

Effect of Integrated Study Reading on Students' Academic Success Mindset and Academic Achievement

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Abstract

As a key factor of academic achievement, study reading skill is taught to tertiary institution students with the expectation that they will practice it on their own but the reality is that most students do not. They usually delay study reading till few days to examinations when they will now 'burn the mid-night oil'. This leads to high incidences of examination mal-practice and low grade. This study was conducted to make case for the integration of study reading in students' daily schedules through regulated monitoring. Three null hypotheses were tested. 400 students from four departments in three faculties of a non-residential polytechnic were selected and randomly assigned to experimental and control groups of 200 each. Both groups were lectured on study reading skill and the importance of academic success mindset but only the experimental group was monitored to practice study reading. The two instruments used were Effect of Integrated Study Reading Questionnaire (EISRQ) filled by experimental group before and after treatment and Test of Students' Achievement (TOSA I-IV) administered on both groups after treatment. Results showed that there were significant differences in the mean academic achievement ($t(398)=11.11, p < 0.05$) and academic success mindset ($t(199) = 20.33, p < 0.05$) of both groups. Also, no significant disparity on academic success mindset was recorded based ND and HND dichotomy ($r .88 t(199)= -1.421, p<0.05$). It was concluded that if closely monitored and supervised to practise study reading every student has the potential to be high on academic success mindset and achieve high scores in examinations. It was recommended that necessary institutional arrangements should be made to promote and monitor students' study reading and to orientate them on the values of academic success mindset.

Keywords: Integrated study reading; Study reading; Academic achievement; Academic success mindset.

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) argue 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 study 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 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 extra-curricular 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.. This much is confirmed by Olajide and Olatipe (2017) when they lament that it is a fact that the higher institutions are full of distractions where students are surrounded by distractive co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. They surmised 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 detriment of their academic pursuits. In their study on students' reading interests and habits Issa, Aliyu, Akangbe and Adedeji (2012) found that most students studied particularly during examination periods noting that one of the factors militating against their developing reading

interests and habits include unserious attitude which makes them relegate their academic assignments to the background.

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). 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. He calls attention to how much time can be lost - when the average person is interrupted every 10 minutes by instant messages, tweets, and *Facebook* updates. According to the online dictionary, 'successful students know how to focus on their studies when it matters while also taking breaks when they need them. They can manage their time wisely, stick to meaningful study schedules, and make the most of their time in the classroom.' The first task 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. They should 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.

As recorded in item (ix) the obvious result of the eight-point portrait is 'high grades' 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.

Another factor of successful studentship is success mindset. It is a motivating force to transform even an average student to a high academic achiever. Telling his story on 'my struggle from E's to A's, Ajayi (2013) writes:

I got promoted to JSS3 through cheer (sic) force and a bit of luck I was given lots of looks that implied something like 'you are not good enough to be in school, drop out fast'. I like a girl in the class.... She was the most brilliant student.... Anytime a teacher wanted to disgrace the class, it was I (sic) they (sic) would call.... One day I resolved within me that ... the only wise thing to do is to go and study harder and know all I needed to know till I become the best in class.... That was my turning point ... I became obsessed with the subjects of accelerated learning and how to maximize the power of our brain. I began to read and learn something more! I bought every book on accelerated learning, personal excellence, personal excellence, motivation, memory improvement, photographic memory, exam techniques, speed reading, and notes taking I could get (sic) my hands on... From that day I metamorphosed from 'E' grade to becoming the beast overall. Finally, I aced all the science subjects I took with distinctions! (4-6)

Success mindset is a key quality every student should possess as it serves as the foundation upon which other factors are built. Chegg (2017) calls it a ‘bonus habit’ when he advises aspiring successful students to always visualize success for it is helpful to imagine the end product: that is, to really picture what it will be like, and to experience the good feelings that will come with it. This provides motivation and energy and makes it all seem worthwhile. Students with high success mindset will require less prodding to engage in study reading. According to Learning Petals (2017),

people with success mindset plan while others are playing; study while others are sleeping; decide while others are delaying; prepare while others are daydreaming; begin while others are procrastinating; work while others are wishing; save while others are wasting; listen while others are talking; smile while others are frowning; commend while others are criticizing; and persist while others are quitting.

