
Examining the Influence of Instructional Resources on English Language Reading Readiness of Children in Grade One at Kericho Rehabilitation School, Kenya

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Abstract. An instructional resource is a generic term used to describe the materials that teachers use to deliver instruction. Teaching materials can support children's learning and increase learner success. Children in rehabilitation schools have a vital social issue that every nation tries to contain.

English Language Reading Readiness is preparation of children by giving them the chance to improve the ability to listen, and speak effectively, to apply the desired vocabulary, and develop the appropriate academic readiness skills. English Language Reading Readiness is of great importance in improving equity in access to learning language and education results, particularly for juvenile delinquency. The objective of the study was to examine the influence instructional resources on English Language Reading Readiness of children in Grade one at Kericho Rehabilitation School. The study also utilized the hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between mean score of the group of children taught before use of instructional resources, and mean score of the group of children taught after using instructional resources in English Language Reading Readiness of children in Grade one at Kericho Rehabilitation School. However, little research has been done on the effect of instructional resources on English language reading readiness in rehabilitation schools setting. The study adopted a case study research design that utilized a descriptive design. The target population included 1 head teacher, 3 teachers and 25 learners in class 1 at the Kericho Rehabilitation School. Data collection was done using a combination of an English Language Reading Readiness Test, a questionnaire, document analysis and observation. The data was analysed both descriptively and inferentially. The findings revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected and adopted the alternative hypothesis. The results show and it is recommended that the children's performance in English Language Reading Readiness can be improved when the teachers effectively use instructional resources in the teaching of English language in rehabilitation schools.

Key Words: Kenya, Kericho Rehabilitation School, Instructional Resources, Case study

Introduction

Reading is an extraordinary thing. It is one of the most important skills acquired in early childhood. And while it's distinctly unnatural, it forms an intrinsic part of our lives. According to Burchinal, Roberts, Hooper and Zeisel (2000), best-trained and supportive teachers, who apply reasonable degree of praise, proactive teaching strategies, and non-harsh discipline; can play an extremely significant role in fostering the social and emotional skills development and preventing the conduct problems in young children together with enhancing language readiness among children. Ideally, the instructional resources will be tailored to the content in which they're being used, to the learners in whose class they are being used, and the teacher. The resources come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have in common the ability to support learning. Teaching materials can refer to a number of teacher resources; however, the term usually refers to concrete examples, such as worksheets or manipulatives - learning tools or games that children can handle to help them gain and practice facility with new knowledge (Marx et al., 1999).

Kericho Rehabilitation School is one of the ten Children's Correction and Rehabilitation Centres in Kenya that are run by the Department of Children's Services. The Department also

runs twelve Children's Remand Homes as well as three Children's Rescue Centres. These institutions have various rehabilitation programmes, carried over from the colonial administration, including education service to Kenyan juvenile children, aged 10 – 12 years who are found to be in conflict with the law.

Statement of the Problem

Kericho Rehabilitation School, Kenya caters for the rehabilitation of boy-children between the ages of 10 - 12, but the overall effect of these programmes is rather weak because the mechanisms in place often lean more towards behaviour adjustment rather than address the existing English language Reading Readiness in learning situations (Kinyua, 2014). A survey conducted by Uwezo Kenya (2009-2013) on monitoring learner achievement indicates that for the first three years, the state of literacy skills in Kenya is grim. It exposed that actually nationally; only 3 out of 10 children in class 3 can do the work of class 2. A whopping 4.6% and 0.9% of children in class 3 and 8 respectively cannot read at all! (Uwezo, 2013: 8). There was also a general drop in comprehension levels. The number of children in class 4-5, for example, who cannot read and comprehend a class two level story increased to six out of ten in 2012 from five out of ten in 2011 (ibid: 15), seven out of 100 children in class 8 can neither read a simple story in English nor Kiswahili (ibid: 3). This further motivated the researcher to conduct the study in a boy's school and in a rehabilitation setting. Therefore, the current study sought to address the influence of instructional resources on English language reading readiness of children in class one in Kericho Rehabilitation School.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study may help the Ministry of Education (MOE) to formulate and implement classroom practices for class one learners in the rehabilitation schools. The findings of this study may be useful to the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), in coming up with appropriate and clear policies to guide learning in rehabilitation schools to enhance English Language Reading Readiness. Teachers may also use the findings to develop standardized classroom practices for rehabilitation schools. It is also believed that the data generated will constitute part of the knowledge pool from which future research can borrow and form a basis for further related research.

