

## Instruction of Reading for Nationhood: English Language Teachers' Cognition in Kenya

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### Abstract

This paper discusses secondary school teachers' cognition of the instruction of reading to instill human values among students in secondary schools in Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to determine how teachers of English use curriculum implementation to enable learners to acquire moral values stipulated in the philosophy of education in Kenya. Data was obtained from 30 teachers of English within Uasin Gishu County. Instruments used to generate data were informal interviews and observation of classroom practice. The study established that several contextual factors such as the school administration, Quality Assurance and Standards Officers among others made teachers to believe that enabling students to score high marks was more significant than instilling human values. Teachers developed their cognition through benchmarking, collaboration with colleagues, teacher guide books, teacher workshops, teaching practice and teacher education. The findings are important to teacher educators, curriculum developers, Quality Assurance and Standard Officers, policy makers and researchers. They will realize that teachers are not robots to implement the curriculum as it is, they are rational beings and many factors affect their classroom practice..

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**Keywords:** teacher cognition, instruction, reading, nationhood and curriculum

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### INTRODUCTION

The mission of education in Kenya is to: *promote and coordinate quality life- long education, training and research for Kenya's sustainable development and responsible citizenry* (MOES&T 2005). This can be achieved through curriculum implementation hence teachers are seen as significant in shaping the destiny of the nation by instilling human values that would make citizens to be responsible. English being a compulsory subject to all secondary school students has been identified as an appropriate channel of instilling human values through purposeful selection of reading material with appropriate content. Kenya vision 2030-research team (2007) also acknowledge the fact that education is a social pillar that can be used, "to create a cohesive society with a culture of hard work." (Kenya vision 2030 research team 2007). These human values stipulated in the philosophy of education are believed to enable graduates from such an education system to live in harmony with other human beings nationally and internationally. At national level, it is described as achieving nationhood. Unless Kenyans love their nation, become loyal to the nation and value harmonious co-existence, it will be hard to achieve Kenya vision 2030.

Starting from the philosophy of education in Kenya to the goals of teaching English and specifically the

objectives of teaching reading, nationhood should have been achieved. The scenario is different. What has been happening in the country shows that the core national values are not upheld by many Kenyans. Disrespect for the rule of law and other vices are the order of the day. Many youths in the custody of Kenya police face serious charges ranging from murder, arson and rape. This shows that the driving factor is to hurt people from other speech communities. The Commission of Inquiry into Post Election Violence- the Waki Commission –reports that almost everybody is to blame ranging from politicians, government officials, businessmen and the police force,(Omanga, 2008). The violence claimed 1,133 people: 1,048 men, 74 women and 11 children. The police shot dead 405 people, including children and raped women instead of protecting them. Gangs of youth raped women in their own houses before their spouses and children (Wanyonyi, 2008). Most of the crimes were motivated by ethnic hatred. Precedence is given to tribalism, not nationhood. Tribalism, corruption, impunity and lack of professional ethics are the order of the day. The report says senior national leaders were involved in planning for the butchering of many civilians instead of unifying Kenyans (Obonyo, 2008). The education system seems to have failed in promoting moral and ethical values, social responsibility virtues and appropriate attitudes necessary for promoting