Reading and writing in early stages of primary education

Methods for reading and writing

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One of the most important things schooling should give the pupils is the knowledge of reading and writing. To be able to meet every pupil's needs, a teacher has to have a lot of knowledge in the subjects. As a preparation for the field study I read literature according to the topic I had chosen and focused on answering the following questions:

- Which are the different methods of teaching reading and writing in early stages of primary education?
- How can you as a teacher adapt the methods and apply them in into a teaching situation?

A minor field study was conducted in Kenya between October and December 2009 through Karlstads University and mainly financed by SIDA. The study was done through interviews and observations at Kenyatta primary school in Nakuru, Kenya. The main purpose of the study was to establish the differences in methods of teaching young learners in Sweden and in Kenya. By interviewing four teachers, observing their way of teaching for a period of 8 weeks and studying Kenyan primary school curriculum, differences clearly emerged. My main result was that there is no method better than the other, if the teacher believes in the method and adapt it to the pupils it will work.

Keywords: languages, reading, writing, methods, teaching, linguistic awareness.
II.
SAMMANDRAG

En av de viktigaste kunskaper vi lärare skall ge våra elever är kunskapen att läsa och skriva. För att kunna möta varje elev så måste en lärare ha mycket goda kunskaper inom ämnet. Efter att ha studerat litteraturen i ämnet så har jag fokuserat på att svara på följande frågor:

• Vilka är de olika metoderna för att undervisa och stimulera en god läs- och skrivinlärning?
• Hur kan du som lärare anpassa undervisningen i klassrumssituationen?


Nyckelord: språk, läsa, skriva, metoder, undervisning, språklig medvetenhet.
This essay is written in Nakuru, Kenya. From the end of October to the end of December 2009. I had the opportunity to go on a MFS, Minor field study, to a developing country and did a field study which was financed by SIDA and organized by teacher Lars Lorinus at Karlstads University. Karlstads University has had exchange programs with students from Egerton University in Kenya for 10 years and when I contacted Lars about it he was more than willing to help me go to Kenya. While conducting interviews and observing how pupils are taught in Kenya differences emerged between Kenya and the Swedish system. I will present some of the most common methods used in primary schools in Sweden. I will also define the differences between them and what I observed in Kenya. My study also looked into details how the Kenyan system and methods works. The synthetic and analytic approach is from where all methods have emerged.
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Presentation

Reading and writing is basic knowledge and for a primary school teacher they are the main basis of their teaching. Students who lack the knowledge of reading or writing have a hard time catching up with schooling. This essay importance is to show the methods used in Sweden and Kenya to help students acquire reading and writing skills. Since the studies have been done in Kenya with a completely different school system I hope to bring up the best parts of both systems.

Lpo94 says that:

Skolan skall sträva efter att varje elev utvecklar sitt eget sätt att lära och känner trygghet och lär sig att ta hänsyn och visa respekt i samspel med andra och tillägnar sig goda kunskaper inom skolans ämnen och ämnesområden, för att bilda sig och få beredskap för livet (Skolverket, 2006:9).

Due to the Kenyan government policy established in 2003 to achieve universal primary education and making primary education free for the public so as to reduce the high rate of illiteracy. The enrollment to school has risen by 70 percent. To encourage enrollment of pupils in schools the government has embarked on a series of campaigns like building of schools and employing more teachers. My thought and questions are which kind of methods have they embarked on since there is also an increase in the number of pupils enrolling due to government’s subsidizing of tuition fees and other levies? Have they also revised the old methods of teaching introduced to Kenyans by their former Colonial master in the early stages of 1960s when Kenya was still a colony of Britain?

Due to more students enrolling and the pressures rising on the teachers who sometimes have nearly 100 students in a class, has the value of education gone down?
An investigative study was done through interviews and observations in Kenyatta primary school. It is a government owned primary school with 883 pupils and 18 teachers in Kenya’s third largest town, Nakuru. Nakuru has a population of 1.5 million which are mainly middle class income earners. I chose Kenya as my location because it is one of the countries in Africa which is at the peak of development and had a stable government at the time.

1.2 Purpose and research questions

The purpose of the study is to clarify teaching techniques and methods applied to primary school pupils in order to lay a strong foundation in reading and writing. By doing so, I wanted to compare the Swedish and the Kenyan system so as to merge the best teaching techniques for my counterparts and for the future.

Research questions

1. What are the methods for teaching, reading and writing?
2. How can you as a teacher adapt them in to your classroom?

1.3 Limitations and boundaries

I conducted the interviews and observations during regular school term and at that time they were in the middle of midterm examinations, which made it difficult to find teachers who were available for interviews and observation. They were also tied up in their daily teaching routines. Language barrier was also a problem. With my small scale knowledge of Swahili and English I managed to perform four interviews with four different teachers of different standards. Most of the teachers were away on seminars and workshops in Nairobi (the capital city of Kenya and national teacher’s headquarters) where they were being taught how to mark the final exams. The option I had was to choose from the teachers available at school at that time. The ones left were not all that I needed since some of them dealt with older pupils, but I decided to interview three
who were qualified to teach younger pupils and one who is teaching older ones so as to get
different thoughts and information. Kenyatta Primary School is a mixed school with boys and
girls in the same classes. But the gender equality is not balanced and there are more boys than
girls attending to school which was gone affect the nature of my results in my observations and
interviews.

1.4 Disposition

I had 10 weeks to finish the essay. Eight weeks was conducted in Kenya to do my interviews and
observations in Kenya. Before leaving Sweden I did a major literature study on Swedish
methods of teaching, Kenyan history, their school system and their curriculum and a study on
Swahili as a foreign language.
2 THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 What does the curriculum say about reading and writing in Sweden and in Kenya?

When studying the Swedish and Kenyan curriculum some great differences emerged. Whereas the Swedish system deals mostly with individualism and motivation, the Kenyan curriculum have set rules and guidelines which the teachers are supposed to follow strictly the rules dictates that by the end of the primary education. All pupils are expected to have acquired a sufficient command of English in spoken and written forms to enable them to communicate fluently, follow subject courses and textbooks, and be able to read for pleasure and information. It doesn’t break down on which modes the teachers can deliver this to the pupils with different needs and understanding as required, it also stresses on the importance of assessment in a group level and not individual level. By the end of lower primary which consist of pupils between the age of three to ten the set standards are:

- that they should have acquired listening skills to be able to listen, understand and respond appropriately to information and instructions.

- have speaking skills to be able to use correct pronunciation, stress and intonation so that their speech is understood, to express needs and feelings, convey information and relate experiences.

