

**PERCEPTION OF TEACHERS ON THE ROLE OF LEARNING AIDS IN TEACHING
OF ENGLISH IN STAREHE SUB-COUNTY, NAIROBI COUNTY, KENYA**

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DECLARATION

This research project is my original work and has not been presented for an award in any other University

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This research project has been submitted to the University with my approval as University supervisor

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DEDICATION

This research project is dedicated to beloved wife Juddy and sons Larry and Lytton for their patience, love, encouragement and co-operation during my habitual absence as I pursued my studies at the University of Nairobi.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perception of the role of learning aids in teaching English in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County. The study was conducted in 16 schools randomly selected in the Sub-County. Data was collected from 50 teachers who taught English by use of questionnaires. The findings revealed that the use of learning aids in teaching is advantageous to both the teacher and the students. Their use reduces the talk and chalk method of teaching. They study also established that teachers improvised teaching aids to improve their content delivery in class. The study established that teachers used relevant and quality instructional materials to teach their lessons. In light of these findings, it is recommended that the Ministry of Education should help teachers of English to design packages (software) materials that could be used in teaching to enhance academic performance in English at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations level. This venture should be supported by the Government and other educational stakeholders in order to make learning more interactive and learner centered.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Learning and teaching is the concern of a trained teacher. Gray (2001) says that learning can be defined as a disposition, a relatively permanent change in behaviour over time and this is brought about by experience. Learning can occur as a result of newly acquired skill, knowledge, perception, facts, principles and new information, (Adeyanju, 1997). Learning can be reinforced with learning aids of different variety because they stimulate, motivate, as well as arrest a learner's attention for a while during the instructional process. Learning aids are instructional materials and devices through which teaching and learning are done in schools. Examples of learning aids include visual aids, audio-visual aids, real objects and many others. The visual aids are designed materials that are locally made or commercially produced. They come in form of wall-charts illustrated pictures, pictorial descriptions and other two dimensional objects. There are also audio-visual aids. According to Glean (1997), these are teaching machines like radio, television, and all sorts of projectors with sound attributes.

Hardy (1998) says it is interesting to note that a large percentage of trained teachers and those undergoing professional training courses can teach with some of the learning aids. They do so consciously because they know that the use has positive effect on learning outcomes as their cognate experiences during teaching practice reveals. Learning aids improve methodology and reduces the teacher's talk and chalk method (Adeyanju, 1997).

Branton (1999) argues that visual aids are learning tools that educators and teachers of English use to convey an idea more effectively while teaching. He notes that visual aids used to aid in teaching English should be tailored for a particular audience, depending on their language levels and learning needs. Importantly, teachers of English should use visual aids only as helping tools and not depend on them to teach the subject. Further, (Ertmer et al., 2001) observe that visual aids are key tools in learning and development since they help to increase a student's interest in English as a subject. They further help to break the mundane cycle in certain settings, such as in classrooms. This view is shared by (Heinich et al., 1999) saying that visual aids help teachers of English to make teaching English more interactive, helping learners to become more engaged in their own learning.

Higgins and Mosley (2001) say another benefit of visual aids is that they enhance learning of English because the teacher can use interactive effects to reinforce the material learned. Colours, effects and format can all be customized for effective teaching, which helps learners. Visual aids help emphasize a point, which is another benefit to using them. Hope (1997) asserts that teaching of English using learning aids also help break information down to manageable pieces for learners to absorb.

Lam (2000) says teaching aids especially during the delivery of an English lesson is an integral component in any classroom. He discloses that there are many benefits of teaching aids in the instruction of English that include helping learners improve reading comprehension skills, illustrating or reinforcing a skill or concept, differentiating instruction and relieving anxiety or boredom by presenting information in a new and exciting way. Teaching aids also engaged students' other senses since there are no limits in what aids can be utilized when supplementing an English lesson. Sinatra (1986) notes

that as students are reading less and less on their own, teachers of English have found out reading comprehension skills are very low among today's students. Teaching aids are helping teachers of English to close the gap and hone the reading comprehension skills of their students. Further, Sinatra (1986) says that teachers of English using magazine and newspaper articles, prints adverts and even comic books are viable teaching aids that assist in helping students comprehend text. At the same time, (West, 1997) concurs that teaching aids are a formidable supplement for teachers of English when the reinforcement of a skill or concept is necessary because they allow students more time to practice by presenting the information in a way which offers students a different way to engage with the material. Of course, this is important in order to reach the various learning types in the class.

(Ross et al., 1999) says it is important for teachers to reach all learners in a classroom. Using teaching aids in English such as graphs, charts, flashcards and videos provides learners with visual stimulation and the opportunity to access the content from a different vantage point, (Lam, 2000). This gives each learner the opportunity to interact with the content in a way which allows them to comprehend more easily. Further, (Lam, 2000) notes that teaching aids during the content delivery of a subject like English helps to make the learning environment interesting and engaging. West (1999) admits that teaching aids have improved the quality of education in today's schools while also providing students with the sense of excitement they desire.

The operational definition of perception as reflected in this study is based on the transactional theory of perception. The theory focuses on variables and contextual factors as having effects on how perception takes place. The individual perceives as a result of variables surrounding the interpretation. This is why the teacher organizes his/her methods of teaching around the aims and objectives he /she intends to achieve. In order to attain the objectives, instructional materials (learning aids) during an English lesson are perceived as very important in the teaching. This is what caught the researcher's attention and hence the need for this study.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Teaching of English is a complex process that requires proper and in-depth planning in order for one to achieve learning objectives. However, teachers are faced with a myriad of challenges especially in large classes where learners have different entry behaviour and capability. Some learners are fast whereas others are slow. In such a scenario, slow learners need learning aids to assist them catch up with the fast learners. Learning aids are a formidable supplement for teachers of English when the reinforcement of a skill or concept is necessary. The use of learning aids in the instruction of English allows students more time to practice by presenting the information in a way which offers learners a different way to engage with the material. In view of this, teachers' perception of the role of learning aids in teaching of English is a problem which needs investigation and possible solutions sought. The present study was designed to investigate teachers' perception of the role of learning aids in teaching English to complement the use of textbooks to achieve effective learning outcomes in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate teachers' perception of the role of learning aids in teaching English in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County.

