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Effect of Integrated Study Reading on Polytechnic Students' Time Management and Academic Achievement

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Abstract
Being a key factor in academic achievement, polytechnic students are taught study reading on the assumption that they will practice it on their own. The reality, however, is that most students do not practice it because there is no institutionalized regulated monitoring. The common trend among majority of the students is to delay serious reading till few days to examination. This leads to ineffective time management and low academic grades. This study was conducted to see how the integration and proper monitoring of students' practice of study reading will affect their time management and academic achievement. Three null hypotheses were tested. 400 students from three departments in three faculties of a polytechnic were selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of 200 each. After they were lectured on the study reading skills and time management practices, the experimental group was monitored and effectively guided to put study reading to use. Two instruments used were Effect of Integrated Study Reading Questionnaire and Tests of Students' Achievement. Results showed a significant difference in academic achievement ($t(398)=11.11$, $p < 0.05$) and time management practices ($t(199)=22.30$, $p<0.05$). There was however no significant difference in ND/HND experimental students' time management. The study therefore concluded that students can be less wasteful with time and make high grades in examinations if closely monitored and supervised to engage in study reading. It was, therefore, recommended that necessary institutional arrangements should be made for the students to be instructed in the importance of time management and closely monitored in study reading.
Keywords: Study Reading, Integrated Study Reading, Academic Achievement, Time Management

1. Introduction

Every student has got the potential to attain high grades in their subjects if they faithfully practise study reading. Reading varies in type and purpose but the most important purpose of reading for a student is to learn. Learning is largely connected to comprehension. Reading, therefore, is at the heart of comprehension. Complete understanding of a text is achieved by careful reading. Study reading requires the student to pay close attention to the text. Much like intensive reading, study reading is done with undistracted attention to details and analysis especially when one is aware that the material will later have to be recalled, discussed, evaluated and applied. Faniran and Olajide (2012) opine that a student who has obtained an overall understanding of the text is expected to not only be able recall it in the original order, but also be able apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information.

The teaching of study reading is embedded in the polytechnic General Studies curriculum prepared by the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE). One of the general objectives of *Use of English* taught in the first semester of the first year of National Diploma programme is development of appropriate study skills which invariably include note-taking, use of dictionary, library, scanning, skimming, and study reading (NBTE, 1999). The students are expected to use the different methods of reading as they undertake their studies but more often than not this expectation is defeated as most students put up a laissez-faire attitude to reading delaying serious reading till the examinations are imminent. A visit to the library shows that while the library is always jam-packed during examinations, students are usually very scanty in the libraries before examinations.

In his submission on reasons why most students do not upgrade to straight 'A', Ajayi (2013) points out that the school is fun-filled with extracurricular clubs and leisure activities. He further observes that students are in the habit of wasting their time instead of being productive and they end up with C's and B's instead of the A's they honestly deserved'. This much is confirmed by Olajide and Olatipe (2017) when they lament that the higher institutions are full of distractions where students are surrounded by distractive co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. They surmise that students often get themselves involved in these activities so that they will not just pass through the institution but also for the institution to pass through them. It is not uncommon, therefore, to see many students engage in games and sporting activities, socio-cultural activities, religious activities, and business enterprises to name just a few, to the negligence of their academic pursuits.

Reading is a great factor for academic success; not just reading but effective reading achieved through proper study reading habits. Students must be able to overcome the innumerable distractions encountered in study reading to be able to obtain an overall understanding of the text required to 'not only be able recall it in the

original order, but also be able apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information' as posited by Faniran and Olajide (2012). Part of the twenty recipes provided for aspiring successful students in a Wikihow (2017) paper includes avoidance of distractions. It is also stated in the online dictionary that successful students are those that know how to focus on their studies when it matters while also taking breaks when they need them. They are able to manage their time wisely, stick to meaningful study schedules, and make the most of their time in the classroom. In the same vein, Bodekaer (2015) warns against the dangers of distractions for aspiring successful students. According to him, research has shown that distractions can be incredibly costly, taking people up to 23 minutes to get back to the task at hand after being distracted. You can see how fast this can add up - and how much time can be lost - when the average person is interrupted every 10 minutes by instant messages, tweets, and Facebook updates. The first task, therefore, is to stay focused and the key is to avoid distractions in the classroom. Students are advised to avoid sitting next to chatty students, and to put away food, magazines, phone, or anything else that keeps them from studies. Try not to think about one class when sitting in another.

