



# **Teaching Thinking: Using a Creativity Technique for the Eradication of Truancy among Students to Enhance the Success of Universal Basic Education in Nigeria**

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## **Author's contribution**

*This work was single handedly carried out by me after a thorough observation and investigation of the situation on ground, but with the full cooperation and assistance of the Ministry of Education and Principals of the concerned students. All aspects of the manuscript were prepared by me.*

## **Research Article**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Truancy is an antisocial behavior perpetrated by many students in the lower secondary school, and which is specifically rampant in Osun State of Nigeria public schools, which if not properly addressed could abort the laudable objectives of the Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) in Nigeria. Therefore, this study explored how Lateral Thinking Creativity technique could be utilized to teach the truants to think right and take rational decisions that would make them jettison truancy for the success of the U.B.E. in Nigeria. A pre-test-post-test quasi experimental group design was adopted. A sample of 100 Junior Secondary School II students playing truancy randomly selected from Ila and Iwo Local Government areas of Osun state were used for the study. Their ages ranged from 10-16 years with a mean of 13 years. Fifty students from Ila formed the experimental while the other fifty from Iwo made the control group. The experimental group was subjected to six weeks of training in Lateral Thinking Creativity technique for one hour twice a week while the control group was asked to wait a little time for attention. A validated instrument, Animasahun (2008) truancy scale was administered on all the participants in both groups at both the pre and post test situations. The result showed that there was a significant

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difference in the post-test truancy behavior scores between the experimental and the control groups ( $F(1,97) = 24.795 < 0.05$ ). The significant difference in their adjusted mean scores (41.516) and (47.864) also prove that there was a significant difference in the post-test scores of the participants as the experimental group scored significantly lower than the control on truancy scale. It should be noted that the lower the score on truancy scale the better for the person. It was therefore recommended that any student playing truancy should undergo training in Lateral thinking creativity technique so as to be able to think rationally and have a change of attitude in order to reduce truancy and consequent dropping out of school.

*Keywords: Creativity; lateral thinking; truancy; universal basic education.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Thinking has been found to be the basis of all human actions [1] because it leads to a kind of decision that prompts a consequent action. There is no decision without thinking whereby various alternatives are considered.

The cerebrum in the human fore-brain is autonomously concerned with thinking. It is the largest part of the brain made up of hemispheres and coordinates all the body's voluntary and some of its involuntary actions. This function includes: receiving sensory information, processing it, and sending out the necessary instructions along motor neurons to effectors to take appropriate action. The cerebrum is therefore the seat of consciousness, learning, memory, imagination, reasoning, intelligence and creativity – higher mental functions [2,3,4].

Therefore, the significance of this level is manifested in the fact that if anything is wrong at this perceptual thinking and decision-making stage, the consequent action would also be in the wrong direction. If properly done, rational, constructive, creative, realistic, productive and responsible behavior will be the outcome; otherwise, muddled, illogical, irrational, subjective, unrealistic, unproductive, foolish and irresponsible behaviours would be the result of poor thinking [5]. It has been discovered in the recent time that pinging has replaced thinking among the school-going adolescents. The young ones spend much time on their cell phones pinging rather than engaging in creative thinking [6]. Perhaps, what Nigerian society lacks is productive thinking which accounts for the aggravated negative life skills and high crime rate in the society. One of those negative skills is truancy, which eventually gives birth to dropping out of school.

The inadequacies of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) which began in Nigeria in 1976, which include emergence of special interest groups which were not initially provided for; problems of funding and management; lack of sustained political will; and the problem of harnessing the goodwill and sustained financial input from stakeholders; gave birth to the introduction of the nine-year Universal Basic Education, launched by President Olusegun Obasanjo at Sokoto on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1999 [7]. The nine year academic programme is meant to be free and compulsory for children from Primary 1 (Basic 1) to Junior Secondary School III (Basic 9).

The UBE is intended to remove all the obstacles to lifelong education for millions of Nigerian citizens who otherwise would be denied the opportunity of education. It includes an estimated 2.1 million six-year olds who have had no access to early childhood education and a large number of school-age children who labour for their parents or simply roam the street

as Almajarai [8]. Nigeria is a signatory to the 1990 Jomtien Declaration of Education for All by the year 2000 and also a member of the Group E-9 nations committed to the total eradication of illiteracy. In spite of this, the nation's literacy rate was estimated to be 52%. Education statistics for 1996 shows that only 14.1 million children are enrolled in primary schools out of the 21million children of school-going age while the completion rate was 64% [9].

