



# NARED PERISCOPE

TOPICAL ISSUES ON EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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## ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS



*This is an abridged version of an original discourse on Addressing Bullying in Schools which was commissioned by NARED-FME and put together by a committee of the Association. The article seeks to highlight the issues surrounding this enigma and proffer appropriate solutions.*

### Introduction

**B**ullying is a major challenge in schools worldwide. Many stakeholders are oblivious of the devastating consequences of bullying on victims. Some people actually misconstrue bullying to be part of growing up. The purpose of this write-up therefore, is to draw the attention of all critical stakeholders in education, to the deeper understanding of bullying and its cataclysmic impact on achieving the goals of education.

### Definition

Bullying is the repeated undesirable aggressive behaviours such as verbal, physical, emotional or virtual abuse of an individual or group of individuals by another

*Continued on page 5*

### Contents

• Addressing Bullying in Schools	5
• Artificial Intelligence in Education	9
• The Power of Creative and Critical Thinking Skills	15
• Examination Malpractice in Schools: Causes, Effects & Remedies	18
• Photos	24
• Improving the Mental Health of the Elderly	26
• The Journey of FUCs Online Class	28
• FGGC Owerri: The Journey So Far	32
• Personality Profile	35
• Assessing scholarships in Nigeria	38
and more inside	

## From the **EDITOR'S DESK**

The world is evolving rapidly all around us. Yet education is still one of the foundational pillars of society. It lays the foundation for nurturing the minds and spirits of young learners who will be the leaders of tomorrow. However, as the world changes, so too must our approaches to education. Our traditional means of delivery of education is now being questioned and reimagined. For this reason, educators, policymakers and stakeholders are seeking novel solutions to the age-old problems of education.

Some of the examples of the evolving challenges in the education landscape can be itemized as follows: ***The Digital Divide*** – *the increasing use of technology in education has a divide between learners. Not all students have equal access to digital tools and resources, thus highlighting a significant barrier to inclusive and equitable education. There is a need to bridge this gap.* ***Mental Health Awareness*** – *The issue of mental health is gradually becoming noticeable in educational settings. Both staff and students today face certain levels of stress and anxiety, exacerbated by academic/examination pressures as well as socio-economic challenges. This calls for the need to create within the school system environments that give priority to mental well-being as well as offer support systems that are accessible to all.* ***Embracing Innovation and Adaptation*** – *The presence of Artificial Intelligence-driven personalized learning platforms and collaborative global classrooms have created avenues for transforming education. Furthermore, a push towards interdisciplinary studies, critical thinking and creative problem solving is redefining what it means to be educated.*

It is indeed an honour for me to introduce this inaugural edition of the NARED Periscope – a publication meant to shed light on topical and critical issues that educators and policymakers confront in our ever-evolving world. NARED Periscope seeks to be more than just another educational magazine. Our

mission is to be a vibrant forum where innovative ideas are shared, where pressing challenges are dissected and where the voices of passionate educators, researchers and leaders of thought are amplified. Our aim is to peer through the periscope to see the complexities of the education landscape in Nigeria and bring into focus the topics that demand immediate attention for action.

As policymakers and educators are entrusted with the task of guiding future generations in a world in which technology is bringing so many changes as quality of education continues to evolve, the Periscope is poised to engage these challenges. Some of these challenges could be ethical considerations of artificial intelligence in education, the pervasive and persistent issue of bullying in schools, examination malpractices or the strategies to ensure equitable access to quality education for all students.

Our commitment at NARED Periscope is to foster a community of practice and reflection. We will do so by delivering in-depth analysis and compelling stories from the front lines of education. We will highlight not only the challenges, but also the successes and innovative solutions that are reshaping how to teach learn.

I extend the appreciation of all the members of the editorial board to our contributors and readers. Your insights, expertise and experience are the cornerstone of this publication. It is through your voices that NARED Periscope will thrive, informing and inspiring educators around the country.

Let us remain focused and vigilant, looking through our “periscope” to gain a clearer vision of the issues at hand, and together, march toward solutions that will benefit generations to come.

Dennis Ugochukwu Okoro, FNAE  
Editor-in-Chief.

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF RETIRED DIRECTORS OF FEDERAL MINISTRY OF EDUCATION (NARED-FME) - THE STORY SO FAR

By  
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The National Association of Retired Directors of Federal Ministry of Education (NARED-FME) whose membership is now in every corner of Nigeria and beyond had a small beginning. A little over two decades ago, six retired directors of the Federal Ministry of Education (FME), who were members of the Nigerian Academy of Education, came up with the idea of having a group made up of retired FME Directors for the purpose of having a get-together from time to time and supporting each other whenever the need arose.

The retired directors were Chief Bola Olaniyan, Mr. Dennis Okoro, Alhaji Mobolaji Ligali, Mr. Joseph Abolade, Alhaji Gani Bello and Mrs Yetunde Holloway. Together, they nominated Alhaji Ligali to serve as the Coordinator. Alhaji Ligali served meritoriously through mobilization of support for members and their families

whenever the need arose. Condolence visits and attendance at burials of members were effectively coordinated. However, after some years, Alhaji Ligali passed on the baton of leadership to Dame Omolara Euler-Ajayi.

Dame Euler-Ajayi, working with an Executive Committee (EXCO), expanded the group into an association through the creation of a structure for the governance of the association, development of constitution, registration of the association with the Corporate Affairs Commission and expansion of its membership to accommodate the retired directorate cadre officers of FME.

Thus, the Association of Retired Directors of the Federal Ministry of Education (NARED-FME) was established whose duties were mostly social and educational as listed below:

- Attendance at weddings of members' children with a modest financial support from the Association
- Attendance of members at burials of late members or their spouses and generous financial support to the family
- Participation at educational seminars and conferences virtually and physical
- Intervention in any known/publicized cases of misconduct in any educational institutions,
- Official complaints to Pensions Office (PTAD) regarding pensions and gratuity of members; and
- Recruitment of new members.

With the Draft Constitution written, reviewed and approved by all members, the Board of Trustees (BOT) were appointed based on seniority and zonal affiliations with one member serving as the Advisor. They include:

- Chief Mrs. Teresa Chukuma – Chairman South East
- Mrs. Jane Ejueyitchie – Member South South
- Chief Amos Bolanle Olaniyan – Member South West
- Dr. Ibrahim Khaidal Zaifada – Member North East
- Dr. Ahmed Bokani Usman – Member North Central
- Dr. Umar Ahmed – Member North West
- Mrs. Yetunde Ibironke Holloway – Advisor

The first Executive Committee members of ARED-FME, who were appointed from the existing membership were as follows:

- Dame Omolara Euler-Ajayi - President
- Asiwaju Oladele Olapeju - Secretary General. His duty was expanded to include opening the group's online platform, registering new members and liaising with members who had celebrations. As a result, he was assisted by Mr. Abubakar Suleiman.
- Deaconess Modupe Okebukola - Treasurer. Pastor Bisi Giwa later took over from her; and
- Mrs. Ekwutozia Osime - Welfare officer

Dame Euler-Ajayi served meritoriously, diligently and transparently for 14 years while her EXCO served for 6 years until February 2024 when they handed over the baton to the present EXCO headed

by Rev. Dr. Uwemedimo Edet Asomugha.

The present EXCO came on board by a stiffly contested election. They include:

- Rev. Dr. Uwem Asomugha - President
- Mrs. Bolajoko Ogunmekan - Vice President
- Mr. Awa Arua - Secretary General
- HRM Stephen Obaro - Financial Secretary
- Mrs. Elizabeth Omotowa - Treasurer
- Mr. Abubakar Sadiq Suleman - Social Secretary
- Dame Omolara Euler-Ajayi - Ex-Officio

Uwem Asomugha with her EXCO has put in a number of structures that have further strengthened and expanded the coverage and scope of the Association. They include:

- Changing the name of ARED-FME officially to the National Association of Retired Directors of Federal Ministry of Education (NARED-FME).
- Initiation of strategic programmes such as the development of this magazine, NARED Periscope -Topical Issues for Educational Development which is offering a variety of perspectives for the development of education in Nigeria.
- Amending the Constitution to accommodate an expanded role that NARED-FME is designed to play towards the provision of lifelong educational services to humanity.
- Strengthening of collaborations with FME, other relevant MDAs, the private sector and other stakeholders in education.
- Institution of award to best performing Federal Unity Colleges in public examinations.
- Boosting of welfare of members.
- Increasing the membership of the Association, among others.

NARED-FME appreciates the support of FME and its parastatals, the private sector and other education stakeholders towards making our contributions to educational development in Nigeria and the welfare of NARED-FME members count.

# ADDRESSING BULLYING IN SCHOOLS



*Continued from page 1*

with intent to humiliate, dominate or harm underdog victim(s). This can be inside or outside a school setting.

Single incidents and conflict or fights between equals are not considered as bullying. Bullying is a deliberate action characterized by power imbalance and repetition. Bullying is harmful, malicious and dangerous.

## **Why Bullying Subsists in Schools**

The following factors could be responsible for the enduring state of bullying in schools:

- (i) Exposure to negative tendencies such as unfettered access to the vagaries of the social media and modelling after violent superstars.
- (ii) Unbridled envy, bigotry and inappropriate self-esteem.
- (iii) Poor academic performance, emotional distress and mental health issues.
- (iv) Nonchalant - indulgent teachers and bystanders.
- (v) Negative school climate: the obnoxious idea that schooling is a waste of time.
- (vi) Scarcity of essential facilities and amenities in school.

## **Types of Bullying**

There are four cardinal types of bullying. They include:

### ***a. Physical Coercion or Violence***

Physical bullying refers to bullying in which the bully has physical contact with the victim. It is the most frequent form of bullying in which one study found that globally, 16.1 percent of children who have been bullied say they have been hit, kicked, shoved around and locked indoor (Agun, 2024).

### ***b. Verbal/Written***

Verbal/written bullying includes spoken

remarks or written information that is emotionally damaging to the targeted victim. Furthermore, name calling or insulting someone due to natural deformity or personal characteristic, racist expression or terrorism against vulnerable individuals constitute bullying. Forceful dispossession of another's property also constitutes bullying.

### ***c. Emotional Bullying***

This involves slandering and backbiting or spreading unfavourable rumours to hurt the reputation of the student being bullied. Making ridiculous fun of someone, telling others to ignore or exclude someone from a social group to undermine his acceptance are other examples.

### ***d. Cyberbullying***

The advent of the Internet came with it the ubiquitous social media, through which individuals could reach out to millions of people in the comfort of their homes.

While the original intent of social media applications such as Facebook, Instagram and many others was to share love and goodwill among mankind, bullies use them to antagonize their victims. They use social media platforms like Facebook to write damaging content against their victims. It can be verbal or written and can include threats or violence as well as images, videos and/or audio sharing of a victim's private photos or videos without his consent, with the intent to blackmail him.

## **Vulnerable Students**

Generally, any student can be the target of a bully. However, it is important for school staff to be able to identify the type of students who are most likely to be victims of bullies so as to guide the school in putting in place appropriate measures to protect them.

S.O. Agun (2024) postulates that the following factors could make some students more vulnerable than others:

- (i) Being different in some ways. There are some students who have very small stature or are obese, some with deformed hands or legs, squeaky eyes, protruding navels, albinos, etc. are prone to ridicule and harassment;
- (ii) Introvert and non-assertive. The introvert keeps to himself most of the time, does not join the crowd naturally in social activities at play or festive activities.
- (iii) Suffering from depression or anxiety.
- (iv) Lacking friendship. A simple exercise in which students are told to write down the names of their friends in a class sometimes shows one or more students who practically have no friends in the class.
- (v) Emotional students. There are some students who get very emotional on minor issues and become very nervous, cry at the least provocation very jittery and disorganised.
- (vi) Belonging to a minority group could elicit bullying from a dominant ethnic group.

#### **Indication a Child is Being Bullied**

A child is under bullying when you notice the following in him:

- (i) Unexplainable injuries
- (ii) Lost or destroyed clothing, books, electronics, or jewelry.
- (iii) Frequent headaches or stomach aches, feeling sick or falling ill and feigning sickness regularly.
- (iv) Changes in eating habit, like sudden skipping of meals or binge eating.
- (v) Difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares.
- (vi) Declining academic performance, loss of interest in schooling.
- (vii) Sudden loss of friends or avoidance of social integration.
- (viii) Feeling of helplessness or decreased self-esteem.
- (ix) Self-destructive behaviors such as running away from school, home or talking about suicide.