- Knowledge in writing to be able to express own ideas meaningfully and legibly in English, to convey information and to communicate effectively.
Strömqvist (2007:15-16) writes in her book Skrivprocessen, I quote:

Enligt läroplanerna för det obligatoriska skolväsendet och de frivilliga skolformerna (Lpo94 och Lpf 94) skall eleverna under grundskolan utveckla en språklig säkerhet i tal och skrift” och kunna, vilja och våga uttrycka sig i många olika sammanhang” och också genom talet och skrivandet erövra “medel för tänkande, lärande, kontakt och påverkan.

Lpo94 says that:

Skolan skall sträva efter att varje elev utvecklar sitt eget sätt att lära och känner trygghet och lär sig att ta hänsyn och visa respekt i samspe med andra och tillägnar sig goda kunskaper inom skolans ämnen och ämnesområden, för att bilda sig och få beredskap för livet (Skolverket, 2006:9).

2.2 Kenya school system

The Kenyan education system includes three years of nursery school, eight years of primary school and four years of secondary school. The school year runs from January to December and is divided into three terms of three months each, with a break at the end of each term. Children start school at an early age sometimes as early as three years old but the government set age is when they are four years old. Nursery school is divided in three stages, baby class, middle class and top class, each stage takes a year. Thereafter they move on to primary school from standard 1 to 8. By then the pupils are between the ages of 6 and 7. The groups are normally between 40-60 pupils per class. In every class the students sit for end term exams which determine the progress and an end year exam, which determines if they are qualified to be promoted to the next class, or if they have to repeat the same class for a year. After the end of the eight years of
primary education they sit for the national exam, known as, Kenya Certificate of Primary Education (KCPE) which is a combination of everything they have been taught during the 8 years. The examination contains questions with multiple choices at the primary and nursery level only. The marking system in primary school involves grading pupils in five subjects mainly mathematics, English, Kiswahili, science and geography history and religion(G.H.C) each subject carries 100 points each, highest scorer is listed as the top in class and the least scorer takes the last spot. If they excel, they get to join secondary school for a maximum of 4 years. In secondary school students are graded from A to F, F is equivalent with fail. Both in primary and secondary school all subjects are taught in English, and Swahili is taught as a subject on its own. This is due to the fact that it’s the recognized national language. Students start school at 7 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon. In secondary school, mathematics, English and Swahili are compulsory subjects and a student can choose five other subjects that he/she would like to major in. They get to choose from; religious education, social ethics, music, geography, history, physics, chemistry, biology, home science, art, business education and agriculture.

2.2.1 Summary Kenyan history with different languages

Kenya and many other countries in Africa have been colonized by Great Britain since 18th century according to Iliffe (1997) in his book Afrika historien om en kontinent. They got their independence as late as 1963 according to Shillingtons (1989:390) book History of Africa. Kenya has 43 different tribe languages, with Swahili as the main language. English is spoken by all Kenyans and all subjects in school are taught in English. When Kenya was colonized by the British they went through a major languages change. According to Ahlsen and Allwood (1995:62) in their book Språk i fokus, English, French, Portuguese and German are all immigration languages and have accorded in Africa in the last century’s. Earlier African languages were placed into four languages families. Kenya is a mixture of tree of them, but Bantu languages are the main ones says Ahlsen and Allwood (1995:62-65). The Bantu language Swahili is the largest language in East and Central Africa with almost 80 million speakers in eight countries. The economical and religious changes that Africa went through during the colonization and even after independence played a major role in the education system in most African countries. With Kenya not being an exception. The government ensured that all primary education was provided for free by the end of 2003. All pupils have the right to go to school and
get free education. Due to this decision, schools in Kenya are at the moment at the highest peak of enrollment of students. By 2004, enrollment of students in schools rose by 70 percent. The teachers and the schools are overwhelmed according to Kenyan ministry of education.

Education was compared to wealth and started to get highly rated even among the poor people. One of the reasons was that education and knowledge in different subjects could be transferred much more easily to the next generation than financial status, writes Iliffe (1997:291). The missionaries were the first ones to come and preach Christianity to Kenyans and they started many different schools that taught Kenyans how to read the bible and live according to Gods’ will. Before 1950 most African countries believed mostly in domestic religious views. Since this religious views didn’t have writings and instructions they have slowly died out says Iliffe (1997:299). Kenya has as many as 43 different languages and some have had tribal differences between them during the last hundred years. It is due to that Ministry of education had decided that tribe languages are not taught in school or spoken in public places. Every tribe in Kenya has different perspective towards education, a tribe like Luo tribe values both female and male education while Maasai tribe which does not value education and prefer practicing their cultural norms. Therefore the government encourages use of one language to make the education mode more interesting. When a member of a tribe learns English he or she is considered learned and adored and this encourages more people to try and learn. The languages between different tribes are not similar in anyway and coming up with English as the standard mode of communication makes the learning standard similar in all parts of the country and also allows the teachers to be able to teach in any region of the country.

2.2.2 Reading

Reading is a complex system of knowledge and experiences combined and they are to serve you automatically says Stadler (1998:27) in her book Läs och skrivelärrning. To understand written texts the readers must have the knowledge of decoding, which by said understanding every letters sound and how they are put into words. Before a reader can feel comfortable with their reading they have to go through four different stages according to Stadler (1998). Lindö (2002)
says in her book *Det gränslösa språkrummet* that a combination of the following will make the students get more interest of knowing how to read themselves: reading loud and individually, speaking in groups or with friends, languagegames and rhymes, poems, fairytales, listening to music and singing.

According to Stadler (1998:37-42) there are four steps of reading before a pupil can decode the words in a written text and read it fluently. The four steps are following:

- **Small children pretend to read**

  Small children who have parents or other adults who read for them can easily copy spoken words. They often take a book and pretend that they are reading the written language says Stadler (1998:38). When the child also has pictures which he or she can use to tell the story they normally tell it with a variety of words. They also create their own letters and writes stories. After they have created something they often ask the grown-ups what is written on the paper. Their way of playing games which copy grownup behaviors makes them develop a linguistic awareness in a early stage in life says Stadler (1998:38).