Records further show that the transition rate from primary school to junior secondary school is 43.7%. By implication, 56.3% of those in the nation's primary school are likely to grow into adulthood as illiterates and this would further compound the problems of an estimated 43% adults who have missed their opportunities of a sound education. It is for these categories that the present UBE programme intends to provide a second chance [8]. Therefore, basic education, which is the foundation for sustained lifelong learning that provides reading, writing and numeracy skills comprises a wide variety of formal and non-formal educational activities and programmes designed to enable learners acquire functional literacy; which in Nigeria context, includes primary, junior secondary and nomadic education is aimed at equipping individuals with such knowledge, skills and attitudes that will enable them to live meaningful and fulfilling lives; contribute to the development of society; derive maximum social, economic and cultural benefits from society; and discharge their civic obligations competently [9,10].

The goals of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) scheme are to universalize access to basic education, engender a conducive learning environment and eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time; while the specific objectives of the scheme include:

- Developing in the entire citizenry a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotions.
- The provision of free, universal basic education for every Nigerian child of school-age.
- Reducing drastically the incidence of dropout from the formal school system (through improved relevance, quality and efficiency).
- Catering for school dropouts, and out-of-school children/ adolescents, through appropriate forms of complementary approaches to the provision and promotion of basic education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate levels of literacy, numeracy, manipulative, communicative and life skills (as well as the ethical, moral and civic values) needed for laying a solid foundation for lifelong learning [9].

However, despite the fact that the above goals and objectives of the UBE are laudable, truancy could abort everything, reducing all labour, expenses and time incurred to nothing as a result of poor attendance in school, non-challant attitude towards education and consequent dropping out.

Truancy, simply defined, is an irregular attendance in school. While [11] defined school truancy as absence from school for no legitimate reason, [12,13,14] defined it as a situation where the student has neither the permission of his parents nor the consent of the school authorities to keep away from school. However, [15] contended that any absence from school without an acceptable reason would be termed truancy, whether or not the student's parent know and appraise it. Yet, [16] submitted that absence from the school must be without a reason before being considered valid by the school and referred to as truancy. Similarly, [17] submitted that absence in school is regarded as truancy if it is persistent, habitual and unexplained; and which can occur with parental knowledge and sometimes consent. Nevertheless, [18,19] maintained that only the failure of the absentee to obtain

permission to be absent from the school should be considered as truancy. Wisconsin [20], however, concluded that a case of truancy could only be established if the parents failed to provide the valid reasons for student absence. The above scenario of definitions lent credence to [21] who submitted that a uniform definition of truancy does not exist.

However, for the purpose of this paper, truancy is considered from the point of view of [22] who opined that truancy occurs when a student is not present at a school, or a condition whereby students who are required to attend school chose not to do so. It is a condition of being absent at a place where a student is expected to be and being at a place where he is not expected to be during school hours. Animasahun [23] referred to such students as area boys and girls in school uniform.

### **1.1 Characteristics of a School Truant**

Animasahun [23] identified the following as the basic characteristics of a school truant. They include: laziness, excessive sleeping at home, sluggishness, lack of interest in morning/home duties, non-challant attitude, rudeness, cunning, always eating something and preferring to buy ready-made food rather than cooking. Other characteristics include lack of interest in academics, lack of readiness to learn, never studying at home, sees no reason for studying, always in the company of hoodlums, always wearing slippers and other wears not acceptable in school. Further still are the following: having extravagant and strange hairdo, dirty, lacking required textbooks; the males, having no school bags but carrying only one or two exercise books by hand or in uniform pockets while their female counterparts carry fashion bags meant for one or two notebooks and spare clothes as well as cosmetics, walking majestically to school after 8:00a.m. They also have special jungles to school, leaving home by 7.30 a.m. but never getting to school or sneaking to school around 9:00 a.m. and leaving by break time but returning home between 2.45 and 4:00p.m. just like regular students. They roam about during school hours, never found at the assembly grounds, always leaving their shirts untouched-in, sometimes having something to sell, armed with electrical gadgets such as video clips, C.D. and audio cassettes, watching films during school hours, spending more times watching films and can recite the content of any cassette any time. Other characteristics include: having at least a cell phone as regular companion and always using it for non-sensical purposes, never attending extra lessons, playing table tennis, snookers and other games during school hours. They are always found at barbing/hairdressing salon, tailoring, mechanic and spare parts workshops during school hours; and never participate in school agric/manual labour. They consume alcohol and smoke for fun; moving in gangs; breaking into homes and stealing for sustenance. They are always feeling tired at home after school hours; restless and preferring to go out all the time, wandering about aimlessly and copying notes when exam is near. They have no special private timetable, no particular life set-goal to pursue; failing and repeating classes or looking for other schools; dropping out of school and possibly taking to crime.