#### **Characteristics of a Bully**

A typical bully is usually aggressive and found in company of bullies, who take no responsibility for their actions. He is frequently caught on the wrong side of the rules and regulations, with inexplicable possession of extra or new belongings.

#### **Signs of a Bystander**

Youngsters who witness bullying are more likely to exhibit the following traits:

- (i) Poor school behaviour by missing or skipping classes
- (ii) Emotional disturbance
- (iii) Depression and anxiety
- (iv) Post-traumatic stress
- (v) Drug and alcohol abuse, and
- (vi) Suicidal thoughts.

#### **Why Bullied Children Keep Silent**

Statistics from 2018 Indicators of School Crime and Safety shows that only 20% of school bullying incidents were reported. This is evidence that youngsters do not tell adults for many reasons such as threat from bullies, fear of the unknown and what would happen to them after disclosure.

#### **EFFECTS OF BULLYING**

Bullying has damaging effects of enduring proportions on youngsters in particular and society at large. Virtually no stakeholder in education is left out of the negative consequences of bullying. It is therefore apt to take a closer look at the effects of bullying, with a view to strategies towards mitigating them.

#### **Effect of Bullying on the Bullied**

The ultimate purpose of education is to nurture individuals to discover their innate abilities, with which they add value to their lives and the growth and development of society. Bullying completely truncates these expectations by making life miserable for victims, whose focus shifts from discovering themselves to escaping from the onslaught of bullies. Ironically, many victims of bullies, as if in retaliation, go on to become bullies themselves.

#### **Effects of Bullying on Other Critical Stakeholders**

Some parents get distressed by the undesirable state of their children under the onslaught of bullies, while others are in litigations against their children's schools. Friends of victims of bullying get disillusioned for their inability to

help their friends, while they also fear of the possibility of falling victim of the same fate.

The reputation of the school administration is also on the line for their inability to curb the monster in bullying that militates against the achievement of the vision and mission of the school.

Studies have shown that bullies engage in substance abuse and have the tendency of becoming huge liabilities to themselves and the society at large (Oleos, 2011).

## **WAYS TO ERADICATE BULLYING IN SCHOOLS**

In view of the devastating consequences of bullying, deliberate efforts must be made to prevent it from taking place. Therefore, aversive strategies must be put in place in all schools.

### **Reward and Punishment**

In principle and in practice, actions that are rewarded are usually repeated while actions that are punished are not repeated. Rewarding academically excellent and well-behaved students could reinforce their behaviours. School administrators should leave no student in doubt about how reprehensible and abhorring bullying is in the school system.

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a veritable medium of propagating good moral rectitude and the eradication of bullying in schools. Parents are bound to cooperate with the school to stamp out bullying in schools.

### **The Home Front**

Parents and guardians need to educate their children on bullying generally, through clear definitions and explanations, so as to know how to avoid indulging in it and also to protect themselves against falling victims of bullying.

### **At School**

It is important that staff and students are properly educated in clear terms, about what bullying is, its attendant negative, damaging and dangerous consequences.

Depending on the severity, the bully should be given proportionate punishment aimed at discouraging future occurrences. Where it leads to the death of a victim, the school resorts to the law of the land.

Where punishment does not result to expulsion, the bully will also need intensive counseling and assistance to change for the better. To achieve this level of success, a background check is needed to discover the remote causes of the negative behaviour of the bully. His parents must be involved from the onset of counselling.

It is pertinent to say that while the victim deserves sympathy, treatment, counseling and regular assurances of safety, with his school and parental support, the bully also requires same including his punishment, so as to change from his bullying tendencies.

The Ministry of Education at Federal and State levels should join other stakeholders in education, to ensure that necessary strategies including installation of requisite infrastructure such as CCTV to serve as deterrent to bullies.

Professional educators are advised to note the Psychological theories and interventions.

## **HOW TO HANDLE BULLYING CASE IN SCHOOLS**

A school that is serious about eradicating bullying must have:

- a well-organised Disciplinary Committee with clearly spelt out Standard Operating Procedure.
- Cases of bullying must be handled promptly. All the parties involved must be interrogated and their submissions properly taken and documented.
- The report of the Disciplinary Committee is submitted to the Principal with recommendations for the appropriate punishment to be meted out to whoever is found guilty.
- The support of parents of the bully and the bullied is solicited to forestall further infractions.
- Copies of the Disciplinary Committee Report are filed in the personal files of the bully and his victim.

## **Cases of Bullying in Nigeria and Other Countries**

Some examples of bullying in Schools in Nigeria and other parts of the world are highlighted below.

- A boy who was bullied because he was the Principal's son and was buried alive by

fellow students.

- A girl whose life was made miserable through name-calling.
- A boy with a huge stature made life impossible for fellow students. He became a case study in University of Lagos.
- A little boy beaten and poisoned to death in a co-educational institution.
- A senior student subjected a junior student to several slaps while the other senior students watched gleefully in acquiescence.
- In a foreign school, a suicide note was left by a victim of bullying in chilling poetry:  
“I shall remember forever and will never forget  
Monday: my money was stolen,  
Tuesday: names called,  
Wednesday: my uniform torn,  
Thursday: my body pouring with blood,  
Friday: it's ended,  
Saturday: freedom.”  
The final diary pages of a thirteen-year-old Vijay Singh. He was found hanging from the banister rail at home on Sunday!!!
- In January 1999; Manchester, England: eight-year-old Marie Benthams hanged herself in her bedroom with her jump rope because she felt she could no longer face the bullies at School!!! She is known to be Britain's youngest bullycide.
- January 1995; Belfast, Ireland: Maria McGovern overdosed after being bullied. The diary she left behind recorded a life of daily terror at the hands of her Schoolmates!!!

Most recently, in one of the Federal Government Colleges in Enugu, Nigeria, some senior students gang-beat a junior student. The horrifying episode was streamed online to the chagrin of the viewing public. The Federal Ministry of Education launched a comprehensive investigation into the mindless bullying and suspended 13 students involved, pending the report of the investigation. In addition, the Ministry directed the School-Based Management Committee to work with security agencies to find out if there was any external affiliation. Also, counselling and rehabilitation support was provided for the students' reintegration.

There are a lot more examples with horrible outcomes in Nigeria and across the world.

## CONCLUSION AND WAY FORWARD

Bullying is a pervasive threat to the well-being and educational success of students in schools across the globe as it is in Nigeria. Consequently, schools must develop an effective response to the different types of bullying, through the development of a comprehensive whole school initiative in support of the policy on bullying.

Successful implementation of a whole school policy requires the proactive leadership of the Heads of Institution and the support of Teachers, students, parents and the community.

Bullying is a life-and-death issue that is ignored at society's peril. It can no longer be trivialized by critical stakeholders in education. It must not be taken lightly, brushed off or denied. Thousands of children go to school every day filled with fear and trepidation; others feign illness to avoid being taunted or attacked on the way to school or around the school premises. Children who are bullied spend a lot of time thinking up ways to avoid or escape the trauma and have little energy or zeal left for learning, getting involved in constructive activities or maintaining healthy relationships with their peers.

Bullying requires to be deeply analysed and eradicated frontally.

This Is A Wake-Up Call To All Stakeholders. Together We Can Prevent The Monster Called Bullying At All Levels Of The Education Sector.

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# ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF **ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE** IN EDUCATION

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## INTRODUCTION

Artificial Intelligence (AI) refers to the simulation of human intelligence in machines, allowing them to perform tasks such as learning, reasoning, problem-solving, and decision-making. AI systems can analyze large amounts of data, identify patterns, and adapt based on inputs, making them particularly valuable in fields like education, healthcare, finance, and business.

The concept of AI dates back to the 1950s, when Alan Turing proposed the idea of machines being able to mimic human intelligence. Early AI developments focused on symbolic reasoning and rule-based systems. Over the decades, advancements in computing power, machine learning, and neural networks have propelled AI into a new era, enabling generative AI, deep learning, and large-scale automation.

## DIMENSIONS OF AI IN HUMAN ENDEAVOURS

### AI in Education

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming education through its integration in **classroom instruction, administrative operations, and policy development**. Adaptive learning systems and intelligent tutoring platforms enable personalized instruction, while AI streamlines tasks like grading and resource allocation, enhancing efficiency and accessibility. Policymakers leverage AI analytics to address systemic challenges and shape educational strategies.

Despite its benefits, AI adoption raises concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and job displacement, potentially reinforcing inequalities and reshaping educators' roles. This study examines AI's advantages like personalized learning and operational efficiency and its challenges, including ethical and equity issues. The goal is to explore how AI can be

responsibly implemented to create inclusive educational systems that preserve the human elements of teaching and mentorship.

### Advantages of AI in Education

AI integration in education transforms learning by enabling personalized experiences, improving accessibility, streamlining administration, and offering actionable insights. These advancements foster a more inclusive and efficient educational landscape.

#### 1. *Personalized Learning*

AI tailors educational experiences to students' unique needs, as seen with platforms like Squirrel AI. Key features include:

- Immediate Feedback: Instant corrections improve comprehension and engagement.
- Individual Pacing: Students progress at comfortable speeds, enhancing retention.
- Customized Content: AI identifies gaps and provides targeted resources.

Meta-analyses reveal significant improvements in performance, particularly in subjects like Mathematics, with adaptive systems boosting test scores by 20%.

#### 2. *Improved Accessibility*

AI promotes inclusivity by breaking down barriers for students with disabilities and underserved communities:

- Speech-to-Text Tools aid hearing-impaired learners with real-time transcriptions.
  - AI Translators enable multilingual classrooms to bridge language gaps.
- In practice, AI tools empower students with dyslexia and provide offline solutions for low-bandwidth areas, creating equal participation opportunities.

#### 3. *Administrative Efficiency*

AI reduces educators' workloads by

automating tasks:

- Grading ensures accuracy and consistency.
- Attendance Tracking streamlines records with automation.
- Resource Management optimizes institutional productivity.

These efficiencies allow teachers to spend 30% more time on student interaction while reducing operational conflicts by 25%.

#### 4. **Data-Driven Insights**

AI analytics support better decision-making:

- Student Monitoring identifies at-risk students for early intervention.
- Resource Allocation optimizes classroom and technology use.

For example, AI-enabled remedial programs in a U.S. school improved retention rates by 15%, demonstrating the strategic benefits of data-driven approaches.

AI enhances education through tailored learning, accessibility, and efficiency. However, thoughtful implementation is essential to ensure it complements the human aspects of teaching.

### **Disadvantages of AI in Education**

While AI offers transformative opportunities in education, its implementation raises significant challenges that require careful attention. These challenges include job displacement, equity and bias, ethical concerns around data privacy, and over-reliance on technology.

#### 1. **Job Displacement**

AI's ability to automate tasks such as grading, lesson planning, and administrative operations has raised concerns about job security. Teachers may feel their roles as mentors are being diminished as AI assumes responsibilities central to their profession. While reducing workload, this automation risks sidelining the emotional intelligence and creativity that educators bring to teaching, potentially impacting holistic student development.

#### 2. **Equity and Bias**

AI systems often reflect biases present in their training data, leading to inequities in educational outcomes.

- *Cultural and Linguistic Biases*: AI tools may fail to support students from diverse backgrounds effectively, disadvantaging non-standard dialects or less common languages.

- *Access Inequity*: The digital divide limits access to AI-driven tools for students in under-resourced schools, exacerbating educational disparities.

Example: During the COVID-19 pandemic, biased AI grading systems disproportionately impacted low income students, favouring historically high performing schools.

#### 3. **Ethical Concerns and Data Privacy**

AI's reliance on extensive data collection raises ethical issues:

- Consent: Students and parents may be unaware of how their data is used or shared.



- Data Breaches: Centralized data storage creates vulnerabilities, risking breaches and misuse of sensitive information.

- Transparency: AI algorithms often operate as “black boxes,” making their decision-making processes opaque and challenging accountability. *Case Study*: The UK's AI grading system faced backlash for disproportionately downgrading students from less affluent areas, highlighting the need for transparent and fair AI systems.

