

This study looked at the various factors that affect availability, acquisition and utilization of instructional resources in the teaching of English in selected secondary schools in two districts in Kenya, namely, Embu and Nairobi. It was aimed at finding ways of improving the poor performance of English at the Kenya Certificate of Secondary Education examination (KCSE). The schools used in the study were those that topped in the KCSE English examinations and those at the bottom in each district. The required data were availed by teachers of English in form three classes, heads of English language departments, head teachers, inspectors of schools and the head of the English language departments, head teachers, inspectors of schools and they had of the English section at the Kenya Institute of Education. The instruments used in the data gathering process were questionnaires, interviews and an observation schedule.

The findings of the study revealed that no single school involved in the study had all the resources required for the teaching of English. There was also a disparity among the various categories of schools with regard to availability of instructional resources. The top schools, led by those in Nairobi and closely followed by those in Embu were better endowed with instructional resources than the bottom schools in both districts. The resources that were available in all the schools were the recommended course books.

From the analysis of the responses, it was quite evident that parents were the major source of funds used in the purchase of instructional resources. All the respondents cited lack of funds as the major factor that contributed to unavailability of resources. The category of top schools was more resourceful in relation to looking for other sources of funds from the outside community.

Although there was a general consensus that utilization of instructional resources had a great impact in teaching and learning, the study revealed that resources were inadequately utilized in the teaching of English. However, the top schools led by the category of top schools in Nairobi, utilized resources much more than the bottom schools.

Some of the factors that affected the availability acquisition and utilization of resources were applicable to certain categories, of schools, but one factor that was repeatedly mentioned by the respondents as affecting acquisition and utilization of resources was the lack of time to incorporate resources in teaching. This was due to the heavy workload and the wide syllabus. Other factors given were the inability to produce and use resources, unavailability of resources and poor maintenance of the available resources.

All the recommendations made pointed out to all stakeholders in our education system, including teachers, parents, curriculum specialists and other policy makers to promote the use of instructional resources in the teaching of English in secondary schools as a sure way of enhancing performance. Of great importance was the need to sensitise teachers of English on the importance of resources in teaching and learning.