Lake and von Bayer (2005) provide what can be regarded as the portrait of an outstanding student as follows:

i. *Attendance*: "A" students have virtually perfect attendance. Their commitment to the class is a high priority and exceeds other temptations.
ii. *Preparation*: "A" students are prepared for class. They always read the assignment. Their attention to detail is such that they occasionally can elaborate on class examples.
iii. *Curiosity*: "A" students demonstrate interest in the class and the subject. They look up or dig out what they don't understand. They often ask interesting questions or make thoughtful comments.
iv. *Retention*: "A" students have retentive minds and practice making retentive connections. They are able to connect past learning with the present. They bring a background of knowledge with them to their classes. They focus on learning concepts rather than memorizing details.
v. *Attitude*: "A" students have a winning attitude. They have both the determination and the self-discipline necessary for success. They show initiative. They do things they have not been told to do.
vi. *Talent*: "A" students demonstrate a special talent. It may be exceptional intelligence and insight. It may be unusual creativity, organizational skills, commitment - or a combination.
vii. *Effort*: "A" students match their effort to the demands of an assignment.
viii. *Communications*: "A" students place a high priority on writing and speaking in a manner that conveys clarity and thoughtful organization. Attention is paid to conciseness and completeness.
ix. *Results*: "A" students make high grades on tests - usually the highest in the class. Their work is a pleasure to grade.

The obvious result of the 8-point portrait is 'high grades' as recorded in item (ix) and that should be the dream of every student. Exhibiting all these traits requires steadfastness and unalloyed commitment which an average or lowly motivated student cannot achieve without being supervised or guided.

Time management is also of vital importance to successful studentship. Students in the higher institutions enjoy a good measure of personal freedom and unrestrained latitude to spend their time. The nature of the campuses also does not help matters. Very many activities are going on which could prove distractive or eat into student's study time. Ajayi (2013) asserts that with so much to do, it can be easy to become overwhelmed, stressed and eventually burn out. He opines that students can help themselves stay sane and still get everything done by developing a good time management skill. In their study on students' reading interests and habits Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe and Adedeji (2012) report that most students studied particularly during examination periods noting that one of the factors militating against their reading interests and habits include unserious attitude which makes them relegate their academic assignments to the background.

Time management according to Covey (2003) is about effectiveness and efficiency**.** Efficiency is about getting more done while effectiveness is about getting the right stuff done. Students should be trained and assisted to spend their time doing things right and doing right things. He identifies four quadrants of tasks in the time management matrix as follows:

- Quadrant 1: Important and urgent (e.g. last-minute assignments and projects)
- Quadrant 2: Important but not urgent (e.g. spending time with your family or exercising)
- Quadrant 3: Not important but urgent (e.g. some phone calls and text messages)
- Quadrant 4: Not important and not urgent (e.g. watching YouTube videos)

He goes on to advise aspiring effective students to spend at least 80% of their time on Quadrant 2 tasks. This is in the spirit of the maxim that all work and no play make Jack a dull boy. A good student should not wait

until studying becomes urgent before he starts to read. A student who manages his time well ought to be more relaxed during examination.

Goodin (2012) calls on students to develop ability to rely on their own strengths and know their weaknesses. He roundly frowns at a situation where students wait to be told all the time what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. While agreeing that extrinsic motivation is not unnecessary for success, he charges students to engage in search for success to avoid what he calls 'the imposter syndrome', which makes students believe that all that have been gotten is based on luck. To him, what students often describe as luck is actually the audacity of being at the right time, with work and precise skills. The popular adage is proven to be true that if you aim at nothing, you will hit it. Bovee (2017) is quoted to have said, 'failure establishes only this, that our determination to succeed was not strong enough'. It is in this vein that everything should be done to assist the students to develop effective time management in view of its intrinsic value to integrated study reading and high academic achievement outcome.

In conclusion, as stake-holders in the development of the nation the students who are regarded as leaders of tomorrow must be well guided to live a focused life. An institution that does not discourage loafing among the students and arrest unrestrained lifestyle is preparing itself for anarchy. Where students are not properly guided and monitored to display effective time management skills and work themselves to success, outstanding achievements and world class breakthroughs will be far-fetched. All hands must be on deck to transform the majority of our students in the polytechnic institutions from the average rating to first-class achievers in their academic pursuits. The way to achieve this is to regulate and monitor the students' practice of study reading. Everything necessary should be put in place to ensure that they jettison their laissez-faire attitude to study reading and give their studies a top priority in their daily schedule. This is the focus of this study. It is being conducted to see how institutionalized, integrated and monitored practice of study reading by the students will affect their academic achievement and time management.

