PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN THE TRAINING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
The complexities of the times have made education and the expectations of the teacher infinitely more complex. The complexities are brought about by many changes and innovations which emanate from changing societal needs. Technology and the explosion of knowledge have brought sharply into focus new concepts and approaches to teaching. Therefore, the professional preparation of physical education teachers must take into consideration the changes that the times have brought about. Competent teachers can only be produced through the programme of teacher education. This paper, therefore, stresses the Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE) curriculum as a means of attaining professional competence among physical education teachers. Other areas of focus include roles and competencies required of physical education teachers promoting professional competence in the prospective physical education teachers. Suggestions are made towards improving the quality of teacher education in physical education.

KEYWORDS: Professional competence, Training, Physical education

INTRODUCTION
The major concern of every profession centres around the growth and development of members and the quality of services being rendered to the society. The degree of competence possessed by members of a profession determines, to a great extent, the quality of services they render towards the growth and development of the society. There is no doubt that the pride of every profession, teaching inclusive, is to see that its members are competent in carrying out their professional roles, duties, and responsibilities, as well as rendering high quality services to humanity. A profession without competent members has little or nothing to offer towards the growth and development of the human society, and as such, is not worth existing (Kayit, 2017). In order for the teaching profession to raise its shoulders high among other professions, efforts must be geared towards moulding, sharpening and shaping its members to withstand societal pressure and classroom complexities. Only competent teachers are capable of living up to the callings of the teaching profession and of giving reasonable and satisfactory educational accountability to the public (Venkat, 2008).
The current trends in the Nigerian educational system attract high demand for accountability today. One of the major areas where accountability is demanded from school proprietors and teachers is the area of “falling standards in education”. The proprietors of schools as well as teachers are always apportioned blame for the poor performance of students in public examinations – WAEC, GCE/SSCE, NECO and so on. The blame on the part of the teachers is not unconnected with the issue of incompetence in the art of teaching. It is a fact that only competent teachers can give qualitative academic leadership to students in the teaching/learning situation. A situation in which a blind person is leading other blind persons in teaching/learning environments should be avoided by the institutions responsible for the training of would be teachers (Kayit, 2017).

Presently, there are numerous complex innovations in education which come alongside with many other complexities. The complexities of the times have made education infinitely more complex and demanding. Yesterday’s educational solutions may therefore, not work in tomorrow’s world (Rife, 2008). Technology in education and the explosion of knowledge have brought sharply, into focus some new concepts with their own complexities. There are new terms in the school curriculum such as flexible and modular scheduling, computer programming, team teaching, individualized teaching, personalized instruction, the teaching machine, etc. Only competent teachers can cope with the demands of these complexities brought about by these new educational innovations. There are also new approaches to teaching and the complexities in these approaches have put additional burdens on teachers. To scale over the hurdles of these added burdens, the teachers’ training institutions have to focus on the production of competent and more focused products (prospective teachers) (Rife, 2008).

Teachers’ chances of making adjustments to new situations brought on by social upheaval and changes should be in proportion to the professional training programme. In the programme of teacher education, there must be greater understanding of learning, teaching, and of learning to teach. Physical education and sports activities are highly complex and scientific in nature; as a result of this, a lot of complex technologies in terms of teaching approaches, instructional facilities and instructional materials are involved. The introduction of modern technology into physical education and sports places high demand on the competence of teachers and coaches to perfect the acquisition of motor skills in the learners. Competency is required of physical education teachers and sports coaches in the analysis and evaluation of motor learning and human performance. To teach motor skills effectively, physical educators are required to possess a good number of technical and procedural competencies which can only be developed through effective implementation of teacher education programmes.
PROFESSIONAL ROLE EXPECTATIONS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The roles expected of professionally trained physical education teachers are more than what the public thinks. There is no doubt that people think that physical education teachers are exclusively trained to be committed to only the teaching of motor skills and as such are not capable of doing any other thing. This is a wrong perception.

Physical education profession prepares prospective teachers in line with their role expectations to be carried out after graduation. In view of this, the training programmes for prospective teachers is highly encompassing for the purpose of exposing the learners to different experiences for different careers (Mgbor, 2002).