1.4 Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following objectives:

1. To investigate teachers' perception of the use of learning aids in teaching English.
2. To determine the relationship between the types of audio visual aids the teachers are using and content delivery in the teaching of English.
3. To develop intervention measures that can be used to equip teachers with skills of using learning aids to make the delivery of teaching English successful.

1.5 Research questions

The research sought to answer the following questions.

1. What is the perception of teachers on the use of learning aids in the teaching of English?
2. Is there a relationship between the types of audio visual aids teachers are using and content delivery in the teaching of English?
3. What intervention measures can be used to equip teachers with skills of using learning aids to make the delivery of teaching English successful?

1.6 Scope of the study

The study was conducted in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County of the Republic of Kenya. Two divisions were covered in the proposed study. The study targeted 40 secondary schools out of which 16 schools were randomly selected.

1.7 Significance of the study

It is hoped that the findings of this study may help teachers and school administrators to gain insights on how teaching and learning can be organized in the use of relevant and quality learning aids to carry out teaching effectively. The findings of this study may also act as a source of information for policy makers in helping teachers of English to design packages (software) materials that could be used in teaching to enhance academic performance in English at Kenya Certificate of Secondary Examinations. In regard to content dissemination during the instruction of English, visual aids convey an idea more effectively while teaching and help to increase a student's interest in a subject because they are more interactive. Therefore, visual aids enhance learning because interactive effects reinforce the material learned by presenting information in a new and exciting way.

1.8 Limitations of the study

The following were the limitations of the study.

1. The study used teaching resource outcomes from teachers of English, a form of summative evaluation which measures the outcome of using audio-visual aids in the learning process rather than the process itself.

2. Perception is a difficult variable and as such generalization based on a single study may not yield proper results.
3. Time and financial constraints greatly limited the research.

1.9 Definitions and Operational terms

Charts and models: These refer to prepared permanent displays on manilla paper.

Pictorial materials: Refers to illustrated pictures that enable one to form a mental picture or impression of it.

Radio: Refers to a process of sending and receiving messages especially radio broadcast where a series of sound programmes are transmitted to students.

Television: Refers to a process of transmitting and reproducing on screen events, scenes, plays in pictures and sound using radio signals.

Projectors: Refers to an apparatus for projecting photographs, or films into a screen.

Videos: Refers to recording or broadcasting of moving pictures, as distinct from sound, by using television.

Tape recordings: Refers to imprinting magnetic variations on a tape to produce electric variations which can be amplified and converted into sound relayed through a loud speaker.

Perception: Refers to the ability to see, hear or understand; quality of understanding.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF LEARNING AIDS

In the Kenyan English context, where English is officially stated and taught as a second language, learning secondary school English as an integrated subject with Literature and Oral Literature is not easy. This difficulty arises because learning English as a second language always poses many language and cultural obstacles (Sinatra, 1986). Thus, it becomes the foremost task for the teachers to devise lessons creatively and innovatively in order to engage students' interest in literary learning and reading.

According to Lam (2000), today's students and classrooms are becoming more diverse and unique each day. The emergence of information and communication technology has made it possible for teachers and students to collaborate with each other in diverse ways. In teaching English literature in a classroom set up, students often encounter problems in reading and understanding the assigned literary texts in the literature component. Kleinman and Dwyer (1999) found out in their study that secondary school students do not feel motivated to read literary texts due to lack of language proficiency and inadequate supply of teaching materials. Thus, there is a need to insert the use of visual aids in teaching literature in order to trigger students' motivation in reading literary texts.

Higgins and Moseley (2001) state that there are a number of benefits in using visual aids in teaching English. They note that these benefits are of paramount importance in maintaining a good momentum of reading interest among students. Firstly, using visual aids in teaching English creates strong engagement between students and the texts (Hope,

1997). The use of visual aids like pictures, videos and projectors encourage students to read texts with interest, which make it easier for them to understand the abstract ideas in the texts. This proves the use of visual aids act as ‘vehicles’ that can be used to enrich and enhance the act of reading (Ross et al., 1999). Similarly, Heinich et al., (1999) in research related to the use of multimedia applications for language teaching and learning, it has been stated that the insertion of visual aids in teaching enables authentic communication between students and English texts. Thus, it allows the students to have full concentration on the texts which leads to their understandability of the story and flow of the texts.

Hope (1997) says that the use of voice clips in teaching poems is vital because it could help students to understand the meaning and the message of the poems better. Apart from that, the insertion of animation of texts and graphics in the web-based multimedia as a tool to teach English increases students’ interest in learning and reading literary texts.

In order to cope with this learning problem, visual aids such as graphics, illustrations, pictures, audio, and video can be used to serve as a helpful tool in facilitating students’ understanding of the literary concepts occurred in the texts (Germann and Sasse, 1997). The characteristics of the visual aids like sound, light and colour can trigger and stimulate students’ understanding of the texts.

Teaching is communication. According to Gray (2001): “Language is a code restricted to those that are familiar with it. To non-users, it is mysterious and complex. For good understanding therefore, teachers must be aware that learners are abstracting. Meaning does not exist in isolation or in the words but in the context which the words are used.

English language learners must be well exposed to usages of words through teaching aids as guides to learning grammar, concepts, spellings and even pronunciation.” Glean (1997) emphasized that it is therefore important that teachers of English use teaching aids or improvise to make learning easy, enjoyable and permanent. Since it is not possible for users to migrate to English territories, there is serious need to improvise the situations that will make for near perfect learning. If teachers bear this in mind, they will see the need to create atmosphere conducive to learning. An effective learning situation will require the use of teaching aids.

