Children”**

Questions	Responses							
	Yes	%	Fair	%	No	%	Total	%
1. Are the exercises in terms of content appealing to the pupils?	10	100	0	0	0	0	10	100
2. Can the exercises in terms of presentational style elicit interest among pupils?	9	90	1	10	0	0	10	100

3. Are the exercises within the interest of pupils?	10	100	0	0	0	0	10	100
4. Are the exercises appropriate for the reading readiness levels of pupils?	8	80	2	20	0	0	10	100
5. Are the instructions of each exercise clear?	9	90	1	10	0	0	10	100
6. Are the exercises effective in developing the skills of the pupils?	9	90	1	10	0	0	10	100
7. Will the reading readiness exercises enhance other language and reading skills of pupils?	8	20	2	20	0	0	10	100
8. Will the writing exercises develop the writing skills of pupils?	8	80	2	20	0	0	10	100
9. Are the selections suited to the exercises of the different levels?	10	100	0	0	0	0	10	100
10. Do the selections emphasize the value being conveyed?	10	100	0	0	0	0	10	100

Table 4 shows the results of the evaluation of both the Expert and Peer validators. There were ten (10) validators who evaluated the materials. The following were the criteria used in the selection of the validators. For expert validators, he/she should have at least five (5) years' experience in teaching reading and must have an M.A. in Teaching Reading or any related field. On the other hand, the peer validators should have at least three years (3) experience in preschool teaching and teaching reading with at least eighteen (18) graduate units towards an M.A. in Teaching Reading or any related field. The responses revealed the acceptability of the selections as to their content, presentation style, interest of pupils, whether the exercises are clear, and development of basic reading readiness skills for pre-school children, the selections are found to be suited to the exercises provided for in the different levels. Most importantly, the selections emphasize the value being conveyed in each selection. There are skills that also need to be given emphasis such as in the item which asks whether the exercises enhance other language and reading skills of pupils; and if the writing exercises develop the writing skills of the pupils. Both the expert and peer evaluators suggested that these two items must be further improved. They suggested that the researcher need to give more additional reading readiness exercises on these items. The expert and peer evaluators gave some comments and suggestions on how to improve the research paper. The researcher was grateful for the comments and suggestions because she was aware that these will improve the research paper. In consideration of the expert and peer evaluation as well as the comments and suggestions given by them, the researcher feels confident that the reading readiness materials will be useful and effective in teaching and learning process for both the teacher and the pupils. It is therefore hoped that our preschool teachers and reading teachers will consider preparing reading readiness skills exercises for a more effective teaching-learning instruction.

### Conclusions

From the information derived from the study, as well as from the evaluation made by the experts and peers, the following conclusions are made:

- The exercises in terms of content are appealing to the children and within their level of interest;
- The interest in terms of representational style can elicit interest among children;
- The exercises are appropriate for the level of reading readiness skills of the children;
- The instruction of each exercise should be clear;



- Reading readiness exercises can enhance other language and reading readiness skills of children;
- Supplementary exercises on writing skills must be added;
- The selections are suited to the exercises of the different levels;
- The writing exercises can develop the writing skills of the children but need further emphasis;
- Some of the selections are needed revision.
- The selections emphasize the value being conveyed.

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