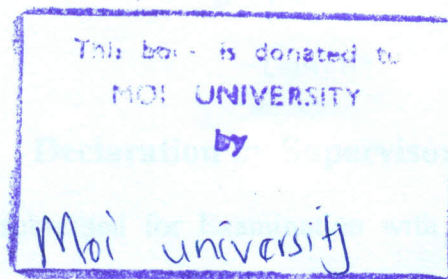


**THE ROLE OF TEACHER COGNITION, IN DEVELOPING FUNCTIONAL
WRITING SKILLS FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN THE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE CLASSROOM IN KENYA.**

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ABSTRACT

This study is an examination of how and what teachers think in their practice of teaching functional writing. It looks at the planning practices of teachers, both in preparation for the classroom and during the moment-by-moment decision-making that occurs in the classroom. It also looks at teachers' interpretive process, that is, how they interpret and evaluate the events, activities and interactions that occur in the teaching process, and how these interpretations and evaluations feed back into subsequent planning. This study sought out to investigate the English language teacher's cognition on functional writing skills. Investigate to what depth learners are exposed to appropriate functional text varieties Identify the kind of support teachers give learners in their functional writing tasks. Establish how these cognitions influence the teacher in teaching functional writing as a system of communication. This study was based on Hylands' theory of teaching writing, Hymes concept of communicative competence and Widowson's concept of communicative language teaching. This was a descriptive research and data was collected using observation, a student's self evaluation schedule and interview schedule to capture the actual teaching and learning of writing in the classrooms. A total to 6 secondary schools in Nyanza Province were selected randomly to make the study population. During the entire study 720 students and 18 teachers of English language participated. The analysis of data was done descriptively. From the research, it was found that teachers have different cognitions, knowledge, beliefs and understanding about the teaching of functional writing skills. The differences in the cognitions, beliefs that teachers held about the issues in teaching functional writing, did reflect differences in their practices and approaches in teaching functional writing. On one hand teachers felt the teaching of functional writing was not challenging, not demanding and therefore did not need a lot of preparation while on the other ,teachers felt that the teaching of functional writing skills was demanding, required a certain format and therefore technical to teach. Regarding the depth to which learners are exposed to appropriate functional writing text varieties, it was found that students are not fully exposed to varieties of functional writing texts. It was revealed that teachers give minimal support to learners. Teachers were grappling with large classes, and this made it very difficult for them to give individual attention to all learners. It was further revealed that teachers relegated teaching writing skills and only evaluated the same. Lastly, minimum effort is put by the teachers in trying to show the learners how functional writing should be seen as a means of effective communication.