

# ***The Four-Pronged Approach in Reading Instruction***

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*The four-pronged approach was first developed by Professor Basilisa Manhit of the College of Education, University of the Philippines, Diliman. The philosophical foundations of the four-pronged approach are the following: literature-based, holistic, and places emphasis on the process of transfer. This approach has evolved through the years with the consistent use by the teachers of the University of the Philippines Integrated School Kindergarten to Grade II (U.P.I.S. K-2) and with the input of the other members of the faculty of the Reading Education Area of the same university.*

The four-pronged approach is composed of four parts:

## **I. GENUINE LOVE FOR READING**

The first prong aims to immerse the child in literature and develop a deep and lasting *love for reading*. Finding a good and interesting story or poem is the first step in this prong. The story/poem should be suitable to the age, interests, and vocabulary levels of the children. The message of the story should be very clear to the teacher. His/Her understanding of the material will be the basis of an appropriate objective which will guide the development of the lesson.

The words, phrases, places, and important details of the story which may hinder the children's understanding of the selection should be identified. Methods of clearing these obstructions should be planned. Unlocking of difficulties may be made through a variety of ways such as demonstrations, concrete objects, drawings, and other forms of representation, verbal/contextual clues and games.

To develop a love for reading, the child must also have a need and desire to read or listen. The teacher must look for an incident in the story/poem which is familiar to the child. From this, a question for motivation may be asked so the children may freely share personal experiences and feelings about it. Linking these expressed thoughts and feelings to the story through a similarly phrased question will motivate them to listen to or read the story. They will want to find out if the question is resolved differently or not. Thus, the children have a motive for listening to the story.

Only after this enthusiasm is kindled, should the story be read to the children. The manner of story or poetry reading should sustain this interest. The reading of the story/poem should equal the artistry of the author.

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## II. CRITICAL THINKING

After story/poetry reading, the children are asked to answer the motive question. A discussion then unfolds the events and beauty of the selection. This discussion should succeed in imparting the message of the story. The children arrive at this on their own pace of realization guided by the questions of the teacher. The children are trained to reflect on the story. They soon become accustomed to *critical thinking*, the second prong. Creative exercises may follow to elevate the reading/listening activity to a more aesthetic level when they can interpret the story/poem purely on their own.

Through this method of sharing literature, vocabulary is developed, attention span is lengthened, listening comprehension is honed and critical thinking, applied daily, becomes a habit.

## III. MASTERY OF THE STRUCTURES OF THE (FILIPINO/ENGLISH) LANGUAGE

Through this method of sharing literature, vocabulary is developed, attention span is lengthened, listening comprehension is honed and critical thinking, applied daily, becomes a habit.

Literature is an excellent source of examples of good language. The children will catch this language and use it in their conversations in and out of school. The story/poem gives the children a common experience which they can talk about. Capitalizing on this shared knowledge and individual security to teach specific language structures will eliminate the burden of listening and speaking about unrelated topics. Using the content of the story, the children will be able to practice newly learned language structures. In this manner, the children will gain *mastery of the structures of the (Filipino/English) language* (now also named GOLD or Grammar and Oral Language Development), without really knowing that they have just had a grammar lesson.

## IV. TRANSFER STAGE

In the course of time, children who have become used to listening to stories will want to read on their own. Opening a book and pretending to read are just some of the symptoms that tell that a child is ready for beginning reading instruction, or the *transfer stage*. This prong is also planned and implemented as systematically as the three prongs. This is the prong where reading readiness activities are given to the pupils. The *Fuller*

*Approach* is used as a guide for the sequence of teaching the phonemes. In Filipino, the *Marungko Approach* provides the structure.

The table below presents a matrix of the four prongs, the goals for each one, and the materials to be used in each of the prongs:

<b>PRONG</b>	<b>GOAL</b>	<b>MATERIAL</b>
Genuine Love for Reading (GLR)	To develop a lifetime love, habit, and enjoyment for reading.	storybooks, poems, trade books, songs
Critical Thinking (CT)	To develop the habit of reflecting on what is read and exercising decision making, making judgments, and valuing.	same story and post-reading activities that engage children
Mastery of the Structures of the Filipino/English Language (MSF/EL) or Grammar and Oral Language Development (GOLD)	To develop competence in oral language, understanding, and correct use of syntax.	still based on the story, objects, pictures, charts to facilitate application of structures learned
Transfer Stage (TS)	To develop phonemic awareness, decoding, and encoding skills.	worksheets, writing tablets, charts, and other materials of appropriate level

*The four prongs flow into each other smoothly and without fanfare introductions. All but one prong emanates from the story. Genuine love for reading, critical thinking, and mastery of the (Filipino/English) language are all based on the poem/story read. When the transfer stage commences, the children switch to the lesson they left off the day before and move on from there as guided by the teacher.*

Reference:

Ocampo, Dina Joana & Hermosa, Nemah (1997). EDR 210 Module: **Trends in Reading Instruction**. U.P. Open University, Diliman, Quezon City: Office of Academic Support and Instructional Services.