

## Lateness to School Remediation Game

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### Abstract

Primary and secondary school in Nigeria encourage punctuality to school yet a good number of the learners came late to school. This is especially true in the case of day students. Learners who come late to school are usually punished in one way or the other yet the lateness to school phenomenon still persist. Lateness to school behaviour affects the tone of the school, the learners as well as teachers in different varying ways. Remediating lateness to school behaviour is a concern to stakeholders of education. It is in this wise that the Lateness to School Remediation Game was developed to approach behaviour change from a fun perspective.

**Keywords:** Game, Lateness, Remediation, School, behavior.

### Introduction

All educational institutions in Nigeria abhor lateness to school, be it primary, secondary or tertiary. This makes institutions to take steps to discourage lateness to school behaviour especially in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria. Schools check lateness from 7:50am when the morning assembly is on. All learners coming to school at that time through the school gate are stopped. In some schools, their names and time of arriving school are recorded. Late-comers are usually punished. The punishment may include kneeling them down for some time, asking them to pick papers around the school buildings, giving them some portion of land/field to cut grasses or even some strokes of the cane on their palms or buttocks. Among these late comers, some come late to school everyday while others come in few other days. It is expected that with the punishment given out to latecomers, lateness to school behaviour should be non-existent or at worst drastically reduced. The behaviour is persistent and by casual observation could be said to be on the increase. This is because, learners especially those in public schools, could be seen going to school even by 9:30am on a school day be it in the primary or secondary schools in the rural areas or urban towns. It now seems to be that the lateness to school behaviour defies remediation. To this effect, this paper undertakes to develop a Lateness to School Remediation Game adopted from a ludo game and group procedures applied in reduction of lateness to school behaviour.

In the old traditional set up, behaviours are changed through meaningful stories, adages, proverbs, punishments of various kinds etc. Today in this age of civilization and in rural and urban schools, professional counsellors and teachers have roles to play in this regard to reduce lateness to school behaviour. Counselling has gone beyond face to face professional relationship into the use of technology and other techniques. One of such techniques is the use of games in counselling.

### Games: Meaning, Purpose and Benefits

Game as viewed by Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionaries of Current English, (1974: 353) is a "form of play especially with rules". Ugwuegbulam (1989) citing Abt (1971) saw game as a get up activity and as an activity among two or more independent decision makers seeking to achieve their objectives in some limiting context. Asonibare (1987) opined that game as a recreational activity may have dated back to time immemorial but observed that innovative employment of puzzles, games and stimulations in shaping behaviours by behavioural scientists and counsellors in a maximal way have been an eluding thing. However, Travers (1979) pointed out that teachers have always attempted to brighten their students' days by devising games based on spelling and geography.

Ugwuegbulam (1989) citing Abt (1971) and Seldner (1976) are of the view that the purpose of games include but not restricted to the following:

- a. To provide opportunity for communication and interaction among the participants of a game.
- b. To self activate participants in a game.
- c. To attain rewards both by individual performance and as group members resulting in learning that is retained and transferred.
- d. Provides learners with fun and opportunity to learn about themselves and their world, as well as permit children to cope with intense emotional reaction (Stamin, 1976).

In education and by extension to counselling, games have good recreational values, providing fitness values and necessary outlets for exuberance. There are many types of games used in counselling. They serve

different purposes. Some of the games are board games, some are on cards. The games are usually group games, some of the games are: social conflict game, changing family games, the family living game, the helping, sharing and caring game, from rage to reason game, the coping skills game, empathy counts game, emotional bingo game, Consequences board game, classroom behaviour game, small sharks card game, take a champ out of anger game, the self-control patrol game, escape from Anger Island game, exploring my anger etc. This present game is a board game. It is designed to help remediate lateness to school behaviour.

### **Development of Lateness to School Remediation Game**

The lateness remediation game is board game. It has a playing board (see appendix 1), guiding rules, process of playing the game and some implications.

#### **The Board**

The game is adopted from Ludo game. Like the ludo game it has a playground referred to as the “board”. The board can be made using card board sheets which can be folded after use. It could also be made on plywood. The type made on card board paper is ordinarily lighter than the one made on plywood. The playground measures 40cm<sup>2</sup>. The essence of making the board measures 40cm<sup>2</sup> is to make provision for six players to be accommodation each time a game is being played on the board.

The game is played with a Ludo dice, cup and six seeds in different colours. The difference in colours is to enable each of the players to identify his/her seeds during the course of play.