#### 4. **Over-Reliance on Technology**

Excessive dependence on AI risks diminishing critical thinking and creativity. Students may become reliant on predefined solutions, limiting their ability to approach problems innovatively. Teachers who over-rely on AI could lose opportunities to refine

their instructional techniques and adapt lessons to classroom dynamics. A balanced approach is essential, ensuring AI complements human interaction rather than replacing it.

The disadvantages of AI in education emphasize the importance of a thoughtful approach to its integration. Addressing issues of job displacement, bias, and privacy requires collaboration among policymakers, educators, and developers to create responsible frameworks for AI adoption that enhance education while retaining its human-centred values.

### Case Studies

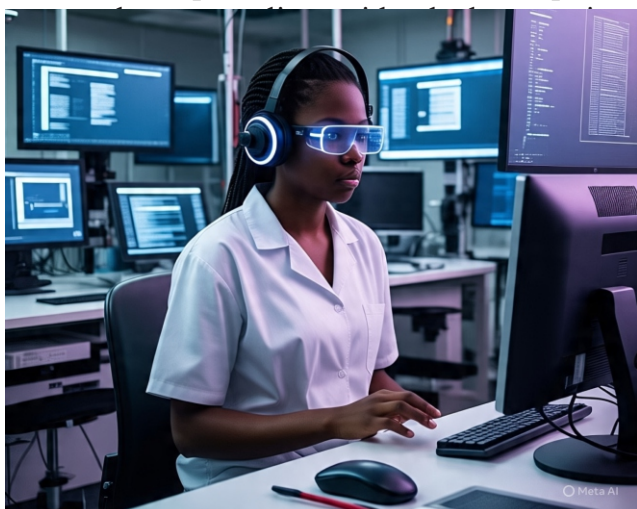
The integration of AI in education is best illustrated through real-world applications. These case studies from China, Nigeria, and the USA highlight how AI-driven solutions have transformed education while also shedding light on the challenges of implementation and scalability.

#### 1. *Squirrel AI in China*

Squirrel AI stands as a beacon of innovation in personalized learning, particularly in STEM education. As one of the leading adaptive learning platforms in China, Squirrel AI utilizes advanced algorithms to tailor educational content to individual student needs, ensuring a highly customized and engaging learning experience.

##### Key Features:

- **Real-Time Customization:** The system dynamically adjusts lesson difficulty and content based on continuous assessments of student performance. For example, a



and adaptive nature fosters deeper student engagement, particularly in subjects requiring foundational understanding.

##### Challenges:

- **Digital Divide:** While urban schools in China have embraced Squirrel AI, rural areas face significant barriers to implementation, including inadequate internet access, lack of digital devices, and insufficient teacher training. These disparities highlight the need for infrastructure investment to ensure equitable access to such transformative technologies.

#### 2. *uLesson in Nigeria*

uLesson represents a groundbreaking initiative to address educational challenges in West Africa, leveraging AI to make quality education accessible in under-resourced regions. Tailored to the specific needs of the region, uLesson focuses on affordability, offline compatibility and culturally relevant content.

##### Key Features:

- **Offline Compatibility:** Recognizing the limitations of internet access in many areas, uLesson offers downloadable content that can be accessed without an active connection.
- **Localized Curriculum:** The platform aligns its content with national curricula, ensuring relevance for students in Nigeria and neighbouring countries.

##### Impact:

- **Improved Learning Outcomes:** Schools using uLesson have reported significant improvements in student performance, particularly in mathematics and science.
- **Affordability:** By offering a subscription model that costs a fraction of traditional private tutoring fees, uLesson has made high-quality education accessible to families in low-income communities.

##### Challenges:

- **Scalability:** Infrastructure issues, such as unreliable electricity and limited access to devices, remain significant barriers to broader adoption. Efforts to address these challenges, such as partnering with local governments and NGOs, are critical for

expanding uLesson's reach.

### 3. *Carnegie Learning in the USA*

Carnegie Learning has become synonymous with AI-driven advancements in mathematics education. Its flagship product, the MATHia (ai?) platform, combines AI and cognitive science to provide a personalized and effective learning experience for students across the United States.

Key Features:

- **Teacher Support:** MATHia generates detailed reports on student progress, enabling teachers to identify struggling learners and offer targeted support.
- **Immediate Feedback:** The platform's AI engine provides instant feedback, allowing students to correct mistakes and build understanding in real time.

Impact:

- **Enhanced Student Outcomes:** Studies show that students using MATHia perform significantly better on standardized math assessments, with some schools reporting improvements of up to 25% in proficiency levels.
- **Reduced Teacher Workload:** By automating grading and providing analytics, MATHia allows teachers to focus more on instruction and less on administrative tasks.

Challenges:

- **Adoption Barriers:** Effective implementation requires extensive teacher training to maximize the platform's potential. Additionally, schools with limited budgets may find it challenging to invest in such technologies.

These case studies illustrate the transformative potential of AI in education, demonstrating its ability to enhance learning experiences, improve accessibility, and optimize teaching practices. However, they also underscore the importance of addressing infrastructural, economic, and training-related challenges to ensure that the benefits of AI are equitably distributed across diverse educational contexts.

## Global Trends and Challenges

The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in education reflects broader global trends, highlighting both progress and persistent challenges. While developed nations lead in adoption, developing regions face significant barriers. Policymakers worldwide grapple with ethical considerations, aiming to ensure that AI is deployed equitably and responsibly.

### 1. *AI Adoption Rates*

AI adoption in education has seen significant advancements, particularly in developed nations such as the United States, China and parts of Europe. These regions benefit from advanced infrastructure, including widespread internet access, robust funding mechanisms, and institutional readiness for technological integration. Schools and universities in these regions have successfully implemented AI tools for personalized learning, administrative efficiency and data analytics.

Challenges in Developing Regions:

In contrast, developing regions face numerous obstacles:

- **Inadequate Internet Access:** Many schools lack reliable connectivity, a prerequisite for most AI-driven tools.
- **Limited Funding:** Budget constraints hinder the adoption of AI technologies, particularly in rural and underserved areas.
- **Lack of Training:** Teachers and administrators often lack the technical skills needed to implement AI effectively.

*Bridging the Gap* To address these disparities, global partnerships and collaborations are essential. Initiatives such as UNESCO's AI for Education program aim to provide resources and guidance to developing countries, focusing on affordable and scalable solutions. Public-private partnerships can also play a vital role in bridging the digital divide, ensuring that AI's benefits reach all corners of the globe.

### 2. *Ethical Considerations*

The ethical deployment of AI in education

is a growing concern, prompting calls for clear regulations and transparent practices.

*Transparency in Decision-Making:* AI systems, particularly those involved in grading or resource allocation, often operate as "black boxes," making it difficult for educators and administrators to understand or challenge their decisions. Policymakers must demand explainability in AI algorithms, ensuring that their outputs are interpretable and fair.

*Data Governance:* AI relies heavily on student data, raising questions about:

- **Privacy:** How is data collected, stored, and shared? - **Consent:** Are students and parents adequately informed about data usage?

Policymakers must establish stringent data governance frameworks, mandating secure data storage and clear consent protocols to protect student information.

*Addressing Bias:* Algorithmic bias is a pervasive issue, particularly when AI tools are trained on datasets that reflect societal inequities. To ensure fairness, educational institutions and technology developers must regularly audit AI systems, testing for potential biases and ensuring that all students are treated equitably.

The global adoption of AI in education presents opportunities for innovation and inclusivity, but its challenges require coordinated efforts from governments, institutions, and the private sector. By addressing issues of accessibility and ethics, the education sector can harness AI's potential while ensuring that its deployment is equitable and responsible.

## **Discussion and Implications**

The integration of AI in education offers a wealth of opportunities, but its successful adoption requires a balanced approach that considers the roles of educators, policymakers, and stakeholders. Each group must contribute to ensuring that AI serves as an enhancement rather than a disruption to the educational experience.

### **1. For Educators**

AI tools should act as complementary aids rather than replacements for educators, preserving the critical human element in teaching. While AI excels at handling routine tasks and providing personalized learning, it lacks the emotional intelligence and creativity that teachers bring to classrooms.

- **Skill Enhancement:** Professional development programs must focus on equipping educators with the skills to use AI effectively. These programs should address both technical proficiency and strategies for integrating AI into lesson plans without compromising pedagogical quality.
- **Role Preservation:** Teachers remain essential for fostering emotional and social growth in students. AI can provide personalized learning paths, but only educators can inspire creativity, critical thinking, and ethical awareness in their students. Educators must view AI as a tool to enhance their teaching capabilities, allowing them to focus on areas where human interaction is irreplaceable, such as mentoring and nurturing interpersonal skills.

### **2. For Policymakers**

Policymakers play a pivotal role in creating a supportive environment for AI integration, ensuring that its deployment is ethical, equitable and sustainable.

*Establish Ethical Frameworks:* Comprehensive policies must address key issues such as data privacy, equity, and algorithmic fairness. Policymakers should mandate transparency in AI decision-making and require regular audits of AI systems to detect and mitigate biases.

*Support Infrastructure Development:* Equal access to AI tools is critical. Policymakers must prioritize infrastructure investments, such as improving internet connectivity and providing digital devices to underserved schools, to bridge the digital divide.

Additionally, policymakers should encourage public-private partnerships to fund AI initiatives, ensuring that schools in low-income regions are not left behind in the digital transformation of education.

### 3. For Stakeholders

Stakeholders, including technology developers, educational institutions, and community organizations, must prioritize inclusivity and affordability to ensure that AI benefits all learners.

- **Affordability:** Reducing the cost of AI tools is essential for broad adoption. Technology developers should explore scalable, cost-effective solutions tailored to the needs of underfunded schools and low-income communities.
- **Localization:** AI tools must be customized to suit diverse educational contexts, including language, cultural relevance, and curriculum alignment. For example, AI systems should accommodate regional languages and address the specific learning challenges of local populations.

Collaboration between stakeholders is vital to create an ecosystem where AI technologies can thrive while maintaining accessibility and inclusivity. This involves ongoing dialogue between developers, educators and policymakers to align technological advancements with educational goals.

A balanced, collaborative approach is essential to maximize the benefits of AI in education while addressing its challenges. By focusing on professional development, ethical policy frameworks and inclusive practices, educators, policymakers and stakeholders can ensure that AI contributes to a more equitable and effective educational landscape.

### Conclusion

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is poised to revolutionize education by providing innovative tools for personalized learning, enhanced accessibility, and increased administrative efficiency. These advancements have the potential to create more equitable and inclusive educational systems, particularly when implemented thoughtfully and ethically.

However, alongside these transformative benefits, AI brings significant challenges that must not be overlooked. Issues of data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the risk of over-reliance on technology underscore the need for a balanced approach.

To ensure the successful integration of AI in education, a collaborative effort is essential. Educators must leverage AI to enhance their teaching while maintaining their irreplaceable role in nurturing creativity, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking in students. Policymakers must establish clear frameworks to address ethical concerns, ensure fairness, and bridge the digital divide that limits access to AI tools in underserved regions. Stakeholders, including technology developers and educational institutions, must prioritize inclusivity and affordability, ensuring that the benefits of AI extend to all learners, regardless of their socio-economic background.

Future research should delve into AI's long-term implications on educational equity and its impact on historically underserved regions. Understanding how AI can address systemic challenges in these contexts will be critical to its role as a transformative force in global education. By focusing on sustainable, ethical practices, and fostering partnerships across sectors, AI can become a powerful ally in shaping an educational landscape that is not only technologically advanced but also human-centred and equitable.

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# THE POWER OF CREATIVE AND CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS: UNLOCKING THE POTENTIALS OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY GENERATION NIGERIANS

*By Abubakar Sadiq Suleman FIMC*

## Introduction

Creative and critical thinking skills are essentially the entelechy of education in all its ramifications and sophistications.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century has brought about unprecedented changes, challenges, and opportunities. The rapid pace of technological advancements, the increasing complexity of global issues, and the shifting landscape of the workforce have created a world that demands innovative solutions, adaptability, and resilience. In this context, creative and critical thinking have emerged as essential skills for success, enabling individuals to navigate the challenges of the 21st century and create a brighter, more sustainable future, especially for Nigerian youths.

