

## Programme Planning in School: Perspectives on Out-Door Programme

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**Abstract** *he objective of this paper is to emphasize the need and importance of outdoor learning in our secondary schools which will act as a panacea to improving academic excellence and discipline in schools. It is believed that refocusing the out door learning will go a long way to strengthen the social, skills and mental development of the students. The methodology here involves the review of the past and present perception of school head on outdoor programmes. It also finds out that the awareness is not there among the stakeholders in education. It was also discovered through personal interaction with staff and students that most schools do not take part in outdoor programme. Most of the schools interacted with show no knowledge of what outdoor programmes are. The uniqueness of this paper is providing clues on how school head can introduce and carry out the outdoor programmes. They should see it not as extra curricula activity but as an inevitable part of completing the school curriculum. This paper is calling for a refocus on the outdoor learning and how this can be achieved internally without waiting for fund from the government but as a means of attracting the government.*

**Keywords:** *Programme, Planning, Outdoor, Learning*

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### Introduction

The school can be defined as an industry engaged in the transformation of human being, ready for meaningful living and making his or her own contribution to the development of the society.

For the school to achieve this role, they will not work in isolation, It is on this ground that the school is referred to as a social system where the different unit need to work together to achieve a common goal.

Akinwumiju and Agabi (2005: 101) defined the social system as "a system that is essentially service oriented. It is a system that exists primarily to service society with the purpose of maintaining a social order. It therefore, does not exist in isolation with its environment".

The school as service organization needs to plan its programme in order to achieve its set up goal. Senge (1990) Watkins and Marsick (1993) in Hoy and Miskel (2006:33) sees the school as "places where participants continually expand their capacities to create and achieve, where novel patterns of thinking are encouraged, where collective aspiration are nurtured, where participants expands its capacity for innovation and problem solving".

From the views above one can deduce that learning can take place outside the classroom, to produce a total educated child that will fit into the society. The school in planning its programme should also take note of non-academic programmes which also enhances the academic programmes, that is the psychomotor domain, the cognitive and the affective domain. In the past most of this outdoor programmes were referred to as extra curricula activities which led to schools not attaching too much importance to it. The word extra according to Edem (2004) made it to add anything to the exam scores of the students.

The less attention paid on the outdoor programmes and the use of the psychomotor domain has led to series of indiscipline cases in our schools today.

The non-academic programme as so called because its does not add to the exam scores of the students and as such must schools are not committed or dedicated to it. Even where they are done, it is done haphazardly or just for the sake of doing it. The non- academic programmes are more of a practical way of learning.

According to Smith (1971) in Ozuru (2003: 132) that outdoor learning should offer educational experiences designed " to help the student identify and solve real-life problems to acquire skills and

appreciation with which to enjoy a life time creative living; to attain an understanding of human and natural resources.

The view above can be supported with the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004:7) the section (1) number 4 (d) which states that " there is need for functional education for the promotion of a progressive, united Nigeria, to this end, school programmes need to be relevant, practical and comprehensive, while interest and ability should determine the individual's direction in education".

The FRN (2004:7) section(1) number 7(d) went further to state that "the acquisition of appropriate skills and the development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society".

The aim of the National Policy on education above is not just academic alone, but development of mental, physical and social abilities of the individual, that is covering the three domains, the psychomotor, affective and cognitive domain. Outdoor-learning is so broad but, in this write up emphasis will be made on the common outdoor-learning activities.

### **Types of Outdoor – Programme**

The outdoor-programme if properly planned should be included in the school internal annual programme. It should be planned in a way that the experience acquired would have a link with the classroom experience. Out-door learning is active learning, and the participants learn through what they do, what they encounter and through what they discover.

### **Annual Sports Competition**

This is an outdoor-learning activity where the students are engaged in different types of sporting activities. It brings the theoretical aspect of physical education into real life situation. It encourages friendship and team work among students.