The playground of the game has a game’s rest house. The game’s rest house is a rectangle vertically divided into two and horizontally divided into three, thereby providing six squares where each of the seeds will rest before the commencement of the game. This game’s rest house is opposite the “start” box. The start box is coloured red. The game’s playground has four stops marked “A”, “B”, “C” and “D”. The fourth stop marked “D” is the “home”. The home is where the first seed will get into and the game comes to the end. The distance from the start box to point “A” is made up of fifteen spaces. The distance from point “A” to “B” as well as from point “C” to “D” are made up of fifteen boxes each. The essence of this is to keep the playing of the game longer. Each of the spaces measured <sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> inch square and are numbered from the start box to the home. There are sixty five numbered spaces from the “start box” to the “home”. The essence of numbering the boxes is to enhance easy identification of where each players seed stopped at the end of each session.

The Lateness to School Remediation game has been described above. Other materials used in playing the game are also materials used in playing the Ludo game.

The materials are:

- a. **The Dice/Seeds:** These are Ludo game seeds/dice used by the participants to count while running the course on the board.
- b. **The Cup:** The cup is also the Ludo game cup or any other cup like container, small in size that can allow the scooping of the dice into it and allow the dice to being shaken before being thrown on the board to know the score of the player.

#### **Target Group**

The Lateness Remediation Game is designed for learners who come late to school especially habitual comers. The game can be played by pupils in the senior primary school level and adolescent in the secondary schools. It is assumed that these learners mentioned above should be able to basically count numerals from 1 to 50 and may presently have tried their hand in playing the Ludo game.

#### **Objectives of the Game**

The game has objectives. The objectives of the Lateness Remediation Game include but not restricted to the following:

- a. To identify habitual late-comers to school via the lateness to school checklist /register.
- b. To create a sense of belongingness among the players of the game.
- c. To discuss and identify what to do to drop lateness to school behaviour.
- d. To create fun for the players of the game.

#### **Rules Guiding the Playing of Lateness to School Remediation Game**

The Lateness to School Remediation Game has rules of plays. The rules are:

1. The game has to be played by 2 to 6 persons at a time with the counsellors as facilitators. This number is so recommended to ensure and enhance in-depth discussions by allowing players to have enough time to make contributions. It will be easy to manage the number of players if they are few.
2. To start the game, a seed comes out from the home when a player throws the dice and earns a value of “One” (1). The seed goes and sits on the start box. The seed runs its course following the subsequent values obtained by the player from the throwing of the dice on the board when it gets to his/her turn. The throwing of the dice is done in turns.
3. No “killing” of other player’s seed when one lands on the other player’s seed. This allows for two or more seeds to be on a square in the start box and run-away. This is done to teach and allow the spirit of

- “Live and let live” principle as well as to encourage the spirit of co-cooperativeness in group counselling process.
4. The seed will be thrown on the playing board one after another. Starting from the first player the exercise goes in a clock-wise fashion.
  5. No new member will be admitted to play this game once a person’s seed has landed on box “A” and discussion started. This is to enhance coherence and coordination in the group’s discussions.
  6. That any leading seed has to stop at every stop designated A, B, C or D. This applies only to the first seed to arrive at any of the points at any point in time. It does not apply to other seeds following the first seed.
  7. The seed should not be thrown on the board twice by any particular participant even if the first throw earns him/her a score of six. One is only allowed to throw the dice once even if it resulted into a “loose” throw.
  8. There should be no interruption during discussion but respect for others view.

#### **Process/Procedure of Using the Lateness to School Remediation Game**

The participants are first of all recruited before the game will start. Before the recruitment of participants for the game, a late comers register which has to be an exercise book with heading on each page indicating name of latecomers, class, Age and sex has to be designed and used to write the names of late comers, be it occasional or habitual/chronic latecomers. The information are purely for identification. The possibility that the late comers can give fake bio-data is not ruled out, as such, it is suggested that on each day, a student from each class who comes to school early should help the teacher or counsellor to identify the latecomers and the information properly and accurately recorded.

After the recording of names of students who come late to school for two weeks, the total number of lateness to school for each student should be determined. Students who came late to school for four times or more within an observatory time of two weeks (i.e ten school days) will be eligible to participate in the game. (Note, those who have 4-5 lateness to school behaviour can be regarded as moderate late comers while those with 6 lateness to school behaviour should be regarded as habitual late comers to school).

After the above, the teacher/counsellor will use the information on the student lateness to school register to contact and invite those selected to take part in the game. The invitation will inform them of the time, date and venue for the meeting.

On the appointed date and time, the teacher/counsellor meets with the participants at the schedule venue. The venue should be spacious to accommodate the participants and teacher/counsellor. It should be well lit and free from distractions. Auditory and visual privacy should be ensured. The room should be arranged with seats in a circular form with a table at the centre earlier before the participants arrive for participating in the game each day of their meeting. The essence of sitting in a circular form is to build in a sense of closeness in the group.