## Defining Creative and Critical Thinking

Creative thinking is the ability to generate new ideas, solutions, and products through an imaginative and innovative process. It involves thinking outside the box, making connections between seemingly unrelated concepts, and finding novel solutions to complex problems. Critical thinking, on the other hand, is the systematic evaluation and analysis of information, ideas, and situations to form a judgment or decision. It involves objectively assessing evidence, identifying biases and assumptions, and developing well-supported arguments. (Christopher B. Hennessy, 2018).

## The Importance of Creative and Critical Thinking

In today's fast-paced, interconnected world, creative and critical thinking are crucial for success in various aspects of life. Here are some reasons why these skills are inevitably essential for the 21st century generation Nigerians:

*Innovation and Entrepreneurship:* Creative thinking enables individuals to develop



innovative solutions, products, and services that can drive economic growth, improve lives, and address pressing global challenges. Critical thinking helps entrepreneurs to evaluate market trends, assess risks and make informed decisions.

*Problem-Solving and Decision-Making:* Complex problems require creative and critical thinking to develop effective solutions. By analyzing information, identifying patterns, and evaluating evidence, individuals can make informed decisions that drive positive outcomes.

*Communication and Collaboration:* Creative and critical thinking enable individuals to communicate complex ideas effectively, collaborate with others from diverse backgrounds and build strong relationships that foster innovation and growth.

*Adaptability and Resilience:* The 21st century is marked by rapid change, uncertainty and ambiguity. Creative and critical thinking skills help individuals to adapt to new situations, navigate uncertainty and develop resilience in the face of adversity.

*Global Citizenship and Sustainability:* As global

citizens, individuals must be able to think creatively and critically about complex issues such as climate change, social justice, and economic inequality. By developing innovative solutions and evaluating evidence, individuals can contribute to creating a more sustainable and equitable world.

### **Cultivating Creative and Critical Thinking**

Creative and critical thinking skills are essential for human and societal development, they can be developed and strengthened through practice, education and experience. Here are some strategies, which schools are primed to adapt for cultivating these skills:

*Encourage Curiosity and Inquiry:* Foster a culture of curiosity and inquiry, where individuals feel comfortable asking questions, exploring new ideas and challenging assumptions.

*Promote Interdisciplinary Learning:* Encourage learning across disciplines, such as art, science, mathematics and language. This helps individuals to develop a more reasonable understanding of complex issues and to think creatively.

*Develop Critical Thinking Frameworks:* Teach individuals to evaluate information using critical thinking frameworks such as the Socratic Method.



*The Socratic Method* is a critical thinking framework that involves asking a series of questions to encourage critical thinking, expose assumptions and draw out ideas and underlying presuppositions. This method, named after the ancient Greek philosopher, Socrates, uses questioning to stimulate critical thinking, analysis, and problem – solving. By applying the Socratic Method, individuals can develop their critical thinking skills, challenge their assumptions and arrive at more informed conclusions.

*The Six Thinking Hats* is a critical thinking framework developed by Edward de Bono, which enables individuals to think more effectively and collaboratively by considering multiple perspectives. The framework consists of six hats, each representing a different thinking mode, including facts, emotions, caution, benefits, creativity and process. By applying the Six Thinking Hat, individuals can develop a more structured and collaborative approach to critical thinking, leading to better decision-making and problem-solving outcomes.

*The Paul-Elder Critical Thinking Framework* is a comprehensive approach to critical thinking that emphasizes the importance of intellectual standards, traits and elements of thought. It consists of three main components: Elements of Thought (purpose, question, information etc.), Universal Intellectual Standards (clarity, accuracy, precise, etc.), and Intellectual Traits (intellectual humility, intellectual courage, etc.). By applying this framework, individuals can develop their critical thinking skills, cultivate intellectual virtues and make more informed decision.

Schools should also:

*Foster Collaboration and Feedback:* Encourage individuals to work in teams, share ideas and provide constructive feedback. This helps to develop creative and critical thinking skills, as well as communication and collaboration skills.

*Emphasize Real-World Applications:* Connect theoretical concepts to real-world applications, enabling individuals to see the practical

relevance of creative and critical thinking.

### **The Way Forward**

In order to popularize creative and critical thinking skills in schools, educators should incorporate project-based learning, case studies, and real-world scenarios that encourage students to think outside the box and develop innovative solutions. Additionally, teachers can use interactive and immersive learning methods, such as gamification, simulations and debates, to foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By providing opportunities for students to explore, experiment and reflect on their learning, schools can cultivate a culture that values and celebrates creative and critical thinking.

### **The Home Front**

At the home front, parents can encourage creative and critical thinking skills in their children by providing open-ended toys, materials and activities that promote exploration and imagination, such as puzzles, brain teasers, and art supplies. Engaging in conversations that ask "what if" or "why" questions can also help stimulate critical thinking and problem-solving skills. By setting aside dedicated time for unstructured play and allowing children to take calculated risks and learn from their mistakes, parents can foster a supportive environment that nurtures creative and critical thinking.

### **The Critical Role of the Government**

While our government is visibly concerned about the abysmal state of education in Nigeria, deliberate efforts must be made to ensure that the right steps are taken towards addressing the near absence of creative and critical thinking skills in the school system. In the recent attempt at reviewing our school curriculum, more job skills were introduced for students to pick from as subjects. At this juncture, our leaders must be reminded that the 21<sup>st</sup> century school (by way of definition) is a place where students receive education that responds to the economic, technological and social shifts that are happening at an ever-increasing pace. It is an institution that sets children up to succeed in a world where more than half of the jobs they will have over their careers don't even exist yet! Creative and Critical thinking skills remain the

tools with which the 21<sup>st</sup> century generation will use to imagine, construct and navigate their world today and even beyond.

Government is accordingly advised to include Creative and Critical Thinking Skills curricula (exclusively) in our school content design, to complement the achievements of the greater goals of education in Nigeria.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, creative and critical thinking are essential skills for the successful growth and development of the 21st Century Nigerian youth. By cultivating these skills, individuals can develop innovative solutions, make informed decisions, communicate effectively, and adapt to an ever-changing world. As educators, parents and leaders, it is our responsibility to foster a culture that encourages curiosity, inquiry and creativity, and to provide Nigerian youths with the enabling environment, tools and frameworks necessary to develop their creative and critical thinking skills. By doing so, we can empower the 21st century generation to create a brighter, more sustainable and more equitable future for all.

The starting point is to articulate Creative and Critical Thinking Curricula in all their ramifications and sophistications, and deploy them to our Basic and Secondary Education levels of the Education sector. Adequate manpower resources should be provided to drive this initiative to its logical conclusions.

God bless Nigeria.

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# EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE IN SCHOOLS: Causes, Effects and Remedies

By: Agun, Samuel Olufemi

## INTRODUCTION

Many students engage in examination malpractice in schools. Some students use various methods to cheat in routine class tests, school examinations as well as in some major National Examinations conducted by West African Examinations Council (WAEC), National Examinations Council (NECO), National Business and Technical Education Board (NABTEB) and Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB).

According to figures given out by WAEC for the April/June 2024 WASSCE, out of the 1,814,736 candidates who took the examination, 215,267 candidates were involved in examination malpractice and their results withheld. In other words, roughly 1 in every 8 candidates who took the examination were engaged in examination malpractice. Also, in the NECO SSCE conducted in 2024, 40 schools were involved in examination malpractice. This is definitely unacceptable.

As much as efforts are being made by government, examination bodies and school authorities generally to tackle this menace, the problem has continued, year in year out with new methods of cheating in examinations emerging.

This article seeks to examine the root causes of this menace, different forms of examination malpractice employed by students, its effect on the society and efforts being made to combat them.

## DEFINITIONS

*What is a School Examination?*

Examination is a major component of teaching and learning which has been entrenched in the formal education system all over the world for centuries. Generally, at some regular points during a teaching course, tests are administered to students to measure their level of understanding or knowledge through a series of questions or tasks. It typically results in a score



that reflects the student's performance in a specific area of interest.

Another writer defines examination as an organized assessment technique which presents individuals with a series of questions or tasks geared towards ascertaining the individual acquired knowledge and skills (Oduwaiye, 2014).

In Nigeria, the concept of examination has assumed a high level of importance beyond the traditional school system. It is used as an element of recruitment into positions in all sectors of the economy. It is also used for promotion.

There was a tragic recruitment exercise conducted in 2014 by the Nigerian Immigration Service, where it was reported that 6.5 million people took part in the recruitment test. All the applicants turned up at various designated recruitment centres and sixteen job seekers died due to overcrowding, stampede, exhaustion and impatience of applicants at the various venues.

That much can be said of how examinations and tests have taken root, not only in the school system but also in the general life of citizens in Nigeria.

*What is Examination Malpractice?*

Wikipedia defines Examination malpractice as a

deliberate act of wrong doing, contrary to the rules of examinations, designed to give a candidate an undue advantage. Examination malpractice also known as cheating is the illegal action that students take during their examinations to try to make good grades by cutting corners.

### **WHY DO STUDENTS ENGAGE IN EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE?**

There are several reasons why students engage in examination malpractice which include:

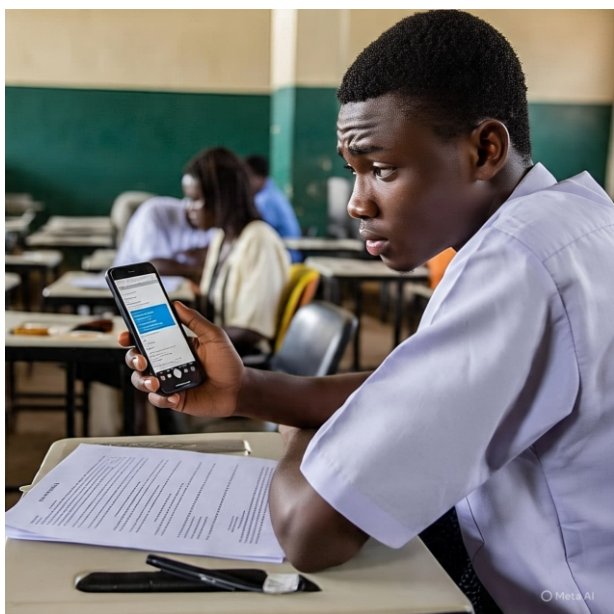
#### **1. The Over-dependence on Educational Certificates By Society**

Generally, in Nigeria, once one acquires a certificate, with good grades, he is assured of open doors to employment, admission into educational institutions of choice etc. Hence, everyone wants to acquire a certificate and good grades by whatever means. This “obtain a certificate by any means syndrome” puts pressure on students to use whatever means, including cheating to pass examinations.

Certification in the Nigerian educational system has encouraged rote learning, truancy, malpractice and over reliance on cognitive-based examination. This has led to most people being certified graduates who are grossly unqualified and are unable to contribute meaningfully to national development. (Nwafor, Alozie H. A).

#### **2. Inadequate and Poor Preparation for Examinations**

Many students who have prepared



inadequately for an examination and know within themselves that they have no chance of passing an examination, sometimes resort to using various forms of examination malpractices to cheat to make good grades.

The challenge is further complicated by the fact that students are more at home with social media than studying their textbooks!

#### **3. Collusion by Some School/Centre Authorities**

Some unscrupulous school/centre authorities deliberately allow their teachers to assist students to cheat especially in the National Examinations. In some cases, the students pay extra fees to the schools to cover such assistance rendered.

#### **4. Collusion by Invigilators**

There are cases where external invigilators sent to some examination centres by examination bodies demand monetary gratifications from students who are willing to pay in order to be allowed to cheat in examinations.

#### **5. Collusion by Teachers**

Some teachers assist students to cheat in examinations for various forms of rewards including “sex for grades”.

#### **6. Ignoble Role of Some Parents**

There are some parents who go out of their way to induce teachers, examination invigilators and some other individuals connected with the conduct of examinations to allow their children and wards to cheat or obtain good grades.

#### **7. Leakage of Examination Questions by the Staff of Examination Bodies**

Some members of staff of examination bodies and in some schools as well as other syndicates leak examination questions to students.