- **Logo graphic reading**

  With this way of reading and writing the letters does not have a meaning to the pupils according to Stadler (1998) it is connected to a sound and a mental picture in the pupils mind. They are in the phase of just recognizing the letters shape and then connecting it to the visual meaning. Logogram is a symbol for a word or concept. The most common words that pupils learn first are how to write their own name. But as a matter of fact, they are not writing it they are just drawing it from the picture they have inside of how their name looks writes Stadler (1999:38-39). Children’s memories signs and logotypes they have seen in their normal daily life. Maybe they have seen the word SAUSAGE and connect it to the picture of a sausage, by using the image they have in their head they create the word. The logo graphic method is used until the pupil has too many word pictures in their head to keep track on. Normally they move on from this phase.
• Alphabetic reading

Alphabetic reading is when there is a clear connection with the letter and the sound of the letter. To read and write with alphabetic reading the pupil needs to have a developed phonologic and cognitive understanding for the language. The letters will be connected to phonemes says Stadler (1998:40). To be able to read alphabetically the child needs to know following.

- How the different sounds, sounds like in the spoken language.
- Knowledge of how the letters looks like.
- Connecting sound to letter.
- Put the sounds in phonologic order to be able to read the word correctly.
- Associate a meaning with the word they have read.

• Orthographic reading

This is when decoding of the written text comes fluently and the reader does no longer have to think of each words sounds or meaning. Decoding happens fast and always correct. The bending of words, first and last spelling just comes to the reader without even knowing that it has happened. The letters creates an orthographic pattern and the reader sees the connection of the words in the sentences fast. When the child starts to write without sounding techniques then the vocabulary has developed to a much higher level says Stadler (1998:41-42).

Reading is the process of constructing meaning from written texts says Sundblad, Dominkovic & Allard (1988:9-13) in their book, LUS en bok om läsutveckling. It is a complex skill requiring the coordination of a number of interrelated sources of information. It is also the process of constructing meaning through the dynamic interaction among:

- the reader’s existing knowledge
- the information suggested by the text being read, and
- the context of the reading situation
2.2.3 Writing

Spoken language is from where the written language has emerged thousands of years ago. Graphic symbols were printed on paper so that knowledge and information could be transferred for generations to come. The first alphabetic writings were done in 1300 f.Kr according to Stadler (1998).

Children go through different stages when they are exposed to written texts. One of the main factors is their childhood environment. If the culture of writing is strong in the family usually the child shows a great interest in writing from early stages of life. Another good reason can also be the child’s lust to express themselves. Before a child learns how to write they normal pretend to write, just like they pretend to read. It’s usually around that stages they develop an interest in shaping letters and asking what written words means says Stadler (1998:48-49). Dahlgren et al. (2008:92) writes in their book, Barn upptäcker skriftspråket, that children needs to know the reasons way it’s good to know how to read and write, when they have the understanding for that is when they can continue in there process to become good readers and writers. When we write words and thoughts they live forever, they can be kept, reread and understood by people from different contexts says Stadler (1998:43). According to Witting (1998) a writer is transferring spoken language into written language and they also come with a message. Stadler (1998) says that written texts can always be taken through time and be read for many years to come. Even if the recipients are in another year, country or context they can still understand what has been written.

According to Björk and Liberg (1999) in their book, Vägar in i skriftspråket, writing has two aspects, functional and shape aspect. The functional is the fact that written language is a way of communicating without time and room frames. Shape aspect is about how the written language is technically put together. Strömqvist (2007) explains in her book Skrivprocessen the benefits of getting the students interest for written texts. She says that when the teacher introduces their students for a new assignment it is of absolute important that they have tried the method themselves, the teacher will have the understanding for how hard it is to create a written text with good contents which someone else is supposed to read later. The children need to hear from adults that writing is something hard but also very pleasurable say Strömqvist (2007:43-44).
2.3 Synthetic approach

According to Ejeman & Molloy (2005: 69-71) in their book *Svenska i grundskolan – metodboken*, they say that in synthetic methods you start with the knowledge of the letters and the later you learn how to combine the letters into sentences. That means that you start with the small parts and later you get knowledge of how to set words, phrases and sentences. When the pupil is introduced to a new letter they learn how the letter sounds and words where you can find the sounds says Ejeman & Molloy (2005). After the pupils have a good understanding of how the letter sounds they are exposed to pictures. The most common synthetic approach is Witting method and Bornholmsmodellen. According to Stadler (1998) the knowledge of letters is crucial when teaching pupils the alphabetic way of reading and writing. The pupils are introduced to a whole new world and the pupil needs a more cognitive and phonological development then when they are taught reading and writing logo graphically.

2.4 Analytic approach

According to Ejeman & Molloy (2005: 69-71) in the analytic approach they start with the words and sentences and the separate theme in to sound and letters. When you are introducing these methods you always start with words which are well-known to the pupil, such as family member’s names or short words writes Ejeman & Molloy (2005). They mean that what is most important is to see the whole meaning of the word before they analyze and separate the letters and their sounds. The pupil will start with sounding when they know the full meaning of the word they are reading say Ejeman & Molloy (2005).
2.5 Views of reading and writing

2.5.1 Cognitive-Semitism

Säljö (2000) writes in the book *Lärande i praktiken – ett sociokulturellt perspektiv* that in the late 1950s and early 1960s cognitive-Semitism was brought up. According to cognitive-semitism the human thought is an interesting research object, when it comes to understanding psychological processes. The cognitive revolution was strongly inspired by the rapid development of computer technology. We talked about the man as an information-processing creature and the brain as a processor according to Säljö (2000). Constructivism is the elements of cognitive-Semitism that has had the greatest influence on the perception of learning.

Edward. C. Tolman, who is one of the founders of cognitive-semitism. Tolman said that we organize the world into units (mental health plans). This is called the Tolman cognitive maps they can hold beliefs about causes and effects write Säljö (2000).

Learning can also be without any response or reward to be involved. When the individual is in a situation known from the past, individuals have an expectation of what going to happen. The reward can be confirmed that expectation.

Tolman pillars are not stimuli and responses. He is talking about a systematic rationality, which means that individuals make predictions or develop expectations about what will happen. Expectation is a very central concept in cognitive motivation theory, such expectation of how we will solve a problem. Tolmans reward is mental which is a contrast to Skinner's and Thorndikes external reward strategies says Säljö (2000: 49-50, 55-57).

2.5.2 Behaviourism

According to the book, *Elevens värld*, by Imsen (2005: 38-39) behaviorism was founded in the United States during the 1900s the first half. Research foundation lies in true science and should only stick to what can be observed, counted and measured writes Imsen (2005).

Some important theorists within behaviourism are Edward Lee Thorndike, John B. Watson and Burrhus Frederic Skinner. Behaviorists believe that when we study humans we can just note what affects the individual (stimulus) and the behavior that follows this
impact (response). Imsen (2005) means that since one cannot observe another person’s thoughts these can’t be used as ideas in a scientific concept. The individual is a machine that reacts automatically to external stimuli. An important goal for the behaviorist is to predict an individual’s reactions based on impact, thereby in principle they can be able to control the individual’s actions.

