

# **A Survey of Approaches Used in Teaching of Reading in Early Childhood Grades in Dagoretti and Westlands Divisions, Nairobi County, Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Proficiency in reading has been identified as one of the most reliable indicators of whether a learner will attain the competence needed to achieve academic success and contribute actively to society. Research into the level of English Language proficiency in Kenyan primary schools has revealed significant levels of underperformance. The study examines reading strategies with reference to the teaching of reading to early childhood learners. The teaching of reading at the early stages is important because the quality of experience children get at this level affect or lay the foundation for reading development (Chall,1996). The teaching of reading in early childhood levels studied is therefore of great importance. The theoretical background used includes theories of literacy development and Stages of Reading selected for discussion in this study. The Literacy development theories by Holdaway and The Stages of Reading theory by Chall tried to guide, explain and predict the outcome of this study and have highlighted the role of the teacher and use of instructional strategies in early childhood levels. Research has shown that factors such as choice of instructional method, teacher experience and training, academic qualification impact on academic performance of the learner. Research has also identified appropriate strategies such as phonics and whole word in teaching of reading to enhance academic performance. The purpose of the study is to establish instructional approaches used by teachers in teaching of reading in selected schools in Dagoretti and Westlands Divisions of Nairobi County in Pre Unit and class three levels and use of phonics and whole word approaches. The study adopted the Descriptive research design using the survey method and observation technique. The semi-structured interviews were used as the main method of collecting data from the forty early childhood teachers and twenty Heads of Department selected from the twenty selected schools. From the findings, the teachers used two main approaches, Phonics and whole word in teaching of reading in early childhood classes. The teaching/learning environments and instructional materials in the study do not depict the level of the learners. Since the instructional strategies available for teachers use in their classrooms are more than the teachers indicated, the study recommends that the training curriculum should be revised to include more instructional strategies. The study also recommends more involvement and collaboration between teachers, administrators and trainers when planning for training on teaching of reading approaches. Stakeholders to keep abreast with new developments in teaching of reading to effectively analyse new approaches. Finally teachers should be encouraged to carry out investigations on teaching of reading approaches in their respective classroom and to come up with approaches best suited for the learners.

**Key words:** Approaches Used in Teaching of Reading, Early Childhood Grades, Dagoretti and Westlands Divisions, Nairobi County, Kenya

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