Literature Review

Concept of English Language Reading Readiness

According to UNICEF (2012) there are three segments of English Language Reading Readiness which consist of: Ready children (focusing on children's learning and development), Ready schools (focusing on the school environment along with practices that foster and support a smooth transition for children into primary school and advance and promote the learning of all children) and ready families (focusing on parental and caregiver attitudes and involvement in their children's early learning and development and transition to school). All three segmentations are of significance and must work in tandem, because English language reading readiness is a period of transition that needs the interface between individuals, families and systems. The recent literature has a common theme that English language reading readiness is an 'encompassing' concept, which includes cognitive, socio-emotional, and physical components (Janus & Offord, 2007).

Research studies on the prevalence of speech and language impairments propose that approximately 7% of children in primary schools usually exhibit difficulties (Law et al., 1996). Increasingly it is recognized that children with identified language challenges have low academic performance in comparison to their peers in secondary and primary schools.

(Stothard, et al 2001; Conti-Ramsden, Durkin, Simkin & Knox, 2009). There are now distinct causal associations between a child's degree of language and communication development at school entry age and how this impacts on their literacy learning and resultant attainment (Catts, 2002; Catts & Kamhi, 2005; Nathan, et al 2004). However, as with typical development, there is variation in how children with speech and language impairment progress. Lately, there has been a major concern on late development of language in early readers. Until relatively recently, concerns about the development of language were purely the responsibility of the parent and the early years practitioner (health visitors, early educators, speech and language therapists, psychologists and the like).

Concept of Classroom Practices

Classroom practices have been viewed largely as any steps taken by teachers to present the environment that supports and facilitates both academic and social-emotional learning (Evertson & Weinstein, 2006). Rules and routines are powerful preventative elements to classroom organization and management plans because they create a behavioural context for the classroom that includes what is expected, what will be reinforced, and what will be re-taught if inappropriate behaviour occurs (Colvin, Kameenui & Sugai, 1993). This prevents problem behaviour by giving students particular, appropriate behaviours to engage in. Monitoring student behaviour permits the teacher to acknowledge students who are attaining in appropriate behaviour and eliminate misbehaviour from progressing (Colvin, Sugai & Patching, 1993).

According to Evertson and Weinstein (2006), the main parts of classroom practices comprise of: (1) classroom organization resources; (2) teaching methodologies; (3) classroom assessment practices; (4) discipline management; (5) organizing and planning; (6) conducting instruction and maintaining momentum; and (7) getting the year off to a good start. For the purpose of this review, universal or whole-class classroom practices is described as a composition of instructional and non-instructional classroom procedures implemented by teachers in classroom settings with all students for the aim of teaching cognitive and pro-social behavior as well as preventing and minimizing inappropriate behaviour.

Link between Classroom Practices and English Language Reading Readiness

An effective management of a classroom is closely for prevention measures. Children's behaviour is moulded by environment's social context during the process of development (Kauffman, 2005). Most behavioural disorders start with or become bad through behavioural practices such as reinforcement, modeling, extinction, and punishment (Kauffman, 2005; Patterson, Reid, & Dishion, 1992). The classroom set-up performs a major part in the emergence and persistence of behaviour aggression. Early intervention and appropriate treatment for students at-risk for Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD) is crucial to eliminate further occurrences of fatal behaviours developing (Kauffman, 2005; Greer-Chase, Rhodes, & Kellam, 2002). The progression and malleability of maladapted behaviour is mostly affected by teacher's classroom management practices in the very initial grades (Greer-Chase, Rhodes, & Kellam 2002).

Research depicts that aggressiveness of students is determined by either aggressive nature or classroom disruptions environments which are most likely to be aggressive in later grades (Greer-Chase, Rhodes & Kellam, 2002). English language reading readiness involves the quality of the school environment that has been associated with greater rates of student retention due to a well-diversified system of enhancing English language reading readiness (Lloyd, Mensch, Clark, 2000). Research studies have showed that much positive perceptions of classroom structure and overall school environment by children in class one have closely

associated with high academic engagement due to high level of language readiness (Valeski & Stipek, 2001).