According to behaviorists every person is at birth a blank page. They believe that through the right impact and stimulation, anyone can in theory learn anything, but the learning speed may vary. The intellectual difference between students explains the differences in learning speed. The behavioral tradition has developed a coherent learning theory. Behaviorist focus particularly on simple learning:

- reflexes and associations
- motor skills
- basic concept learning

An important principle, which characterizes the behavioral motivation theory, is the benefit principle: individuals do what pays them off. This means that punishment is bad and it is not an effective action according to Imsen (2005).

### 2.5.3 Socio-cultural perspective

Säljö (2000: 18-20) writes that one starting point is how individuals and groups acquire and use physical and cognitive resources. Interplay between collective and individual. They lead the linguistic and physical resources that we use to understand the world around us and act in it. The socio-cultural basis is considered problem of how we learn, be a matter of how we acquire the means to think and carry out projects that are part of our culture and environment says Säljö (2000).

According to Imsen (2005: 50-51) Vygotsky’s theory is a socio-cultural theory on children's cognitive development and it is a good example on how culture
and society affects the individual. The child lives in a social context in which language and culture plays an important role. According Imsen (2005) Vygotsky says that language is not just a way to express themselves, but also a tool for thinking and consciousness. Knowledge is part of the culture writes Imsen. Vygotsky theory attaches great importance to social interaction and the importance of language learning and development processes. Behaviorists argued that it is driven by the stimulus and response. Vygotsky, however, argued that development must be understood as the result of several development principles. These principles can make a variety very important in different times in life. Biological trends and social conditions are mixed together to form a line in children’s personality says Imsen (2005).

2.6 Methods of reading and writing in Sweden

2.6.1 Methods with synthetic approach

The Witting method

The witting method is well-known in Sweden and it emerged in the 1960 by a lady called Maja Witting. The Witting method does not differ a lot from the usually presented way of reading and writing process. What is the great difference is how it’s used in the classroom. The activities of writing and reading can be divided into two parts. The basic principles of reading and writing with the Witting method are that it’s based on the fact that both reading and writing has a technical part and content. Maja Witting was cooperating with the students during the development of the method. It became clear to her that students prefer working with the methods separately. While reading the pupil need to know how letter sounds and the language sounds are put together into words. While reading they start with the technical part and then move on to content and when it’s about writing they do it in reverse order. Reading is about the understanding of someone else’s message while writing is about creating a content that others would enjoy. Witting method uses the terms, symbolic function for the technology component, and understanding and content creation to content section. Maja Witting came to the conclusion
that the symbolic function in reading and writing are contrary to each other. She means that when the student realizes how to use the symbolic function of the letters for one of the above they can learn how to work with the other one later. Writing leads to reading and the other way around.

The Bornholm model

When the founders Häggström and Lundberg of the Bornholm model did an eight months study in 1988 about how languages games develops reading and writing skills they came to see great results. Häggström and Lundberg (2006) says that language games is one of the best ways of learning how to make sounds in to letters and how to make words into sentences. The Bornholm model has five steps to develop linguistic awareness. Listening games, rhymes, words and sentences, syllables and phonemes. Häggström and Lundberg (2006:7) says that when the teacher has good knowledge in how to arrange this language games they can easily prepare all students for reading. The games are structured in a way that they get more complex as they proceed on to higher levels. Dahlin et al. (2002) writes in their book Besjälat lärande that when children are put in to assignments which they can be an important part of they feel motivated to move on to a higher level all the time. They mean that when assignments are filed with lust, laughter and joy the pupils remember the knowledge they have been given for a lifetime.

2.6.2 Methods with analytic approach

LTG method

According to Leimar (1977:15-22) in her book Arbeta med LTG the knowledge of learning how to read is based on analysis. We use the spoken language and then we compare it with the spoken language and written text. Leimar (1977) says that it’s important for pupils to see the connection between sound and letter
characters, between written text and spoken word.

These are the five phases of the methodical time of LTG.

- Conversation phase
- Dictation phase
- Laboration phase
- Restore phase
- Finishing phase

When the students have gone through these phases they sit down again for a conversation phase says Leimar (1977: 16). The conversation should be a dialogue. The keywords will be speaking, listening and thinking. Ahlsen and Allwood (1995:15-17) they writes in the book, Sprak i fokus, that the complexity of using a language is a process of spoken language, body language and writing process. Ahlsen and Allwood says that spoken Swedish has five different components

1. Language sounds and phonemes
2. Prosody
3. Vocabulary
4. Grammar
5. Conversation

According to Ahlsen and Allwood (1995:17) the conversation plays a major role in developing a well managed language both in spoken and written language. When people communicate they learn how to play with words, give and take words, how to connect to questions and how to replay, encourage others and that is the basic knowledge to move on to a much more diverse written language.
Whole language

Lindö (2005) writes in her book, *Den meningsfulla språkväven*, and Björk och Liberg (1999) writes in their books that Whole language method and also called Storboks metoden in Sweden came from New Zealand in the 1970 and the founder was Don Holdaway. Holdaway saw the benefits that children got when they were exposed to loud reading in early ages. He wanted to create this environment in school because he believed that it would contribute to the children’s reading and writing skills. It is thought from the child’s interest and the teachers use a large book which we in Sweden call a Storbok. Storböckerna is a book in a larger format which pupils and teacher reads from together seated in a group. Most of the times the pupils have the same book but in smaller size (lillboken) and they work with the two books in three different phases. Their first phase is when the group explores the Storbok and the pupils and the teacher reads all the text written in the book together. The second phase is when the pupils analyze the text together with the teacher. The three phase the independent phase when the pupils work individually with the small book. They analyze the text written by them. According to Lindö (2002) the working climate created with whole language creates a positive atmosphere where the pupil’s personal skills can develop. She writes that the teachers signal to the pupils should be following:

- To respect them for the whole person that you are.
- To accept that they find their own ways of learning new things.
- To encourage them to take responsibility for their own learning ways.
- To encourage them to use dictionaries, books, friends, adults, computer and other means of support during their working hours in school.
- To encourage them to take risks, it is mostly through mistakes we learn.
- To give them freedom without supervision; so as to prove that he/she can trust them.