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Manchester (UM, 2001) released on its Study Skills website a plan of action for their students interested in study reading. It is instructive to note that the plan covers not only the weekdays, but also weekends. The implication is that in whatever he does every day of the week a student is expected to engage in one study activity or the other. The thinking is that the students will be sufficiently self-motivated to engage in the provided plan of study reading. For him to succeed in his studies, therefore, a serious-minded student must incorporate into his daily activities a significant dose of his academic pursuits and reading plans. However, the fact of life is that not all students can be equally serious-minded or self-motivated. Some are bound to be unserious, slack and unwilling, needing a pushing influence before they can invest optimum time and efforts in their study. This set of students does exist and they can constitute a menace to the institution. Granted the vagaries of life and the prevailing side attractions, provisions should be made to prod the indolent and not-so-self-motivated students so that their dreams will not be scuttled. There should be institutional arrangements to provide the driving force that will inspire, enthuse, and spur the students to engage in regular study reading. This study was therefore conducted to see if there would be significant differences in students' academic performances and time management traceable to the practice of integrated study reading.

Some of the objectives of the study are to institutionalize the practice of study reading; to assist the students to achieve their academic goals; to promote qualitative and positive studentship; to promote scholarship among students; to inculcate effective time management in students; to promote in the students a high sense of responsibility and commitment; and to raise the standard of education.

2. Hypotheses

The following three null hypotheses were tested:

$H_0$1: There will be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' academic achievement

$H_0$2: There will be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' time management

$H_0$3: There will be no significant difference between time management of National Diploma (ND) and Higher National Diploma (HND) students.

3. Method

The study adopted the post-test control group quasi-experimental design. Students in all polytechnics and colleges of technology in the nation constituted the research population. One college of technology was purposively selected for the study based on proximity to researchers. Two of the four faculties in the institution were also purposively selected based on co-researchers involved. The study samples were students from three purposively selected departments being taught by the co-researchers. The first co-researcher taught same course at HND level of a department and at ND level of another department. The second co-researcher taught the same course at HND and ND levels of the same department. From each class, one hundred (100) students were randomly selected for the study and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of 50 students each.

In the four departments, a total of 200 students respectively made up the experimental and control groups. The sample size was four hundred (400).

The study had one independent variable which was Integrated Study Reading; and two dependent variables (i) Time Management and (ii) Academic Achievement. The first instrument used for the study was the *Effect of Integrated Study Reading Questionnaire* (EISRQ). The questionnaire designed by the researchers contained 30 items crafted to capture the students' academic success mindset indices and time management practices before and during treatment. Students were required to respond to each item by picking one of the four options: *Very often, Often, Not often, and Never* that best described their opinion. EISRQ had a split-half reliability index of .85

The second instrument labelled *Test of Students' Achievement* (ToSA). It was in four variants. ToSA I-IV were examination questions constructed by course lecturers and submitted along with marking guides for moderation and final approval at the departmental level. The usual practice was for the departmental heads to send the questions to external moderators for their expert input.

ToSA I - Examination questions for national diploma students in the Department of Banking and Finance
ToSA II - Examination questions for higher national diploma students in the Department of Banking and Finance
ToSA III - Examination questions for higher national diploma students in the department of Mathematics and Statistics.
ToSA IV - Examination questions for national diploma students in the Department of Computer Science.

4. Treatment Procedure

All the research subjects were first lectured on the importance of study reading, academic success mindset and time management. The students were thereafter randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. Experimental group were given EISRQ to fill and submit immediately and the two groups were taught together in their various classes and given similar tests and home assignments. While the control group did not have any further interaction with lecturers on the matter pertaining to study reading, the experimental group was closely monitored and guided in their study reading and time management efforts.

Researchers ensured that the experimental group went over the day's topic before they returned home after the day's work. Since lectures were held once a week, the lecturers gave the students assignments to submit either physically to their offices at specified times every day of the week. Assignments treated during weekends were to be submitted at specified times on Monday morning. The researchers also provided them with suggested reading lists and topics which they were mandated to read and show proof of reading. Researchers made arrangement with library staff to monitor students' daily visits to the libraries during the day.

Similarly, to ensure that students read and did their take home assignments after school libraries had closed for the day, researcher made provisions for well illuminated reading rooms that opened from 7.00-10.00 every night and 5.00 to 7.00 every morning throughout the research period. To facilitate access to online reading materials students were provided with internet connectivity. Arrangements were also made to record their visits to the reading rooms. At the end of ten (10) weeks, the two groups wrote similar tests. The experimental group was made to fill the EISRQ once again to get their post-treatment responses.