Branton, (1999) argues that improvisation, when true to itself, transcends any limited context, border, dogma, regulations, drives, habits and fears dwelling in the moment of the ecstasies of the here and now. The focus of teaching/learning English in this regards is on the natural reciprocating of comprehension and production in communication; on the functional and collaborative practice of the target language in flexible learning environment, on transformation at participation rather than on measurable outcome and individual’s possession of skills. Benson (1997) posited that improvisation greatly enhances dialogues, scene, plays that approximate real life communication, provide a dynamic format in which language skills can be introduced and reinforced. Improvisation is interaction, which is a strong booster to improving language processing ability. He refers to it as ‘textbook talk’ that is often tightly controlled and generally lacks many substantial elements of authentic conversation. Although numerous researchers cited above have emphasized the effect drama/theatre can have on a learner’s cognitive and affective development, there exists a gap between understanding its value and actually applying it. Teaching and learning English can become defective in the absence of

appropriately ascertaining teachers' perception on the role of learning aids and content delivery for the benefit of the learner. According to Lam (2000) instructional materials are those materials used in the classrooms or workshops for instruction or demonstration purposes by students and teachers. Sinatra (1986) saw them as actual equipment used as a "hands-on" process by learners in order to develop the degree of skills sought by the course requirements. In English Language such instructional materials include word cards, pictures, objects, puzzles and among others. These materials can be grouped into three sections.

a. Audio: dealing with what is heard; music, drums, radio, tape recorder, projectors, Digital Video Disks and any sound effect that can be heard.

b. Visuals: things that can be seen; comprising of posters, charts, chalkboard, flannel graph, flashcards, puzzles, objects – (real), projectors, cartoons, television, computer Compact Disk, internet and so on.

c. Multi-sensory: where pupils learn through the five senses – see, hear, smell, taste and touch. This can take the form of role-play, demonstration, models, simulation, experiments, excursion, visits and so on.

According to Sinatra (1986) speakers and listeners who have the same language background can understand one another because their common culture provides the common meaning whereas without the common culture such kinds of word are often misunderstood as illustrated in the introduction. If the new language is to be properly understood, they have to be rooted in the learners' personal experiences. West (1997) in his study found that human being remember 10% of what they hear, 50% of what is heard

and seen, and over 80% of what is heard, seen and done. Further Sinatra (1986) described how children through play, learn to discover ideas, concepts of likeness and differences, sort, match or organize experiences. This will not be possible if the learning aids are not available.

2.2 TEACHERS' PERCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF LEARNING AIDS IN TEACHING ENGLISH

The presence of visual elements in today's teaching and learning is increasing as the integration of images and visual presentations with text in textbooks, instructional manual classroom presentations, and computer interfaces broadens (Benson, 1997; Branton, 1999). Although the educational community is embracing visual enhancements in instruction, the connection of visual and verbal information is evident throughout history. According to the poet Simonides, "Words are the images of things" (Benson, 1997); similarly, Aristotle stated that, "without image, thinking is impossible" (Benson, 1997).

The use and interpretation of images is a specific language in the sense that images are used to communicate messages that must be decoded in order to have meaning (Branton, 1999). If visual literacy is regarded as a language, then there is a need to know how to communicate using this language, which includes being alert to visual messages and critically reading or viewing images as the language of the messages. Two major approaches have been suggested for developing visual literacy skills (Heinich et al., 1999). The first is to help learners read or decode visuals through practicing analysis techniques. Decoding involves interpreting and creating meaning from visual stimuli. The second is to help learners write or encode visuals as a tool for communication. Students

develop their visual abilities through use. Sinatra (1986) compares the creation of visual messages to writing word messages, in that visual messages have a combination of objects, space, light, angle, and mood to suggest a particular message or effect just as the writer uses words, sentences, and paragraphs to achieve a particular style. Students need to learn visually and teachers need to learn to teach visually. West (1997) conveys an innovative Mathematics approach whereby students “do” Mathematics rather than “watch” Mathematics. The technique emphasizes learning through interactive graphics without words. “The words go into an idea only after the idea has already settled in our mind” (West, 1997).

Heinich et al., (1999) in their study suggests that most learners prefer colour visuals to black and white visuals, but that no significant difference in the amount of learning occurs except when colour is related to the content to be learned. In addition, the study indicates that young learners prefer simple visuals and older students prefer complex visuals, yet simpler visuals are usually more effective regardless of the age group. Additionally, students do not necessarily learn best from the kinds of pictures they prefer to view.

2.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE USE OF LEARNING AIDS IN ENGLISH AND CONTENT DELIVERY

The use of visuals in education, although consistently shown to aid in learning, must be carefully planned. The use of visuals that steer the learner to the exciting or entertaining aspects of presentation rather than encouraging thoughtful analysis of the underlying meaning may interfere with the intent of the lesson (Sinatra, 1986). In addition, Kleinman

and Dwyer (1999) suggest that visuals must be properly used in the educational setting since visualization alone does not function to maximize student achievement. The study by Kleinman and Dwyer (1999) on the effect of metaphoric strategies in the achievement of learning objectives indicates that the use of verbal and visual metaphors to complement visualized instruction is not always an effective instructional strategy.

Though funding, equipment, lack of time, and knowledge are known obstacles to successful technology integration (Hardy, 1998; Lam, 2000), a critical component in meeting teachers' technology needs is responding to teacher's beliefs toward technologies. Hope (1997) wrote, "Teachers basically had to contend with two factors (with technology adoption); (a) the psychological effect of change and (b) learning to use microcomputer technology." Understanding teachers' beliefs towards the use of learning aids play an essential role in successful adoption of teaching aids to complement the English textbook.

Hope (1997) say that previous studies employed a variety of methods and perspective to assess in-service teachers' technology beliefs. These methods included: Likert-scale questionnaires and case study methodology. Ertmer et al., (2001) found that teachers who participated in a two-year technology integration programme improved their technology self-efficacy and their interest in learning more about how technology could impact the curriculum. Ross et al., (1999) reported that access to learning aids increased teachers' "opportunities for successful teaching experiences, thereby contributing to greater confidence in their instructional ability." In addition, they also noted, "teachers who interpret their interactions with computers as indicative of high growth in self-confidence, regardless of their experience." Research also reveals that before teachers use learning

aids for classroom instruction they must be personally convinced of its benefits and must see the utility of using a particular teaching aid (Lam, 2000).

Before a learning aid is used in the classroom, teachers focus attention upon their students. They want to know what impact it will have on students' learning outcomes (Higgins & Moseley, 2001). Teachers use learning aids because it motivates students and offers a different mode of presentation. Instead of using textbooks for drill and practice, more confident teachers use learning aids as an instructional tool to enhance students' learning (Lam, 2000). Successful teaching aids adoption in teachers' classrooms is dependent upon school administrators providing an individualized, differentiated process of training and implementation (Gray, 2001).