#### **8. Poor Monitoring of Institutional Policies**

Some policies aimed at promoting teaching and learning performances when left unmonitored could be counter-productive. For instance, promoting or rewarding performances and achievements in examinations, if left unmonitored, could encourage schools, teachers and students to device foul means of performing well.

### **DIFFERENT TYPES OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE**

Students use different methods to cheat in examinations. Some of the methods used include:

### 1. **Smuggling Notes Written on Pieces of Paper into Examination Halls**

Some students bring into the examination hall materials and pieces of paper hidden on their bodies. Such materials are sometimes hidden in shoes, pants, ladies' braziers, berets, hollow parts of school belts etc. Others write on their palms, thighs as well as on materials like rulers, handkerchiefs, chairs, tables, examination walls etc.

### 2. **The Use of Mobile Phones/Smart Watches and Other Wearables**

Some students bring smart handsets, watches, glasses among other wearables into the examination hall which they use to assess answers to questions.

### 3. **Collusion Among Candidates**

Where the examination hall is crowded and students sit very close to each other, some students copy each other's scripts.

### 4. **Patronizing Some Rogue Website Operators**

Some candidates patronise some rogue website syndicates which claim to be in possession of examination questions before the date of examinations.

### 5. **Collusion with Invigilators**

Compromised invigilators often allow candidates to cheat by using smuggled materials brought into the examination hall, and sometimes by allowing third parties to assist candidates directly during the conduct of examinations.

### 6. **Impersonation**

Some candidates arrange with impersonators to sit for examinations for them.

### 7. **Working with Agents Outside the Examination Hall**

Some candidates smuggle question papers out of the examination hall to some agents and touts to prepare answers which they pass back to candidates in the examination hall.

### 8. **Using Coding Methods**

Pre-arranged coded signs are used by students during the examination to pass on answers to each other.

### 9. **Intimidation of Invigilators**

In some cases, especially during external WASSCE/NECO examinations, candidates sometimes resort to intimidating invigilators and examination officials by brandishing

dangerous weapons and charms to enable them cheat.

### 10. **Post Examination Malpractice**

In some cases, some forms of malpractice take effect after the candidates have written and submitted their scripts. Examiners have found telephone numbers, urging the marker (examiner) to contact for price negotiation. Some examiners find attached to some answer scripts, money and at times, semi-nude photographs with telephone numbers, assuring of sexual gifts for generous marking.

### **Parents' Role in Examination Malpractice**

Parents play some roles in the perpetration of examination malpractice in various ways. These include:

1. Giving money to teachers to assist their children to cheat.
2. Providing gratification to key personnel connected with the conduct of examinations to leak examination papers to their children.
3. Sending their children to special centres where they would be assisted to cheat.
4. Interfering directly in the conduct of examinations to give their children undue advantage.

### **EFFECTS OF EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE**

There are important undesirable fallouts arising from examination malpractice which include:

#### 1. **Production of Incompetent Work Force**

Anyone who obtains a certificate by cheating would have fallen short of the skills and knowledge expected of the demands of that certificate. Thus, he would lack the capacity, needed knowledge and skills to work at optimum level at any duties assigned in his workplace. No wonder we have several cases of poorly designed and constructed buildings that collapse or newly constructed roads which get washed off at the first heavy rain.

#### 2. **Production of Corrupt Citizenry**

A candidate who gets away with examination malpractice or those who engage in mass cheating in their schools are invariably sowing the seed of corruption in their lives which would germinate as they move on in their places of work and personal life. As teachers, they would take bribes from their students. As politicians they would see nothing wrong with altering election results. As husbands/wives

they would cheat on their partners. As managers of banks, they would alter the books for financial gains. As governors of states, they would take bribes from contractors and steal government money. As entrepreneurs, they would produce fake, adulterated substandard products to maximize profit. The list goes on and on.

3. It defeats the basis of objective comparison between and among candidates. The examination is an instrument of objective comparison between the competing candidates with respect to their mastery of what has been jointly taught to them. That is, examinations are often used for ranking and selection purposes. In this regard, examination malpractice makes the selection of the best for a particular position or level difficult. This makes a mockery of excellence and standard and sends the signal that honesty does not pay. (Ayanniyi B. Alhassan1 Anya, Chidimma Adamma2)

4. **Debasing Certificates Issued by Institutions**  
An unfortunate fallout of this menace is the suspicion surrounding the standard of Nigeria certificates expressed by some foreign countries. This has led to subjecting many Nigerians to some form or confirmatory supplementary assessment tests to validate the level of knowledge applicable to the certificates they carry.

5. **Making a Mockery of the School System**  
Examination malpractice discourages hard work, encourages laziness and inhibits self-development. Why should a candidate who is working hard to get by with various forms of cheating strategies waste his time burning the midnight oil to catch up with his studies?

## **MINIMISING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICE**

With the negative consequences of examination malpractice on the society as analyzed, it is essential for all stakeholders in the education industry to put in place various measures to eradicate or minimize this menace. We shall examine these roles as follows:

### **GOVERNMENT**

Government at various times has taken some steps to tackle examination malpractice and has enacted laws to punish those caught. Such laws include the promulgation by the Federal Government through Decree 20 of 1984, part of which reads thus: “Any person who fraudulently or with intent

to cheat or secure any unfair advantage to himself or any other person or in abuse of his office, produces, sells or buys or otherwise deals with any question paper intended for the examination of persons at any examination or commits any offences specified in section 3 (27) (c) of this Decree shall be guilty of an offence and on conviction be sentenced to 21 years imprisonment.”.

Examination Malpractice Act 33 of 1999 revised the Decree 20 of 1984 and stipulates punishment ranging from a fine of ₦50,000.00 to ₦100,000.00 and imprisonment for a term of 3 – 4 years with or without option of fine.

In addition, Government should also take the following measures to address some of the underlying root causes of examination malpractice:

1. Government should ensure that those who are caught breaching the law are brought to book. For example in the year 2020, Lagos State Government fined 27 private schools the sum of N13.5m as part of punishments for being involved in examination malpractice during the 2020 SSCE which was conducted by WAEC. Each of the affected schools were to pay N500,000.
2. Government should ensure that schools have well-trained teachers for effective teaching and learning.
3. Schools should be provided with functional laboratories, libraries, teaching resources and conducive classrooms for students to have meaningful and result-oriented teaching and learning environment.
4. Government should ensure that the societal dominant system of relying solely on certificates is broken by redesigning the school curriculum to include inculcation of skills, hands-on projects, entrepreneurship and innovative practices.

### **WAEC/NECO/JAMB/NABTEB**

The National examination bodies have put in place various measures over the years to stem this menace. They include:

- Public enlightenment on the dangers of examination malpractice
- Information to candidates on rules and regulations guiding its examinations
- Sensitization of government and other stakeholders

- Use of Computer Based Test
- Use of Realtime Monitoring Systems during examinations
- Deployment of Biometric Technologies and National Identification Number
- Sanctioning candidates and officials caught in examination irregularities.
- Use of security bags for collection of security materials
- Photo-embossment of certificates
- Mounting of anti-malpractice billboards among others

However not all the examination bodies have effectively deployed technologies. The examination bodies can put in place some other measures to stem this malaise as follows:

1. All examination bodies should deploy Computer Based Testing, which has less potential for cheating.
2. All examination bodies should adopt the system which customizes every candidate's questions with each candidate receiving a unique set of questions; thus, minimizing the chances of copying from others.
3. For essay papers, different subjects should be scheduled on the same day and candidates seated in such a way that no two candidates writing the same paper sit side by side. A candidate writing a Geography paper for instance, may sit with another candidate writing Biology.
4. All examination bodies should deploy modern Biometric technology including NIN, fingerprint and facial recognition at examination centres to weed out impersonators.
5. All examination bodies should deploy modern Video/CCTV technology to cover examination halls to identify infractions during the conduct of examinations.
6. All examination bodies should specify and enforce guidelines on sitting arrangements for examinations to reduce "giraffing" and communication between candidates during examinations.
7. Conduct thorough background checks on invigilators to be used for examinations to ensure that no one with tainted and dishonorable credentials are recruited.
8. Put in place necessary security measures to

ensure that question papers from production to distribution at examination centres are not leaked.

## **ROLE OF SCHOOLS**

Practically all the infractions of examination malpractices are carried out in the examination halls in schools. It is therefore important for schools to put on various measures to reduce infractions to the barest minimum.

1. All candidates should be searched physically or with modern scanning gadgets to ensure that they do not bring into the examination hall, undesirable elements hidden on their bodies.
2. Sitting arrangements should be such that generous amount of space is given between candidates.
3. Teachers who assist in the conduct of examinations should be chosen from the rank of trusted, honest and reliable ones.
4. Schools should build into its curriculum, the inculcation of moral rectitude, honesty, fear of God and the zeal for hard work.
5. Teachers should be given needed teaching resources, be suitably remunerated, carry moderate teaching loads as well as have comfortable teaching environment to carry out their work.
6. Teachers should deliver good lessons, assist students to learn and cover effectively the syllabuses for examinations.
7. The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) should organise special programmes/seminars for teachers to discuss this menace and how to tackle it.
8. Any teacher caught engaging in acts related to examination malpractice should be handed over to the police for prosecution under existing laws on examination malpractice.
9. Students should be counselled through various programmes towards the inculcation of moral rectitude, honesty, hard work, diligence and emphasizing the evils of cheating in any ramifications.

## **PARENTS' ROLE IN STEMMING EXAMINATION MALPRACTICES**

The following measures should be put in place to ensure that parents desist from assisting their children to cheat in examinations.

1. Parent Teacher Association (PTA) should be used to appeal constantly to the conscience of parents to desist from such acts of misdemeanors.
2. Religious bodies should constantly direct their worshippers including parents to the

virtue of rectitude, godliness, honesty and uprightness as contained in the holy books.

3. Schools should constantly counsel teachers and other relevant members of staff who are targets of parents to imbibe the value of uprightness and honesty. Also, any cases which are discovered which relate to collusion between parents and teachers should be taken very seriously and stiff sanctions imposed on the teacher(s) parents and students involved.
4. Rather than scheming and looking for inappropriate methods of getting their children to cheat and obtain high scores, parents should be encouraged and feel free to bring to the attention of school authorities, areas of concern where they feel that the school is lacking in the provision of quality education for their children.

### General Remarks

The high stakes involved in the institution of examinations and its societal value, have pushed the fear of God to the background; as such many students are prepared to use any improper methods to cheat to obtain good grades.

We may wish to learn one or two things in shaping the educational policy of Nigeria from the educational systems of some countries which have either cancelled examination in their school system or apply them sparingly. A typical example is Finland where there are no mandated standardized tests apart from one examination at the end of students' senior year in high school if the classroom teacher agrees to participate. Most do out of curiosity. Results are not publicized. There are no rankings, no comparisons or competition between students, schools or regions.

The statement, "We prepare children to learn how to learn, not how to take a test" said by Pasi Sahlberg, a former Finish Mathematics and Physics teacher should be the central focus of the educational delivery in Nigeria.

### SUMMARY

We have discussed generally various aspects of examination malpractice in schools in Nigeria. Starting with definitions of examination and malpractice, we examined some of the causes of examination malpractice and listed some of the methods used by students to cheat in examinations. We discussed the effect of malpractice in the society and examined efforts made by all those who are connected one way or

the other with the generally conduct of examinations.

No efforts should be spared by government, examination bodies, schools, parents and the general public to rise up to the occasion and play their part to ensure that incidents of examination malpractice are eliminated in the conduct of examinations in Nigeria.

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# PHOTOS



President NARED-FME, Rev. Dr. Uwem Asomugha handing over a NARED-FME award to Federal Ministry of Education (FME) for the best FGGC in WASSCE 2023/24 during the World Teachers Day 2024



NARED-FME President and her team at a sensitization meeting with the then Permanent Secretary, Federal Ministry of Education (now Head of Service of the Federation), Mrs Didi Esther Wilson-Jack



NARED-FME on a sensitization meeting with the Executive Secretary, Prof. Paulinus Okwelle and the management team of National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE)

# PHOTOS



Celebration of Prof. Jamila Shu'ara, a NARED-FME member as the first female Vice Chancellor of Baze University. It was a combined celebration of her birthday and the naming of a faculty after her by the university.