Instructional Resources and English Language Reading Readiness

An instructional resource is a generic term used to describe the materials that teachers use to deliver instruction. Teaching materials can support children's learning and increase learner success (Marx et al., 1999). Ideally, the instructional resources will be tailored to the content in which they're being used, to the learners in whose class they are being used, and the teacher. The resources come in many shapes and sizes, but they all have in common the ability to support learning. Teaching materials can refer to a number of teacher resources; however, the term usually refers to concrete examples, such as worksheets or manipulatives - learning tools or games that children can handle to help them gain and practice facility with new knowledge (Marx et al., 1999).

Instructional resources are important because they can significantly increase learner achievement by supporting his/her learning. For example, a name tag may provide a children with important opportunities to practice a new skill gained in class. This process aids in the learning process by allowing the child to explore the knowledge independently as well as providing repetition. Learning materials, regardless of what kind, all have some function in student learning (Nunan, 2001).

Instructional resources can also add important structure to lesson planning and the delivery of instruction by the teacher of English language, especially during the preparation for the teaching of reading. Particularly in lower grades, learning materials act as a guide for both the teacher and child (Bueno, Madrid & McLaren, 2006). They can provide a valuable routine. For instance, if you are an English language teacher and you teach new vocabulary words every Tuesday, knowing that you have a vocabulary game to provide the children with practice regarding the new words will both take pressure off of you and provide important practice (and fun) for your children (Dörnyei, 2005).

In addition to supporting learning more generally, the resources can assist teachers in an important professional duty during the differentiation of instruction. Differentiation of instruction is the tailoring of lessons and instruction to the different learning styles and capacities within your classroom (Reasoner, cited in Rubio, 2004). Learning materials such as worksheets, group activity instructions, games, or homework assignments all allow you to modify assignments to best activate each individual child's learning style as well as getting ready to read (Horwitz, 1986, p.127).

This review makes it imperative that sourcing for the instructional resources requires that teachers get their hands on valuable teaching materials which are not nearly as difficult as it can seem at first. The Internet has many resources for teachers, most of them free that can significantly increase the contents of the teacher's teaching toolbox (Wyse & Goswami, 2008). The teacher can also make his/her own resources. Every learning resource that develops will be an asset to him/her when he/she next teaches a similar unit. An investment of time or money in good teaching materials is an investment in good teaching (Strauss & Altwerger, 2007).

Mollica (2009) posits that the wide classification of printed materials that are applied in classrooms comprise books, and supplementary reading resources. These large groups of instructional materials have resultant effects on early learners' performance on prerequisite skills taught in an Early Childhood Education (ECD) classroom. World Bank (2007) noted that instructional resources are components in learning and the envisaged curriculum can't be executed in their absence. Over the years, the significance of appropriate learning and teaching equipment (comprising textbooks, teachers' guide and additional materials) to back educational growth and standard have been utilized. These broad segments of instructional materials therefore affect students' English language reading readiness.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design of a study describes the principal approach that researchers use to respond to their research questions (Polit & Beck, 2010). The study adopted a case study research design because the study was done in one institution that utilized a descriptive research design where the instructional resources formed the independent variable while the English Language Reading Readiness of the children was the dependent variable. For the purpose of this study, a one group pre-test post-test quasi-experimental design was used. This is because the subjects could not be randomly assigned to either the experimental or the control group and the researcher couldn't control which group would get the treatment. In other words, participants were not entitled to the same opportunity of being in the control or the experimental groups, or of receiving or not receiving the treatment (Best & Kahn, 2003). In this study, there was only one selected group under observation, with a careful measurement being done before applying the experimental treatment and then measuring after.

Target Population

Kericho Rehabilitation School is the only school in Kenya that offers educational and rehabilitation programmes for boys in class one to three who are admitted to the school through a judicial process. Polit and Beck (2010) contend that quantitative researchers should select the largest sample possible so that it acts as a representative of the target population. Since the study was about children in standard one, the researcher used all the 25 children in class one. Additionally, all the four teachers and the head teacher were included in the study.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher used a triangulation approach to collect data from the respondents. In this case, data collection was done using a combination of an English Language Reading Readiness Test, a questionnaire for head teacher and teachers, document analysis on the availability/non-availability of the various documents and records used by teachers and other school departments in class one and observation schedule for classroom teaching.

Data Collection Procedures

Before the start of data collection, the researcher obtained an introductory letter from University of Nairobi, School of Graduate Studies, authorizing implementation of the study. A permit from the National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and permission from the Department of Children's Services to carry out the study was also acquired. The researcher then proceeded to the rehabilitation school where he sought audience with the head teacher and Manager for reconnaissance. The teachers and the head teacher were issued with the questionnaires to respond. The researcher allowed the respondents sufficient time to accurately fill in the copies of the questionnaire with the required information after which the documents were collected for data extraction and analysis.