Teachers must see how the use and incorporation of learning aids fits within their localized classroom setting (Sinatra, 1986). According to Gray (2001), some investigators further claim that whenever they taught with some of the teaching aids, their students got more stimulated because the learning aids help the students to become more attentive. In addition, students' positive attitude generates more interest for the lesson they teach. As a result, students participate better in class activity. The various researchers (Gray, 2001; Lam, 2000; Ross et al., 1999) found that teachers, who are trained and untrained, use some form of materials to teach their lessons. However, the relevance of the choice of instructional material types that were used and the quality of the instructional material types that teachers use have not been investigated.

2.4 SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

Gray (2001) says a large body of literature indicates that learning can be reinforced with learning aids of different variety because they stimulate, motivate, as well as arrest a learner's attention for a while during the instructional process. Branton (1999) shows there is evidence that visual aids are learning tools that educators and teachers of English use to convey an idea more effectively while teaching. Hope (1997) asserts that teaching of English using learning aids also help break information down to manageable pieces for learners to absorb. From the foregoing, it is understood that teaching is a complex process that requires proper and in-depth planning in order for one to achieve learning objectives. However, teachers are faced with a myriad of challenges especially in large classes where learners have different entry behaviours and capability. Some learners are fast whereas others are slow. In such a scenario, slow learners need learning aids to assist them catch up with the fast learners. Nevertheless, little has been done on teachers' perception on the role of learning aids in teaching English and no study has been done in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County to ascertain their effectiveness in curriculum implementation.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study employed the transactional theory of perception in analyzing the effectiveness of teaching using learning aids. Further, this study found out that teaching aids help to make the learning environment interesting and engaging. As the country moves toward a more digital society, children are being exposed to technology and digital devices at a younger age. Video games are now what are exciting to students, so when they come to school they have little patience for lecture style teaching. Therefore, students are seeking

constant excitement and simply have no tolerance for boredom. Teaching aids have improved the quality of education in today's schools while also providing students with the sense of excitement they desire. Further, the theory helped to analyze teachers' perception on the role of learning aids in the teaching of English in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County.

2.5.1 TRANSACTIONAL THEORY OF PERCEPTION

Lam (2001) says Louise Rosenblatt, the proponent of the Transactional theory of perception, presumes that perception is based on unconscious assumptions about a person's environment. These assumptions can be viewed as probabilities of transactions that may occur in that environment. Therefore, according to the transactional theory, what is perceived is highly dependent on the knowledge gathered during interactions with the environment, and the perceived reality and its properties are built up via a series of interactions or transactions.

Transactive theory holds that reading is a dynamic two-way process in which meaning is created. Instead of a strict focus on the author's intent, interpretation can involve personal knowledge and associations through the use of learning aids. The English textbook focuses attention on specific scenes or concepts, which the reader connects to personal history and concerns viewed through the lens of learning aids. The experience is not divided into perception and reaction but is interactive, with pauses to "chew on" something in the text with the help of various learning aids (Sinatra, 1986).

Lam, (2001) says that Rosenblatt, in her theory assumes that people are connected through communication; they engage in transaction that recognizes that each of us is a

sender-receiver, not merely a sender or a receiver. Secondly, it recognizes that communication affects all parties involved. So communication is fluid or simultaneous. This is what most conversations are like. The transactional model also contains ellipses or learning aids that symbolize the communication environment especially in an English textbook. Where the ellipses meet is the most effective communication area because both communicators share the same meaning of the message.

Just as one person interprets art slightly differently from the next person, learners in a classroom setting experience the teaching of English on a personal level differently with the help of learning aids. This concept underlies Rosenblatt's Transactional Theory. She believes learning is a transaction because the learner's prior knowledge, experiences, culture and personality all affect how he or she interprets a subject. When a teacher of English implements Rosenblatt's theory in the classroom, he or she will create a rich experience for both the teacher and for the students through the use of learning aids.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The chapter is divided into six sections, namely, the research design, target population, sample population and sampling techniques, instrument validity and reliability, data collection procedure and data analysis techniques.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

According to Orodho (2004), a research design is a specific plan for studying the research problem and it constitutes the ‘blue print’ for collection, measurement and analysis of data. This study utilized a descriptive survey as a method of collecting information by administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Mugenda and Mugenda (1999) observe that descriptive survey is an excellent vehicle for the measurement of characteristics of a specific population. They further point out that a descriptive survey design is concerned with gathering of facts or obtaining pertinent information concerning the current status of phenomena and wherever possible, draws conclusions from the facts discovered. Descriptive survey design was appropriate for this study because it enabled the researcher to collect data concerning teachers perception on the role of learning in the teaching of English in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County in complemented the textbook. The researcher drew conclusions from the findings of the study which are crucial in narrowing the knowledge gap by providing information on schools drawn from Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County.

3.2 TARGET POPULATION

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), a population is defined as a complete set of individual cases or objects with some characteristics that differentiate it from other populations. This study was carried out in Starehe Sub-County, Nairobi County of the Republic of Kenya. Two divisions were covered in the proposed study. The study targeted 40 secondary schools out of which 16 schools thus 8 schools from each division and 50 teachers of English were randomly selected so as to capture as much information as possible on the subject of investigation. The study targeted the 50 teachers of English who had taught between 3 and 15 years to constitute the target population based on their level of experience while others were left out because they were not directly related to the study.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The target population of this study was the teachers of English in Starehe Sub-County. Due to the small size of the sample population, the researcher targeted all the teachers of English drawn from Starehe Sub-County. In total 50 teachers participated in the study. The choice of 50 teachers of English was motivated by the total number of English teachers in the Sub-County, a number that was deemed manageable especially during the distribution of questionnaires and data analysis. Each of the 50 selected teachers of English taught as many as 10 students to 40 or 41-50 students in class at a time. An on the spot evaluation of types of instructional materials they used, the quality and relevance of the topic taught were assessed by the researcher.

3.4 INSTRUMENT RELIABILITY

An instrument is said to be reliable when it can measure a variable accurately and consistently if used in similar conditions. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (1999), reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The researcher used the test-retest method to estimate the reliability of the questionnaires. In order to establish reliability, the split-half method was used. The questionnaires were issued to the same secondary school which was used in the pilot study within an interval of two weeks.

