

The unintended consequences behind extra classes

For years, many parents have often asked teachers to administer extra tuition classes, also known as coaching, in a bid to have them improve their learning outcomes. This practice appears to have found support with teachers, who have been making money from these instructions. This constituted extra teaching work, for which they demanded compensation.

However, in this regard, the ministry of Education and Sports banned extra tuition classes, also known as coaching in 2007, over concerns for safety of the children. The school calendar is clear on when gazetted teaching should take place. When the teaching happens outside these times, this constitutes extra lessons, that are held, when learners should be resting. This is part of the reason why the ministry of Education outlawed tuition classes.

The assumption was that having children walk from their homes to schools and other learning centers, to extra classes in order to benefit from holiday learning. However, there

is a growing trend towards online learning, both as a way of evading government checks on learners and schools hosting holiday classes, as well as protecting learners from moving out of their homes. The move to online 'coaching' is just a diversion in reality.

There is research by Educationists in institutions of higher learning that shows that extra classes or coaching does not necessarily translate into improved learning, unless it is directly targeted at a specific learner, who is slow at appreciating content. There are also research studies that show that when learners don't rest, they are likely to become mentally exhausted. The studies show that learners need to rest, in order to be able to regain their cognitive abilities - not to be given more work. This, then leads to poorer learning outcomes, confusion and a tendency to hate learning of any kind.

In addition, the Uganda National Examinations Board (Uneb) has also complained about the impact of coaching on exam performance

in the country. According to the Uneb, students who are exposed to continuous coaching tend to perform poorly due to the stress associated with continuous learning, without rest. To cope most learners are forced to cram, established contents in their heads, which they then reproduce in national exams, without regard to the questions being asked.

This now calls for the ministry of Education to be more decisive in ending coaching across the country, in a bid to save learners from the adverse effects of continuous learning, without rest. This, it is hoped, would allow learners to return from holidays, like the one that starts this week, refreshed and ready to continue with the learning process.

The NIE welcomes comments and suggestions from readers, especially secondary school students. If you would like your suggestions, complements published, send them to our regular email ad-

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