

**EFFECTIVENESS OF READER'S DIGEST WORKSHEETS IN
IMPROVING READING SKILLS – A CASE STUDY ON
MUET-TAKING STUDENTS**



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Abstract

Reading, which is a receptive skill, does not come easy to learners of a second language, yet by mastering the skill of reading, learners are able to excel in their academic pursuit. In short, reading is just as important as the other language learning skills – listening, speaking and writing. This research is an attempt to provide an insight into the effectiveness of the use of a magazine, *Reader's Digest* in preparing students for Malaysian University English Test or MUET. *Reader's Digest* is chosen for its varied content which can motivate and inspire the students. The level of English Language is also challenging for most of the students. Using various measurements namely survey, experimental research and in-depth interviews with the teachers and worksheets designer of the *Reader's Digest* Reading Program, this study focuses on the use of *Reader's Digest* and its worksheets in English Language classrooms as supplementary material to improve student's reading skills. It can be concluded that if consistently used with involvement from the educators, *Reader's Digest* especially the worksheets can help the students to improve their English especially their reading and also vocabulary even though students are encouraged to read the magazine and do the worksheets on their own. So far, the *Reader's Digest* Reading Program has not been implemented in UiTM Kelantan although it has been implemented in many educational institutions including schools in Klang Valley and other states on the central and southern regions of Peninsula Malaysia. This finding also shows that teachers need to ensure not only opportunities exist in their lessons for the introduction of useful articles as found in *Reader's Digest* but that students have opportunities to practice meaningful use of new vocabulary through various activities. Hence, the importances of creating a reading program to cultivate a reading culture at higher education institutions can prepare students not only to do well in MUET but help them to excel in their academic pursuit. After all, having knowledge on wide issues in English Language can be an asset for them.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.0 Introduction

As a receptive skill, reading is a crucial skill to master in order to be successful in one's academic pursuit. Due to its importance, reading is an important skill cultivated in an English language classroom at primary and secondary level. Even at tertiary level, reading is a primary skill given emphasis as in MUET (Malaysian University English Test), a university entry examination to gauge one's English language skills. It is a requirement for students who wish to pursue higher education at the university. Some secondary schools in Malaysia, particularly boarding schools have adopted the use of Reader's Digest as part of their reading program in their effort to improve students' reading and vocabulary skills.

Other than being authentic in nature, Reader's Digest has been chosen because of several reasons. One is the magazine covers a wide range of issues from current issues, health, environment, science and technology while on the other hand it is packed with condensed, motivating articles that touch on human life, relationship, hardship and struggle which can be inspiring for students. The price is reasonable and affordable as students get the educational rate. Furthermore, it comes with worksheets for each issue which contain reading and vocabulary exercises based on selected articles from the magazine of that particular issue. The exercises are tailored to cater to the lower-level and higher-level secondary school students in Malaysia. These issues bring us to the next section that is Statement of the problem. This chapter also justifies the need to conduct the research by presenting the objectives and significance of the study. After setting the ground for the research, this chapter also presents limitations of the research and possible research outcomes.