Goodin (2012) calls on students to develop ability to rely on own strengths and know the weaknesses. He 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 necessary 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 has been got is based on luck. To him, what students often describe as luck is actually the audacity of being at the right place 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 prompt and assist the students to develop success mentality in view of its intrinsic value to integrated study reading, effective time management, 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 through success mindset and the can-do spirit. 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 mentored to cultivate a can-do spirit 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 students in the tertiary 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 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 success mindset and academic achievement.

2. Statement of the Problem

The Faculty of Humanities at the University of Manchester (UM) 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 (UM, 2001). The implication is that in whatever he or she 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 reminded and prompted to engage in the provided plan of study reading. For him to succeed in his studies, therefore, a serious-minded student must incorporate academic pursuits and reading plans into his daily activities. 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 study was therefore conducted to see if there would be significant differences in students’ academic success mindset and academic achievement traceable to the practice of integrated study reading designed to provide the necessary monitoring and driving force that will inspire, enthuse, and spur the students to engage in regular study reading.

3. Research Hypotheses

The following three null hypotheses were tested:

- H₀1: There would be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students’ academic achievement
- H₀2: There would be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students’ academic success mindset
- H₀3: There will be no significant difference in effect of treatment between academic success mindset of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students.

4. Objectives of the Study

Some of the useful purposes of this study are to promote the rate of students’ academic success, to stem the rate of students’ failure in examinations, to stem the rate of examination mal-practices, to stem the rate of suspension

and expulsion of students for examination mal-practices, to ensure that more students graduate with higher grades, to stem the tide of anti-social behaviours among students, and to maximize the use of the physical and e-library facilities. The study was expected to meet the following objectives, among others: 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; to encourage students to develop positive academic success mindset; and to raise the standard of education in the tertiary institutions evidenced by students' high academic achievement.

5. Research Design

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 the researchers' involvement. 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 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 two hundred (200) students respectively made up the experimental and control groups. The sample size was four hundred (400).

6. Variables

The study had one independent variable: Integrated Study Reading and three dependent variables (i) Success Mindset, and (ii) Academic Achievement

7. Instruments

Two instruments were used for the study. The Effect of Integrated Study Reading Questionnaire (EISRQ) designed by the researchers contained 30 items crafted to capture the students' time management and success mindset indices and 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*. It had a split-half reliability index of .85. The second instrument labelled *Test of Students' Achievement (ToSA)* 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

8. 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.

9. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Discussion

H_{01} : There would be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' academic achievement

To determine the effects of treatment students' academic achievement, the examination results of the experimental and controlled groups were compared to determine the difference. 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	398	11.11	<0.05
Control	200	2.74	0.82			

Analysis

Table 1a shows not one student in the experimental group scored 40 per cent or below while 6 per cent of the control group falls in that category. Also, while not one student in the control group scored above 70 per cent; 27 per cent of the students in the experimental group scored higher than 70 per cent; some of them (9%) scoring above 80 per cent.

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_{02} : There would be no significant difference in the main effect of treatment on students' success mindset
 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 Success Mindset

Response	Value	Pre-Treatment		Post-Treatment	
		Frequency	Score	Frequency	Score
Very Often	3	32	96	110	330
Often	2	106	212	85	170
Not often	1	62	62	5	5
Never	0	0	0	0	0
		N=200	370	200	505

Table 2b: Paired Samples t-test

Group	Number	Mean	SD	Df	t	Sig.
Post-treatment	200	2.53	0.549	199	20.330	<0.05
Pre-treatment	200	1.85	0.671			

Analysis

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

Table 2b shows the results of the correlated (paired) samples t- test conducted to determine the effect of treatment on the experimental groups' success mindset. Post-treatment mean score was higher (M=2.59; SD=0.49) than pre-treatment mean score (M=1.85; SD=0.67). The mean difference 0.68 was statistically significant, $t(199) = 20.33, p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected.

