



**BARRIERS TO FULL PARTICIPATION OF LEARNERS WITH READING  
DIFFICULTIES IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN LANGATA DISTRICT,  
NAIROBI COUNTY-KENYA**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this study was to investigate the barriers to full participation of learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools. The objectives of the study were: to identify possible barriers affecting full participation, teachers' awareness of non-participation of learners, extent to which full participation of learners exists and intervention strategies of learners with reading difficulties in Langata District, Nairobi County. The study adopted two models of full inclusion, namely; adaptive learning environments model and team teaching. In the study, the target population comprised 7 schools in Lang'ata District with a number of 1018 learners, 58 teachers and 7 headteachers. This study employed descriptive research design. The research showed that teachers were qualified but not all were able to handle learners with reading difficulties, since most headteachers indicated that they could find learners with reading difficulty even in class 6, 7 and 8. The implications of these findings of the study were discussed and recommendations made to all stakeholders and policy-makers to which was a call to all parties to review their roles with an aim of helping the learners with reading difficulty included in learning and participate in schools. The study also recommended that teachers should give equal opportunity to all learners in class especially those with reading difficulty. Emphasis should be made on the importance of use of learning materials and teaching strategies through in service courses.

*Keywords: Learning disability, public primary schools, reading difficulty*

## **1. Background to the Study**

In Kenya, special education was established by religious and charitable organizations in mid-1940s. Starting as a modest outfit, the sector continues to expand, for instance, in 1968, 1,373 children enrolled in 26 special schools and units (Ndurumo, 2003). The number rose to 14,600 children and 479 programmes in 1998 (Koech Report, 1999). The government's support of special education is evident through training of teachers at Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE), developing curriculum at the Kenya Institute of Education (KIE) and in the management and supervision of the sector at the Ministry of the Education headquarters.

Full inclusion of learners with reading difficulty seeks to provide all students with collaborative, supportive and nurturing learning (Schwartz, 2005). Education is a basic human right with power to transform an individual (UNICEF, 2001). The examination in Kenya requires the pupils to decode and comprehend so as to answer the questions. Reading is one of the primary ways of learning while achievement of basic reading skills opens the way to all areas of learning. As a result, the Kenyan society and the Ministry of Education are concerned about the poor performance in national examinations (Ministry of Education, May, 2009).

Consequently, children with non-conspicuous disabilities such as reading difficulty learn in regular schools within learning process which does not meet their needs. There are efforts made by the government of Kenya to offer early identification through assessment and intervention to children with various kinds of disabilities such as reading difficulty. This was done by the commission of education established to look into such matters of learners with learning difficulties where reading difficulties are included. The Gachathi report (1976) recommends that there should be clear identification and intervention of learners with special needs. This led to the introduction of education assessment and resource centres (EARCs) to perform identification and assessment of learners.

A study conducted by Arasa (2004) on reading achievement in slums indicates that, achievement of basic reading skills opens the way to all areas of learning. In most cases, not all learners are successful readers even in class eight, whereby all school subjects require reading skills to comprehend and answer questions in an exam. Runo (2010) suggests that problems that affect learning reading abilities can be eliminated. Hence, this present study addresses the factors

affecting full inclusion of learners with reading difficulties in regular classes in Lang'ata District, Nairobi County.

## **2. Statement of the Problem**

Reading is crucial to the academic, economic and social success of children (Lerner, 2006). Every learner should achieve reading skills which ensure access and active participation in general education. Salend and Spencer (2011) suggest that full inclusion improves the education system for all learners by placing them in general education classroom regardless of their learning ability with appropriate support. In addition, Farrell (2009) suggests that reading difficulty is predominantly a phonological problem; the brains of affected children are thought to be less efficient, implying that teachers are capable of enhancing reading abilities of learners with reading difficulty by employing phonetic teaching strategies. Some learners with reading difficulties are not given time to participate in the classroom. Large number of learners repeats classes due to continuous failure in academic work. For Kenya to achieve vision 2030, then it is important that full inclusion of learners with reading difficulties should be taken seriously in schools. Furthermore, Downing (2010) indicates that full inclusion ensures access to the core curriculum, and active participation in the general education with the necessary support services.