3.5 INSTRUMENT VALIDITY

Validity is the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences which are based on the research results, Mugenda and Mugenda (1999). Orodho (2004) says validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of data actually represent the phenomena under investigation. First, the researcher went through the research instruments in relation to the set objectives. Secondly, the researcher sought for views as well as consulted the supervisor and other experts from the department of Educational Foundations. Then the researcher conducted a pilot study in one secondary school to help in establishing if the instruments were to measure the intended purpose and whether the respondents experienced any difficulty in their responses. This helped the research in establishing if the instruments were comprehensive enough to elicit the intended information exhaustively and whenever there was a need, a revision was done accordingly.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

3.6.1 QUESTIONNAIRES

This research study used questionnaires to collect information from the respondents. Questionnaires were cost effective compared to using interviews because personal interviews usually take time and mistakes can be made during the analysis of the data due to individual interpretation. The responses were gathered in a standardized way, so questionnaires were more objective and helped reduce bias than using interviews. A disadvantage of using standardized questionnaires was the inability to explain any points in the questions that participants might misinterpret. This was solved by piloting the questions on a small group of teachers teaching English at Arya Girls' Secondary school in Starehe District to reduce the researcher's bias. Similarly, using questionnaires was an advantage over interviews because of the anonymity of the questionnaire especially questions about the age of the teachers. The questionnaire items were distributed to selected teachers, who gave prompt attention to the task of completing the questionnaire. While the subjects were busy completing the questionnaire, an on the spot-checking of the types, quality and relevance of the instructional materials were assessed.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS TECHNIQUES

After collection of all the data, the research instruments were analyzed using the information given by the selected 50 teachers of English. The data collected was screened for completeness and accuracy. The consistency in responding to the various questions was examined, processed each item and reported through descriptive narrative. The completed responses were then coded and entered into a spreadsheet and analyzed using

Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) computer software in terms of frequencies and percentages. The analysis is presented by use of charts, graphs and frequency tables. This was followed by drawing inferences which formed the basis of research findings of the entire process.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the data analysis and presentation. The collected data was analyzed and presented in form of tables, charts and percentages. This information was recorded alongside the objectives of the study and an analysis was drawn. Generally, the respondents were cooperative and they returned their questionnaires in time. Out of the 50 questionnaires given out, 99% of them were returned filled. This was necessitated because the drop in address for the questionnaires was en route to the town centre, a route most of the respondents used regularly.

4.1 CLASS ENROLMENT AND NUMBER OF TEACHERS

Table 4.1: Class Enrolment and Number of teachers

• Class Enrolment (No. of students)	• Number of Teachers
• 10-40	• 18
• 41-50	• 32

Source: Field data, 2009

According to Table 4.1, Eighteen (18) teachers taught between ten (10) and forty (40) students. Thirty-two (32) teachers taught between forty-one (41) and fifty (50) students in a single class. The implication is that those learners who were in relatively small classes

received individual attention from the teacher. They eventually did well than those in bigger classes who might have missed the teacher's eye.

4.2 NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS WHO USE LEARNING AIDS

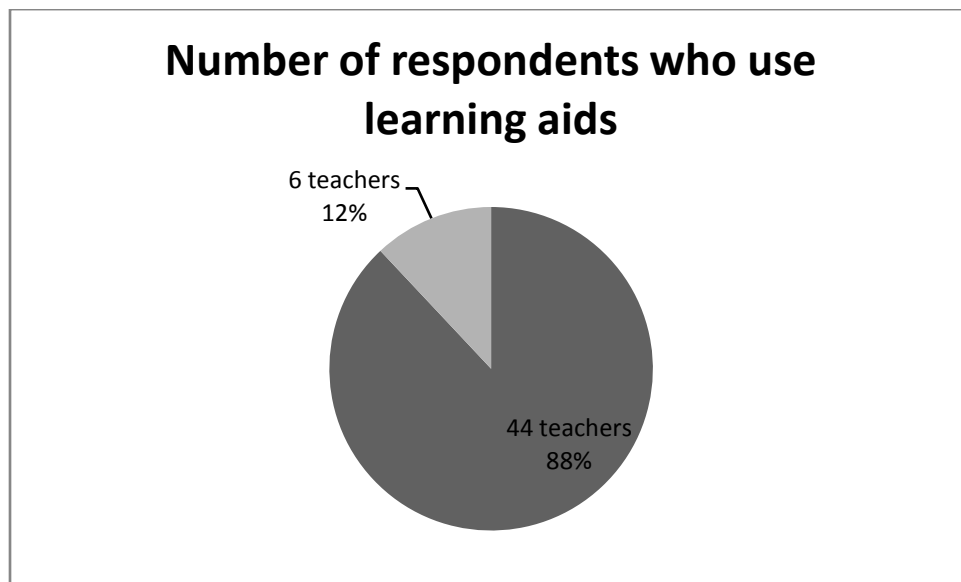


Figure 4.1 Number of respondents who use learning aids

Source: Field data, 2009

All teachers except six (6) did not use learning aids in teaching their lessons as shown in Figure 4.1. It was noted that visual learning helped to enhance learning since interactive effects were used to reinforce the content being learned. Effects like colours were customized to assist the learners better understand the content of the subject. The visual aids helped the teachers to convey ideas even more effectively and at the same time proved that their use was a great way of learning as it aids to increase a learner's interest in a certain subject. In fact, visual aids broke the ordinary cycle in settings like offices, classrooms and meetings. This kind of learning was also highly interactive, assisting the learners to become even more involved in their learning. The quality of the learning aid

materials that teachers claimed to have used could not be determined, as teachers could not produce them on the spot for evaluation, therefore, judgment was as a result based on what was seen. However, the relevance of the teaching aids that were used in teaching were assessed and found adequate.