Apart from playing the role of a teacher, a professionally trained physical education teacher plays many other roles that this paper cannot fully exhaust. However, some of these roles include athletics director, athletics coach, public relations officer (PRO), sports journalist, sports psychologist, sociologist, sports director/administrator, sports manager, counsellor, curriculum planner, physical fitness programme manager, sports co-ordinator, exercise scientist, among others.

The aforementioned role expectations of professionally trained physical education teachers are enough justification for the competencies required of them. The possession of these competencies is necessary if physical education teachers must live up to their professional callings. They need certain competencies to be able to prove their worth in society and to protect the integrity and image of physical education as a profession. Competencies are required of physical education teachers to prove not only their worth but also that of the profession as a whole (Mgbodile, 2006).

To play the role of a sports coach successfully, one needs coaching-related competencies. Also, to play the role of athletics director or sports administrator, one needs leadership competencies. Similarly, if one must be successful in playing the role of a sports manager, it is required of him/her to possess certain competencies for management. These competencies cut across skills, abilities, knowledge and attitudes or behaviour.

THE COMPETENT PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHER

Before discussing the competent physical education teacher, it is pertinent to begin with the definitions and concepts of certain relevant terms, these are competence and competencies. Competence might be defined as the ability of an individual to achieve success in a particular field of endeavour (Barrow, 2007). Operationally speaking, competence is defined as a performance that can be observed, analysed, measured and evaluated. In the professional preparation of physical education teachers, competence is a demonstrated ability to teach motor
skills. Bloom (2008) defines competence as the capacity to have motor and intellectual mastery of the environment through which one also acquires the feeling of self-confidence to interact in socially ascribed, self-selected, and self-created roles. Brunner (2004) defines competence as knowing “how” as well as knowing “about”. Applying this definition to teacher education in physical education, it would mean that a graduate of a Competency Based Teacher Education (CBTE) programme would know about the field, and, importantly, would also have demonstrated the necessary competencies for teaching physical education.

To be competent, then, means to possess the ability to perform desired teaching behaviours in physical education. Competence implies the possession of the ability to instruct physical education by the teacher, to children or youth. Competence, in the CBTE system, is both theoretical and practical. It combines knowledge about the subject with the demonstrated ability to teach that knowledge to others. Having considered the definitions and concepts of competence, it is equally important to consider the definition of the term “competencies” in the professional preparation of prospective physical education teachers. Competencies refer to abilities, skills, knowledge and desired teaching behaviours. Competencies are the qualifications which a physical education teacher requires to achieve success in playing his professional roles. The competencies required of a physical education teacher are of three (3) categories – procedural, technical and personal. The first two constitute professional competencies, while the third one is innate.

From this therefore, a competent physical education teacher could be described as the one who possesses abilities, skills, knowledge and desirable teaching behaviours. Furthermore, a competent physical education teacher may be described as one whose performance can be observed, analysed and evaluated. A competent physical education teacher possesses the abilities or qualifications needed for success in the teaching of physical education programmes. In simple terms, a competent physical education teacher is the one who possesses a demonstrated ability to teach motor skills successfully. Efficiency and proficiency are therefore manifestations of teaching competencies in the teacher (Bucher, 1979).

OUTLINE OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES REQUIRED OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Generally speaking, people usually ask many questions on matters relating to the topic: competence. The common question which is always asked is “competence for what”? This shows that every profession has competencies peculiarly required of its members. This is true because the competencies for teaching Mathematics are different from those for teaching Physics, and also, different from those for teaching Chemistry. Similarly, the competencies required for teaching Biology may be different from those required for the teaching of Physical
Education, and so on. Even within a particular field, different competencies are required for different purposes. This statement is a confirmation of the existence of general and specific competencies in any given field. For instance, in physical education, there are required competencies for the administration of first aid treatment; there are competencies for teaching racket and ball games; competencies for teaching gymnastics, competencies for teaching jumping events in athletics, competencies for the teaching of the biomechanics of sports, and competencies for teaching dance education (Armstrong & Sparkes, 1999). Specific competencies are required in the teaching of physical education because of the variation and complexities involved in physical activities. The competencies required for successful teaching of practical physical education lessons are different from those required for the successful teaching of the theoretical lessons. Considering the aims and objectives of physical education, the professional preparation of prospective physical education teachers should be geared towards development of competencies across the three major learning domains, cognitive, affective and psychomotor. Literature reveals a long list of competencies required of prospective physical educators. For the purpose of this discussion, a few of these competencies are presented under the following sub-headings:

- competencies required of physical education professionals with teaching and coaching duties
- Competencies for physical activity programme managers
- Competencies required of the elementary physical education teachers
- Competencies required of secondary school physical education teachers
- Competencies required of middle school physical education teachers
- Competencies required of physical education teachers for defence against legal liability

**Competencies Required of Physical Education Professionals with Teaching and Coaching Duties**

As earlier mentioned in this paper, there are professionally trained physical education professionals who perform teaching and coaching duties, even though these duties are not exactly the same, both teaching and coaching require the same basic competencies for success. Mgbor (2002) classifies these competencies into eight (8) categories as follows:

i. possessing knowledge of specific sport or group of sports

ii. possessing knowledge of sound teaching styles

iii. possessing knowledge of factors that serve as the interconnections between teaching and learning

iv. possessing knowledge of procedures of teaching motor skills

v. possessing knowledge of techniques of teaching motor skills
vi. Having patience to work with young children and youth
vii. Ability to analyse motor skills
viii. Possessing good knowledge of kinesiological principles

The above competencies are pre-requisites to the successful teaching of both physical education activities and sports coaching. Any physical education professional who performs teaching and coaching duties/responsibilities must possess these basic competencies, in addition to other required competencies.

**Competencies Required of Physical Activity Programme Managers**

Managers of physical activity programmes include sports programme directors, recreation programme directors, athletics programme directors, physical fitness programme managers/coordinators, physical education programme directors, etc. As managers, these professionals require all the skills or competencies in the business world to succeed. Matthew (2000) identifies the following basic competencies required of the aforementioned professionals for success in their roles performance:

i. communication skills
ii. financial management skills
iii. personnel management skills
iv. facilities and equipment management skills
v. security control and risk management skills
vi. Public relations skills
vii. Human relations skills

In addition to these basic competencies, other career specific competencies may be required for success in managing physical activity programmes.

**Competencies Required of Elementary Physical Education Teachers**

Lumpkin (1998) outlines competencies required of elementary physical education teachers. These competencies are drawn from the Guidelines for Elementary School Physical Education (1988), National Association for Sports and Physical Education Guidelines for Secondary School Physical Education (1994), National Association for Sports and Physical Education. The perception in these guidelines is that the professional preparation of the prospective elementary school physical education teacher should focus on the child in the pre-school through grade six. This perception holds that the curricula for the prospective elementary school physical education teacher should result in the development of the following required competencies:

i. Understanding of a child’s growth and development with emphasis on motor development
ii. Possession of the knowledge of appreciation for structure and function of human movement

iii. Ability to observe and assess children and their movement

iv. Possession of the knowledge and assessment of health-related and skills-related aspects of physical fitness of children

v. Possession of the knowledge of learning processes, teaching strategies and factors that affect learning of motor skills

vi. Ability to develop curriculum with emphasis on curriculum designs and strategies appropriate for elementary school physical education programmes

vii. Ability to assess and work with children who have special needs. Personal skills and teaching skills in the content areas of fundamental movement patterns, games/sports, dance, gymnastics, and aquatics to meet the needs and interests of children in kindergarten through grade six

viii. Possession of laboratory and field experiences that are directed and supervised throughout the teacher preparation programme

ix. Being acquainted with a variety of elementary school organizational structures and the administration of physical education with those settings

x. Possession of the knowledge of the physical, mental, emotional and social characteristics of elementary school children, with emphasis on meeting their needs and interest through quality physical education programmes, etc.