### **1.2 Outcome of Truancy**

Various authorities that have worked on truancy concluded that the outcome is dropping out of school [24,20,25,26,13,23,14]. Animasahun [23], specifically found that 68% of school truants end up being Motorcycle riders popularly called (*okada* riders), bus conductors, sex hawkers and possibly take to crime. He concluded that they become a burden to their parents or significant others and remain dependent throughout their lifetime.

### **1.3 Factors Responsible for Truancy**

In her discovery, [24] reported that manifestation of poverty, ignorance, cultural perception of work and schools, and changing social values are responsible for truancy. More specifically, she identified peer influence, unemployment, poor remuneration for educated persons, capacity for illiterate men to have educated spouse including Ph.D holders, poor learning conditions, household poverty, inability of education to bring riches, parental inability to pay school fees, capacity to make petty cash to augment family income and finding trading more satisfying than schooling.

Animasahun [23] identified lack of readiness to learn in school, lack of motivation, the fear of unknown, poor parenting, misplaced priority, peer group influence, bad role models, overindulgence, excessive homework, excessive demand by the home to make quick money for support and spiritual factors as responsible for truancy.

Gesinde [13] and other literature grouped the factors responsible for truancy into five categories as factors resident in the child, family, school, society and government. Among the factors resident in the child are: psychiatric disturbance; indifferent or irresponsible attitude towards education; being ill-equipped to tackle normal pressure of school [27], lack of adjustment to school life [28]; love of immediate earning from employment [29]; incompatible age [30]; lack of willingness to learn [31]; peer group influence [32,18]; lack of self-esteem and social skills confidence; poor peer relations, lack of concentration, lack of self management skill, and lack of academics ability [33,34].

Factors that are family centred include; inadequacies in the home background [35,36,25], unfavourable home circumstances e.g poor physical home condition; poor parent-child relationship characterized by hostility; lack of affection, under-involvement in the child's welfare; overtly harsh and authoritarian methods of discipline, high degree of family conflict and disorganization [37,18]. The Project Stay-in [38] identified parental lack of appreciation for value of education; parental high school dropouts; parental financial difficulties; ineffective parenting; family instability; parental discord; inappropriate role models; child abuse and/or neglect; substance abuse, alcoholic parents; and parental convenience where older sibling is kept home to babysit for younger siblings. Other family-based factors include parental neglect [25]; parental carefree attitude [39,40]. Animasahun [41] identified marital discord, separation, divorce and single-parenthood as parental factors responsible for truancy.

School-based factors which in the opinion of [42] and [43], are stronger than other factors, they include: unmet education needs; placement problems; hostile atmosphere of the school [44,18], poor school organization [27], teachers' professional misconduct; teachers' non-challant attitude towards truancy [45,46]; teachers discriminative and harsh behavior, teachers with inadequate lesson plan; teachers strike actions [18]; teachers absenteeism; poor working condition; scarce opportunities for professional advancement; poor supervision [47]; teachers high handedness, excessive capital punishment, mass failure, victimization, preferential treatment, sexual harassment, poor quality of teaching, academic failure, humiliation, discouragement [48,22]; uninteresting and irrelevant curriculum; improper class placement; failure to identify and provide services for problem students; poor pupil-teacher relationships; insufficient counseling and guidance staff; high student-teacher ratio; low teacher expectations; lack of parent-school communication and involvement; and too weak or too rigid administrative policies [38]; escape routes in school; poor teacher-student relationship; and irrelevant curriculum [33] as well as general school climate [22,49].