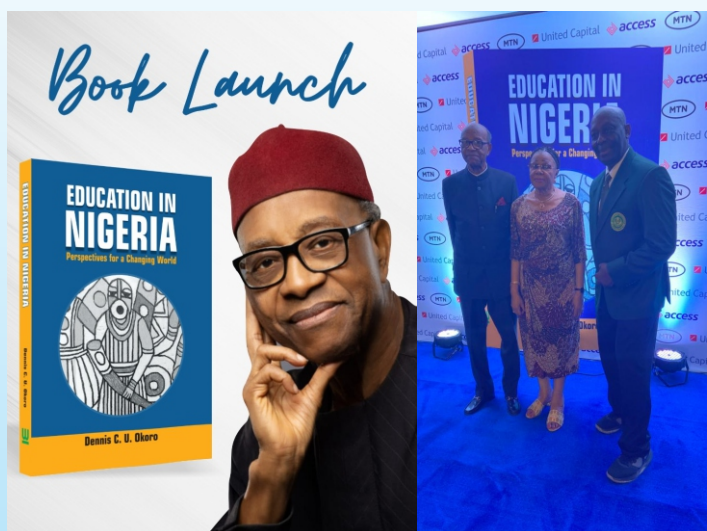
Coronation ceremony of HRH Oba Stephen Adedeji Obaro on 24th August 2024 in Bekuma Akoko-Edo LGA, Edo State. HRH Stephen Adedeji Obaro is the Financial Secretary of NARED-FME.



NARED-FME President, Rev. Dr. Uwem Asomugha with the Executive Secretary, NCCE, Prof. Paulinus Okwelle



Ambassador Mariam Katagum, a recipient of 2025 Hallmark of Labour Award. She is a member of NARED-FME.



Book Launch of "Education in Nigeria: Perspectives for A Changing World" by Mr. Dennis C. U. Okoro. He is a member of NARED-FME.



NARED-FME team visits Federal Civil Service Commission. At the centre is the Hon. Commissioner, FCSC, Hajia Hindatu Abdullahi, a member of NARED-FME.

# IMPROVING THE MENTAL HEALTH OF THE ELDERLY

By Dr. Gladys Chinenye Gomina

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), "Mental health is a state of well-being where individuals can cope with life's stresses, realize their abilities, learn and work effectively and contribute to their community". Thus, mental health is important for a long-lasting and fulfilling old age. Retirement should be a happy moment filled with relaxation and less or no work, but it has its peculiar challenges.

## Challenges of Retirement

The challenges of retirement include the following:

- a) Loneliness, anxiety and depression.
- b) Bereavement of former colleagues, friends and loved ones due to the age involved.
- c) Loss of structural job routines, social connections and sense of purpose which leads to low self-esteem, reduced self-worth and isolation.
- d) Financial difficulties, physical health problems and general mood swing, among others.

## Ways to Improve Mental Health During Retirement

From the above challenges, the following are some of the solutions for improving the mental health of the elderly:

1. Social Connections are important. Interact with church members, friends, family, neighbours to reduce isolation and loneliness. WhatsApp groups, Zoom, Facebook, telephone calls, among others, allows you to remain in touch with loved ones. Social networking is key to keep us mentally fit.
2. Eating healthy meals. Eat balanced and nutritious diet especially according to your current health status. Drink lots of water to avoid dehydration. Lack of sufficient water can affect the circulation of blood and the general body functions.
3. Exercising regularly. Walking, dancing, swimming, among others, can reduce depression and anxiety, and improve our mood swings. Exercise keeps us busy and less idle.
4. Learning new skills. New skills like musical instruments, baking, learning new language from in-laws, friends and neighbours as well as planting vegetables and trees in our farms etc. can keep our brain active and reduce our feeling of idleness. You can learn how to write poems, stories or even draw new things.
5. Mentoring younger ones. Give back to your community. You can mentor younger generations, be a counsellor or a consultant in your field, among others.
6. Playing Games and Puzzles. Solving puzzles, playing games such as Ludo, Scrabbles, Whot and online Games on phones as well as reading and meaningful chats can help improve our mental health.
7. Attending Seminars and Workshops. Capacity- building programmes such as seminars and workshops in the Universities and other institutions can be of help especially on topics that relate to you or you find interesting. It can either be online trainings or in-person trainings.
8. Going for Counseling. There is need to speak to an expert whenever the need arises, especially during mood swings, sadness,



anxiety or feeling indifferent, loss of a loved one, among others. This can reduce the effect of the loss on you and therefore improve your mental health.

9. Planning your day. Drop a list of daily to-dos. This can reduce the feeling of aimlessness, lack of fulfillment, etc. Draw plans of your wake-up time, sleeping time, meal times and so on. Remember not to be too rigid on yourself, there is room for flexibility if you cannot meet up with your planned time.
10. Relaxing and reducing stress. Find ways to cope with stress. Seek support from loved ones. Get care-givers and a chef, if possible. You cannot do everything for yourself at that age, you might breakdown. Take time out to relax and watch movies, go for walks, sit by waterside, read books and so on.
11. Getting enough sleep. Keep off your phones and sleep. Headaches, anxiety and depression are results from lack of adequate sleep. Make sure your bed is free from clothes and books and the room should be airy, spacious and comfortable with cross-ventilation. Lots of exercise during the day can enhance quality sleep at night.
12. Engaging the power of the mind positively. We live and die in our minds. It is our minds that make us feel rich, poor, lonely, successful or even see ourselves as failures. Be positive-minded and see retirement as an opportunity to try new things. Travel to new places to gain new experiences. Be patient with your spouse, with your children and with yourself. Remember that what you cannot achieve or acquire today, you can acquire tomorrow.
13. Being contented. Be contented with what you can afford. Reduce debt as much as possible. Do not live above your finance. Reduce your bills, from very costly DSTV to a lower package of GOTV, among others.
14. Dwelling among like-minds. Environment of like-minded people will improve your mental health and give you adequate social engagements and support networks.

### Why Mental Health for Retirees

Mental health is a major aspect of overall health and happiness for retirees.

- It makes life easier.
- It helps in calmness during crisis.
- It helps one to cope with grief and loss of loved ones.
- It helps in tackling of fears, remaining positive throughout life's uncertainties such as health diagnosis, poverty, discrimination, addictions and so on.
- It helps in maintaining good relationships with other people.

Lastly, finding a balance in your physical, social, emotional and intellectual life helps to improve our mental health. Remain active and connected while allowing yourself rest, relaxation and sleep. We all have different retirement journeys, please find what works best for you and also remain kind to yourself. Retirement will remain fun as you consider the above keys to improving mental health.

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# THE JOURNEY OF FEDERAL UNITY COLLEGES (FUCs) ONLINE CLASS

## Preamble

In order to meet the shortage of teachers in some key subject areas and other forms of challenges in teaching and learning in some Federal Unity Colleges, the Federal Ministry of Education, through its ICT Department, set up online classes to address the challenges. This article gives a breakdown of what is being done and what has been achieved to date on this innovative project.

Federal Unity Colleges (FUCs) Online Class started when the six newly-established Federal Science and Technical Colleges (FSTCs) could not commence in 2021 after students had been admitted. This was a rescue project that many felt would not be possible and parents were skeptical on the learning outcome. However, the ICT Department, Federal Ministry of Education was not deterred and constituted a committee which deliberated on how the live class would commence while the students were at home.

The schools involved were:

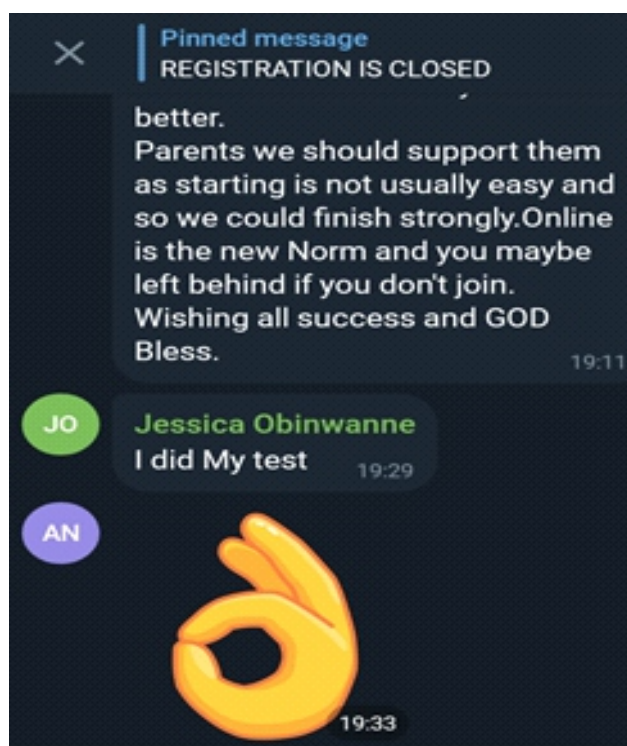
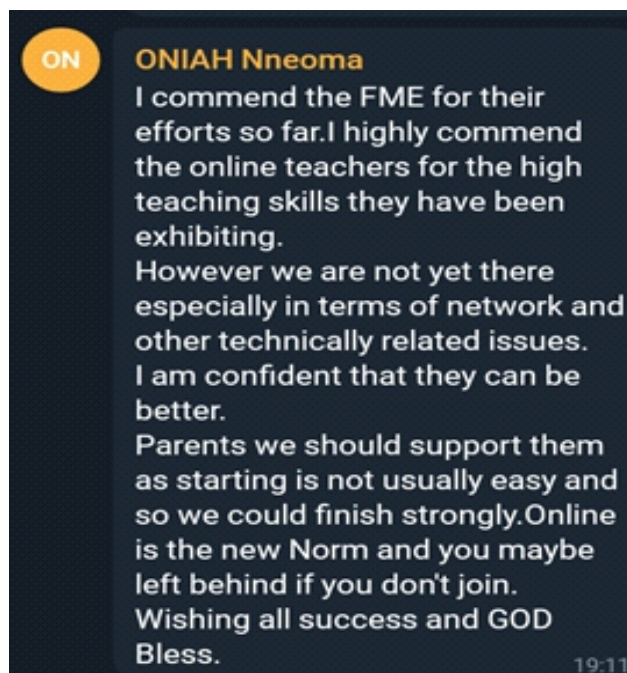
- (i) FSTC Umuaka, Imo State
- (ii) FSTC Igangan, Oyo State
- (iii) FSTC Ogugu, Kogi State
- (iv) FSTC Amuzu, Ebonyi State
- (v) FSTC Hadeja, Katsina State
- (vi) FSTC Ganduja, Kano State

The FUCs Online Class commenced broadcast on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at Federal Government College, Abuja (Wuye Campus) with 16 teachers in selected subjects from the school. Prior to this, the teachers were trained on how to develop interactive educational contents that contained graphics, animations and videos. In addition, they were taken through the rudiments of online teaching skills.

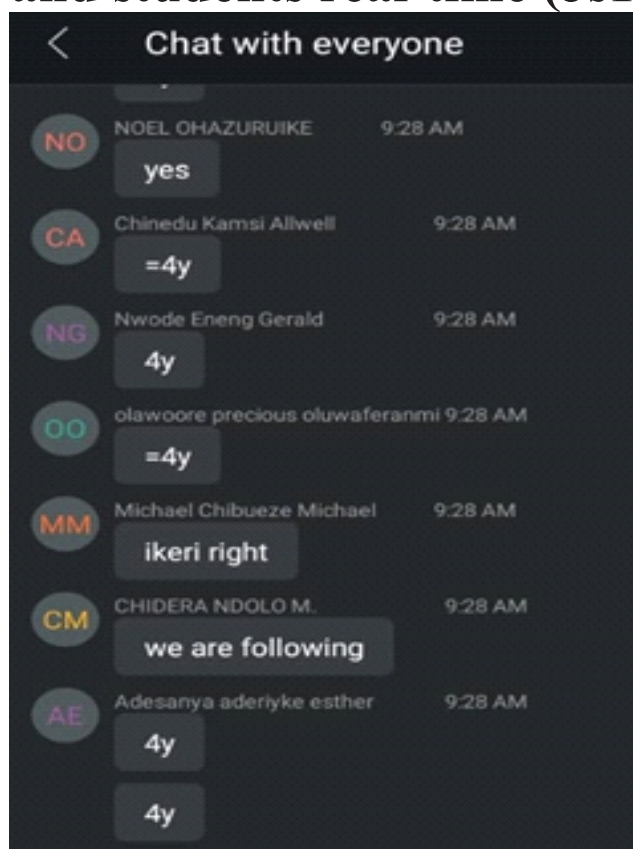
At the end of 2021/2022 session, the students had completed the scheme of work for the year in 15 subjects. A computer-based test (CBT) assessment was done including the examination that promoted them to JS2.

