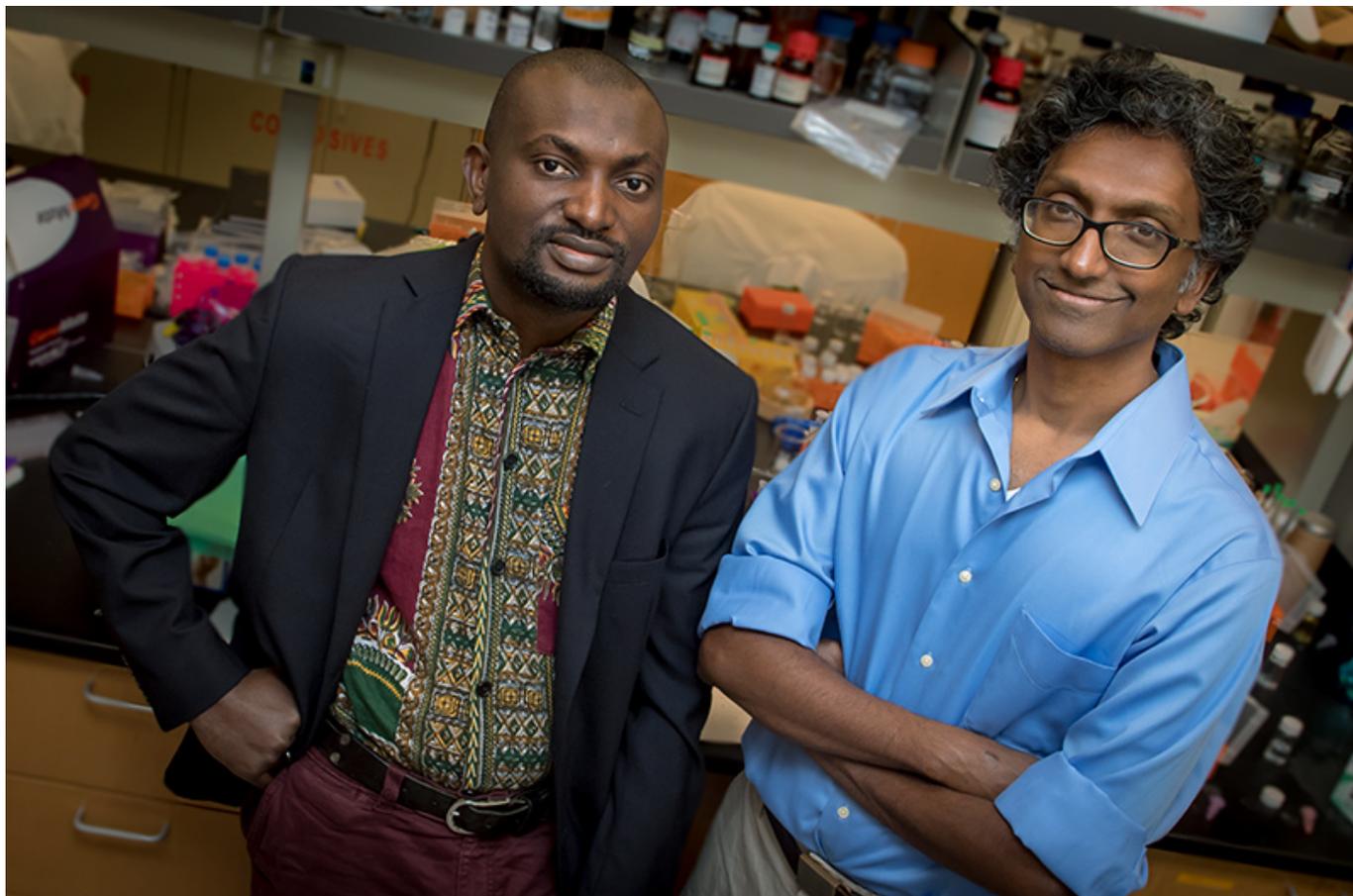


Yoruba science textbook will be put to the test

October 31, 2018 11:00 AM

Tulane Today staff today@tulane.edu



Mellon Fellow Taofeeq Adebayo (left), a PhD student in linguistics, is pictured with Mellon Fellow Janan Jayawickramarajah, a professor in chemistry. Adebayo and his collaborators translated a science textbook from English and will use it in Nigerian classrooms in November. (Photograph by Sally Asher)

This month a Mellon Fellow from Tulane University, Taofeeq Adebayo, will travel to Nigeria to begin teaching middle-school students from a science textbook he translated with four graduate student collaborators from University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

Adebayo was awarded the Andrew Mellon Fellowship in Community Engaged Scholarship in 2017, through which he began translating *Longman's Basic Science 1* into the Yoruba language for seventh-graders. His plan is to collaborate with seven schools, where he and the graduate students will teach from the translated text and perform scientific demonstrations with the help of local science teachers from those schools.

"The idea is to get feedback from them regarding how our translation can be improved to meet their classroom needs and how we can design the translation so that it is accessible not only to the students but also to the teachers, as well as parents who read in Yoruba," said Adebayo, who is pursuing a PhD in linguistics.

Tulane University

“The idea is to get feedback from them regarding how our translation can be improved to meet their classroom needs.”

Taofeeq Adebayo, PhD student

Adebayo has been discussing the project with Mellon Fellow [Janan Jayawickramarajah](#), a professor of chemistry in the [School of Science and Engineering](#). In addition to providing Adebayo the perspective of a scientist and educator, Jayawickramarajah is providing materials for the scientific demonstrations.

Adebayo’s Mellon project proposal cites a 2010 UNESCO policy brief that argues Africans should work to “plan late-exit or additive mother-tongue-based multilingual education, develop it boldly and implement it without delay.”

“His project suggests an approach that could allow kids who speak a language that is not widely used to think about science in their mother tongue, making science more accessible at an earlier age,” said Ryan McBride, administrative associate professor and director of the [Mellon Graduate Program in Community-Engaged Scholarship](#).

The goal of the interdisciplinary Mellon Fellows certificate program, McBride said, “is to provide graduate students in the arts and humanities a distinctive educational experience that allows them to connect their disciplines to new communities and to work with those communities to develop cutting-edge, civically informed, ethically grounded, community-engaged scholarship.”

The program was made possible by a \$1.5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and is an initiative of the [School of Liberal Arts](#), the [Center for Public Service](#), and the [Center for Engaged Learning and Teaching](#).