**Competencies Required in The Training of Secondary School Physical Education Teachers**

Educational programmes should be conducted only by competent and certified teachers. Secondary school physical education programmes should be handled by physical education teachers who:

i. serve as positive role models of personal health, fitness, skills and enjoyment of participating in physical activity.

ii. are knowledgeable in curriculum and instruction and demonstrate sportsmanship and sensitivity to students’ needs

iii. know and apply effective teaching strategies that provide maximum student-time on task

iv. apply various teaching methods and instructional strategies that personalise physical education classes and allow students to attain optimum personal growth and development
v. are to provide for equitable instruction and participation with regard to individual needs of the students

vi. are able to demonstrate professional commitment through membership and involvement in professional organization and other enrichment experiences

vii. are able to plan programme of activities that promote understanding of cultural diversity

viii. accommodate the needs of exceptional students in regular physical education classes.

ix. use recognized assessment and evaluation instruments in planning for accountability of the instructional programmes of physical education

x. are able to apply technology in their teaching on a regular and continuing basis (Cooper, Howard & Weber, 2007)

Competencies Required of Middle School Physical Education Teachers

There is no doubt that a lot of complexities are involved in the teaching and learning of physical activity. The degree of complexity ranges from one activity to another. The nature of each activity determines the complexity involved in its teaching and learning. The complexity involved in the teaching and learning of physical activity makes the students prone to all kinds of accidents. It is a fact that the performance of physical activity is not accident free and accidents that occur in the course of the performance of motor skills are many and can lead to death. The injury which one may sustain while performing physical activity may be temporal or permanent (Kayit, 2017). It is important to mention at this juncture that no one can completely prevent or rule out the possibility of accident occurrence during motor learning and human performance. However, the rate of accident occurrence could be reduced to the barest minimum through carefulness and prudence in the teaching and learning situations. This implies that physical educators have a great task ahead of them if they must avoid being legally liable to law-suits in the course of performing their professional roles.

A well informed and competent physical educator is one who understands legal liability; torts, particularly the tort of negligence; the standard applied by the courts in negligence cases, the manner in which the court reaches its decision in such cases and the defences available to the defendant/employee in negligence actions. Physical educators should be competent enough to embark on prudent actions towards reduction of risks of injury to participants. To achieve this, a list of competencies required of them has been compiled. This list includes the following:

i. Being conversant with the factors that should be considered for proper grouping of students – age, skill, size and ability

ii. Ability to make intelligent and wise selection of physical activities for students

iii. Possession of a good knowledge of the fitness and prowess of the students
iv. Ability to properly demonstrate physical activities being taught
v. Ability to provide diligent careful supervision as the students perform motor skills
vi. Ability to formulate clear statements of class rules
vii. Ability to provide appropriate facilities and equipment
viii. Ability to detect defects on facilities and equipment
ix. Ability to recognize when participation in certain activities without proper protective equipment or other precautions is hazardous
x. Ability to provide students with a clear understanding of the inherent dangers and guidelines for safe participation by the students
xi. Ability to conduct periodic and comprehensive physical examinations of all students before allowing them to participate in programmes of strenuous physical activities
xii. Ability to design and follow a specialized programme of carefully selected warm-up activities for the students
xiii. Possession of first-aid knowledge and skills
xiv. Skilfulness in handling an injured student
xv. Knowledge and ability to detect signs and symptoms of stress and fatigue in students during motor skills performance
xvi. Ability to present physical activities in a progressive and gradual manner, etc (Arnold, 1983).

Competencies Required of Physical Education Teachers for Defence Against Legal Liability

The preparation of the would-be teacher of middle school physical education should include course and teaching experiences that pertain to the education of middle school students. The teacher education programmes for the prospective physical education teachers is imperative to assure and ensure that skilled and knowledgeable teachers administer the varied programmes required for middle schools. The teacher education programmes for the prospective middle school physical education teachers should prepare them towards acquisition of the following competencies before graduation/certification:

i. Understanding of the middle school physical education concepts
ii. Understanding the physical, social emotional and intellectual characteristics that are unique to middle school youth
iii. Possession of a positive self-concept and demonstration of respect for the dignity and worth of individuals
iv. Possession of the knowledge and skills of developmentally appropriate practices to work with students on a one-to-one basis
v. Familiarization with a wide variety of skills and activities in order to implement exploratory qualities of physical education programmes