2.7 Choosing methods of reading and writing

According to Stadler (1999:51) in her book *Läs och skrivinlärning*, the debate of all the different methods for teaching students how to read and write has been a complicated issue and Stadler (1999) means that’s it’s not real the method itself which makes the student know how to read and
write. Stadler (1999) believes that it’s more about the teachers approach and relationship towards
the students which make students read and write. All learning situations should be filled with joy
according to Dahlin et al. (2002) in their book Besjälat lärande. It is a teachers main job to
always evaluate the different lessons or learning situations they put the students into and it is
crucial in which environment the students meets the new information says Stadler (1999:51).
When a teacher has broad and deep knowledge in all different methods and ways of teaching, the
teacher has more in his or her backpack to present to the pupils. Stadler (1999:51-52) writes that
no method is complete and all children learn in different ways it is a teacher’s job to find the
right way for the pupils.
3 METHODOLOGY

According to Patel and Davidson (2003) it is important that the reader finds the methodology behind a research. It has to have a strong plausibility and generalization. The reader has to know how the research was done and what obstacles were encountered.

I have chosen to use interviews and observation as main course while doing the study at Kenyatta Primary School in Nakuru. According to Patel and Davidson (2003:23) a good way of doing a research is to relate theory studies with empirical studies. A research always starts with a problem according to Patel and Davidson (2003:9). The problem does not have to be a concrete problem; it can be something which you find interesting or something that you would like to get more knowledge about. My study was based on an interest to know more about the different methods and means of how to use them. According to Patel and Davidson (2003:132-133) when a person does a qualitative research they can choose to make quotes from what the informants said or you can do a summary of the whole interview. I have chosen to do just that a qualitative research based on observations and interviews which I have done a summation of.

3.1 Interview methodology

I interviewed four teachers in different standards at Kenyatta Primary School in Nakuru. All of them are female and above forty years old.

The interviews were done in the staff room or in the teachers own classroom. I had my questions prepared in front of me and started from question one going down to twelve. The interview took about 30 minutes. I ended my interviews with handing over a small gift to show my appreciation.
3.1.1 Description of the interviews

The informants were all informed that I will use my interviews and observations according to what the University of Karlstad has given me as guidelines. I will not use the information for any other purpose or reveal their names. According to Patel and Davidson (2003:69-71) it is of our most importance that the informant get to know that you apply confidentiality and anonymity. My purpose with the essay is to bring out the best of Kenyan and Swedish methods of teaching. After my interviews were done I wanted to spend time to just observe how the teachers were teaching. Teacher A did not teach on the lower parts of primary (standard 1-3) so she was not interesting to observe in class. I choose to observe the three other teachers in their classrooms during a period of 3 weeks. I wanted to see if what we had talked about on the interviews rhymed with real life situations.

3.1.2 Observation criteria

1. Atmosphere in the classroom
2. Material used in the classroom
3. Methods used while teaching reading and writing
4. Relationships between teacher and student
5. Environment in the classroom

3.2 Approach

3.2.1 Selection

I decided to select informants who are teaching in the lower standards or who have been teaching early stages of reading and writing. The reason for that is to make sure that I get a full picture of how teachers at the location chosen to work with reading and writing in early stages of education.
Since many of the teachers at Kenyatta Primary School were on seminars and workshops I did not have that many teachers to choose from. I wanted to interview and observe teachers who were teaching the younger ones from baby class to standard 3. They were only eight teachers left so I chose four of them to be a part of my study.

3.2.2 Course of action

My course of action was to both observe and interview the teachers. According to Patel and Davidson (2003) this gives a qualitative research. I was well prepared with the Swedish methods of teaching and our curriculum and I had studied the Kenyan curriculum before facing the reality in their school.

3.2.3 Criticism

I felt like one of the main problems on the interviews was the language barriers. Either the informant or I could speak in our mother tongue language which always creates a problem when expressing your true emotions or thoughts. I could have used an interpreter but I felt like I did not have the time to look for one. I had some knowledge about Kiswahili when I arrived in Kenya and after staying for three months I could speak a lot. Teacher B and C was sometimes frustrated over the language situation and I could tell they had more to tell but the words was not enough.

Another obstacle was the fact that I could not really choose my informants because most of them were away on workshops for the national exams starting in November. So I was left with the eight remaining and I had to pick from them.
3.3 Interview Presentation

According to Patel and Davidson (2003:71) the person doing the interview questions have responsibility of how they create the questions and in which order they come. Patel and Davidson call this standardization. While creating the interview questions you have to evaluate how much freedom of interpretation the informants have. That is called structuring of the questions. I have chosen the following questions after that I had done a pilot test on my VFU location in Sweden. The questions was tested to strengthen the value of them and to make sure that they come in the right order.

Questions 1-5

1. Tell me about yourself? ( Name, how old you are, how long you have worked as a teacher, what class are u teaching )
2. What are your thoughts about reading and writing in the early stages of education?
3. Do you believe that all your students have good awareness of their language?
4. How do make all your students to read and write?
   -And when do they start to practice reading and writing?
5. Do you use any special methods for teaching your students how to read and write?

Questions 6-10

6. What classroom material do you use while teaching the students how to read and write?
   -Do all students work with the same material or different? Why or why not?
7. Do you adapt your teaching to every pupil’s different need? Why or why not?
8. The students who have problems with reading and writing do they get special training?
9. How do the students examine their writing and reading skills?
10. How do you as a teacher work with the curriculum and syllabus?
4. RESULTS

4.1 Interviews Presentation Structure

I have made a preparation of all my interviews in a shorter form. That is because of convenience for the reader and to make the reading value high.

4.1.1 Interview with Teacher A

She has worked as a teacher for 30 years in different governmental schools. She has been teaching all ages from 5 up to 20 years old. Right now she is teaching standard 7 to 8 in social studies and mathematics. Reading and writing is something the students should learn in baby class or in standard 1-3. It is the teacher’s job to make sure that all students get a good hand writing and they know how to read in a good speed. Teacher A says that she never have to deal with pupils who does not know how to read and write. When she is teaching she only speaks English and Kiswahili in class. Due to tribalism it is not allowed to talk any of the tribe languages. She says that she follows the syllabus and curriculum in every subject and that she is very strict with the pupils. She believes that is the only way for them to keep their mind on focus of learning. In class they practice a lot of free writing and using your imagination to compose good texts. At this stage the pupils should have a good handwriting so she believes with the ones who doesn’t have that there is not much to do for them. She uses the blackboard, talking exercises in class and course books in all subjects. Right now they are also reading a lot of poetry and re-known novels. Teacher A says that she tries to focus on the slow learners every now and then but the majority of the class is smart students. She often has to give more work to the ones who reads and writes well. But adapting every lesson to each individual is something she does not do. If there was more time and more resources maybe she could try that.
4.1.2 Interview with Teacher B

Teacher B has worked as a teacher for 32 years and is the oldest teacher at Kenyatta Primary school. Next term she is retiring so she is teaching her last class in standard 2 which is in ages 7 to 12 years old. She works a lot with the children’s handwriting and teaching reading strategies. She also believes in having an open atmosphere for talking comprehensions. She says that she wants to give the pupils the confidence to speak properly to know how to write in the right way. All pupils learn how to read and write in baby class but there are always slow learners who need more attention. The problem at Kenyatta Primary school is that more than 70 percent of the students come from single parents, are orphans or have parents with HIV. They do not have any support from home so homework can be very hard for them. Every day after school Teacher B stays in school to help the ones who cannot do homework at home. Many of the children have to work after school on their family’s farm. In standard 2 and 3 the teachers are supposed to teach the students how to use the pencil properly, so in her class they spend a lot of time with handwriting.