On the first day of the participants meeting with the teacher/counsellor, the teacher/counsellor should welcome the participants to the day’s meeting with unconditional friendly greeting with non-critical facial expression to aid a quick and smooth establishment of initial rapport. The teacher/counsellor who is the group facilitator should emphasize confidentiality of the group sessions and discussions. The facilitator should address the participants thus:

“Good friends, this group is ours, it belongs to us. We are here to play a game in a purely friendly manner. As we play the game we discuss. Our discussion, which will be on lateness to school issues should be within us, that is, what we discuss here should be confidential”

Thereafter, the roles of the participants and the facilitator will be spelt out. Their roles include participating in group discussion in a free and honest way as well as seeing one another as themselves. After the participants’ role definition, the rules of the game will be read out and explained to them. This could end the first meeting with a reminder and appeal to attend the next meeting in terms of place of meeting, time and date.

On the next appointed day, the facilitator will assist participants to review the previous session especially their roles, and rules of playing the game. Then, they will commence the playing of the game according to rules. When a seed arrives at point “A”, the game is stopped temporarily. The teacher/counsellor will hand over to the owner of the seed whose seed is resting on point “A” some six pre-prepared folded pieces of paper to pick one. Five of these piece of papers has “lateness to school” written on them while the sixth one will be blank. The essence of having five of the pieces of papers having “Lateness to school” written on them is to enhance very high probability of the participant picking the one written “Lateness to school”. If the participant picks and gets one that has nothing written on it, he/she will be asked to pick a second time. At this second chance, balloting without replacement will be employed. This is to ensure that at the second ballot, the participant will pick a paper with “lateness to school” written on it. At this point, lateness to school will be discussed. The facilitator will ask participants what they understand by coming late to school. Further in the course of the discussion, the teacher/counsellor should use direct statements and questions. When questions are used, the facilitator states the hypothesis first followed by a question, for example, the facilitator could say: “We come late to school at times,

what makes us to come late to school?" Then the participants will be encouraged by the facilitator to air their views. They should not be in a hurry to air the view. The facilitator should employ listening and probing skills during the interaction. The summary of their views will be recorded by the facilitator who will act as the secretary to the group.

At times, not all the participants may have contributed to the discussion because of time constraint. The group secretary and members should take note where their seeds are on the board as well as who and who are yet to contribute to the groups' discussions. Then, they will fix time and day for another appointment agreeable to all.

On the next appointment meeting day, the facilitator and participants will meet, review their previous meeting and continue from where they stopped. Assuming that there were participants that didn't make their own contributions during the previous meeting, they will do that in this meeting. When everybody is done, the game resumes again from where they stopped in the last meeting. They will play the game till a seed lands on box "B". Again, the game will be stopped. The facilitator will ask the question: "Is coming late to school good?" and later "In what ways does coming late to school affect you?" The participants will make their contributions and they are recorded by the group's secretary.

Again, the facilitator will ask another question "What things do you think you can do to be coming early to school? The participants will also discuss this and their responses will be recorded. They will also be asked to record their own responses.

This phase may continue into another meeting time. The playing of the game can only resume when issues raised previously had been addressed. As usual, date and time for another meeting will be fixed.

On another meeting day, the previous session's activities will be reviewed before the playing of the game resumes and will stop again when a player's seed lands on the square marked "C". The facilitator will stop the game and ask the participants the following questions:

"There are benefits for coming to school early. Why would you like to come to school early? The second question will only be asked when all have contributed to the question asked in the session.

Participants will be given time to respond to the question. Their responses will be recorded by the group's secretary. Each participant will also be asked to record their own personal responses to the question. Then the session will come to an end and another session scheduled for another day and time.

In the next meeting, review of the previous session will be carried out and the participants will be asked the reasons for considering being early to school. The participants will share their views and resume the playing of the game from where they stopped in the last session until one of the participant's seed lands on box "D" then the game will stop. Box "D" is a house in a big circle. The box "D" in the circle is the home for the game. In this circumstance, the facilitator will lead the group to discuss what the participants can do in their various circumstances to start coming to school early.

The participants will each be given time to make their contributions and record their individual contributions. The facilitator will equally record all participants' contributions. Thereafter, the participants will be asked to try to implement what they said they will be doing in order to be coming early to school.

Two weeks after the last session, the frequencies of the late coming behaviour of the participants should be observed and noted using Lateness to School Behaviour Register. The observation which should be done without the knowledge of the participants should be done for two weeks and a comparison of Lateness to school behaviour before and after participating in the game and activities will be made.

### **Conclusion**

The above is a modest attempt to suggest that games of this nature are important and can be used in reducing lateness to school behaviour. This assumption should be tried out empirically. In a situation where the playing of the game achieves its purposes, counsellors can use it to "fight" lateness to school/behaviour. When learners come to school early, academic and non-academic activities will be attended to with high probability of success. The learners will likely come to school early, do their morning functions and get into the classroom and be set to learn. They will not be put off by the punishments that would be given to them if they had come late to school.

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Graduate studies, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State.

**APPENDIX 1**

**THE PLAYING BOARD FOR LATENESS REMEDIATION GAME ( L.R.G )**

