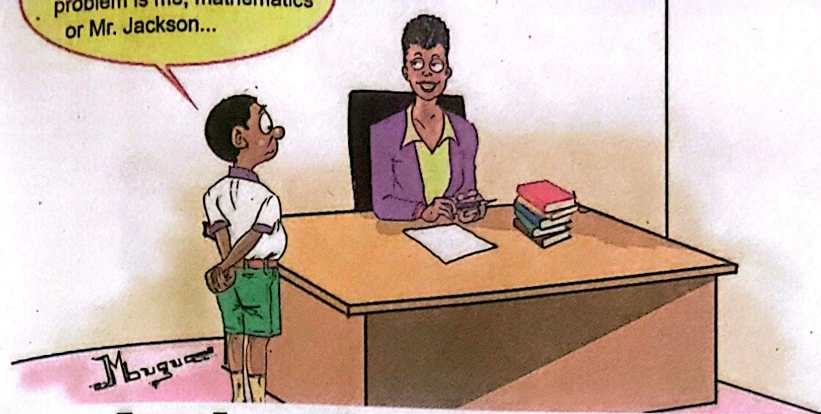


problem is me, mathematics or Mr. Jackson...



Musho's strategy to crash Mathematics

BY TONY MUSHOBOROZI

Mathematics! The biggest headache for Musho in Primary Seven. He always feels lost in most lessons. No matter how many questions he asks, he never seems to catch up. This makes him sad and scared. What makes him even more concerned is that he had improved in Primary Six when the headmistress became their math teacher. He had hoped that the headmistress would remain his math teacher in Primary Seven but alas! Now, he was struggling again. And he thought the problem was Teacher Jackson. He needed to talk to someone about it.

"Good afternoon, Teacher Sylvia," he said softly.

"Good afternoon, Musho. You look troubled. What is on your mind?" Teacher Sylvia looked up from her papers and smiled warmly.

"Do you have a moment?" Musho asked.

"Of course. What is the matter?" Teacher Sylvia asked.

"It is Mathematics..." Musho hesitated.

"That is not my subject, Musho," Teacher Sylvia said.

"I know. I am sorry," Musho started to walk away.

"Musho, do not go. I am listening."

"Mr Jackson... I do not like him," Musho

whispered.

"Why not?"

"He is too strict. I feel too scared in his class."

Teacher Sylvia gestured for him to sit. "Tell me," she said calmly, "do you dislike Mathematics because it is difficult, or because you fear your teacher?"

"I do not know," Musho said, unsure.

"Musho, disliking a teacher can make the subject seem even harder. Mr Jackson may be strict, but strictness is not a bad thing. Sometimes it is another way of pushing learners to grow."

"Maybe, for me, I don't want to grow," Musho said, half joking.

Teacher Sylvia laughed. She knew Musho was saying this in jest but she also knew he was saying something that was concerning. She let him speak his mind as she was

trying to figure out a way to help Musho. Musho was worried that the worst might happen.

"I really need help now or I will fail mathematics at PLE," Musho said.

"Were you ever good at math?" Teacher Sylvia asked.

"It was my worst subject in Primary Five but last year when the headmistress taught us math in P6, I started understanding it and performing better," Musho said.

"Why do you think you improved when the headmistress taught math?" Teacher Sylvia asked.

"Because she was nice to me," Musho said.

"So you think Teacher Jackson is not being nice to you?"

"Yeah," Musho said.

"Musho, not every teacher will be nice to you. You have to grow up and learn to follow the lessons even when the teacher is not being nice to you," Teacher Sylvia said.

"Or, you could tell him to be nice," Musho said.

"Why don't you approach him and tell him how you feel?"

"Because he intimidates me. I fear him," Musho said.

"Okay. Thank you for reaching out to me. Leave it to me, I will handle it," she said.

As soon as Musho left, Teacher Sylvia called Musho's father.

To be continued...

Answer this

1. Why does Musho struggle with Mathematics?

2. Why did Musho improve in P6?

3. What does Musho fear about Mr. Jackson?

4. What advice does Teacher Sylvia give him?