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# LEARNING

A book in Honour of  
Prof. Tolulope Inake Yuloye  
First published in 2013.

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# **AFTER-SCHOOL LESSON SYNDROME: IMPLICATIONS FOR ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS AT S.S.C.E IN NIGERIA**

**Akorede, S.F.**

## **INTRODUCTION**

In Nigeria it has been discovered from research that student in secondary schools are not performing well in most school subjects, especially English language and Mathematics which are core subjects. This and many other reasons have made secondary school authorities to organize after-school coaching classes, in other to overcome some forms of educational backwardness or compensate for inadequate learning and improved performance in school subjects (Ayodabo, 2011). Some state governments have also queue into this, for instance the Oyo State Government recently made it mandatory for all schools to organize after-school coaching for SS2 students during school sessions and vacations.

This paper therefore dealt with the meaning of after-school lessons, its objectives, why it is not meeting its objectives, the implications for academic performance at S.S.C.E and finally where the time and energy of students should be directed. Conclusion were drawn and recommendations given.

### **After-school Lesson Defined**

Omolewa (1981), cited in Ayodabo (2011) defined after-school coaching as supplementary and complementary education. It is a programme needed by the students to overcome some forms of educational backwardness or to compensate for past inadequate learning. It is a golden opportunity that helps students as well as staff to make up for lost lessons and cover the syllabus at the right time. This is because it will add more periods to the number of periods they are using for the regular classes.

Anyanwu (1981) and Onofuevure (1984), cited in Ayodabo (2011) defined continuing education as lessons organized by individuals or group of people outside the formal school system, to prepare students that are no longer in school, for external

examination like General Certificate (GCE) and Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB), etc. However, after-school coaching classes are organized by schools to assist their students as well as their staff to cover the syllabus before examination commences. Hence, in this paper, the focus is on after-school coaching and not continuing education. After-school lesson is therefore lessons organized by school authorities for students who are still in school, preparing for their final examination.

After-school coaching as coaching taking place immediately following the normal school lessons. It is a programme designed to provide care for and educational enhancement to children in the hours immediately following the normal school classes. This is why the after-school coaching is organized within the hours of 2p.m and 5p.m in most schools in Nigeria.

In the developed world, educated programme organized after-school hours are called after-school tutoring programmes. A growing body of research has found that students' participation in after-school programme is beneficial to academic achievement and social adjustments (Pierce, Hamm and Vandell, 1999; Posner and Vandell, 1994 cited in Denise and Ron, 2011). A recent study for example found that students who participated in after-school programmes had significantly higher reading achievement and were rated by teachers as having a greater expectancy of success than students who did not participate (Mahoney, Lord and Carryl, 2005 cited in Denise and Ron, 2011).

Other research has found that those students who participate in quality after-school programme, the largest (both in terms of frequencies and duration) have lower criminal rates (Goldschmidt, Huag and Chiner, 2006; Lamare 1997 cited in Denise and Ron, 2011). Research has also discovered that higher rates of participation in after-school programme can contribute to higher scores on academic standardized tests in mathematics, reading and language arts (Huang, Gribbons, Kim, Lee and Baker 2000, Huang, Leon, la Torre and Mostafari 2008 cited in Denise and Ron, 2011). Munoz (2002) cited in Denise and Ron, (2011) found a positive relationship between after-school programme participation rates and improved day school attendance and academic achievement.

Improving the educational outcomes for students who are at risk for academic failure is an important issue for educators and policy makers. Recently, after-school tutoring programmes have been identified as having the potential to turn academic failure into academic success. Results of studies have also shown that students with learning disabilities who were failing classes could earn average or better grades on quizzes and tests if they had the support of trained adult tutors. Additionally, researchers found that tutors could teach strategies during tutoring session and that students could learn the strategies while they worked on their class assignments. Finally, researchers found that some students continued to be successful after tutoring ended, indicating that they were able to use the strategy they had learned in a generative fashion.

Nevertheless, assuming that all after-school tutoring programme will result in the development of skilled and independent learners may be overly optimistic. Indeed,

some forms of tutoring may be more harmful than helpful. For example, Carlson (1985) suggested that subject-matter tutoring for special education students by special education teachers may be unethical because students rarely acquire the skills necessary to become independent thinkers and learners through such tutoring. In fact, some such students demonstrate little skill growth and became dependent on their tutors for success (Ceprano, 1995; Keim, Mcwhirter and Bernstein 1996).