The Findings

The study sought to establish the influence of instructional resources on English Language Reading Readiness of children in class one at Kericho Rehabilitation School through the following null hypothesis:

H₀: There is no significant difference between mean score of the group of children taught before use of instructional resources, and mean score of the group of children taught after using instructional resources in English Language Reading Readiness of children in Grade one at Kericho Rehabilitation School.

Children's Pre-test performance in English Language Reading Readiness test

In the study, the pre-test was administered to the fourteen children in order to establish their level of performance in English Language Reading Readiness before administering the intervention. The individual children's mean scores for the pre-test results were obtained by marking the children's test out of 10 marks per every item. Table 2 presents the results of the children's marked scripts for the pre-test English Language Reading Readiness test.

Table 1. Pre-test mean scores of children

Class one children	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Score	18	20	18	18	16	12	09	12	08	06	08	06	04	00
Percentage	36	40	36	36	32	24	18	24	16	12	16	12	08	00
Overall mean score = 11.071 (22.14%)														
Source: Researcher														

Table 1 shows a total of 14 children took part in an English Language Reading Readiness pre-test. The test consisted of 10 short answer structured questions with a maximum score of 50 marks. The questions were based on the different aspects of the class one English syllabus. The English Language Reading Readiness Test items were based on; set scores in letter sounds, spelling, reading and writing simple English words. The highest pre-test score was 20 (40%), scored by one child, three children scored 18 (36%) while the lowest score of 0 (0%) was scored by one child. All the children scored below the half mark 25 (50%). This is an indication that almost all the children had low pre-test scores. The overall mean score in the English Language Reading Readiness pre-test was 11.071 (22.14%).

The low performance by the children at the pre-test in the English Language Reading Readiness test by the Grade one children may have been because of their inability to read. The teacher was a trained P1 teacher who had taught Grade one learners before she was deployed to teach at the rehabilitation school. The researcher noted that the teacher had depended more on the look – and – say method in her teaching. In this technique, the teacher simply asked learners to “*open the text books, describe the pictures seen and read what was written.*” The researcher also observed that the teacher relied heavily on the use of dictation to train learners in “*spelling.*” The learners found it hard to describe the pictures in English as well as read what was written. The teacher was used to relying on the text book, asking children to read the sentences, yet she knew quite well that the children could not read. The children did not comprehend how letters are connected to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling designs and to assist them learn how to utilize this knowledge in their reading.

The Intervention – Instructional Resources

The researcher observed that the teacher did not provide to the learners any exciting materials like flash cards, charts, pictures, spelling cards among other simple pre-reading quiz that would attract and sustain the children's interest in reading simple words. Development of pre-reading, writing and oral skills in early years is influenced much by the child's subsequent environment, which must be organized in such a manner that it provides rich and varied experiences that support and propel their holistic growth instructional equipment are the teaching and learning apparatus used by teachers to make the content of what they present more vivid, interesting and pragmatic to learners. The study by Brown (2010) in California demonstrated that instructional materials are variant from simple and inexpensive ones, such as the chalkboard, flat pictures, text books, flash cards, counters, diagrams, worksheets, illustrations, and maps, to more sophisticated and expensive ones like the television,

computers, movie projectors, slides and filmstrip projectors. Instructional materials are widely divided into two categories: printed and non-printed materials (Brown, Oke & Brown, 2010). It was observed that most learners enjoyed using print materials like the newspaper cuttings, magazine pictures, books, photographs, drawings, pre-recorded magnetic audio tape, store flyers signs, phone books, labels, alphabet posters, charts, menus, junk mail posters, calendars, sign-in sheets, sign-up sheets, job charts, daily schedules, class news, class schedules, cook books, recipe cards, coupons, tickets, library cards and non-print materials like CD players, headphones, music and books on CD computers with keyboards among many others to learn (Runo, Mugo & Karugu, 2015).

This study administered a post-test to fourteen Grade one children after their teachers had been trained and applied the phonics instructional method. Table 2 demonstrates the pre-test and post-test mean score.