In Kenya, Arasa (2004) indicates a positive correlation between poor reading and academic performance of learners in schools in Nairobi slums. Runo (2010) also affirms that poor cognitive and language development lead to reading difficulties. Although both researchers indicate the plight of the learners, the issue of teaching and full inclusion as well as participation in day-to-day learning process was not addressed. The failure to implement full participation of these learners in the teaching and learning process can lead to poor performance, hence creating a problem to the learners, parents and the whole society. Since learners in these schools are experiencing reading difficulties, they can be given enough time for remedial, teachers going to in-service training and use of resources. There is need to address this problem since there are barriers for learners with reading difficulties to participate fully in regular classrooms. It is with this concern that, this study intended to find out the barriers to full participation of learners with reading difficulties in regular schools in Lang'ata District, Nairobi County.

## **3. Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the barriers which affect learners with reading difficulties in public primary schools in Lang'ata District, Nairobi County, Kenya.

#### **4. Objectives of the Study**

- i. To identify possible barriers affecting full participation of learners with reading difficulties.
- ii. To find out whether teachers are aware of non-participation of learners with reading difficulties in their teaching and learning processes
- iii. To find out the extent to which full participation of learners with reading difficulty exists.
- iv. To identify the intervention strategies being implemented to assist learners with reading difficulties.

#### **5. Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumed that;

- i. Learners with reading difficulties in classrooms in regular schools are not fully included in participating in the learning processes.
- ii. Learners with reading difficulties are not identified early enough to receive help.
- iii. Time for remediation for learners with reading difficulties are ignored as most teachers work for high average marks.

#### **6. Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by two full inclusion models, Wang (1983) and Walter (1996). Wang's (1983) Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM), was designed to create school learning environments in which all students learned basic academic skills and increased their confidence in their ability to cope with the social and intellectual demands of school. ALEM combines a prescriptive learning component consisting of highly structured and hierarchically organized learning component consisting of a variety of learning activities aimed at increasing learners needs. Instruction is individually planned and each student is expected to progress through the curriculum at his or her own pace.

The next model was team teaching which was designed by Walter (1996) whereby general education and special education teachers joined together and taught all students in one class as partners. Team teaching is effectively planned and supported with needed resource materials. According to Walter (1996), co-teaching occurs when the teachers are equal partners. They must both contribute to every phase of the classwork, including planning and evaluating. Successful team-teaching must be supported by necessary resource materials.

## 7. Conceptual Framework

A learner's ability to read and participate in class may be related to the relationship between the learner in classroom and the teacher. The factors that are within the environment while learning such as curriculum, time, teaching approaches, resources and support material may give the learner all the opportunities to read when given adequate instruction.

The barriers that hinder learners to fully participate in class can be overcome if the curriculum is given enough time, while teachers use correct teaching approaches by use of appropriate resources and support materials. The learners with reading difficulties can participate fully hence improve performance.

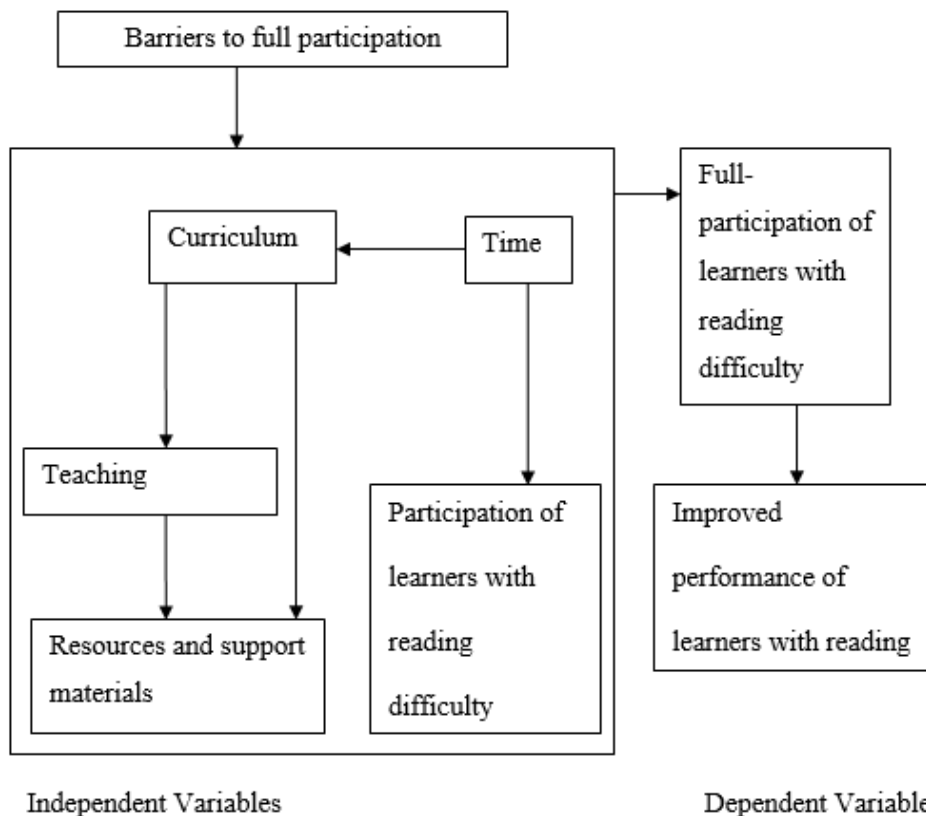


Fig 1: Conceptual Framework on barriers to full participation of learners with reading difficulties