Feedback from both parents and students were very encouraging, though some parents found it difficult to key into the programme because the child/ward had to use their phone and the cost of buying internet data.

## Feedback from Parents (Js1)



## Interaction between teacher and students real-time (Js1)



The success of the live transmission for the six FSTCs caused the Ministry to leapfrog the Online Class to all Federal Unity Colleges (FUCs) in the country in 2022/2023 academic session. This directive was by Mallam Adamu Adamu, the then Honourable Minister of Education. In order to achieve this milestone, a needs assessment was carried out to determine the subject areas with inadequate number of teachers in the FUCs. This was the baseline used to select the subjects to be taught virtually and the six schools selected for the pilot phase. The schools which were drawn from the six geopolitical zones were:

- (i) Federal Government College, Odogbolu
- (ii) Federal Government College, Okposi
- (iii) Federal Government College, Jos
- (iv) Federal Government Girls' College, Zaria
- (v) Federal Science and Technical College, Uyo (Girls only), and
- (vi) Federal Science and Technical College, Michika

The pilot phase transmission started on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 for JS2 and SS2 classes in 5 subjects for each class.

### *List of JS2 subjects*

- (i) Mathematics
- (ii) English Studies
- (iii) Basic Science
- (iv) Agricultural Science
- (v) History

### *List of SS2 Subjects*

- (i) Mathematics
- (ii) English Studies
- (iii) Biology
- (iv) Physics
- (v) Agricultural Science

During the pilot phase, the transmitting centre was increased to two where Federal Government Boys College (FGBC Apo, Abuja) campus transmitted SS2 subjects while the JS2 remained at the Wuye campus. The online teachers were drafted from FGBC, Abuja.

At the school level, the online class subject timetable was integrated into that of the respective schools. In addition, the selected supervisors and technical officers ensure the smooth running of the online class and the

PDF versions of the lesson notes are made available to the students after the lesson.

In April 2023, a 3-week online revision lesson in English Studies and Mathematics was organized for the exit classes (JS3 and SS3). Likewise, during the 2022 flood, where many schools in the South-South had to remain closed. Online class was organized for the JS3 and SS3 students of FUCs affected by the flood.

Currently, twenty FUCs are participating in the Online Class and twenty subjects are being taught real time. More so, there are

schools that have indicated interest to come on-board. The transmitting centres have increased to three, which is at FSTC Orozo, where technical subjects are transmitted and the JS1 Class of the 3 newly established FSTCs are being held real time.

Feedback from students and the FUCs was very encouraging despite the challenges faced.

**Thanks for helping me understand mathematics class very well. Mathematics use to be my worst subject but since Mr Felix taught us I made it among my best 5 subjects. Why is basic technology not added?**

**This online class has been very helpful to me and i don't think it should be stopped for any reason whatsoever**

**88.2% of students say that the explanation of teachers using interactiv lesson note makes the online lesson ver interesting and impactful.**

**Interesting, but network challenges and highly consumption of data.**

**The online class gave me a better learning experience**

**I now have a better understanding of Physics**

**Student  
FSTC Michika**

### Effects of The Online Class on Students

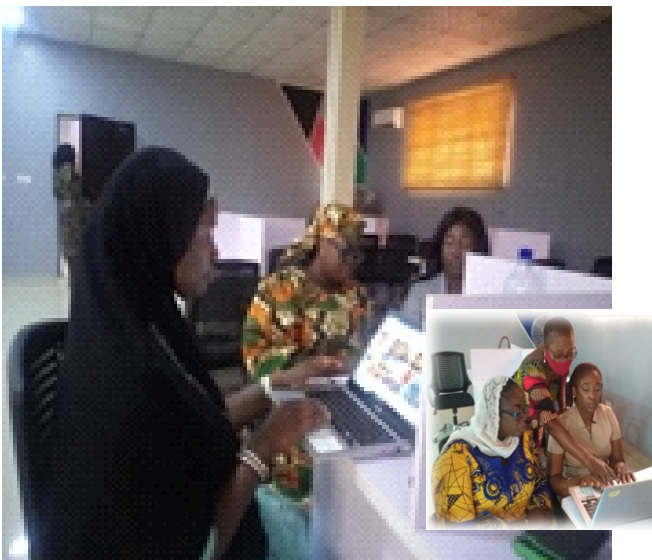
- (i) The emphasis on the use of interactive educational contents by the teachers has improved the listening skills of students.
- (ii) Less error in note taking since lesson notes are summarized in bullet points.
- (iii) It has exposed students to other teaching techniques and encouraged collaboration amongst students of other schools.
- (iv) Soft copy of the lessons notes are made available to the students in their Google Classroom accessed by the students anytime.

### Challenges

The major challenge is the acceptability of the subject teachers at the schools. They are of the opinion that they are being made redundant. As a result, they inform the parents that the virtual lesson is not student-centered. The other challenge is unstable internet connectivity and poor electricity. In addition to these is the inadequate number of equipment for schools with large number of students.



**Teaching in the Online class in progress**



**Training of Teachers**



**Teachers Preparing Interactive Lesson Notes**

### What is Next?

- To convert the classrooms to smart classroom. This will allow the students attend the online class in their respective classrooms instead of moving to the hall.
- To extend the online class nationwide.

# FEDERAL GOVERNMENT GIRLS' COLLEGE, OWERRI: THE JOURNEY SO FAR

## INTRODUCTION

This magazine intends to feature in each of its edition, outstanding academic, social and overall corporate performance of one educational institution as a model for other colleges to learn from and utilize one or two things to improve their educational delivery. In this edition, we feature Federal Government Girls' College, Owerri, which came first in 2023/2024 WASSCE and NECO SSCE, among all the Federal Unity Colleges in Nigeria. We congratulate them for this achievement.

## HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE

The college was founded on 14<sup>th</sup> November 1973 with a total student population of eighty (80) and ten (10) tutorial staff. It is a model secondary school for girls. At inception, the college started with a few buildings; some of which were inherited from Government College, Owerri. The inherited buildings were two laboratory blocks which housed the Biology, Home Economies, Physics and Chemistry Laboratories and four staff quarters; one of which was used as the administrative block. From this humble beginning, the college has recorded outstanding achievements. This has been made possible through the efforts and contributions of individuals, groups, corporate bodies and government.

The school has graduates excelling in all fields of endeavours around the world in Medicine, Education, Engineering, Legal, Optometry and Economics to mention a few. It also has alumnae chapters in the different parts of Nigeria, United Kingdom, United States of America, Europe and the Americas. In November, 2023 the college celebrated its golden jubilee.

## LEADERSHIP OF THE SCHOOL

The first Principal of the college was Ms Shella Everard (1973- 1980). She set the



pace for the school to excel in academics and extra-curricula activities. Nine successive Principals have followed her and maintained the culture of excellence in the school.

In January 2020, Mrs Francisca Chinwe Obiagwu, the current Director/Principal took over the mantle of leadership of the college. Coming from the understanding that effective instructional and administrative leadership are key requirements for a successful school, the Principal in her daily work brings to bear these attributes and more. Other attributes required for a successful school are: quality plan and policy, conducive learning environment, high standards and expectations, frequent monitoring of learning and teaching, focused professional development, among others. The Principal no doubt, puts to use some of these factors for the school's high performance as discussed below:

### Professional Development

Successful schools support staff in obtaining high quality professional development. To ensure that quality teaching and learning takes place, FGGC, Owerri organizes a termly capacity building workshop for teachers. At the workshops, the teachers discuss complex topics as well as methodology in their subject areas. This exercise empowers them to be creative and resourceful. There

is no gainsaying that their productivity is enhanced.

### **Frequent Monitoring of Teaching and Learning**

The college has in place, a vibrant lesson monitoring team and prep supervisors to ensure compliance and conformity to acceptable standards. Often times, the Principal goes round the classrooms with the Vice Principals to supervise teaching and learning. This keeps both the teachers and student on their toes.

### **Motivational Strategies**

Shaping the learning environment and motivating students to learn are important tasks of teachers as they influence their (i.e. students) performance effectiveness. Equally, motivating teachers at work ensures that work is done right and within a time frame.

At the college, students are encouraged to work hard by appreciating the best three students in each class in the Morning Assembly at the end of each Continuous Assessment Test (CAT). Teachers' motivation is also not compromised as their welfare is given proper attention. These motivational activities have reflected positively in the enviable performance of the students both in internal and external examinations.

The college is Information Technology compliant by enabling staff and students access to Information Technology as a

veritable means of Teaching and Learning.

### **Attitude of The Principal**

A student-friendly Principal is considered to be approachable, encouraging, among other attributes. The Principal of FGGC, Owerri is a student friendly principal who has built a cordial and healthy relationship with the students without losing grip on their discipline. Her open door and listening ears system, has endeared her to the students. A pet name she has for her students is, "The Stars of the South East" Mrs. Obiekwe ensures that her students are served good food, both in quality and quantity and in a clean environment. Her students see her as their mother, mentor and role model.

### **ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE SCHOOL WITHIN THE LAST FIVE YEARS**

#### **Academic**

- ❖ 1st position in 2023/2024 WASSCE and NECO SSCE among all the Federal Unity Colleges in the country.
- ❖ 1st position in 2020 Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE).
- ❖ 1st position at the National level of the Global Learning and Observation to Benefit the Environment (GLOBE) a competition organized by the Department of Science and Technology, Federal Ministry of Education on 13th October 2022.
- ❖ 1st position in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Mathematics Award for Schools at the National Level which led to the crowning of a student of the college, Marcel-Onyebuchi Jewel as the 2021/2022 Mathematics Queen of Nigeria on 14th March 2022.
- ❖ 1st position in the Science Quiz Competition for Senior Secondary School Students in Owerri zone organized by the School of Science, Alvan Ikoku Federal College of Education, Owerri on 24th February 2022.
- ❖ 3rd position in the SDGs National ICT BOOTCAMP for the Girl-Child from 23rd to 28th January 2022.
- ❖ 1st position at both State and Zonal level of the 24th Annual JETS Competitions in 2021



- ❖ 1st position in Essay Competition on 'Female Genital Mutilation' organized by CIRRDON Nig. Ltd. in November 2021.
- ❖ 1st position in the High School Leadership Convention 2021 Debate competition on 13th March 2021.
- ❖ Best Female Delegate Award at the 2021 Nigeria Secondary School Model United National Conference (NISSMUN).
- ❖ 2nd and 3rd positions in the 2021 Royal National English Olympiad organization by Royal Education Media for students across the 36 States of the Federation and FCT.

### **Infrastructural Development**

The college was recently given a face lift. One of the buildings inherited from Government Secondary School, Owerri, since inception which was still in use and housing the Principal and Vice Principals' Offices and the Bursary Unit was pulled down through the support of the Federal Ministry of Education. A besetting one-storey building, as the Administrative block for the college has been erected. Other recent projects undertaken in the college, still through the Federal Ministry of Education include:

1. Construction of 1 block of 1 storey hostel.
2. Construction of 200 tables and 400 benches for dining hall.
3. Purchase of a brand new 150KVA sound proof generator.
4. Equipping of the new Administrative block.
5. Construction of a 4 unit of 3-bedroom flat staff quarters.
6. Construction of a 4-bedroom duplex (Principal's House) (near completion)
7. Purchase of 1 brand new Hummer bus.

### **Others**

The Old Girls' Association has been of immense support to the school. Below are ways through which the school has benefitted from them:

1. Donation of Ultra-Modern 6 Classroom Block.
2. The installation of sixty (60) Solar Street

lights in the College which has helped to illuminate the College and aid security at night.