Table 2. Pre-test and post-test mean scores

Grade one children	Pre-test score Out of 50	%	Post-test score Out of 50	%	Post-test (%) Deviation
1	18	36	44	88	52
2	20	40	48	96	56
3	18	36	36	72	36
4	18	36	42	84	48
5	16	32	36	72	40
6	12	24	36	72	48
7	09	18	28	56	38
8	12	24	34	68	44
9	08	16	26	52	36
10	06	12	28	56	44
11	08	16	28	56	40
12	06	12	22	44	32
13	04	08	22	44	36
14	00	00	08	16	16

Note: Overall mean: Pre-test=11.071 (22.142%) Post-test=31.285 (62.571%)

Table 2 displays the pre-test and the post-test mean scores for every child in English Language Reading Readiness test. The greatest post-test score is shown as 48 (96%) as compared to the highest pre-test score of 20 (40%). The least post-test score was 8 (16%) in commensurate to the lowest pre-test score of 0 (0%). The outcomes in Table 2 show that no particular child scored a score higher than 50% in the pre-test in comparison to post-test where 11 children out of the possible 14 scored more than 50%.

These results on Table 2 are an indication that children performed better in the post-test English Language Reading Readiness test than in the pre-test. The results obtained further showed that utilizing instructional resources could assist the learners acquire the ability to read and form words efficiently. Subsequently, children's word recognition greatly improved. It seems that teaching of reading via a wide variety of instructional materials could intensify children's word reading for many reasons.

The researcher used observation schedule to establish the availability, the adequacy and the relevance of the various teaching and learning equipment in the classroom. The results are as depicted in Table 3.

Table 3. Teaching resources and oral work, phonics and reading readiness

Effect of resources on oral work, phonics and reading	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Oral work emphasizes listening and speaking	4	1	2	1.50	.577
Alphabet posters are key to the mastery of letter names and letter sounds	4	1	1	1.00	.000
Oral work leads to effective confidence building to language beginners.	4	1	2	1.50	.577
The phonics method emphasizes vowels and sound production.	4	2	2	2.00	.000
The use of flash cards, word cards and spelling cards enable learners to develop mastery of spelling which is a precursor to reading readiness.	4	2	2	2.00	.000
The phonics method is directly related to the use of oral work in language learning.	4	2	2	2.00	.000
The use of simple reader books promotes acquisition of competence in English language reading.	4	2	2	2.00	.000
The use of simple card readers leads to increased achievement of English language reading readiness in English.	4	2	2	2.00	.000

Table 4 shows the outcome of the hypothesis test done using the children's marked scripts for the pre-test English Language Reading Readiness test.

Table 4. One-sample statistics for use of instructional resources

	Test Value = 31.29					
	T	Degrees of freedom	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
					Lower	Upper
x2	1.098	3	.003	.488	-.927	1.902

Note: The results given (df=3,p<0.05)

From Table 4, the t-test gave a significant value of 0.003 which was less than the p-value 0.05. Since $0.003 < 0.05$, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative, that there is a significant difference between the means of post-test results of learners and that of the use of instructional resources. Hence the use of instructional resources did have an impact on the post-test mean of the English Language reading readiness test in English Language done by the pupils. Therefore, on assessing the impact of instructional resources on English Language reading readiness of children, the study found out that classroom resources such as (flash cards, charts, text book and letter cards) had an effect.

One study by Marx et al. (1999) in Chicago contended that the classroom seating arrangement usually affect the actual number of questions asked and by each particular learners. In essence, the learners asked essentially most questions overall in the semi-circle sequence and there wasn't statistical difference among individual learners. The researcher re-arranged the sitting plan by the teacher to a semi-circular plan in order to let the children have

more opportunities to share materials in the classroom as well as break the barriers that could exist when the children sit in rows facing the teacher.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The study notes that Rehabilitation Schools in Kenya are offering the education service as well as offer the corrective programmes to children whom the judicial process places them in the institutions. The study recommends that the Department of Children Services should establish an ECDE Centre in order to lay a foundation for the learning of children within the rehabilitation schools. The Department should hire ECDE teachers to help children in Grade one who still require ECD services. The further notes that the Quality Assurance Department of the Ministry of Education should focus more on the quality of education offered in Rehabilitation Schools. It's also recommended that the teaching of English should emphasize the integration of quality and adequate instructional resources in the foundation of pre-reading skills among the learners of class one in rehabilitation schools. Lastly, it's highly recommended that further research on the teaching and learning of children in rehabilitation schools be conducted to establish if the service is beneficial to the learners in all the rehabilitation schools in Kenya.

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