## 8. Research Methodology

This study employed descriptive research design. Purposive sampling was also used to select teachers and learners because they had the information needed. Quantitative data were first coded and entered in SPSS spread sheet and then screened for errors. All the gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by use of frequency tables, pie charts, percentages and bar graphs. Tools used to gather primary data included questionnaires and interviews. Qualitative

data were analyzed thematically by categorizing the data into themes in relation to the opinions, views and perception of the respondents.

### **9. Study Variables**

In this study, the dependent variable was full participation of learners with reading difficulty while independent variables included the teaching approaches, curriculum, time, resources and support materials.

### **10. Barriers Affecting Learners with Reading Difficulties**

The barriers affecting learners with reading difficulty is one of the objectives. The study focused on staff, curriculum and in-servicing teachers as some of the barriers that can impede progress for learners with reading difficulties. Removing these barriers and allowing access and participation of learners in classroom can help them to succeed in reading.

### **11. Sampled Teachers by In –Service Training**

Presented in the question is information on in-service training which was to identify the professionalism in teacher’s career as seen in Table 1.

**Table 1: Sampled teachers by in–service training**

In-service training	No. of teachers	Percentage
Yes	9	42.86
No	12	57.14
Total	21	100.00

According to the study findings, the majority 12 (57.14%) of the respondents said that they have not gone to in-service training of learners with reading difficulty while 9 (42.86%) said they had attended in-service training.

From table 1, teachers felt that they could be more effective in assisting learners with reading difficulties through regular in-servicing on reading difficulty since most teachers 57.14% had not gone to in-service training. The learners can be taught in classrooms with specialized support services as needed based on a student individualized plan as cited by (Friend, 2008). Teachers with training on how to teach learners with reading difficulty see this as a very good model that can improve learning for all learners.

## 12. Non-Participation of Learners with Reading Difficulties

The question on non-participation of learners with reading difficulty was given to teachers. The question compared whether teachers excluded learners with reading difficulties in the class participation. The specific questions asked were to identify the accessing and performing of individual learners with reading difficulties. Data was obtained from the teachers questionnaires on identifying learner's class participation.

## 13. Learners' Class Participation

The question sought to find out learners' class participation in day-to-day's learning activities.

**Table 2: Learners' class participation**

<b>Class participation</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Fairly well	15	71.42
Poor	3	14.29
Minimal	3	14.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

As it can be seen from Table 2, 15 (71.42%) of the teachers felt that the learners' class participation is fairly well 3 (14.29%) of the said teachers reckoned that the learner's class participation is poor, whereas another 3 (14.29%) were of the opinion that the learners' class participation was minimal.

Ndurumo (2003) cites that assessment may be used in deciding the type of services the child needs and the type of intervention programmes to be instituted to motivate learners to participate.

## 14. Suggestions to Reduce Reading Difficulty in Learners

Presented in the question were suggestions sought to reduce reading difficulties in learners with reading difficulties. These were presented in Table 3.

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Training teachers	6	30.0
Teaching reading in pre-primary	11	55.0
Give remediation on reading	2	10.0
Learners to be given more practice in reading	1	5.0
Give library books to read at home	1	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From Table 3, the majority 11 (55%) of teachers indicated that teaching reading in pre-primary can reduce reading difficulty in learners, 6 (30%) indicated training of teachers, 2 (10%) indicated giving more practice in reading while the least was teaching reading in pre-unit and learners to be given more lessons in reading and giving library books to read at home.

The researcher observes that teachers did not consider teaching reading during pre-school years as an important intervention. Gargiulo (2006) affirms that learners with reading difficulty have difficulties in recognizing letters hence, the researcher was of the opinion that learners can be taught reading from pre-primary to reduce reading difficulties.

### 15. Reading Periods in A Week

The question sought to find out the reading periods in a week and the table below shows how the teachers responded.