Sporting activities takes care of the psychomotor domain of the students. Through sports, friendship is also encouraged among students and schools mostly where they work as a team. For instance school football team, relay team and basketball team etc.

### **Speech and Prize Giving Day**

This is a programme that is organized though outside the classroom, but is planned to honour classroom activities or experiences. It is a day, where excellence is rewarded. Through it, students are challenged to be studious and of good behaviour. The speech and prize giving programme takes care of the cognitive and affective domain. It is also an annual programme that is very dear to most schools.

### **Class Activity / Open Day**

This is a day set aside by the school for each class or grade, to discuss and review the journey so far in academics. It is a day where parents of students in the same year come to interact with teachers on the well being of the student. It is a day where identified deviance behaviour is discussed openly with parents, and solution proffered.

Open day gives parents ample opportunity to discuss the academic strength and weakness of their children and ward directly with the people concerned. Open day encourages team work among parents, teachers and students and bridges the gap between parents and children, teachers and students, and between parents and teachers.

It is another serious outdoor activity that enhances the cognitive domain. It sensitizes parents to be directly involved in the academic pursuit of their children, and not to abandon them to the school.

### **Founders Day**

The Founders' Day is a special day in the school calendar. It is a day when the school community set aside to commemorate those who founded the school and those who have in one way or the other has bequeathed resources to the development of the school. It is a historical day where the heroes are remembered and a day where future heroes are inspired.

It is a day where generosity is rewarded and some time host community head are honoured. It is also a day used to reward past school head and staff that have made tremendous impact on the school. Founders' Day gives the student the opportunity to appreciate good work, and also to bequeath resources to the development of the school in future after graduation.

### **Parents Teachers Association**

This is an association, where teachers and parents meet to exchange views and explore new methods on how to achieve educational goals. For the school to achieve its goal, the family has a lot to do.

It was on this note that Ajuzie (2005:91) stated that the:

*"Family has much to do with the type of mental, emotional and psychological balance, value orientation, aspiration and personality a child develops later in life".*

The views of Ajuzie above shows that the value orientation and aspiration of a family will affect or influence the child's own value orientation. The collaboration of parents and teachers is of great importance to the achievement of academic goals, and to curb indiscipline in schools. This can be supported with the views of Edem (2003) that interaction of parents, teachers and students, will help in strengthening the authority of the school in terms of discipline and useful ideas will be exchanged on how to improve the learning ability of the child.

### **Clubs and Societies**

This is another means through which many outdoor learning activities are taken care of, the subject areas are covered. Under this section you have the young farmers club, music club, JET club, French club, Young Entrepreneurs club, Home Markers club etc. All these clubs are formed to bring the theoretical knowledge into real life situation and they are action oriented.

Clubs and societies activity also take cognizance of the three domains (that is the cognitive psychomotor and affective domain). The clubs should be meaningfully engaged outside the classroom to avoid idleness. The common saying that an idle mind is the devil's workshop will not occur in a school that has properly programmed its outdoor – activities. Club and societies also enhances the social life of the students and helps them to understand and appreciate the religion, culture and social life of people from other tribes. It helps them to appreciate skills, for instance, their participation in Young Farmers Club can expose them to practical life of livestock farming, while participation in Young Entrepreneurs Club will give those clues on how to start their own small business after graduation or even assist or educate their parents on the skill acquired.

## Impact of Out-Door Learning

Outdoor learning as earlier stated is all activities outside the classroom. They are action oriented, it is the transformation of theory into real life situation, and it is practical based. Above all, they are the means in which the school as a social system interacts with the outside world.

The outdoor-programmes show cases the skills and talents that are inhibited in the classroom, and gives the teachers the opportunity to discover the potential in their students. Sometimes the students also discover the hidden talents in themselves.

The outdoor-programme enhances the social life of the students which also prepares them to interact freely with people outside their family. It encourages unity and harmony among students which will then transcend to the larger society. This is one of the overall philosophy of Nigeria education as stated in FRN (2004:6) to " live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice".

