

Review of Mother Tongue Instructional Materials for Grade Two
by Manuel Faelnar

-Cebuano language specialist (Academe) of DepEd's newly formed Central Office Review Team (CORT)

In Cebu City the Central Office Review Team (CORT) will review instructional materials in Cebuano for Grade Two. Three subjects will be reviewed in Cebu - MT, Music, Art. Likewise three subjects will be reviewed in Butuan City - Mathematics, PE, Health.

On January 15-17, 2013, Cebuano language instructional materials for Social Studies (Araling Panlupunan) and EsP will be reviewed in Davao City. So far there is no designated Cebuano language specialist to go to Davao City. The fact that Cebuano language materials were prepared and will be reviewed in three different DepEd regions shows the extent of use of the language. The preparation of materials was devolved to Regions VII, XI and CARAGA.

A Handout given to us members of the the Central Office Review Team provided the following information:

"During the Orientation on the Development of Grades 2 and 8 Learning Resources, participants were provided with information on the overall scheme, expected outputs, and development processes in preparing the Grade 2 Learners Materials (LMs) and the Teacher's Guides (TGs) for the different learning areas assigned to each region. The LMs and TGs which shall be aligned to the K to 12 curriculum are intended for use in school year 2013-14.

Subsequent activities in the preparation, presentation and feedbacking of the assigned LMs and TGs including mother tongue-based (MTB) materials are being implemented by each Regional Learning Resource Writing Team (LRWT) prior to the submission of the final manuscripts for mass printing.

The Instructional Materials Council Secretariat (IMCS) which provided the initial technical assistance during the national orientation, is tasked to check the completeness of the camera-ready copies and final layout of the LMs and TGs. However, prior to the submission of the final versions of the complete LMs and TGs for all learning areas and MTB materials, the said learning materials must be subjected to an internal review by other stakeholders to ensure that these comply with DepEd standards on content, language, and format and are appropriate for mass production.

The critiquing of other stakeholders aims to provide inputs for the improvement of the learning resources being developed."

DepEd thus formed a Central Office Review Team (CORT). Actually there are 17 CORT Teams, one each for each DepEd Region or part thereof, including CARAGA. Each CORT Team is composed of:

* Two (2) learning area specialists from the Bureau of Elementary Education (BEE) to focus on content aspects of the LMs and TGs,

* Two language specialists from the Komisyon sa Wikang Filipino (KWF) or the academe to focus

on the suitability and appropriateness of the language used.

* Two (2) staff from Instructional Materials Council Secretariat to focus on the book design and format,

* One (1) curriculum expert to focus on the alignment and appropriateness of the LMs, TGs and MTB MLE materials with the K to 12 curriculum.

The CORT Teams will review and critique the content, language, and format of the Grade 2 LMs and TGs and MTB MLE materials developed by the regional LRWTs for the assigned learning areas. The Teams will also provide specific comments and suggestions on the Grade 2 LMs and TGs and MTB MLE materials which will improve their content, language, and format.

Chavacano and Bahasa Sug learning materials will be reviewed by separate CORT Teams in Zamboanga City (Region IX) on Dec. 8-10, 2012. Language specialist for Chavacano is Dr. Jose Genaro Yap of Academe. Language specialists for Bahasa Sug are Dr. Benjamin Bangaham and Engr. Naim Bangahan.

Ilocano materials for EsP and MAPEH will be reviewed on Nov. 27-29 at DepEd Regional Office, CAR, Wangal, La Trinidad. Ilocano language specialist is Ms. Aleli Domingo of Academe.

Ilocano learning materials for Math, AP, Music and Art will be reviewed on Dec. 12-14, 2012, in Tuguegarao at the DepEd II Regional Office, while Pangasinan learning materials will be reviewed on Dec. 12-14, 2012, at RELC in San Fernando, La Union in Region I. Dr. Francisco Nicololas is the language specialist for Ilocano. Language specialists for Pangasinan are Ms. Elvira Estrabo of KWF and Mr. Joselito Daguison.

Meranao instructional materials will be reviewed on Jan. 14-16, 2013, in Cagayan de Oro City at DepEd X Regional Office while Maguindanao will be reviewed on Jan. 9-11, 2013, in Koronadal in Region XII. Language specialist for Meranao is still vacant. Language specialists for Maguindanao are Mr. Abdulmaguid Mohamad and Ms. Dialica Caup, both of Academe.

Kapampangan materials will be reviewed in Pampanga on Nov. 27-29, 2012. Mr. Jose P. Mallari is the language specialist.

Waray language materials will be reviewed on Dec. 5-7, 2012, at RELC in Palo, Leyte. Language specialists are Mr. Jomar Canega of KWF and Mr. Jose Evie Duclay.

Bicol materials will be reviewed on Dec. 17-19, 2012, in Nabua, Camarines Sur. Language specialists are Dr. Sheila Vega of KWF and Ms. Evelyn Pateno.

Hiligaynon materials will be reviewed on Dec. 5-7, 2012, at DepEd VI Regional Office in Iloilo City. Language specialists are Dr. Daisy Rosario and Prof. Ruth A. Lebes-Gelvezon.

When asked what was the language in the Teachers' Guides, we were informed these are in English and Tagalog (aka Filipino). It was explained that the teachers preferred it this way as they had a hard time with the mother tongue. I said that in Region VII teachers must be proficient in the mother tongue or they should not teach at all. Language training for the teachers is very important for the implementation of MTB MLE.

We were also informed that for those languages where no instructional materials have been prepared yet, such as the other languages of Bicol, the medium of instruction will be English and

Tagalog (aka Filipino). I pointed out that this defeats the purpose as the kids do not understand these languages. We were informed that this is temporary pending preparation of materials in those languages. In the meantime, it is understood or assumed that the teachers will code switch between the mother tongue and the medium of instruction. I do not think this is satisfactory. Personally I am against code switching.

Advocates of Kinaray-a, Akeanon, Surigaonon, Ibanag, Ivatan, Kankanaey, Ifugao, Asi, Unhan, Romblonon, Sorsoganon, Rinconanda, Cantanduanes, Abaknon and other languages better lobby for their languages. Also DepEd does not seem aware that under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, the indigenous peoples have the legal right to use their languages as the medium instruction and not just as a bridge.

Commentary by Firth McEachern:

One thing we must change: the policy that certain Teacher's Guides can only be in English and others can only be in Filipino. To me it makes sense that if the medium of instruction is the mother tongue, so should the Teachers' Guides, in order for there to be no disconnect and in order for the teacher's understanding and use of the mother tongue to be as fluid as possible. At the very least, it should be an option for a region or division during these instructional material making workshops to produce Teacher's Guides in the mother tongue, English, or Filipino. Why is the central office so proscriptive?? Just like a recent memo that was sent out...central office released funds for the reproduction of mother tongue materials, but further specified that only the pre-determined 12 languages apply. What is the point of this? The region or division should be able to decide to reproduce materials in additional languages, such as Bolinao, if there is need/desire/demand.