**Table 4: Reading periods in a week**

No. of teachers	No. of reading lessons	Percentage
10	1	47.62
9	2	42.86
2	5	9.52
21	8	100.00

The research findings in Table 4 indicate that, 47.62% of the teachers had just one (1) reading lesson, 42.86% had two (2) reading lessons a week; whereas 9.52% had five (5) reading lessons in a week. The learners did not have enough reading lessons to minimize their reading difficulties.

From the above table, if the learners are taught from pre-primary then it will reduce reading difficulty in learners. This study concurs with that of Lerner (2003) who cited that the early stages of reading development is critical to an individual success in reading. While Mecer and Mecer (2006) assert that practicing reading severally helps attain fluent reading.

### 16. Extent to Which Class Participation Exists

The teachers were asked to indicate the extent to which class participation exists in their classrooms. Data was obtained to indicate the teachers' responses on their own opinion.

### 17. Teachers' Opinion on Learners with Reading Difficulty

Presented in table below was the question that sought to find out the teachers opinion on learners with reading difficulty.

**Table 5: Teachers' opinion on learners with reading difficulty**

Learners with RDs' class participation	Number	Percentage
Fairly good	5	23.81
Poor	11	52.38
Very poor	5	23.81
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.00</b>



According to the research findings on teachers' opinion on learners with reading difficulty, 5 representing 23.81% of the teachers were of the opinion that learners with reading difficulty class participation was fairly good; while 11 representing 52.38% felt that the participation was poor; and finally 5 representing 23.81% felt that the participation was very poor.

The learners had poor participation because of the reading difficulties they experienced. Lerner (2006) indicates that in the US, 17% of the nation's school children have reading problems, so we can presume that learners with reading difficulty in Kenya is higher thus hindering them from participating in class.

### **18. Helping Learners with Reading Difficulty to Fully Participate**

The question sought to find out whether teachers helped learners with reading difficulty to fully participate in the classroom.

**Table 6: Helping learners with reading difficulty to fully participate**

<b>Teachers Possibility status</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Strongly agree	8	38.09
Agree	8	38.09
Disagree	2	9.53
Strongly disagree	3	14.29
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

As indicated in Table 6, 38% representing 8 teachers showed willingness of helping learners with reading difficulty to fully participate in class to help learners with reading difficulties while another 38% representing 8 teachers agreed on the same. On the other hand, 10% representing 2 teachers disagreed that the students participated well in class but they could not read correctly through the wordlist given to them while 14% representing 3 teachers strongly disagreed.

From the table above, most teachers helped learners to fully participate. If the learners participated in class well, then they could overcome the reading difficulties that they were experiencing.

### **19. Learners with Reading Difficulty to Participate in the Classroom**

Presented in the table below was the question that sought to find out the ways learners with difficulty could participate in the regular classroom.

**Table 7: Learners with reading difficulty to participate in the classroom**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Make word list charts	10	50.0
By teaching the learners the skills of reading	5	25.0
Give more exercises in reading	4	20.0
Remedial teaching to be given to them	2	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>

According to the study findings on learners with reading difficulty to participate in the classroom, Table 7 showed that the majority of the respondents, 10 (50%), indicated that making wordlist charts can help to improve reading in the classroom, 5 (25%), indicated that teaching the learners the skills of reading, 4 (20%) indicated that giving more exercise in reading and the least was giving remedial teaching to the learners. This indicates that only 25% of the teachers were concerned about learners acquiring reading skills. Remedial was rated last 5%. The teachers gave reasons that they did not have enough time to help these learners in reading. These teachers hence support the idea of parallel instruction as cited by (Districh & Tutt, 2008) and (Hartus, 2006) affirms on monitoring strategies.

### **20. Intervention Strategies**

The study intended to find out intervention strategies towards teaching learners with reading difficulties. Teachers' opinion on intervention strategies were obtained through the questionnaires. Intervention strategies are used to help learners to access and participate in class.

### **21. Participation of Learners**

In the question learners' participation was sought and Table 8 below indicates how the learners participated in the regular classroom.

**Table 8: Participation of learners**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Giving more exercises	2	10
Encourage them to read when they are free	12	55
Make more reading word lists	5	25
Giving them library books to read	2	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 shows the distribution of teachers with suggestions to improve participation of learners. The highest, 55%, was encouraging the learners to read when they are free 25% noted that the teachers should make more reading wordlists while 10% noted that the teachers should give more exercises and give the learners more library books to read.

Table 8 shows that the teacher can determine the appropriate material to be used by a learner in the classroom (Mercer & Mercer, 2006).