H₀₃: *There will be no significant difference in effect of treatment between academic success mindset of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students.*

To determine the difference in effect of treatment between ND/HND students' academic success mindset, 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' Academic Success Mindset

	N	Min.	Max.	Sum	Mean	S.D	SE Mean
ND	100	1	3	243	2.43	.555	.056
HND	100	1	3	247	2.47	.594	.059

Table 3b: Paired Sample t. test

	Mean	S.D	Std Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of Difference		T	df	r	P
				Lower	Upper				
HND									
ND	-.040	.281	.028	-.096	.016	-1.421	99	.882	<0.05

Analysis

Table 3a shows a marginal difference of 4 in the sum of scores and 0.04 in the mean scores of National Diploma and Higher National Diploma students in academic success mindset. In Table 3b we see a very high correlation co-efficient of .88 which is quite significant at $p < 0.05$. This implied a strong relationship between the academic success mindset of ND and HND students. As the ND students gain more in academic success mindset due to intervention so do the HND students. The marginal mean difference of .04 between the two levels is found to be not significant $t(99) = -1.421, p < 0.05$. The null hypothesis was therefore not rejected. There was actually no significant difference in the difference recorded in the students' academic success mindset of ND and HND students.

Discussion

The results from this study have confirmed Lake and von Bayer's (2005) postulation that students make high grades on tests - usually the highest in the class - when they 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 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.

As explained earlier, 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. This study is in tune with 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. Much of what goes on in an examination tests students' ability in these aspects so it is quite understandable that more of the experimental group students were able to perform better in the test than their control group counterparts.

This study has also established student with high level of academic success mindset also invariably gave themselves to consistent study reading practices. Success mindset has been variously described as a bonus habit that makes student to always visualize success and imagine the end product (Chegg, 2017) and an intrinsic motivation that promotes search for success (Goodin, 2012). This study has confirmed success mindset as truly key quality that serves as the foundation upon which other factors like study reading are built. As posited by Learning Petals (2017) the students in the experimental group either *very often* or *often* planned while others are playing; studied while others were sleeping; decided while others were delaying; prepared while others were daydreaming, began while others were procrastinating; worked while others were wishing, and persisted while others were quitting.

With high success mindset students were able to key into, and benefit from, the constant prodding and pushing provided in integrated study reading scheme which others oftentimes consider as unbearable and wicked. They believed it is *very true* that a student should not just read but study, that examination time ought not to be the most stressful time for a student; that lack of electricity supply should not pose a problem to students' study exercise; that student's contact with lecturers on academic matters should not be restricted to the lecture room;

that nothing should hinder a student from going through his or her notes regularly; and that a student should have study time schedule such that assignment should not be delayed or kept till the following day.

The academic success mindset greatly influenced students to engage in dedicated study reading irrespective of their classes or level whether National Diploma (ND) or Higher National Diploma (HND) all of which led to higher academic achievement when compared with students in the control group. From the lowest level of the educational enterprise to the highest, study reading is needful for the student and effective in achieving high academic achievements

10. Conclusion

This study has confirmed that regulated and monitored practice of study reading referred to as integrated study reading in this research, enhances students' higher academic achievement as it trains them to jettison their laissez-faire attitude and give their studies a top priority in their daily schedule. It has also been confirmed that every student has the potential to make high 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 what other schedules he/she may have.

Also, this study confirmed that consistent and monitored practice of study reading tended to promote in the students irrespective of their level a high academic success mindset which invariably leads to higher academic attainment. Students in higher institutions which are non-residential in nature will surely benefit from the implementation of integrated study reading.

11. Recommendations

The first major recommendation following from this study is that students' study reading should not only be facilitated but also closely monitored especially in non-residential tertiary institutions. 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 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 efforts by ensuring that they go over the day's work before they return home after the day's work; giving them assignments to do and submit at specified times every day of the week including weekends which could be done on dedicated electronic platforms; providing them with reading lists and topics which they must read and show proof of reading by submitting their jottings; and ensuring that the students visit the library daily during the day and reading rooms after school hours when the library has closed. Institutional arrangements should also be made for library personnel to monitor students' use of the physical and electronic libraries. To assist students in non-residential institutions in their efforts to read and do their take-home assignments after school had closed provision should be made for well illuminated and secured reading rooms. Institutional arrangements should also be made to provide regular internet connectivity for students' use at highly subsidized rate if not totally free.

At the onset of their entry into the institution students must also be taken through series of talks and seminars on the values of academic success mindset practices during the orientation programmes organized by the institution's directorate of students' affairs and at the faculty/departmental levels. The topic should also be repeated regularly during departmental and faculty seminars. If students start up and constantly operate with very high success mindset they will tend to be more focused on their study reading activities, will not mind to be driven hard by the lecturers, and will thus benefit maximally from the practice of integrated study reading. All these require the active participation of the lecturers and they should be sufficiently motivated to participate actively in the task.

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