4.3 TYPES OF AUDIO-VISUAL DEVICES

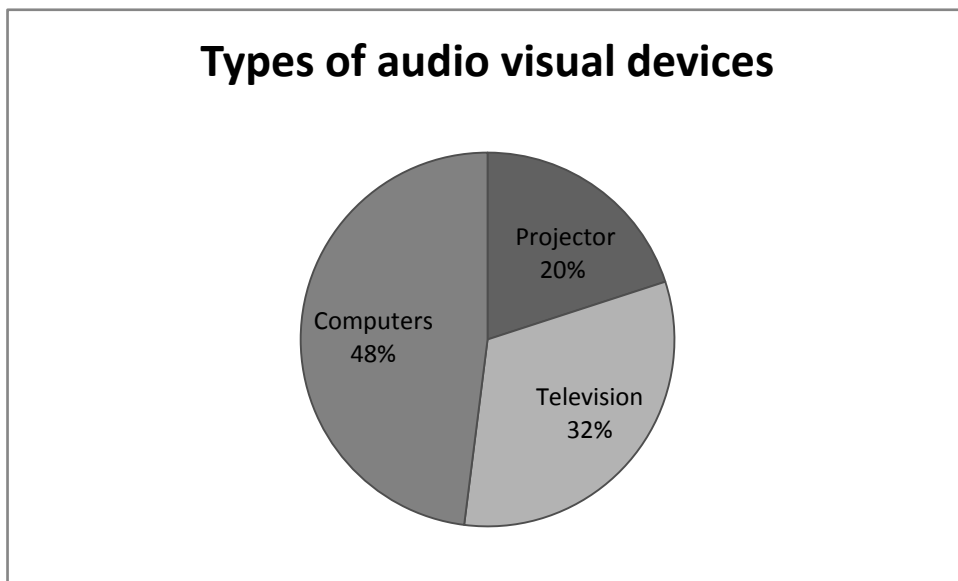


Figure 4.2 Types of audio-visual devices

Source: Field data, 2009.

Since audio-visual materials are available in some schools, the types of audio-visual aids were also analyzed. The common types were computers 48%, television 32% and projectors 20% (Fig 4.2). Teachers also claimed they allow students to listen to important news. Teachers were specifically asked to indicate the types of teaching materials they would eventually want to use in their teaching. Overhead projectors allow

the teacher to face the audience allowing direct eye contact to be maintained. Important items can be highlighted with coloured pens and details can be added to a chart during the lesson. It was noted that through using visual learning, the learners were better served when they were provided certain elements that classroom notes or text cannot fully convey. These visual elements included graphs, images, charts and handouts which students can take home as well as slide shows for reviewing during class. The learners were therefore capable of retaining more information through visual learning. When relevant charts are drawn on transparencies, they can be stored over a long period of time and can be re-used, revised or improved whereas most things done on the chalkboard have to be erased before the next class period. The television is considered as an instruction medium in English but at a moderate level. On-spot observation confirmed that the use of television was inadequate and that most of the schools used it for entertainment than for educational purposes.

Table 4.2: Types of learning aids teachers would like to use in teaching English

Learning aids	Number of teachers
Projectors	6
Non-projected materials	35
Self-made charts	9

Source: Field data, 2009.

Results from Table 4.2 show that, six (6) teachers would like to use projectors to teach their lessons. Thirty-five (35) other teachers would prefer to use non-projected materials to teach their lessons. Nine (9) teachers will prefer to use locally made (self made) charts and other visual materials. This means that majority of teachers in the sample would

prefer using the non-projected materials such as like charts to teach English. A benefit of visual aids was their function as educational tools for learning more effectively. It was noted that visual aids better served learners when they had elements that a piece of text or classroom notes cannot fully convey, such as charts, graphs and images. During the research, it was found that teachers usually made their visual aids accessible, such as handouts to take home and slide shows to review. This benefited the learners and helped them retain more information. For instance, if one walked into any class, especially one in most schools, what you will most likely see are charts on the wall. In view of this, charts provide information on a specific topic in the form of a list, diagram, graph or table and can be used for any subject. For example, in Poetry, students may chart their rhyme schemes whereas in Literature; the students may list different genres of Oral Literature and their sub-genres for easy memorization. During the field research, it was found that charts were also helpful for teaching step processes. In high school, charts were used to demonstrate how characters interact in a novel or how historic events interconnect during specific decades.

4.4 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN AGE OF TEACHERS AND USE OF TEACHING AIDS

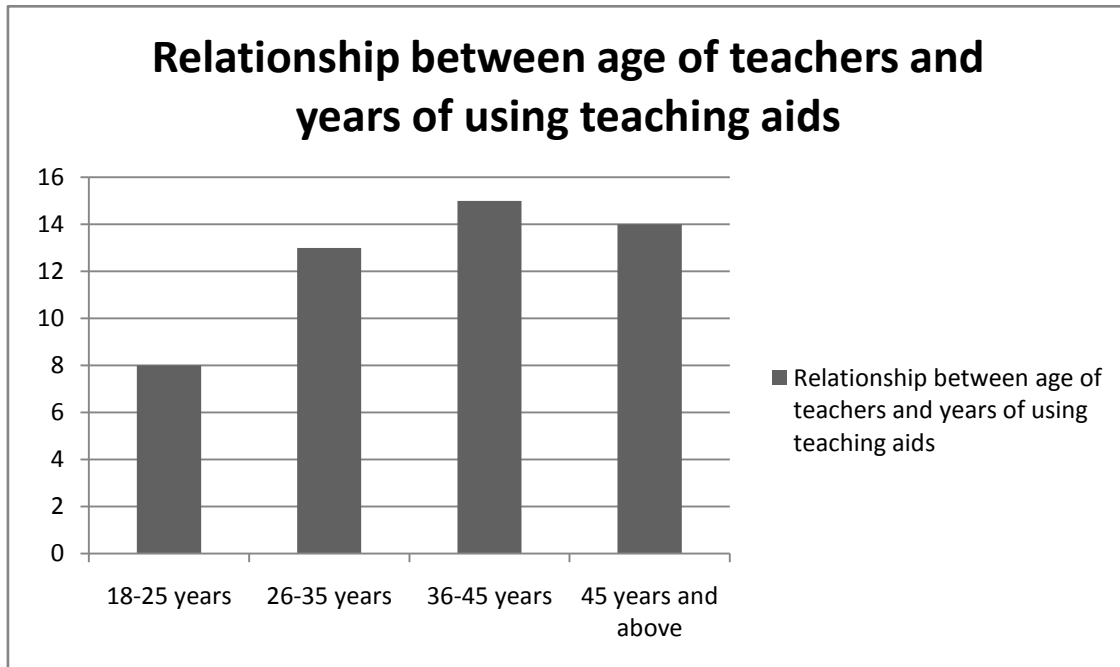


Figure 4.3 Relationship between age and use of teaching aids

Source: Field data, 2009.

