

## Power Naps Are Needed for High School Students

Imagine the possibility of all high school students in The Bahamas being able to have a fifteen-to-thirty-minute nap each day while in school. It is my view that this will be invigorating and will stimulate intellectual learning and retention. Usually, many pre-school and first-grade students are given an opportunity to nap while in class. Why not the high school students?

There is a false notion that older students do not need nap time. Truthfully, napping time is beneficial for people of any age. The older one gets, the more important it is to have daily nap time. These short nap times are called power naps. In my article “Power Naps Can Work Miracles,” I indicated that such short naps could do better for the mind and body than coffee or naps two to three hours in length. In fact, having regular power naps can even boost your health and longevity. As a 70-year-old male, I have regular nap times each day and they are invigorating.

But in high school? Yes! Oxford Learning Institute indicates the following: “Sleep studies tell us that napping—even in class—can actually enhance academic performance and cognitive function. Research shows that even short naps of 20-30 minutes can improve cognitive performance, attention, and memory retention.” A great percentage of students are also sleep-deprived. Thus, power naps rejuvenate the students and help them to become more productive. Teachers would be amazed at how effective a power nap will impact learning, cognitive processing, and behavior.

In the article “Napping: Benefits and Tips” wellness coach Jay Vera Summer, states: “Napping benefits high school students by enhancing memory and learning, improving alertness and focus, reducing stress and boosting mood, and increasing productivity. Studies show that naps, particularly short ones, can help teenagers retain information, feel more refreshed, and better cope with the pressures of school. This is especially important for teens who are often sleep-deprived due to their natural circadian rhythm and early school start times.”

Some may think that teens only need power nap times in school because they are watching TV or on social media for hours after school and late into the night. While this is true for many, the reality is that some teenagers are actually surrogate parents who have to manage younger siblings and take care of the home because their parents are too busy working to pay the bills or are dysfunctional due to alcohol or drug abuse. I believe that high school should not only be a place for intellectual learning, be a safe place for emotional growth and healing. It is my view that including power naps for high school students will greatly increase academic and social performance and greater results on external exams.

Let's take a look around the world. In Japan, power napping during school is called “inemuri,” which means sleeping while present. In the article “Inemuri - the Japanese nap in between” states: “Yes, there is a concept of power napping in Japanese schools, primarily through the cultural practice of inemuri, which is sleeping while present, and through a formal practice of designated 'sleep breaks' or using specialized nap pods for students. Inemuri is a cultural norm where napping in a public or work setting is seen as a sign of dedication rather than laziness, even in schools.”

China and Taiwan also have for midday naps in schools. There are policies that encourage students to rest after lunch. France and other European countries do not have a nap time for high school students. However, the lunch breaks are one-and-a-half hours long to two hours. Students can go home for lunch. Family lunchtime, even during school days, is important in most European countries. Although the students do not sleep, there is much time for relaxation.

There is no high school nap times in African countries. However, my research indicates that most countries around the world are concerned about the insufficient sleep of students and how it is impacting their school performance. As indicated earlier, the insufficient sleep is not the result of teenage defiance, but in many cases, the result of teenagers being made surrogate parents to younger siblings, resulting in less study and rest time in the home. It is now time for The Bahamas to take another look at the education system and adjust it to create enhanced intellectual stimulation and social and emotional development.

I am happy to say that a few years ago, a student at a private high school in The Bahamas came to me to talk about how to deal with stress. He talked about the dynamics in his classroom and the management of stress and frustration that the entire class was experiencing. This inspired me to suggest the idea of having a nap in school. He had never heard about it before and was excited to talk to his home room teacher about it. He introduced the to his teacher who was willing to experiment for a week. They had a fifteen-minute nap time in the classroom every day after lunch for one week, and it worked miracles. Everyone felt rejuvenated and was able to concentrate on their assignments and accomplish more than before.

I encourage school leadership to look into the possibility of students having a fifteen-minute nap in high school every day or at least three times a week. It can be right after lunch period or at a time that best suits each class. Some schools may need to extend the school day by fifteen minutes to make this possible. I believe it can work. Try it. Our students need it.

Barrington H. Brennen is a marriage and family therapist and counseling psychologist. Send your questions or comments to [question@soencouragement.org](mailto:question@soencouragement.org) or call 1242 327 1980 or visit [www.soencouragement.org](http://www.soencouragement.org)