Societal-based factors, according to [18] include the moral bankruptcy and general indiscipline, which are constantly manifested by adults in the society send signals to the students that there is good measure of acceptance in such behavior, hence, they emulate. Along with this is inconsistencies [48,50]; corrupt society [51] anti-intellectual posture of society; placing more value on immediate financial gratification and power at the expense of academics [52]; condoning truancy; society ravaged by civil disobedience, riots or wars etc. and lack of social amenities [13]; lack of support for school; unresponsive community service agencies; community upheavals and social change; loss of neighborhood schools and lack of sense of "ownership" of schools; negative peer influence; high incidence of substance abuse; criminal activities; gang activities; and inadequate provision for transportation [38].

The government-based factors include; government laxity with education manifested in the absence of moral and religion education; shortage of teachers; failure to motivate teachers who in turn should motivate students; and absence of vocational education that will make school leavers employable; and non-implementation of existing policies [51,53,54,55].

#### **1.4 Effects/Consequences and Implications of Truancy**

Truancy ranks highly among deviant behavior manifested by Nigerian school children and has devastating implications for the individual, family, society and the nation at large. It culminates in missed opportunities and deprives the nation of the ability to make the most efficient use of her scarce resources in the younger generation of human supply for the nation resulting in educational wastage and human power development [56,23,24]. Most truants eventually become dropouts, wanderers and terror to the society. It has been noted that early school truancy was a good predictor of various forms of antisocial or deviant behaviours [41]. Furthermore, while it is evident that a truant put himself at a long term disadvantage in becoming productive citizens, [36] concluded that absenteeism is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Adeyemi [14] found truancy to be the first sign of trouble, the indication that the young person is losing his/her way, and that truancy is a gateway to crime evident in rampant substance abuse, daytime burglary rate and high vandalism.

The above implications are enough to retard the growth and development of a nation. Hence, something must be done urgently to eradicate truancy otherwise the labour and huge investment on the success of UBE programme would be in vain. The decision to boycott school as a result of any of the factors earlier mentioned is definitely a wrong decision emanating from poor thinking that leads to poor and irrational decisions. Hence, the art of thinking rationally should be taught in school for students to take wise decisions all the time. A substantial number of researchers have advocated for the adoption of creativity techniques for effective thinking leading to sound decision-making and productive actions. Evidence abound that people who engage in systematic creativity thinking training exercise succeeded in their capacity for creative thinking in a variety of fields [57,58,5,59]. UBE programme should also involve creativity training programme leading to effective thinking through which the problem of truancy could be nipped in the bud.

Creativity is mainly concerned with bringing about new ideas to solve some specific life problems [60,58,5]. One of the techniques of creativity useful in teaching thinking is the Lateral thinking technique, developed by [60]. It facilitates effective thinking leading to rational and effective decision. Lateral thinking creativity technique purports to ameliorate thinking errors. It aims at simplifying thinking, providing alternative forms of behavior and making an individual take decisions leading to responsible actions highly rewarding to the

thinker and beneficial to the society [1]. According to [61], a good and effective decision follows a careful process of searching for alternatives and weighing the consequences such decisions might have on people.

Lateral thinking is a pattern breaking creativity technique which provides a new direction of thinking, solve difficult problems and look for alternative ways of doing things. While [58] defined Lateral thinking as the strategies of seeking to solve problems by apparently illogical means, [62] describes it as an attempt to move sideways to generate parallel ideas, alternative approaches, and different point of view to solve certain problems. The true technical description of lateral thinking is based on a consideration of the self-organising pattern breaking information system: cutting across patterns in a self organizing information system. Instead of moving on the normal asymmetric patterning system, we seek to move and cut across patterns in our thinking. Lateral thinking is generally concerned with thinking differently with the purpose of escaping from old ideas and with the generation of new ideas and new approaches to solve problems. Hence, the old pattern of life such as that of laziness, unplanned life, lack of set goals, aimless wandering, poor time management, negative peer influence, destructive tendencies and all other negative behaviours of truants must be jettisoned and replaced with new ideas of hardwork, goal-setting, effective time management, associating with well-behaved peers and acquisition of positive life skills.