3. Sinking of solar-powered borehole in the classroom area which has helped to make water readily available for students during class hours and prep periods.
4. Donation of 20 desktops with 18 Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS).
5. Construction of a modern basketball and volleyball courts.
6. Reconstruction of the dilapidated building housing the Physical and Health Unit.
7. Repair and replacement of taps and showers in the toilets and bathrooms, among others.

### **CONCLUSION**

Effective leaders are visible and can effectively communicate the schools' goals and aspirations, engage with teachers to improve their abilities and are actively in issues-solving. The vehicle through which FGGC, Owerri has made giant strides in academics and extra-curricula activities is the Director/Principal, Mrs Francisca Chinwe Obiagwu. She no doubt, enjoyed the cooperation of staff and students. She is described by her school community as: "An intelligent educationist, a renowned teacher, a dependable and successful administrator, a role model, hard worker and an achiever."

We congratulate FGGC, Owerri for all her impressive and remarkable achievements.

# PERSONALITY PROFILE

**TERESA  
CHUKUMA**

TEACHER, ADMINISTRATOR,  
INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANT

Mrs. Teresa Chukuma was born on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1932 in Umumbiri, Oparanadim, Mbaise, Owerri, Imo State. She was nurtured in Calabar from age 3 months to 18 years, where she graduated from Cornelia Connelly College (A Holy Child Secondary School) in Uyo, now the capital city of Akwa Ibom State.

Mrs. Chukuma (Nee Nwagwu) attended the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, where she obtained a Master's degree in Geography in 1958. She attended the University of London for her Post-Graduate Certificate in Education in 1959 and the University of Iowa, USA where she bagged a Certificate in Advanced Management in 1978. In 1986, Mrs. Chukuma attended the Elite National Institute for Policy & Strategic Studies (NIPSS) in Kuru, Jos, being the only woman in a class of 45!

Mrs. Chukuma taught in several Schools in Nigeria, namely, Queen's School, Enugu, Federal Government College, Warri and King's College, Lagos. She was also the Foundation Principal of Federal Government College, Ijanikin, Lagos (1974 – 77) and Principal of Queen's College, Yaba, Lagos (1977 – 1982). From 1982 – 1992 she was the Director of several Departments in the Federal Ministry of Education, namely, Director Educational Services, Director Primary and Secondary Education, Director Higher Education and Director Federal Inspectorate Services.

After her retirement from the Federal Civil Service in 1992 she was appointed Executive Chairman of the National Commission for Women which metamorphosed into the Ministry of Women Affairs. In 1999, Mrs. Chukuma was also appointed Chairman of the Presidential Visitation Panel to Abubakar Tafawa Balewa University (ATBU) Bauchi, and University of Ilorin (UNILORIN) in 2004.

She deservedly received recognition for her work from several quarters: from her past students, from Clubs & Societies, from organizations and her community. The chieftaincy title bestowed on her in December 2004, by Eze Benson



Maduakoh of Umokodike, Okwele, sums it all. The title of “OCHIRI OZUO” means “a person who gathers and trains.” Mrs. Chukuma's work with thousands of children in schools, men and women in offices testifies to that. Indeed, UNESCO appointed her Honourary Ambassador for the International Literacy year in 1990 following her participation in Thailand in the World Conference on “Education for All by the Year 2000.” Mrs. Chukuma has visited over 40 countries worldwide.

Mrs. Chukuma served as member of several Boards, namely; Joint Admissions and Matriculation Board (JAMB), the National Universities Commission (NUC), Implementation Committee on the National Policy on Education, National Merit Award Committee, to name a few. She was Chairman of the National Committee of the West African Examinations Council (WAEC) (1988 – 1990), Chairman of the Joint Consultative Committee on Education (JCCE) 1987-1992 and Vice Chairman of UNESCO Committee for the Evaluation of Foreign Certificates, Diplomas and Degrees.

She is a Fellow of the Nigeria Academy of Education (Fnae), a member of the National Institute (mni) and a member of Federation of African Women Educationalists (FAWE). She is also a member of the Hall of Fame of Queen's College, Lagos and a member of the Nigerian Women's Hall of Fame, Abuja.

Mrs. Chukuma is blessed with six biological children.

## AMBASSADOR MARIAM YALWAJI KATAGUM, CON, FCOL

Ambassador Mariam Yalwaji Katagum, CON, FCOL, is an educationist, administrator and diplomat with leadership experience in the Nigerian public service and within the United Nations System.

She was born on 18<sup>th</sup> November, 1954 in Azare, into the Royal Household of Katagum, in present day Bauchi State, Nigeria. Her father, the late Alhaji Umar Farouq was the 10<sup>th</sup> Emir of Katagum, while her mother, Fulani Ulu Binta Bayero was the daughter of the late Alhaji Abdullahi Bayero, the 10<sup>th</sup> Emir of Kano.

She attended the prestigious Capital School, Kaduna from 1960-1966 and then proceeded to Queen Elizabeth School, Ilorin, Kwara State for her secondary education from 1967-1971. She attended the School of Basic Studies, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State from 1972-1973. In 1976, she obtained a B.A (Hons) English and a Graduate Certificate in Education from the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State. She later obtained an M.Ed. in Administration and Planning from the School of Post Graduate Studies, University of Lagos, Akoka-Yaba, Lagos State in 1985 and a Certificate in Social Development Policy, Planning and Practice from the University College London, London, United Kingdom in 1999.

She joined the Federal Civil Service on 28<sup>th</sup> October, 1977 as an Education Officer II and rose to the rank of Director GL17, a position she held until her retirement from service in 2012. She started her career as an English Language Teacher, in 1977, at the Federal Government College, Azare and was eventually posted to the Federal Scholarship Board, Lagos. This was at the peak of the 'Federal Government Crash Programme Scholarships' where students were sent overseas to study, in order to bridge the manpower gap in the country, particularly in the sciences. This was where she honed her skills and developed great interest in multilateral cooperation in education. She was later posted to the NATCOM-UNESCO Section in the International Education Branch of the Ministry. She was Director, Special Projects, National Primary Education Commission/Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC), Abuja,



(2000-2001); Secretary General, Nigerian National Commission for UNESCO (2001-2009); Head of Division for National and International Partnerships, Policy Planning, Management and Research Department, Federal Ministry of Education, Abuja (2006-2009). During this period, she worked extensively on several World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF and JICA projects.

Between 2003-2009, she served as Member, representing FME, on the Governing Councils of the Kaduna Polytechnic; the Federal University of Technology, Minna; the National Open University; and the University of Lagos. She has also served on numerous national and inter-ministerial committees.

In 2009, she was appointed Nigeria's Ambassador, Permanent Delegate to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris, France, by the late President Yar'adua. In 2014, at the expiration of her first term of duty, she was reappointed by President Goodluck Jonathan for a second and final term of office. As Ambassador, Permanent Delegate to UNESCO, Ambassador Katagum served meritoriously under three Nigerian Presidents - President Yar'adua, President Jonathan and President Buhari (between 2009 and 2019). During this

period, she also served as Nigeria's Representative on the Executive Board of UNESCO, and, among others, held the position of Vice-President for Africa (Group Va). She represented Nigeria on the Board of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in Vancouver, Canada, where she was Deputy Chairperson from 2014-2019.

Some of her notable achievements include: establishment of the UNESCO Multi-sectorial Regional Office in Abuja; establishment of two UNESCO Category 2 Centres: Regional Centre for Integrated River Basin Management (Kaduna) and International Centre for Biotechnology (Nsukka); inscription of the Argungu Fishing Festival on the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List; Financial and Technical Support by COL to many teacher training Institutions; and Hosting of the Pan Commonwealth Forum (PCF 7) in Nigeria, to mention a few.

Following her nomination and swearing-in by President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, on 21<sup>st</sup> August, 2019, Ambassador Katagum became Nigeria's Minister of State for Industry, Trade and Investment. As an investment driving Ministry, Ambassador Katagum, with her counterpart, led the promotion of government's policies of Ease of Doing Business, job creation, poverty eradication and industrialization, implementing various policies and programmes including: standardization of bilateral trade agreements, stimulating growth of domestic Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, (MSMEs) and the renewed roadmap to increase Nigeria's Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs).

As Minister of State, she served as the Chairperson of the Presidential Mandate Delivery Unit. She was also the Chairperson, Steering Committee of the MSME Survival Fund; a programme designed to cushion the effects of COVID-19 on the economy, by safeguarding approximately one million, seven hundred thousand (1,700,000) jobs nationwide. She championed the cause of Halal Certification in Nigeria, in view of the opportunities that abound in the sector and chaired the Halal Policy Implementation Committee and that of Tomato Policy. She ensured Nigeria's effective participation in the Dubai 2020 World Exposition. She was a member of the Nigeria-

Saudi Business Council; the Transaction Implementation Committee for the Reform of Calabar and Kano Special Economic Zones; the High Level Advisory Committee on Women's Economic Empowerment and Gender in Nigeria; the Nigeria-South Africa Joint Ministerial Advisory Council; the Steering Committee, Global Entrepreneurship Network, Start-Up Nations Ministerial; and the Osaka 2025 Technical Committee. She has led several trade and investment missions to many countries around the world and chaired the campaign Committee for the election of Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala as Director-General, World Trade Organization.

Ambassador Katagum is versed in international and multilateral negotiations, inter-governmental and policy processes in the fields of education, the sciences, culture and communications; particularly, under the auspices of UNESCO. Amongst others, she is the author of the book **“Ten Years of Stewardship at UNESCO Headquarters”**, a documentation on ten years of multilateral cooperation, achievements and personal policy recommendations for the future of cooperation between Nigeria and UNESCO in all its fields of mandate.

In recognition of her service to humanity, Ambassador Katagum has received several awards and recognitions both locally and internationally. In 2022, she was conferred with the prestigious title of Honorary Fellow of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) in recognition of her years of service to Education and Mentorship of the girl child. She is the first Nigerian female to be so honoured. In the same year, she received Nigeria's Vice President's Commendation for Outstanding Contribution to the MSME Sector. In 2023, she was conferred with the distinguished national honour of Commander of the Order of the Niger (CON) by President Muhammadu Buhari, GCFR, in recognition of her service to the nation.

She is passionate about gender equality; girl-child education; MSMEs; and skills development, particularly for the youth and women.

Ambassador Katagum is married with four children.

# ACCESSING THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIPS/BURSARIES FOR TERTIARY EDUCATION

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Federal Ministry of Education (FME) has a scholarship board, the Federal Scholarship Board (FSB) whose mandate is to implement Federal Government policy and programmes on foreign and local scholarship awards to deserving Nigerian scholars; supervise and monitor the activities of Federal Government Scholars in Tertiary Institutions locally and abroad, among others. The Nigerian Scholarship Award is for scholars studying in Nigerian public tertiary institutions only.

In addition to these, FSB also implements the Education Bursary award for scholars studying Education in public Universities and Colleges of Education. No student is permitted to benefit from both the scholarship and the bursary.

## 2.0 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

The criteria for the Nigerian Scholarship Award are as follows:

- Applicants for Postgraduate Studies should possess a minimum of first degree with Second Class Honours Division. Applicants must be registered full-time students of Federal or State Universities.
- All other applicants must be registered full-time students in their second year or above in Federal or State Universities, Polytechnics & Monotechnics and Colleges of Education. All undergraduate scholarship applicants (Physically-challenged inclusive) must have at least 4.0 Cumulative Grade Points Aggregate (CGPA) on a five (5) point scale or its equivalent or 5.0 on a 7-point scale.



- All HND and NCE applicants must have a CGPA of 3.5 and above on a scale of 4.

## 3.0 APPLICATION PROCESSES

- i. Placement of adverts on FME's website ([www.education.gov.ng](http://www.education.gov.ng)), NTA, Newspapers, FME social media platforms, among others.
- ii. Opening of portal. Visit [www.education.gov.ng](http://www.education.gov.ng)
- iii. Qualified applicants apply.
- iv. Applications are downloaded by FSB.
- v. Qualified Applicants are arranged State by State after screening.
- vi. Inter-Ministerial meeting for the nomination/selection of applicants is conducted.
- vii. Award letters are sent to successful applicants in Nigerian Public Institutions.

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