The outdoor-programme if properly planned can be of economic importance to the school. The school can use most of the outdoor-programmes to raise fund to execute or improve a given project. Through the school sports competition, fund can be generated to improve or purchase more sporting equipment by inviting parents and well wishers of the school.

Founders Day can also be used to generate fund for the school by honouring those who founded the school or those that have being of great assistance to the school. In appreciation of the honour more resources are attracted to the school.

Through outdoor-programme, the relation of the school and its host community is also strengthened. This is also achieved by recognizing the host community in all the social programme of the school, thereby giving the host community sense of belonging. The host community in turn will become interested in the activities of the school, thereby encouraging a healthier school – community relation.

Through outdoor-programme co-operate bodies are invited to sponsor programmes in the school, and through it career development takes place indirectly, since knowledge and skills is developed as an added value to students everyday experience in the classroom.

Outdoor-learning is memorable in nature, and will have a long term positive impact on the students and will lead to individual growth. It also increases the affective and the cognitive with each influencing the other and providing an avenue to high learning. This can be supported with the views of Mehaffy (1985) when he asserted that outdoor-learning will lead to development of more positive self image, it will also improve students sense of competence, enhanced their socialization skills; enhanced integration and improve student – teacher relationship.

## Constraints of Outdoor Learning

Outdoor –learning according to Ozuru (2004) in Nwideeduh (2004) ed) stated that outdoor learning is a peep out of the classroom, to see the environment, but it is much more than that. Outdoor learning should offer an educational experience that is designed to help the students identify and solve real –life problems.

Outdoor –learning has suffered a lot of setback, it has not being accorded its rightful position. As started earlier, there are different types of outdoor learning but majority of Nigeria secondary schools are involved only in one or two of the programmes which is inter-house sports and speech and prize giving day.

The outdoor learning has suffered some set back as a result of so many factors, some of the factors will be discussed below.

## **Awareness**

There is no much awareness on the impact of field trip or outdoor learning among school head and teachers. Learning in the school is just centered on the classroom experience alone forgetting that to produce a total child, there must be an interaction of the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domain. The school head is not aware and even where they are, they pretend not to know.

## **Lack of Facilities**

This also constitute a problem to the achievement of Outdoor learning. A situation where the necessary facilities are not provided in the school, engaging in Outdoor learning becomes a problem. For instance, a situation were a school do not own a school bus, it becomes a problem to attend social functions outside the school because provision for chartering a bus is not given or provided for.

Lack of adequate sports facilities can also hinder student's participation in sporting activities and the absence of adequate school hall can also hinder the school in organizing programmes like Speech, and Prize Giving Day or Founders' Day, Exhibition and Cultural Day.

## **Finance**

Lack of finance also poses a challenge to the involvement of schools in planning Outdoor programme. The execution of any programme, no matter how small needs money for its success. Lack of fund has also compelled some schools to shy away from engaging in outdoor-programmes.

## **Personnel**

The school not being able to assign the responsibility of outdoor programme to a given group of staff also constitutes a problem. The staff that should plan and organize the outdoor learning is not there. This is as a result of lack of interest, those good old days; schools usually have the social teachers who work hand in hand with the social prefect, to ensure the involvement of students in outdoor programme within and outside the school programme.

## **Parents**

They are supposed to be key partners in the achievement of outdoor-learning, but they tactfully shy away from it. Most parents are not aware of the impact of outdoor-learning on their children. They believed that once the mandated school fees is paid, the school should not make any more demand, and even discourages their children from partaking in outdoor-programme that will cost them money.

## **Safety**

The fear of the safety of the students also hinders some schools from embarking on outdoor-learning, mostly the ones that involves travelling outside the school. The fear of taking the students to the river or forest hinders their experience which would have also added to their skills and development.

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