vi. Ability to apply various teaching styles and modify rules, equipment, instructional stations to conform to the needs of the learner

vii. Continually striving to increase knowledge and understanding of how to meet the changing needs of middle school children and their learning environment

viii. Ability to assume leadership in providing for the expanding physical experiences for all the students in the school

ix. Ability to interpret the goals and objectives of activity programmes to students and their parents

x. The ability to use instructional strategies based upon the developmental and skill levels of the students as well as the nature of the activity, etc. (Veridien & Nikon, 1985).

DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Development and promotion of professional competence in prospective physical education teachers have a lot of implications for teacher education programmes. These implications centre on the product (the certificated physical education teacher). It simply implies that government, through the various training institutions, has so much to offer in order to produce competent physical education teachers. The institutions and the personnel responsible for the preparation of teachers in physical education must bear in mind the following implications for the programmes:

i. Adoption of Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE) curriculum. In this case, emphasis in the teacher education programme should be geared towards developing those competencies required of the prospective physical education teacher.

ii. The curriculum design should take cognizance of the complex roles which the product of the CBTE programme is expected to perform after graduation. In this case, the required competencies should be identified and clearly stated. The identified competencies should be compatible with the objectives of the CBTE programme and the role expectations of the product (prospective teacher),

iii. The CBTE curriculum should be comprehensive enough. This should be done to promote the development of competencies across the three learning domains – cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

iv. The CBTE curriculum for teacher education in physical education must clearly state the appropriate instruments for the assessment of competencies in the prospective physical education teacher (Austin, 2008).
v. The CBTE curriculum in physical education should clearly define the time-frame within which the identified competencies should be attained by the prospective physical education teacher. These are just few among the many implications for teacher education programmes in physical education.

HIDRANCES TO EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMMES

Generally speaking, the curriculum for teacher education in Nigeria is faced with so many constraints. These constraints are bottlenecks to the successful implementation of the programme. The effects of these constraints tell on the processes of teaching and learning and the learner is always at the receiving end of these constraints.

The curriculum could be well planned, but the implementation may be surrounded with a lot of limitations. These limitations have to be given serious attention if the objectives of teacher preparation must be accomplished.

A summary of these constraints includes the following:

i. Population explosion in teacher training institutions, particularly, Colleges of Education: This has made teacher/students ratio unrealistic. Over population in teaching-learning situations makes it very difficult to give individual students adequate attention in terms of supervision.

ii. Lack of provision of instructional facilities and equipment: The facilities available in most of the Physical and Health Education Departments in Nigerian Colleges of Education seem to be grossly inadequate to meet the teeming population of students. Even the few available facilities are not in good shape and at the same time are not substandard. These facilities lack proper maintenance.

iii. Manpower-related problems: Discussions with professional colleagues from many Colleges of Education in Nigeria revealed that the number of teachers in Physical and Health Education Departments is grossly inadequate, particularly in the colleges that offer pre-NCE, NCE and B.Sc (Ed) programmes. In some cases, there is the problem of lack of quality manpower supply to the training institutions.

iv. Administrative-related problems: The leadership of each teacher training institution determines to a great extent the successful implementation of teacher education programmes. In most cases, equal attention is not given by the leadership to all the academic programmes in the teacher training institutions. This could be attributed to priority-shift or place value of the various programmes. Generally speaking, poor quality of leadership of the training institutions constitutes a serious bottleneck to the actualization of the objectives of teacher education programmes in Nigeria.
v. Lack of adherence to the accreditation standards for the certification of the prospective physical education teachers.

vi. Many constraints in the implementation of teacher education programmes in Nigerian teacher training institutions emanate from paucity of funding. Both the government and the leadership of the training institutions are usually apportioned the blame on poor funding of educational programmes.

vii. Generally, there is improper implementation of certain aspects of teacher education curriculum. For example, the practicum, which is done in the form of teaching practice is one of the most important aspects of teacher preparation. But it is unfortunate that it is this same aspect that is most haphazardly implemented. This aspect lacks proper planning, coordination, supervision, etc.