Every other day the pupils have homework, in class they practice oral, handwriting, reading short text and vocabulary. She is strict when it comes to marking and she always makes sure that all pupils knows when they are right and when they are wrong that’s how they learn according to teacher B. The smart students she is more strict on, they have to have higher score on their tests and when she mark she look more into details on what they do. The ones who is weaker needs to be pushed and I make sure that they get all the letters right, capital letters and full stops on the right place. The most important knowledge for the weak ones in her class is to know how to read and write their names. They practice that a lot. If a student have not reached the goals for the term in this lower standards they follow the rest of the group, the problem is when they get to standard 8 and the teachers realizes that they will not pass the test for moving on to form 1. The students who do not pass the test have to repeat until they pass the test. That’s why they can be as old as 30 years when they finish form 4. All students have that in mind throughout all their schooling years which make them work hard and perform well in school. That encourages them to perform well on the tests. Teacher B says that she does not believe in punishment and she rather lifts her students with positive words than beating them.
4.1.3 Interview with Teacher C

Teacher C graduated just 3 years ago from the teachers program at Nairobi University. She is teaching standard 1 mostly 6 to 7 year old pupil. In her class she has 48 students.

She believes reading and writing in early ages will determine how the student will continue in school all the way up to form 4. The students have good awareness about the different languages they speak and most of them are very willing to learn more and more. Many of the pupils come from poor families and many of the parents do not believe that it is crucial to go to school.

She practice reading and writing in all her classes and they start every day with letter sound practice. They practice patterns and how to shape the different capital letters. She reads loud and all students follow her in their own reading book. Right now they are reading about a lion that does not have friends. After reading she gives them a couple of questions about the text they have read and they answer by rising up their hands. All students in her group know how to read, they all know that from baby class. They mostly read short texts but some students can also read long ones. They practice on how to read loudly and silently every day. Writing is the same; they were taught that in baby class, but she practice hand writing skills with them. They need to get the pattern of the letters so they practice that a lot. She writes on the blackboard and all students copies in their own writing book. She never gives them writing as homework, she wants them to write on the black board as much as possible because she wants to control that they have the right technique when they shape the letters. When she tests them in writing she tells them 20 words which they have to put in to sentences. Then every child has to read the sentence loud for the rest of the class. She also tests handwriting skills on the blackboard once every week to see that they are getting to know how to shape the letters and where to put them on the line.

4.1.4 Interview with Teacher D

Teacher D is in her forties and has been teaching in primary schools for 10 years. She is teaching a standard 2 with 52 students. Most of the children in her class come from orphanages around the school area or from single parents. Teacher D believes that reading and writing comes when the child is mature enough to understand the purpose of it. Reading is the most crucial and important part of why parents sends their children to school. She says that most of her students
know how to read but many have problems with writing. Her students come from poor backgrounds which makes it hard for them to learn anything in school when they have big responsibilities at home, like collecting firewood or taking care of younger siblings. There is no support from home for these children and it is often that even the parents cannot read and write. She says that many of her students have knowledge about their language, but many of the children don’t bring their minds to school. When you’re hungry or your parents are sick they have that in mind all the time and cannot focus on learning anything. Government schools get government funds to make sure that the pupils who are orphans or comes from poor background should get food in school every day, but in a corrupt society that money ends up somewhere else. More than half of the class does not eat before school, not at lunch and she says that she sometimes wonder if they even eat when they come home. Teacher D says that when you are starving it is not easy to concentrate in class. Teacher D says that her job is to maintain the foundation other teachers laid in earlier stages of their teaching, but she does not feel like she has any time to help the weak ones. Teacher D works mostly on the blackboard, except from when they work in workbooks and textbooks. She writes on the blackboard and the students fill the gaps in the questions or texts she has written. She uses the same books to all students, and the ones who don’t know how to read can just follow in the text when she reads loud for the class. The problem comes later when they are supposed to answer questions about what she read, then they need to know how to write. When you have 52 students and you are only one teacher it is not that easy to get time to help the ones who do not know how to read or write. But she tries her best to help them with letter sounds and how to make sentences. You just wish that God will help them know how to. All students sit for the same national examination, it doesn’t matter how strong or weak they are. She marks all in the same way because she doesn’t see the point of marking them differently. Teacher D says that she uses the same early plan for every class which she takes and she knows that she follows the curriculums and syllabus in each subject.
5. SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

5.1 Observing Teacher B

Teacher B has a nice working atmosphere in her classroom and I can tell that the students like their teacher genuinely. She has a good way of talking to them and she is always observing the whole group most of time, she talks to the class and shows them how to write, or solve problems on the blackboard. She uses both, the blackboard, dialogs, books, songs and drama. Practicing of letters, handwriting, coping of texts, reading loud for the class, Teacher B is getting old so sometimes she has problem to hear what the students say so misunderstandings sometimes happens. The head boy in the class plays a major role in keeping the order in the classroom.

5.2 Observing Teacher C

Teacher C group is teaching a baby class and they are not as many as the other classes. The classrooms environment is much nicer than the other classrooms. The students are well dressed you can tell that most of the kids come from middle class families. Most of them are clean and properly dressed in their school uniforms. It is just four of the pupils who do not have all the books requested and who have to borrow from friends or the teacher. Teacher C is strict but warm with her pupils and you can tell that they have all a great respect for her. Most of the times she reads something for them and then they talk about what they just read. They practice all the sounds and shapes of the letters and the pupils repeat what she has said. She makes sure all students are involved in discussions and no one is left out. The working atmosphere is good and you can see how eager they are to learn and to be the best student in class.