Results from Figure 4.3 show that the older the respondents, the more they used the learning aids in teaching owing to their teaching experience. This reveals that there is a significant relationship between age of the teachers and use of learning aids as shown in Figure 4.3. Visual aids were identified to help young learners to maximize their visual capacity. Many people are familiar with the overhead projector, an important device that helps presenters demonstrate a particular subject through enlarged text and pictures. For the age range of 18-25, film clips were used as visual aids to stimulate thinking. Rather than just standing in front of the class and lecturing when discussing a topic, teachers

were found to often use flip charts. These are large pads of paper that are displayed on an easily movable blackboard. Teachers were found to use different colored markers to write down separate thoughts and then flip over a page of the pad to start a new, clean page of paper. Teachers found flip charts helpful when they were introducing a new topic or explaining a process that had different steps. Teachers of English teachers used flip charts to explain grammatical content and other ideas in a more visual and detailed way than the chalk board. Similar to flip charts are white boards. Teachers also used them to highlight important information that needed to remain visible for a designated time, such as homework for the week as shown in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3 Teachers’ preferences of learning aids in order of priority

S/No	Type of learning aid used in teaching English	% use
1	Chalkboard	93
2	Bulletin boards	45
3	Textbooks	95
4	Television	35
5	Overhead projectors	20
6	Guest speakers	35
7	Tape recorders	45
8	Manila paper	75
9	Charts	85
10	Field trips	65
11	Computers	45
12	Radios	35
13	Pictures	45

Source: Field data, 2009.

Teachers' preferences for the use of visual and audio-visual materials were investigated. The quality and relevance and types of the materials that could assist the learners have been confirmed through the investigation that was carried among long serving teachers.

4.5 Intervention measures used to equip teachers with skills of using learning aids.

Opportunities for ongoing professional development and in-servicing of teachers are limited and where they happen, are more likely to be concentrated in urban areas, enabling urban teachers to gain up to date knowledge of the situation in the classroom than their rural counterparts. This adds to better trained teachers preferring to teach in urban instead of rural areas. Disparity in quality of working environments in urban and rural schools add to the challenges teachers face and play a part in the preference of female teachers for urban areas in many counties. Recruitment of teachers is just one part of a far wider set of issues that the government has to address. The problem involves not just low teacher numbers but also poor teacher morale and commitment. Attracting and retaining well-qualified candidates to undergo training for the teaching force is increasingly difficult.

Low pay is endemic, a problem not only hinders recruitment of able candidates but forces many teachers to supplement their salaries, thus reducing the time devoted to teaching .While a balance has to be struck between affordability and good teaching, the limits to cost-cutting also have to be recognized. The Government, as well as donors, needs to ensure that the conditions under which teachers are expected to work from reflect a commitment to delivering good-quality education through a qualified, competent and motivated workforce. While the challenges facing teachers are many, especially the

training of future teachers as well as the ongoing development of those currently teaching, a holistic approach with support from all key stakeholders would go a long way in improving the situation.

The challenges facing many of the teachers today relate to the increasing demand and expectations put on teachers, yet systems have failed in ensuring that the teachers they employ are able to deliver what is expected of them. Teachers, once recruited, are expected to be able to respond to increasing professional as well as societal demands. Unfortunately, the increasing demand and expectation on teachers are often accompanied by fewer resources as well as increasing class sizes thus making it a huge challenge for many teachers, some without proper training, to cope with. This often result in teachers being at risk of becoming casualties of the situation rather than becoming catalysts of change throughout the teaching and learning process. In order to meet the ever changing and increasing demands on teachers, education authorities need to put in place strategies that foster a well-qualified, well-equipped and motivated teaching force.

Education authorities in each county need to seriously consider putting in place strategies not only for reviewing the initial training programme of teachers but also for ongoing upgrading, updating and renewing the knowledge, skills and capabilities of its teaching force. And with the pace of change both in content and pedagogy, as well as technology, continual updating of teachers' knowledge and skills should be considered a high priority and should be an important component of the career development of teachers as well as an important aspect of the education strategy of all counties. With an endless list of knowledge and skills teachers need to acquire to become effective, it is necessary for counties to identify those that are priority and would make the biggest impact on the

learning of children. This can only be identified if each county sets minimum standards for those attributes, knowledge and skills that all teachers need to achieve.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter concludes the entire study by stating the summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations on perceptions of teachers on the role of learning aids in teaching English in Starehe District, Nairobi County.

5.1 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify perceptions of teachers on the role of learning aids in teaching English in Starehe District, Nairobi County. The background covered various types of teaching aids available for teachers to effectively deliver content in class. The research methodology section gave details regarding the procedures that were used when conducting the study. The pertinent issues discussed in this section included the research design, area of study, target population, sample and sampling procedure and research instruments that were used in the study. The researcher administered questionnaires for both the pilot and main study. According to the views given by the respondents, teachers whether those on training or those that have qualified perceives the use of learning aids in teaching of English as advantageous to the teacher and the students. Their use reduces the talk and chalk method of teaching. Teachers improvised teaching aids for their teaching: they also borrowed some learning aids from other schools.

Teachers used relevant and quality instructional materials to teach their lessons. The most frequently used instructional materials are chalkboards, textbook materials, real objects

and the charts. Audio-visual materials like radio and television are available in some schools. Interest in the use of learning aids to teach often diminishes when student teachers have qualified.

The study found out that visual aids are learning tools that educators and teachers use to convey an idea more effectively while teaching. It was noted that visual aids should be tailored for a particular audience, depending on their learning needs. Importantly, teachers should use visual aids only as helping tools and not depend on them to teach a subject. Visual aids were key tools in learning and development since they helped to increase a student's interest in a subject. They further helped to break the mundane cycle in certain settings, such as in classrooms. Visual aids also tended to be more interactive, helping learners to become more engaged in their own learning.

In this digital age, another benefit of visual aids is that they enhance learning because interactive effects can be used to reinforce the material learned. Colours, effects and format can all be customized for effective teaching, which helps learners. Visual aids help emphasize a point, which is another benefit to using them. They also help break information down to manageable pieces for an audience to absorb. Visual aids may benefit people financially as well since teachers can teach a topic effectively to a wide number of learners.