The programme of Lateral thinking technique involves the following:

1. Current issue, idea or problematic situation. This essentially means that this technique can not just work in a vacuum; there must be a definite issue to trash. This may be a moribund idea, problematic issue or a threatening situation. As far as a truant is concerned, this refers to the major cause of his/her truancy.
2. Alternatives. This is a process of generating several other ways of doing a particular thing, which in turn can generate new ideas or other alternatives. Truants would be exposed to myriads of positive life skills, and alternative ways of handling challenges of life.
3. Focus. Out of several alternatives an individual is expected to focus and stick to a particular idea suitable to solve his personal challenges which must be carefully executed so as not to be controversial, problematic or confusing.
4. Challenge. This is willingness to explore the reasons why we do things the way we do and whether there are any other ways by which it could be done. It enables an individual to break free from the limits of the accepted ways of operating. The truant has an opportunity of challenging his former ways of life and see reasons why new ways of life must be adopted.
5. Random Entry. This is a process of using unconnected input to open up new lines of thinking.
6. Provocation. This is the process of generating provocative statements and then using them to build new ideas. This is specifically designed to challenge the limitations of human perception.
7. Movement. This is a mental operation that we can use as an alternative to judgment. It allows an individual to develop a provocative idea into one that is workable and realistic.
8. Harvesting. This is the process of taking note of specific ideas that seem practical and valuable.
9. Treatment of Ideas. This is the process of developing choice ideas and shape them to fit the current demand of reality.

10. Implementation of outcome [60,63,58,62]. At this juncture, a truant is monitored into practicalising his new positive life skills, develop academic resiliency skills, and make efforts to be punctual in school in spite of all odds.

Some of the researchers who have successfully used Lateral thinking to teach thinking and decision-making include [60,63,58,5,1,62]. This study specifically investigated the effectiveness of Lateral thinking creativity technique in the eradication of truancy behaviours among Universal Basic Education (U.B.E.) students in Ila and Iwo Local Government areas of Osun State, Nigeria.

## **2. MATERIALS AND METHODS**

### **2.1 Hypothesis**

There will be no significant difference in the truancy behavior of U.B.E. students exposed to Lateral thinking creativity technique and their counterparts in the control group.

### **2.2 Design**

A pre-test, post-test quasi-experimental group design using the pretest scores as covariates was adopted for the study.

### **2.3 Participants**

One hundred (100) Junior Secondary School II (JSS II) students who were consistently playing truancy were randomly selected from Ila and Iwo Local Government areas of Osun state. Cases of truancy have been reported to be rampant in many parts of Osun state. However, these Local Governments were purposively selected because they have been identified to be part of the areas notoriously known for high rate of truancy among junior students in public secondary schools. The ages of the randomly selected students ranged between 10 and 16 years with a mean of 13 years. They were categorised into the treatment and control groups based on simple balloting with (50) students in each of the groups. The students in Ila Local Government formed the experimental group while those in Iwo Local Government formed the control.

### **2.4 Instrumentation**

The truancy behavior scale, test 1 in [64] Academic Success Barrier Battery was adopted for the study. The instrument contains 30 items developed on 5-point Likert scale whereby 1 indicates Strongly disagree and 5 indicates Strongly agree. Minimum score is 30 while the maximum score is 150. The Norm is 67 whereby any score above the norm is a strong indication of truancy behavior. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of 0.85 while the Guttman Split half reliability is 0.72.

### **2.5 Procedure**

The researcher went round all secondary schools in the two Local Governments to discuss the purpose of the research with their Principals who all promised to cooperate. Hence, their Vice principals with the assistance of class teachers compiled the lists of truant students in JSS II (Basic 8). The researcher was permitted to meet with them in their various schools



where he sensitized and motivated them towards a life-changing programme. Those who agreed to participate in the programme were given consent forms to fill and which should be countersigned by their parents to make them committed to the programme. Only those who returned the duly signed consent forms by both students and parents were invited to the Local Government Town Hall for final selection and commencement of the programme. They balloted for the available spaces in the programme whereby fifty (50) students were selected in each of the Local Governments. The initial rapport and introduction took place, and all participants in each group responded to the truancy behavior scale so as to determine their pre-test scores. After this, students in Ila Local Government were exposed to six weeks training in Lateral thinking creativity skills of 1hour twice a week while those in Iwo Local Government were told to go about their normal business until when they would be called upon for their own training. At the end of six weeks, the truancy behavior scale was administered on the experimental group to collect their post-test scores. The control group members in Iwo Local Government were also invited to their Local Government Town Hall whereby they also responded to the truancy behavior scale so as to collect their post-test scores as well. It was after this that they were also taught the importance of Formal education and reasons for punctuality in schools. After this, the two groups were appreciated. The Principals and staff as well as parents of the participants were all appreciated. That was the end of the programme.