5. Results

$H_0$1: There will be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' academic achievement

To determine the difference in the main effect of treatment students' academic achievement, the examination results of the experimental and controlled groups were compared. The results were grouped into 7 as follows: 90-100 (**7**); 80-89 (**6**); 70-79 (**5**); 60-69 (**4**); 50-59 (**3**); 40-49 (**2**); 0-39 (**1**). The frequency of students that obtained the scores in each group was obtained and compared. The test of significance was conducted for the difference at $p<.05$.

Table 1a: Achievement Scores of Experimental and Control Groups

Marks Range	Value	Control Group N=200		Experimental Group N=200	
		Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score
0-39	1	12	12	0	0
40-49	2	64	128	16	32
50-59	3	88	264	76	228
60-69	4	36	144	54	216
70-79	5	0	0	36	180
80-89	6	0	0	18	108
90-100	7	0	0	0	0

		200	**548**	**200**	**764**

Table 1b: Independent Samples t-test

Group	Number	Mean	sd	df	t	Sig.
Experimental	200	3.82	1.10			
Control	200	2.74	0.82	398	11.11	0.05

Analysis

Table 1a shows that more students in the experimental group performed better in the test: Not one student in the experimental group scored 40 marks or below while 6% of the control group fall in that category in the control group. While not one student in the control group score above 70 marks, 27% of the students in the experimental group scored higher than 70% some of them (9%) scoring beyond 80 marks.

Table 1b shows the result of the independent samples t-test conducted to determine if there was a significant difference in the mean score of the students in the experimental and control groups. Students in the experimental group performed better (M = 3.82; SD 1.10) than their colleagues in the control group (M = 2.74; SD = 0.82). The mean difference 1.08 was statistically significant t (398) = 11.11, $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

$H_0$2: There will be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' time management.

To determine the effect of treatment on time management, the pre-treatment and post-treatment data from the questionnaire administered on the experimental group were collated and compared. Numerical values were given to students' response to each item as follows: Very often 3; Often 2; Not often 1; Never 0. The t-test of significance was conducted on the difference in the pre-treatment and post-treatment scores at $p<.05$.

Table 2a: Students' Pre- and Post-Treatment Time Management

Response	Value	Pre-Treatment		Post-Treatment	
		Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score
Very often	3	27	81	109	327
Often	2	105	210	82	164
Not often	1	68	68	9	9
Never	0	0	0	0	0
		N=200	**359**	**200**	**500**

Table 2b: Paired Samples t-test

Group	Number	Mean	sd	df	t	Sig.
Post-treatment	200	2.59	0.49			
Pre-treatment	200	1.80	0.66	199	22.30	0.05

Analysis

Table 2a reveals that there is a remarkable difference in students' time management practices after treatment. From 13.5 per cent the population of those who now applied time management practices moved to 54.5 per cent Only 4.5 per cent confessed that their time management practices were still '*not often*' but it is a great improvement on 34 per cent that fell in that category at the pre-treatment level.

Table 2b shows the result of the correlated (paired) samples t- test conducted to determine the effect of treatment on the experimental groups' time management. Mean score after the treatment (post treatment) was higher (M=2.59; SD=0.49) than mean score before the treatment (pre treatment) (M=1.80; SD=0.66). The mean difference 0.79 was statistically significant, t (199) = 22.30, $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

$H_0$3: There will be no significant difference in effect of treatment between time management of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students.

To determine the difference in effect of treatment between ND/HND students' time management, the samples in the experimental group were stratified into ND/HND and the difference in their respective response ratings were compared. The t-test of significance was conducted on the difference at $p<.05$.

Table 3a: ND/HND Students' Time Management

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	S.D
HND	100	1	3	247	2.47	.594
ND	100	1	3	253	2.53	.577

Table 3b: Paired Sample t. test

	Mean	SD	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		t	df	r	Sig.
HND	**-.**060	**.**239	**.**024	**Upper**	**Lower**	**-2.514**	99	**.**917	0**.**05
ND				**-.**107	**-.**013				

Analysis

Table 3a shows a marginal difference of 6 in the sum of scores and 0.06 in the mean scores of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students. In Table 3b we see a very high correlation co-efficient of .917

which is quite significant at $p<0.05$. This implied a strong relationship between the time management of ND and HND students. The marginal difference of -.060 between the two levels is found to be not significant $t(99) = -2.514$, $p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. There was actually no significant difference in the difference recorded in the time management of ND and HND students

6. Discussion

The result from this study confirmed Lake and von Bayer's (2005) postulation that when students record perfect attendance at lectures; always prepare for class by reading the assignment; demonstrate interest in the class and the subject by asking interesting questions or making thoughtful comments; have retentive minds by connecting past learning with the present; exhibit both the determination and the self-discipline necessary for success; match efforts to the demands of an assignment; and place a high priority on writing and speaking in a manner that conveys clarity and thoughtful organization, the obvious result is that they make high grades on tests - usually the highest in the class. Their work is a pleasure to grade. The intervention provided in this study based on the researchers' conviction that exhibiting all these traits requires steadfastness and unalloyed commitment which an average or lowly motivated student cannot achieve without being supervised or guided has actually been justified to a large extent.