## 22. Learners to be encouraged to participate equally

The question sought to find out how the learners could be encouraged to participate equally in the classroom. This is brought out in Table 9.

**Table 9: Learners to be encouraged to participate equally**

	Frequency	Percent
Giving time to participate equally	4	20.0
Giving them enough time to participate	15	75.0
Positive reinforcement	2	5.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the research findings, Table 9 shows that giving enough time to learners to participate was the highest scoring 75% representing 15, while giving time to participate equally was 20%, giving reinforcement was the least scored (5%).

Lerner (2006) suggests that intervention measures were needed to be employed to encourage learners with reading difficulties to participate. This may improve their participation level if they are able to overcome the obstacles hindering them from participating equally as their peers.

## 23. Helping the learners with reading difficulty

The question sought to find out the factors that can prevent teachers from helping the learners to participate in the classroom and Table 10 indicates what can prevent them from participating in the classroom.

**Table 10: Factors that can prevent teachers from helping the learners**

	Frequency	Percentages (%)
Overcrowded classes	16	75
Resources	4	20
Lack of team work from colleagues	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

According to research findings on barriers that can prevent teachers from helping the learners with reading difficulty, the results on Table 10 showed that 75% of the teachers indicated that overcrowded classes as the highest factor that prevents teachers from helping the learners with reading difficulty, while 20% mentioned lack of resources and lastly, 5% indicated lack of teamwork from colleagues.

This was a confirmation that there were learners with reading difficulties in their classrooms. However, it was quite unfortunate for the reading difficulties learners already in classes since most of the headteachers expressed their lack of confidence in teachers handling them since most of them had not attended in-service training. Consequently, needs of such learners are not adequately met. The researcher indicated that overcrowded classes were the highest factor that prevents teachers helping the learners with reading difficulty a finding cited by Arasa (2004).

#### **24. Assisting Learners in class to access and participate fully**

Table 11 indicates how the teachers can assist the learners in the classroom to access and participate fully.

**Table 11: Assisting learners in class to access and participate fully**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages (%)</b>
Give them cards with written words to read	8	40
Encourage them to access and participate in reading	10	45
Provide close attention	3	15
<b>Total</b>	21	100

The study indicates that 45% of the teachers were of the opinion that encouraging them to access and participate in reading was important. 40% of the teachers were of the opinion that giving them cards with written words to read could encourage learners with reading difficulty to participate in regular classes while 15% were of the opinion that if they provide close attention would encourage learners with reading difficulty to participate.

This information indicates that only a minority of the teachers showed real concern on helping these learners participate in reading. These teachers suggested the need to provide close attention through direct instruction. Hence, word recognition as a result of familiarity that develops from extended practise of learners with reading difficulty (Mercer & Mercer, 2006).

## 25. Participation of Learners with Reading Difficulty in Regular Classes

The question sought to find out the participation of learners with reading difficulty in regular classes.

**Table 12: Participation of learners with reading difficulty in regular classes**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Giving them words cards to go and practice at home	1	5.0
Giving them word lists to read when free	6	30.0
Introducing peer teaching	4	20.0
Use positive reinforcement	9	45.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the research findings on participation of learners with reading difficulty in regular classes, Table 12 showed that using positive reinforcement encouraged learners was rated highly at 45% as a way to participate in regular classrooms. 30% were of the opinion that giving them word lists to read when free would encourage them to participate in regular classrooms. While 5% who were the least, were of the opinion that giving them words cards to go and practice at home was an effective way to help such learners.

Since teachers are the major facilitators in class, they should establish a positive learning climate and also a safe, orderly and academically focused environment in reinforcing learning as cited by Dare and O' Donovan (2002).

## 26. Learners Whose Reading Had Words Omitted

Presented in the question is the learners whose reading words were omitted and the Table 4.18 shows the rating of the omissions of the words by learners with reading difficulty.

**Table 13: Learners whose reading had words omitted**

<b>Words omitted</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-3	2	5.71
4-7	10	28.57
8-11	23	65.72
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 13 shows the distribution of learners whose reading had omitted words. 2 learners representing 5.71% of the respondents omitted 0-3 words. 10 learners had 4-7 words omitted while the majority of learners had 23 learners 8-11 words omitted.

The headteachers were of the opinion that the teachers did not take the case of omission seriously since they felt that it did not matter on reading problems.

### **27. Learners Whose Reading Had Words Substituted**

The question sought to find out the learners whose reading words substituted.

**Table 14: Learners whose reading had words substituted**

<b>Words substituted</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-3	1	2.86
4-7	5	14.28
8-11	29	82.86
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Research findings in Table 14 showed that the highest number of respondents 29 had 8 to 11 words substituted, while others 5, 4-7 words and the least had only 1.