The research found out that teaching aids were an integral component in any classroom. The many benefits of teaching aids include helping learners improve reading comprehension skills, illustrating or reinforcing a skill or concept, differentiating instruction and relieving anxiety or boredom by presenting information in a new and

exciting way. Teaching aids also engaged students' other senses since there are no limits in what aids can be utilized when supplementing a lesson. As students were reading less and less on their own, teachers have found out reading comprehension skills are very low among today's students. Teaching aids are helping teachers to close the gap and hone the reading comprehension skills of their students. Using magazine and newspaper articles, prints adverts and even comic books are viable teaching aids that assist in helping students comprehend text. At the same time, teaching aids proved to be a formidable supplement for teachers when the reinforcement of a skill or concept is necessary. Not only do they allow students more time to practice, but they also present the information in a way which offers students a different way to engage with the material. Of course, this is important in order to reach the various learning types in the class.

As previously mentioned in this study, it is important for teachers to reach all learners in a classroom. Using aids such as graphs, charts, flashcards and videos provided learners with visual stimulation and the opportunity to access the content from a different vantage point. This gave each learner the opportunity to interact with the content in a way which allows them to comprehend more easily. Further, this study found out that teaching aids help to make the learning environment interesting and engaging. As the country moves toward a more digital society, children are being exposed to technology and digital devices at a younger age. Video games and iPods are now what are exciting to students, so when they come to school they have little patience for lecture style teaching. Therefore, students are seeking constant excitement and simply have no tolerance for boredom. Teaching aids have improved the quality of education in today's schools while also providing students with the sense of excitement they desire.

In most schools, teaching aids have become the norm in the classroom. As traditional classrooms with blackboard and chalk become a thing of the past, and smart classrooms become the norm, teaching aids are growing in popularity and advancement. In some schools, blackboards are being replaced with white and smart boards whereas televisions are being replaced with Liquid Crystal Display (LCD) projectors and screens. Thus, educators are becoming more focused on students growing with technology and integrating it into the curriculum. Learning aids were found to be important because they significantly increased student achievement by supporting student learning. Learning materials, regardless of what kind, were found to have some function in student learning. This study found out that visual aids can also add important structure to lesson planning and the delivery of instruction. For instance, a language arts teacher who taught new vocabulary words every Tuesday prepared a vocabulary game to provide the students with practice regarding the new words, which helped to take pressure off of the teacher and provided important practice and fun for the students.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS

Classroom visual aids supplements oral and written information with graphical representations and images. Use of visual aids creates interactive and varied learning experiences that reach students with a wide range of learning styles or abilities. Though incorporating visual aids into a classroom lesson can enhance a learning experience, extraneous or confusing visual aids can distract students from the intended content. However, visual aids give students replicas of objects of study by providing students with an opportunity to interact with a tangible object during a largely intangible lesson. When students are consistently exposed to charts, they began to internalize the grammatical

content and stylistic features associated with their study, allowing them to make connections and conceptualize ideas. It is important to note that learning a second language like English can be especially challenging for students. Visual aids serve as tools for translation, as students built target language vocabulary. Images with labels that described items and actions provide students with a visual demonstration of target language concepts. Previous theories of language teaching presumed that language learning was mainly a skill of rote memorization. Now, modern language learning theories support the belief that language learning should be a creative, active process supported by several modes of relaying information, including visual support.

Visual aids are particularly valuable in language learning classrooms because many images, graphs or other forms of visuals speak a kind of universal language, in which all students have access to the information, regardless of language ability. Students with certain learning disabilities also benefit a lot from visual aids. Students who have disabilities, like dyslexia, which interfere with language processing skills are able to access and conceptualize information that is presented through images, charts or models. Visual aids allow teachers to create inclusive classrooms in which all students have access to learning material.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

The media unit at the Kenya Institute of Education should mount periodic training sessions for teachers in order to make sure they are up to date on the use of learning aids to teach English. Devices like audio and visual materials should be used by all teachers, in order to add the practice of technology to the training of teachers. Teachers who are

already in the field without the knowledge of using learning aids properly should be retrained on the use of learning aids by the Ministry of Education. Student teachers should be involved in curriculum development. They should be familiar with the teaching content of the high school syllabus. Both teachers on training and those in the field should be sensitized on the need to update their knowledge on effective teaching. Trainee teachers and those in the field should also have a forum for meeting periodically to assess the effectiveness of their teaching using the methods of instructional and educational technology as applicable to the organization of the content of the school syllabus at secondary school level. Teachers should design packages (software) materials that could be used in teaching English.

5.4 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The following suggestions are proposed for further study. A study should be carried out:

- to establish the effectiveness of teaching/learning materials and their effect on the learners' outcomes.
- to establish the learning needs of various schools and different learning conditions and to develop teaching/learning aids accordingly to evaluate the mode of the instruction process in current use.

APPENDIX I

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APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

The following questionnaire aims at gathering information on teachers’ perception of the effects and use of learning aids in the teaching of English in Starehe District, Nairobi County.

All data collected will be treated with strict confidentiality and will only be used for statistical purposes and recommendations to the teachers of English.

Please answer all questions honestly and don’t give your identity.

SECTION A

1. What is your age bracket?

- A) 18-25 B) 26-35 C) 36-45 D) 45 and above

2. How long have you been teaching English?

- A) Less than 5yrs B) 5-14 years C) Over 15 years

3. What is your class size? Please tick

10-40 students	
41-50 students	

4. Do you use learning aids when teaching English? A) Yes B) No

SECTION B

5. Which of the following types of learning aids do you use in teaching English? (Please tick)

	TEACHING AID	PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE
1	Chalkboard	
2	Bulletin boards	
3	Textbooks	
4	Television	
5	Overhead projectors	
6	Guest speakers	
7	Tape recorders	
8	Manilla paper	
9	Charts	
10	Field trips	
11	Computers	
12	Radios	
13	Pictures	

6. Does the attainment of your lesson's objectives really require the employment of any learning aids? A) Yes B) No

7. Do you improvise learning aids? A) Yes B) No

8. Does your school have audio-visual aids like radio or television? A) Yes B) No

9. Are there other learning aids that you will like to use during your lesson in class? A) Yes B) No

10. If your response to the above question is 'Yes' please tick the teaching aid(s) that you would like to employ in your teaching?

	TEACHING AID	PLEASE TICK AS APPROPRIATE
1	Chalkboard	
2	Bulletin boards	
3	Textbooks	
4	Television	
5	Overhead projectors	
6	Guest speakers	
7	Tape recorders	
8	Manilla paper	
9	Charts	
10	Field trips	
11	Computers	
12	Radios	
13	Pictures	

11. Do you require any further training on how to prepare and use teaching aids to teach your lessons? A) Yes B) No