ROAD MAP TO DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCIES IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

The process of developing professional competencies in prospective physical education teachers could be best described as a “long journey”. The term “journey” in this description refers to the process of the development and implementation of teacher education curriculum. The questions that are worth asking in this journey centre on those who are involved in this journey and the destination. The destination refers to the competent physical education teacher who should be equipped with the competencies expected of him to possess. Those who are involved in this journey include the:

i. training institutions such as Colleges of Education, National Teachers Institutes, Institutes of Education in the Universities, and Faculties of Education in the Universities, etc.

ii. training personnel (teachers/educators)

iii. government through its arms such as the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE), National Universities Commission (NUC) and Ministries of Education, and

iv. professional bodies – Nigerian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, Sports and Dance (NAPHER-SD).

v. journey towards the development of competencies in the prospective physical education teacher involves many routes which have the starting and finishing points. The routes here imply the ways or processes through which the training institutions could promote professional competence in the prospective teacher.
Already, some of the ways through which the objectives of teacher education could be achieved have overlapped into the discussion on the implications of teacher education programmes.

Some of these ways are enumerated as follows:

i. First and foremost, the government, training institutions, professional bodies and personnel involved constitute the major determinants of success in the implementation of the educational curriculum. To achieve the aims and objectives of teacher education programmes in Nigeria, these groups must put all hands on deck in playing their supportive roles.

ii. There is need for proper funding of teacher education programmes in Nigeria. The role of the instructional facilities and equipment in the implementation of the educational programmes cannot be over-emphasized. Funds are needed for their procurement and maintenance.

iii. Provision of high quality manpower for effective and efficient implementation of teacher education programmes should be done by the government. Only competent teachers are capable of effecting the desired changes in the learner.

iv. There is need for government to keep embarking on measures for the retraining of the trainers. This could be in forms of in-service training programmes, refresher courses and

v. award of scholarships to those who deserve it to keep them abreast with new classroom techniques and approaches. A well informed trainer of trainees is in a better position to help them develop the competencies required of them.

vi. The annual budget for the education sector should give serious consideration to the aspect of teacher education. Once this is done, government should ensure that the budget allocated to teacher education should not be cut down at any level. To achieve this, government should strongly demand for proper accountability of the funds released for the implementation of teacher education programmes.

**SUGGESTIONS**

Considering the trends and constraints surrounding the programmes for the preparation of teachers in Nigeria, the following suggestions are hereby made:

i. The policy guiding teacher education programmes, including funding and implementation, should be given proper attention by all those involved.

ii. Both theoretical and practical aspects of teacher education programmes should be given proper and equal attention by the government through the regulatory bodies and training
institutions. For example, teaching practice does not seem to get the attention it deserves in teacher training, especially in the universities.

iii. The numerous problems being faced in programmes for the training of teachers in Nigeria are hinged on funding. Therefore, government should give adequate funding for accreditation of teacher training programmes.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The basic aim of the professional preparation of teachers lies in the development and promotion of professional competence in the prospective teacher towards meeting the manpower needs for competent teachers for national development. It is an undisputed fact that it is only competent teachers that are capable of making learning take place effectively. A nation can only have competent teachers through a well packaged programme for teacher preparation. But a well-designed programme which is not backed with proper implementation is as bad as having none at all. To be a competent prospective teacher, one requires certain competencies, skills, abilities, knowledge and demonstrated teaching behaviours. It is only through a well designed and implemented programme for teacher education that these competencies can be developed.

To achieve the above, Competency-Based Teacher Education (CBTE) Curriculum is perceived in this paper as the best yard-stick if it is well designed and implemented.

This paper also points out certain bottle-necks that inhibit proper implementation of teacher education curriculum in Nigeria. These constraints stem from poor funding and leadership on the parts of the regulatory bodies and training institutions. In conclusion, recommendations pointing to the appropriate quarters are made towards effective planning and implementation of teacher education programmes in physical education in Nigeria.

REFERENCES