The findings indicate that most learners substituted words for others that were not in the wordlist given.

### **28. Learners Whose Reading Had Words Mispronounced**

The question sought to find out the learners whose reading had words mispronounced.

**Table 15: Learners whose reading had words mispronounced**

<b>Words mispronounced</b>	<b>No. of students</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
0-5	2	5.71
6-10	8	22.86
11-15	24	68.57
16-20	1	2.86
<b>Totals</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00</b>

From Table 15, 24 respondents which was the highest number of learners mispronounced 6-10 words while 8 mispronounced 11-15 words. The study found that the teachers' rating of respondents with deficits was very similar to the results from the pupils' tests. It is gratifying to note that for the most part, teachers identified the same reading difficulties as those identified by the respondents test. The wordlists can be useful in indicating the students' sight vocabulary, to estimate the level at which the student can read with fluency and has little difficulty with word attack and to reveal basic weakness in word reading skills as the student confronts unknown words.

### 29. Learners Whose Reading Words Added

The question sought to find out the learners whose reading words added and below the table indicates how the learners responded.

**Table 16: Learners whose reading words added**

Words added	No. of student	Percentage
0-3	25	71.43
4-7	10	28.57
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Table 16 clearly shows that 25 learners, which is 71.43% missed 0-3 words when they were reading, while 10 learners that is 28.57% missed 4-7 words. This poor performance confirms the fact that these class four pupils were unable to effectively read words commensurate with their class level. This implies that these learners may not be able to read, learn and hence they are likely to participate at lower rates than their peers in the teaching process.

### 30. Qualitative Analysis

Qualitative data were necessary to reinforce quantitative data. This was identified from headteachers' responses. In all the schools, headteachers reported those cases of reading difficulties among their pupils. While conducting the research, headteachers reinforced the suspicion that reading difficulty may be affecting some learners in other classes. For example two headteachers said 'The problem is not only in class four I have learners who cannot read in class six'. The headteachers of three schools said that there are some learners who are experiencing reading difficulty in class eight.

Interviews and observations on headteachers revealed that very few numbers of the teachers could comfortably teach the learners with reading difficulties. This is because it was established in the study that learners with reading difficulty were found in all schools sampled.

Three headteachers said that the teachers in upper classes could not identify those learners with reading difficulty because they assumed that all can read. Some headteachers indicated that some teachers were not aggressive in sensitizing learners and identifying the learners who require remedial service. This was because some teachers had not taken in-service training of teaching in reading.

When the headteachers were interviewed on how the learners were identified, two headteachers indicated that they identified the learners when they had not performed well in class. While the other two indicated that they identified when they were discussing the results of end term examinations. Three headteachers indicated that the parents reported the cases at school.

On liaising with parents to encourage them to participate on children's performance, all the headteachers agreed that they did encourage them. Two headteachers indicated that parents voluntarily assessed their children reading abilities by giving them wordlists to read at home when given by the teachers. One headteacher on the other hand indicated that some parents in his school were aware of how their children were doing in reading activities.

## **Results and Discussion**

### **31. Barriers to Full Participation**

The results showed that there is reading difficulty among the learners studied. This is so since some were unable to construct linguistic meaning from written representations (Holloway, 2001). Others had difficulty in recognizing letters and learning in sequence. Gargiulo, (2006) indicates that learners with reading difficulties have difficulty in recognizing letters and learning sequence. Hallway, (2001) also indicated that linguistic meaning forms a written representation. Some of the barriers to participation of learners are inadequate professional development as cited by (Salend & Spencer, 2011). Inadequate training was also cited by (Friend, 2008). All this stood out as the key barriers to full participation.

Inadequate professional development was investigated in terms of teaching approaches, teacher level of training and teacher support. The result did support teacher level of training and teacher support that the teachers with degrees could highly support and help learners with reading difficulty.

Lack of communication among administrators, teachers, staff, parents and students was investigated in terms of teacher support and time allocated. Negative attitude was investigated by in terms of relationship between teachers' attitude and inclusion of learners with reading difficulty. Inadequate training was investigated under teaching approaches and teacher level of training. Friend (2009) indicates that a well-trained special needs educator has positive, well-developed teaching approaches that can be used for the benefit of a learner with difficulties.