This study also corroborated the submission of Faniran and Olajide (2012) that when a student has obtained an overall understanding of the text he is able to not only recall it in the original order, but also apply, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate the information. Study reading requires the student to pay close attention to the text. It is done with undistracted attention to details and analysis especially when one is aware that the material will later have to be recalled, discussed, evaluated and applied. As much of what goes on in an examination tests students' ability in these various aspects, it is quite understandable that more students in the experimental group were able to performer better in the test than their counterparts in the control group.

Also confirmed in this study was that the practice of integrated study reading tend significant effect on students' time management. The implication is that integrated study reading actually assisted in training the students to cultivate a lifestyle of effectiveness and efficiency whereby students now learn to spend their time doing things right and doing right things. Seen in the light of the time management matrix postulated by Covey (2003) the students learnt to place study reading in **quadrant 2 meant for important and urgent** tasks. This implies that the student had been able to overcome the attitudinal problem to reading identified by Issa *et.al* (2012). Some of the things they did '*more often*' during treatment included regular and punctual lecture attendance; visiting the library to borrow books and journals to read; timely submission of assignments; reading beyond course books; join and participate in organized group discussion; approach course lecturers for clarification on difficult concepts; read ahead to prepare for possible impromptu tests; and enjoy close rapport with course lecturers on academic matters. Of particular note was that most of the students still gave time for "gisting" and outing even though on a '*not often*' scale.

Finally, the study showed that there tended to be no discrimination between students on time management following a proper engagement in well guided study reading practices. From the primary level to the doctoral level, for a student that neglects to engage in a concerted and focused study reading the only obvious consequence is poor academic performance. Conversely, a student at any level that exhibits Lake and von Bayer's (2005) characteristics of an outstanding student will certainly excel in time management practices.

7. Conclusion

This study confirmed that regulated and monitored practice of study reading tended to enhance students' proper time management as it trained them to jettison their laissez-faire attitude and give their studies a top priority in their daily schedule. It was also confirmed that every student has the potential to make excellent grades in the examination and come out successful in his study if he/she is closely monitored and supervised to constructively engage in study related activities like: more regular lecture attendance; more visits to the libraries; timely submission of assignments; more study reading time; cut in unnecessary distractive engagements; more organized work schedules; and regulated leisure activities. Another salient conclusion is that it really pays off for a student to engage in one study activity or the other every day of the week no matter other schedules he may have. The reward is good grades.

8. Recommendations

The first major recommendation following from this study is that students' study reading must be facilitated and closely monitored. It is time to jettison the thinking that once they are taught the principles, the students will go ahead on their own to practice study reading to their own benefit in their conscious effort and determination to make good grades when the reality is that a good number of the students take the prevailing liberty in tertiary institutions for license and do not practice study reading because there is no regulated monitoring. The common tide should be stemmed where majority of the students delay their serious reading till few days to examinations

when they now 'burn the mid-night oil'.

Institutional arrangements should be made for the students to be closely monitored in their study reading and time management efforts. To ensure that they go over the day's work before they return home after the day's work, lecturers should give them assignments to submit at specified time everyday of the week including weekends to be submitted at specified time on Monday. Lecturers should provide the students with reading list and topics which they must read and show proof of reading by submitting their jottings for verification. Arrangements should be perfected not only to ensure that the students visit the library daily but also to have their attendance monitored. In non-residential institutions, to ensure that students read and do their take home assignments after school had closed provision should be made for well illuminated and secured reading rooms. Institutions should make available functional internet connectivity for students' use at highly subsidized rate if not totally free.

Students must also be taken through series of talks and seminars on the values of time management during orientation programmes organized by the institution's directorate of students' affairs and at faculty and departmental levels. Students with very high sense of time management will have the tendency to be more focused on their study reading activities; will not mind to be driven hard by the lecturers by way of regular tests and assignments, and will thus benefit maximally from the practice of integrated study reading.

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