## 2.6 Data Analysis

The collected data was subjected to a one-way fixed analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) to determine the effectiveness of Lateral thinking creativity training technique on truancy behavior of the participants.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

To test the hypothesis which states that there will be no significant difference in the truancy behaviour of experimental and control group, the analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was employed to analyse the posttest scores of participants on their truancy behaviour, using the pretest scores as covariates to find out if posttest difference was significant.

**Table 1. Summary of Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) showing the effect of treatment on participants' truancy behaviour tests scores of experimental and control group**

Source	Type III sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta squared
Corrected Model	1007.137 <sup>a</sup>	2	503.569	12.403	.000	.204
Intercept	3691.294	1	3691.294	90.917	.000	.484
pretest2	2.247	1	2.247	.055	.814	.001
group2	1006.705	1	1006.705	24.795	.000	.204
Error	3938.253	97	40.601			
Total	204665.000	100				
Corrected Total	4945.390	99				

The result presented in Table 1 above shows that there was a significant difference in the truancy behavior posttest scores of participants in the experimental and control groups ( $F_{(1,97)}=24.795 < 0.05$ ). Based on this, the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant difference in truancy behavior posttest scores of experimental and control group.

This invariably means that the Lateral thinking creativity technique has large effect on the posttest scores of the treated group. In order to provide more details on the variation in post-test mean score of participants in treatment and control group, the pair-wise comparison was computed as revealed in Table 2.

**Table 2. Summary of pair-wise comparison analysis showing the effect of treatment (lateral thinking creativity technique) on truancy behaviour test scores of experimental and control groups**

<b>Group</b>	<b>Adjusted mean</b>	<b>Mean difference</b>	<b>Standard error</b>	<b>Sig</b>
Experimental	41.516	6.348	1.275	.000
Control	47.864	-6.348	1.275	.000

Table 2 shows that the difference in the adjusted mean value of the participants was significant. The participants in the control group has the highest adjusted mean score ( $X=47.864$ ), while the participants exposed to treatment obtained the lowest adjusted mean score ( $X=41.516$ ). It should be noted that since truancy behavior is an undesirable behavior, therefore the lower the score the better for the student. Hence, the control group has higher mean score which is an indication of manifestation of undesirable behavior. This is an evidence that the intervention (Lateral thinking creativity technique) was effective. This, therefore, implies that the control group possesses a higher tendency to exhibit truancy behaviour than the treatment group.

#### **4. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

This study has clearly demonstrated that the Lateral thinking creativity techniques is effective in teaching thinking leading to rational, effective and enhanced positive behavior towards attending school and jettisoning truancy behavior. The findings corroborated the earlier findings of [60,63,58,65,59] that certain creativity techniques could be used to teach thinking leading to rational and effective decision-making.

The study has revealed that poor thinking and irrational decisions have engulfed the lives of the young secondary school students leading to high rate of truancy among them. However, this study has shown that the students could be taught how to think and make wise decisions through the use of Lateral thinking creativity technique whereby all aspects of an issue would be considered before the final decision is made. Therefore, the finding would enable those who are involved in truancy behaviour as a result of poor thinking and irrational decisions to uphold positive life skill of attending school regularly and becoming better students.

It is therefore, recommended that any student of UBE found to be playing truancy should undergo training in Lateral thinking creativity technique so as to know how to think effectively and invariably nip truancy and dropping-out behaviours in the bud. Thinking should be included in the curriculum of the Universal Basic Education students so that all of them can be vigorously taught about how to think effectively and make rational decisions. This would lead to a total eradication of criminal tendencies including truancy-a time bomb to the success of UBE in Nigeria.

## **COMPETING INTERESTS**

Author has declared that no competing interests exist.

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