Out of 21 teachers sampled, 9 teachers had gone for in-service training and they were instructed in assisting and supporting learners with reading difficulties though the majority of teachers had very few (2) reading lessons in a week. The headteachers also revealed that they knew that learners had reading difficulties which some of them said that was discovered when in class four by either teachers or their parents. Although some teachers had trained on teaching reading, they did not adequately assist the learners because of the overwhelming numbers of learners in classes. Some teachers indicated that it takes up a lot of time to assist these learners with reading difficulties while they are supposed to have higher average performance. However, some teachers said that they never helped learners with reading difficulties because they had two lessons in a week. Some teachers recommended that learners with reading difficulties be helped by their peers in class while others could be given wordlists to be helped at home by parents.

The learners with reading difficulties revealed that they were not helped at home, despite being given wordlists to practise. Some learners said that they read wordlists at home but did not have other learning resources like textbooks and storybooks to support them to practise more. Some learners did not read wordlists at home well because they read while watching Television which leads to lack of good concentration.

It was significant of the learners between 10-19 words. These findings suggested that the parents need sensitization and awareness on how provision of learning materials at home can assist the learners minimize the reading difficulties. This can be done if parents attended school regularly to inquire on their children performance and participation in school. Teachers also identified that learners had problems in retention and comprehension but gave wordlists and simple storybooks to read at home but it was discovered that the parents had no time to assist them for they were very busy working.

### **32. Teachers' Awareness on Participation**

This study had set out to investigate whether teachers were aware of mom-participation of children with reading difficulty in their teaching and learning processes in Lang'ata District of Nairobi County. This was done by examining the relationship between teachers' opinion and inclusion of learners with reading difficulty (Salend & Spencer, 2011).

When learners with reading difficulty are included in regular classes, they gain much in education because they are taught by their peers in regular schools and they greatly benefit. Thus, they academically gain since they are mentally stable like the rest in class and compete

favorably. However, some teachers believe that inclusion of learners with reading difficulty in their schools will lower the standards of academic performance.

### **33. Extent to Which Learners with Reading Difficulty Exist**

The teachers were asked to indicate whether they helped learners with reading difficulties in the classroom. The highest number teachers strongly agreed that they helped the learners who existed.

Three of the head teachers also indicated that the learners with reading difficulty were grouped into different groups according to their capabilities. They were then given enough time for learning and demonstration. They repeated the work that had been done previously and also those pupils who developed skills of reading and writing were integrated.

Salend and Spencer (2010) cited that all students should be educated together and appropriate education in classrooms in their neighbourhood schools. The government should fund workshops and seminars towards creating awareness and knowledge on how to handle learners with reading difficulty so that the teachers can embrace participation. Since the teachers are ready to help these learners, they strongly agreed that they helped these learners. As a result, teachers should be motivated so that they can pay close attention and assist learners with reading difficulty.

One of the headteachers was of the opinion that the actual level of performance of some learners was very poor which made some of the learners to be labeled poor performers in the class work. One of the research objectives was to find out whether the teachers identified the extent to which full participation of learners with reading difficulty existed. They indicated that they identified them by giving assessments to all learners in class. (Mercer and Mercer, 2001) state that assessment can collect personal reading skills and history of an individual.

### **34. Intervention Strategies**

Access and participation was investigated by examining the relationship between teaching approaches and inclusion of learners with reading difficulty. The results led to the conclusion that there was no significant relationship between teaching approaches and inclusion of learners with reading difficulty. This result is at variance with the generally agreed notion that special needs approaches are required for learners with reading difficulty. However, it is worthwhile to note that the findings yield good instruction as one of the key barriers to inclusion of learner's with reading difficulty in Lang'ata District of Nairobi County. Hence, the results of this investigation support the idea of parallel instruction cited by (Dittrich & Tutt, 2008), while self –

monitoring strategies was cited by (Hartus, 2006) as well as full inclusion by (Dare & O' Donovan, 2002).

Three headteachers revealed that only few learners could seek help from the teachers on reading. This clearly indicated that there was no specific program or a day set aside for individual help hence majority of learners did not seek individual help on reading difficulties. In two schools, head teachers indicated that those who sought individual help were very few because there was very little evidence that learners with reading difficulty were helped since teachers had only 2 lessons in a week for learning. It was observed that learners feared to go to the teachers for help. This is because they did not want to air their problems since they were asked to read some wordlists which could take them many hours.

In some schools, learners relied on their peers for practice and accomplishment. Learners received interpersonal feedback as to the quality of their product based on peer negotiation criteria. Each participant shared mental models which were used to jointly solve problems. Conceptual understanding was constructed and extended through discussions and practices. It was also established from the headteachers that the majority of parents cited that they did not help their children because of lack of time and the stigmatization developed in the society on people with disabilities, in this case learners with reading difficulties.