5.3 Observing Teacher D

Teacher D has the biggest group of pupils I observed and the classroom is also the one in the poorest condition. There are big holes in the floors and walls and some of the windows are
broken. All windows are high up along the sealing and there is no other source of light than the sun which comes through the small windows. The classroom is cold and humid. More than half of the group does not have stationeries like pencils, writing books or working books which are required. They borrow from each other and share with the closest neighbor. Teacher D seems harsh and strict on most of the kids, but keeps a few as her favorite ones. She speaks loudly on how good some of the students have done and almost bullies the ones who don’t perform according to her standards. The classroom atmosphere is tensed and I get the feeling that the students fear their teacher. Teacher D uses a plastic pipe to discipline the pupils who doesn’t perform according to her standards. When teacher D leaves the classroom conflicts emerges and some of the students get so frustrated that they even use violence to solve their differences.
6 DISCUSSION

The questions which I wanted to answer were:

a. What are the methods for teaching reading and writing?

b. How can you as a teacher adapt them into your classroom?

Just like Scott and Ytreberg (1999:1) writes in their book, Teaching English to Children, some children develop gradually, others in leaps and bounds, a teacher is the only one who can say how far up the ladder every individual pupil are, and it’s our job to meet them where they are. Young children learn best when they are enjoying themselves and they can never decide themselves what to learn or not. I believe it’s really important to keep the motivation high and make them feel like they can succeed. That’s when they can grasp all new information and knowledge given to them. Scott and Yterberg (1999:3) say that if you can keep your pupils enthusiasm high and make them feel good about what they do they can develop good linguistic awareness. I believe what Imsen (1995) writes about behaviorist views that human beings does what pays off. I agree that as a teacher you have to find the sources of motivating children to develop their own language both in writing and in reading. When a teacher has a mental picture of the whole group of children succeeding as the only set goals by using one method then I think learning battle is already lost. In a group with 30 students you have just as many ways of learning how to read and write. Always remember that all students are individuals and it is through a diverse teaching methodology you will reach all of them.

After studying the Kenyan curriculum and also experienced it with my own eyes in classrooms situations I can see the positive sides of the Swedish curriculum. In my understand the system in Kenya seems shallow and doesn’t have room to accommodate any elements who have slow understanding or who require different techniques to be able to digest the information provided to them. Different approaches makes learning interesting and having a guide line on how the
teacher should be able to teach a certain topic makes more sense than just a blanket assumption of what the kids should know by the end of the day. Therefore I clearly prefer individualism and personal monitoring of a pupil and feeding them with the right knowledge on the level which they are in. Stadler (1998) writes on how a child develops different steps to a linguistic awareness, it gave me some new thoughts. Children start in very early ages with their linguistic awareness and I think as a parent you have a responsibility to feed your young child with reading and writing in everyday life. Reading a bedtime story every evening, playing games and writing a journal can help the young child to develop a great interest to letters and their sounds. Liberg (2006) writes that when a child is small adult’s starts to talk to the child about what is happening, what will happen and what has happened. They get to know a lot of words from an early age. Liberg (2006) says that with spoken and written languages we experience life and the conditions we are leaving in. That is why what frames of my language, is not the same as the teachers or the pupils in Kenyatta Primary school.

According to Dahlin et al. (2002:179) it is important to play games with children to develop a greater awareness of their own languages and their different ways of expression. In Kenya there were little smiles and laughter in the classroom and I felt that many of the kids were depressed. They do what they have to but they don’t do it with their whole heart and soul. Knowledge is something else for both the students and the teachers and I had hard time introducing my thoughts to my colleges in Kenya. I tried showing them the great fun with introducing a new topic with the help of a doll or another toy. They were laughing at me and my crazy ways of teaching and they said that the pupils stopped playing with those things before they started school. Dahlin et al (2002:188) shows in their book that my way of teaching is a great way to start a new topic and to capture the audience. As a teacher I believe you are so much more than just a talking machine. I believe a teacher is supposed to be an artist performing in front of the pupils, capturing their thoughts and interests in a show called teaching. Whatever you introduce has to be something which captures your pupils. Dahlin et al. (2002) says that it’s with the help of games; laughter and joy children develop a wider and more distinct language. For me as a becoming teacher I believe that you always have to hunger for new knowledge in teaching methodology and you always have to update yourselves on the latest. According to Strömqvist (2007) writing to just get a higher grade doesn’t make the pupil a good writer, it blocks the brain from being creative and to have a colored language. I felt that the pupils in Kenyatta Primary was
pushed and threaten to progress in school and it just made them have the knowledge for a short while. They weren’t writing for their own interest they were writing to please the teacher. Vygotskij (2005) writes that a teacher has to guide the pupils in to a higher knowledge but the knowledge starts with where the child is at the moment. The way the teachers in Kenyatta were teaching, they didn’t have any kind of interest to individualize their teaching methods according to every pupil. Vygotskij means that the topics the pupils are taught doesn’t have any value or meaning to a child and I believe it just creates frustration and ignorance later in life when they realize that they were not given the chance to understand what the teacher meant and what knowledge it brings to them. I saw many students who didn’t understand spoken English and who didn’t have the knowledge of the letters in the alphabet. To me that was heartbreaking to see how the children would struggle every day to just keep up with what the teacher was saying. Even if English is the second largest languages spoken in Kenya only a few pupils could manage to understand what the teacher meant. Lindö (2002:170) writes that when a builder starts to construct a house they put up construction pillars around the whole construction site. When the house is ready they can start tearing the pillars down, bit by bit. Lindö (2002) draws a line between this construction site and with when a teacher is about to teach pupils how to use a language that is what teachers do. They build construction pillars from the bottom to the top and first when the pupil is ready the teacher can start taking those crutches down.

I also believe a teacher must understand the different stages a child goes through while learning a language as Stadler (1998) says that a child goes through four different steps when reaching to linguistic awareness. It was a pity to see how these children who could not keep up with the teachers pace were being left behind.

For me it is important to clarify the most common methods and to get more knowledge for myself on how to use them. It also gives this essay a stronger ground when I had the knowledge about the methods before I interviewed and observed the teachers in Kenyatta Primary School.

What I came to realize is the fact that all of them are good methods; it is for the teacher to adapt what fits the pupils most. If you believe in what you teach then anything is possible. Dahlgren et al. (2008:91) writes that long ago in Sweden the way of teaching was not far from how children are taught in Kenya. Dahlgren et al. (2008:91) means that the Swedish school was more into giving the students as much information as possible and they strongly believed that knowledge
was about how much the students know in different topics. Today these views are long gone and now we focus on a more qualitative learning strategy. Today teachers want their students to feel encouraged to know more according to their own interests.