Other researchers have reported mixed results. Some report that tutoring works sometimes and under certain conditions (e.g Cohen, Kulik and Kulik, 1982; Lepper, Drake and O'Donnell-Johnson, 1997; Mc Arthur, Lewis and Bishay, 1996; Merrill and Landes, 1995 cited in Denise and Ron, 2011). Others have reported that one-to-one tutoring has been an extremely effective intervention (Bloom 1984; Graesser, Bowers and Hacker 1997; Slavin, 1990). In short the beliefs about efficacy of tutoring are mixed.

Sometimes, the contradictory results related to after-school tutoring may stem from several problems. The first problem is the previous lack of clear distinction about the type of tutoring model. Another problem is related to major differences in targeted student outcomes. The last problem is tutor training. Regardless of what outcomes drives the tutoring model or whether tutors are adults or peers, tutor expertise and development of instructional skills are thought to be keys to improving the nature of tutoring interactions.

The importance of tutor training becomes evident when the nature of traditional tutor interactions is examined. For example, research has shown that novice tutors, including peer and adult tutors do not have the expertise required for tutoring.

### **Objectives of After-school Lesson**

In Nigeria the main goal of after-school lesson is to improve academic performance of students. This goal can therefore be broken down into the following objectives:-

1. To add more time or periods to the regular school periods.
2. To cover the syllabus at the right time.
3. To overcome some forms of educational backwardness.
4. To compensate for past inadequate learning.

The highlighted goals and objectives are good enough, but are the schools able to attain these noble objectives? It could be reliably ascertained, from my 25years sojourn in the secondary schools in Oyo State, that in most cases, it is objectives 1 and 2 that could be said to be partially attained. It could be said that more periods are added to the normal school time and most teachers strived to cover the syllabus before final examinations commenced. Most of the time, the syllabus is covered without recourse to finding out if students understand what they are taught. In most cases students who left home as early as 6.30a.m are not allowed to rest and eat after the normal school time that ends at 2pm. Students are therefore tired out and diminishing returns must have even crept-in into what they learnt during the normal school hours. To worsen the situation, they got home around 7pm, unable to do their take-home assignments or read what they have



learnt during the day. What do you expect of such set of students' performance at the end of the lessons?

On the other hand, the objectives of after-school coaching in the developed world is a bit similar to that of Nigeria. In the U.S.A, the Sunnyvale school district explains that the mission of after-school programme for middle school students is:-

- (i) To improve the academic performance
- (ii) To reduce the incidence of behavioural problems.
- (iii) Increase recreational and social opportunities and
- (iv) Promote positive parental involvement.

### **Impact of After-school Lesson on Academic Performance in Final Examinations**

The impacts of after-school programme have been seen to be positive in the advanced countries as the research works reviewed have shown. But the poor performances of students in most subjects, especially English Language and Mathematics in Nigeria have not shown that the impact of the after-school lessons is positive. Why then are the objectives of after-school lessons not realized?

### **Why Are the Objectives not attained?**

Many reasons could be adduced for the un-attainment of the main goal of after-school coaching, which is improvement in academic performance.

One of the reasons is the attitude of both the teachers and the students to the lessons. The teacher's attitude may not be positive because they are not duly remunerated for the job done. This then means that they will not put-up their best effort in it. On the other hand the attitude of the students too may not be positive because they are not given time to rest after the normal school time and probably because they are not well orientated about the usefulness of the after-school lessons. The second reason is that teachers are not properly trained to know how to go about the lesson. Teachers need to be focused, experienced and be concerned about students gaining knowledge and skills, not just out to cover the syllabus.

### **Conclusion**

The organization of after-school lessons in Nigeria needs to be improved upon in order to be able to realize its main goal of improvement in academic performance.

### **Recommendations**

1. On the part of the teachers, they need to:
  - (a) Train teachers properly on the focus of after-school lessons.
  - (b) Make use of experienced teachers.
  - (c) Remunerate the teachers.
  
2. On the part of the students, they need to:
  - (a) Be properly orientated about the usefulness of the after-school lessons.
  - (b) Give them at least 30 minutes to rest after the normal school lessons.
  - (c) Train them to improve their study habit.

- (d) Train them on self-practice exercises.
3. On the part of the parents, they need to:
- (a) Provide an enabling environment at home
  - (b) Provide necessary writing materials.
  - (c) Provide other parental supports.

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