In conclusion, the teachers indicated that they can help the learners with reading difficulties if they are identified early enough, given enough time, more reading lessons and taken to in-service training.

### **Summary of the Research Findings**

The study intended to find out barriers to learners with reading difficulties in Langata District, Nairobi County. In this section, a summary of the results of the study are presented according to the objectives.

#### **35. Barriers to Full Participation**

According to this study, some teachers were aware of the learners performing poorly in classroom. Since the learners were identified as having reading difficulties, then the parents could be asked to give academic guidance and support by helping and encouraging them in

relation to schoolwork and give priority to class work activities and positive attitude towards learning. The learners with reading difficulties felt frustrated because of consistent failures.

### **36. Teachers' Awareness of Non-Participation**

Teachers were aware of exclusion of learners with reading difficulties. This was brought about by the overcrowding of learners in classrooms. The teachers revealed that there were not enough lessons allocated to reading because majority indicated that they had only two lessons a week. According to other teachers, they said that learners in class were low-esteemed because when told to read in class, they could take a long time. This leads to using a lot of time in participation though the majority of teachers indicated that the learners participated well in class.

Some headteachers reported that in order to cater for learners with reading difficulties, the schools needed integrated teaching methods to enhance performance and participation of learners. They also reported that teaching and learning resources were inadequate which lead to non-participation of learners with reading difficulty. The headteachers also reported that the schools were short of those teachers trained on special education to help the learners with reading difficulties and as a result, it hindered the effective learning and teaching in schools. Teachers indicated that some learners inherited the problems of reading difficulty, so they cannot change in their reading difficulty.

### **37. Extent to Which Participation Exists**

The greatest problem was when the learners were asked to read the words they had missed. The findings revealed that some learners had missed between 10-19 words while others had missed 20-29 words.

It was established that most institutions experienced mild and severe cases of learners with reading difficulties. It was concluded that the learners should be fully included in teaching and learning process so that we may not have such cases in regular classes. To cater for these learners, the study concluded that most schools had also inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities and inadequate staff members for most classes were overcrowded.

It was also revealed that some teachers had not gone for any service training or any seminar on teaching learners with reading difficulties. To solve these problems, the headteachers requested

support from parents because this would positively influence teacher performance in classroom and include all learners in learning participation and in turn enabled learners to meet their potential.

### **38. Intervention Strategies**

The following were the intervention strategies suggested by the study.

- i. Teachers should have more reading lessons per week to help learners with reading difficulties.
- ii. All teachers should undergo in-service training on how to help the learners with reading difficulties.
- iii. Since the classes are overcrowded, the Ministry of Education should increase the number of teachers so that the teaching and learning process can be manageable.
- iv. Parents should be encouraged to help and assist their children at home when they are given wordlists to practise at home.
- v. Learning and teaching resources plus simple storybooks should be put in place to reinforce reading in learners with reading difficulties.
- vi. Parents should have time with their children at home so that when they are practising cannot turn on the television to enhance concentration.
- vii. Teachers should be keen on teaching learners from lower primary so that they may be helped at earlier age.

### **39. Conclusion**

The study concluded that all teachers should have in-service courses so often so that they can teach the learners with reading difficulties to overcome their problems. The highest number of teachers had not attended in-service training. When allocating lessons on the timetable, more reading lessons should be allocated. The study suggested that they can have one reading lesson per day to curb those learners with reading difficulties although most teachers taught learners for examination purpose because they looked at the mean score instead of giving remedial lessons to reduce reading difficulties in children.

The majority of learners scored low in reading wordlists. This showed that they also performed poorly academically. The headteachers also revealed that some teachers were not aware of the

methods that could be used to identify learners with reading difficulties because most of them said that the classes were overcrowded.

The study also concluded that teachers identified various aspects of reading difficulties in their learners and that is why they do not participate fully in classes and so parents should be encouraged to visit the schools regularly to discuss and support the participation of their children which will promote the academic progress in the schoolwork. Unless parents are encouraged to spend time, provide necessary resources and a good home environment conducive to learning, the condition will continue to manifest within their children.

Vision 2030 aims at reducing the class size to 1:40. This will help in use of resources and remediating learners with reading difficulties in classes. As a result, the challenges faced by the teachers in the process of providing for pupils with high risk of reading difficulty had adapted a wide range of approaches to assist them. Some of the approaches included IEP, individualized attention, pairing learners with able peers, use of relevant teaching simpler tasks and remediation.

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