I knew about some of the methods briefly from before but I feel I have a better perspective on how to teach children how to read and write after writing this essay. According to Witting (2005) the symbolic function in reading and writing are contrary to each other. I also believe what Maja Witting came to realize, the fact that the pupil doesn’t have to know reading before writing or other way around it’s a teachers job to find the right way for the pupil. I have worked with the Bornholm method before and feel comfortable with the language games they provide in the book *Språklekar efter Bornholmsmodellen*. It really gives you a chance to interact with your pupils. Häggstöm and Lundberg (2006:5) writes that the children should always feel it is pleasurable and fun to learn how to manage a language. They believe it is of most importance that children should never feel failure and self esteem stays intact. It’s important for a teacher to feel good about the method they are using and comfortable about the organization around the lessons. When you have reached there then you realize there are higher chances for you to convey the message to your pupils.

By observing and interviewing teachers in at Kenyatta Primary school in Kenya I got to see a school system very far behind our Swedish school system. What I chose to do was qualitative research and interview where I asked questions with open answers and wrote down what the person said. I felt it was hard to catch up with everything said but I kept on writing down keywords and short sentences. After that I summarized what they had told me. According to Patel and Davidson (2003:78) the interviewer has to interact in a qualitative interview with the informant to make the most out of it. Patel and Davidson say that the interviewer have to make a conversation out of the interview to make it more colorful. I and my informants had very good talks and we exchanged different perspectives in the topic.

In Kenyan schools like Kenyatta Primary School has very little means of teaching and the conditions are very poor, they still have a long way to go when it comes to individualize all pupils’ education. What I saw mostly was a teaching methodology where the teacher just assumes that all children have the same knowledge from before and that you have one concept
and you stick to that way of teaching. There is nothing as individualizing the assignment. It is the teachers who are running the show for the learning situation. Mostly from the front next to the blackboard and the pupils have very little engagement to what is happening in the classroom. What the teacher decides is what the students do. According to Dahlgren et al. (2008) this can lead to that more and more pupils getting lost and it’s just a few left who are able to adapt to that kind of learning environment. Children can learn so much from each other and they need to be exposed for assignments where they can get to evaluate their own learning method say Dahlgren et al. (2008).

Instead of winning the children’s respect by being a responsible adult they use threats and beatings to push the pupils to the next level of knowledge. The ways of teaching were set from a frame taken from a book on how they were suppose to teach and then it was delivered to all pupils in the same way. The Kenyatta Primary school follows the curriculum from A to Z and nothing more nothing less. The school is a government owned school with little resources and mostly with pupils from poor and middle class families. The teacher’s income is minimal and I also believe that does not benefit the work effort they put for their students. The working environment is not beneficial for either the pupils or the teachers. I can just look to myself, working in school is a hard job and even teachers in Sweden are paid very little according to the job they do, and it does not give the job the status it is suppose to have. Kenyatta primary school was in poor condition and I believe the environment surrounding the pupils should be in greater variety both according to space and activities. Scott and Ytreberg (1999:5-6) says that’s since the pupils needs to concentrate and keep their attention high it’s our job to make sure that there is a great variety of environment, activity, organization and even the voice the teacher use to speak to the pupils Lindö (2002:169). That enhances the fact that an environment which is beneficial for the pupil stimulates both emotional and the intellectual parts of the pupil. After seeing some of the classrooms in Kenyatta school and the classroom environment they had to stay in I felt that it was not conducive for learning new things. Especially in teachers D classroom where the group was bigger and the environment in the classroom was harsh and cold. The classroom walls were tearing down, there was no electricity. I suggested to her that some of the lessons should be taken outside but she did not agree with me on that. I really saw a lot of new possibilities with their school system and the way they look at their pupils. I believe that teachers need to get support.
and new education in how to deal with every child individually and also support on how to manage this increasing groups. Just like Scott and Ytreberg (1999:9) say, I quote:

Respect your pupils and be realistic about what they can manage at an individual level, then your expectations will be realistic to.

Scott and Ytreberg also believe that a teacher needs to appear equally around all their students. Most of the teachers I meet at Kenyatta didn’t do that. The ones who was number 1-10 in class was the ones noticed by the teacher the other ones were just considered dumb according to how they treated them. I saw many children crying just for failing on a single question in their exams. It felt that with their school system where everything is evaluated by grades the pupils are pushed far over their capacity most of the times and with little guides along the way. I believe that what the teachers and the rest of the school system focused on was not qualitative learning, it’s more about getting the pupils to know as much possible in a short period of time and then put them for exams and then grade them only from what the exams shows. Dahlgren et al. (2008:91) writes that earlier in Sweden the school system was build with a qualitative view of learning, now a day’s its more about creating and constructing learning environment were the pupil will get the understanding for a life time. Kenya is one of Africa’s most developing countries and I think they will get to where we are with time. We just have to give them time and education to brooder their perspectives. This is nothing which will happen overnight, it will take time to see positive results.

6.1 My own reflections

The minor field study I did in Kenya has given me so many new perspectives of life, not only in terms of teaching but also how to handle situations in my daily life. I was shown how children in their early ages have to mature early and they sometimes go to school from 7 to 4 and then they go home and work in their parents’ farm until the sun sets at night. Being in Kenya for this long gave me an opportunity to have many new friends both children and adults, and they gave me experiences hard to describe. I didn’t only get to see their educational system but I also got to see a complete different culture and to share their social life. I made friends for life and meet people who will always play a big role in my life. Strandberg (2007) writes in his book, Vygotskij i praktiken, that creative processes is a social process. Without interacting with others the pupils
miss a lot and the full awareness of the language will not a cure. It made me appreciate what the Swedish school system offers and in my mind the Swedish system is about developing personal skills more than the knowledge skills in different subjects. It has encouraged me to do so much more than just teach in my classroom. I also got the thoughts of doing projects in the future for the children in Kenya. My dream is to start my own school in Kenya, run with Swedish mentality and with Swedish curriculum.
7. CONCLUSIONS

After doing this study I feel more prepared to enter future job as a teacher wherever it will be. I believe I have the knowledge of all different methods used here in Sweden both by reading about them and practicing them during my VFU in Herrhagsskolan in Karlstad. My minor field study to Kenya gave me even more broad knowledge and understanding on how different we all interpret our roles as teachers in schools. As teacher in Sweden you step into many different roles, as the teacher, parent, guardian, mentor, psychologist and friend. I used my time in Kenya to really evaluate my own skills and faults that I have. I came to the conclusion that all methods are good if you really believe in them but one has to know how to adapt them for every student. All children are not alike is one of my greatest experiences both from reading, observing and teaching. This is not something I will ever get the complete knowledge about, I will have to always update myself in the latest researches and take courses about reading and writing to be able to do a good job with my pupils.
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