



Physical Education Curriculum: A Panacea for the Attainment of Socio- Economic and Cultural Development of Primary School Pupils with Visual Impairment in Nigeria

S.B.C. Iheanacho, J. D. Nanjwan, E. P. Ntukidem, C. A. Ajibola and E. E. Etta

*Department of Vocational and Special Education,
Faculty of Education, University of Calabar, Nigeria.*

ABSTRACT

The importance of adapted physical education in the socio- economic and cultural development of children with visual impairment cannot be over- emphasized. Pupils with visual impairment are not often considered in the current physical Education content. The paper advocates the need to adapt the existing physical education curriculum to suit the needs of pupils with visual impairment. Guidelines on the instructional adaptation are also presented and the benefits of having qualified teachers providing special methods and materials are presented.

Keywords: Cultural development, visual impairment, Physical Education Curriculum.

INTRODUCTION

The public had always viewed blindness as a dramatic and compelling condition. There are many articles and books that deal with physical education for the blind. Buell (1983) had listed about 23 books and 88 articles on physical education for blind alone. All dealt with special and physical education teachers employing movement tasks, in handling the blind.

Despite this attention, the participation of visually impaired pupils in sporting activities in Nigeria is low. Perhaps not enough special provisions of adapted physical education are made. Okunrotifa (1992) recognized the necessity for adapted physical education for pupils with visual impairment at an early stage. Thus as Modified programmes for sport were established for visually handicap youngsters to engage in. special educators of the blind have come to realize the importance of early intervention in the enrichment of motor development of young blind pupils.

Physical Education Curriculum for Socio- Economic and Cultural Development

Experts now agree that physical activities with normal children are beneficial and safe for most blind and visually impaired individuals. According to Craty (1989) the attitudes of the blind toward physical activity are largely positive. Despite these positive attitudes, however, most blind pupils in Nigerian schools are not participating in vigorous physical education programmes together with their sighted peers. Most blind persons surveyed in a recent poll opined that their lack of participation in community recreation programmes was related directly to their handicap (Sherill 1984).

The Goal of Adapted Physical Education

The goal of physical education in the schools is to assist each child to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge of human movement that will result in a lifetime of participation in physical activities. Physical activity has important implications for health. Smith and Gilligan (1987) opined that physical inactivity is perhaps the greatest risk factor for chronic diseases. Such as chronic heart disease (CHD) Regular physical activity reduces the risk of some causes of mortality by more than two 25% and increases life expectancy by more than two years over the population average as well as help to prevent and manage diseases (osteoporosis and diabetes) and reduces the rates of stroke (Nichol 1994)

The goals of adapted physical education can be achieved only in an environment in which the natural enjoyment of movement is enhanced for all children: - (the poorly skilled, the average as well as the gifted). It is an environment in which each child feels the thrill of achievement and where self – esteem can the be enhanced. The experiences promote attitudes that value physical activity as an essential part of one's life style. Although most primary school children enjoy being physical active, this interest is not necessarily maintained through out life by every individual.

Need for Adaptation of Physical Education Curriculum

Successful implementation of programmes begins with careful planning of all aspects of the primary school physical education experience. Each school setting is unique because it is affected by the interaction of factors such as environment, budget, staffing and the learners themselves. Regardless of these individual characteristics physical education experiences are an integral part of the school curriculum. Each primary school physical education a programme is developed on the following premises.

1. All children shall have an equal opportunity for participation in physical education.
2. Physical education provides an opportunity for all the children to develop their unique qualities. The right of the individual and the nature and needs of a democratic society are reflected in the physical education experiences.

3. Physical education promotes favorable attitudes about personal worth and activity for life.

Curriculum planning is the first step in the improvement of instruction and a means to better teaching. It gives teachers directions in the planning and carrying out appropriate learning experience for pupils with visual impairment.

Physical education planning is a long-range task, as a sound curriculum is developed overtime. Curriculum change is a continuous endeavour and those responsible must be willing to make the necessary modifications to keep it's viable conditions in education and society change.

The physical education curriculum must have as its foundation of common care and learning experiences. In the early years the culmination of learning experiences should be centered around appropriate learning activities geared toward meeting the developmental needs of children of all ages. The physical education curriculum must provide maximum opportunity for pupils' involvement in learning situations that require cognitive, social affective and motor responses which would result in favorable attitudes, skills and knowledge. It should also help in promoting in the ability to process information in more sophisticated ways.

GUIDELINES FOR INSTRUCTIONAL ADAPTATION IN PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The curriculum programme planning involves an analysis of factors that affect the curriculum, the development of programmes goals, the selection of content and processes, and a plan to evaluate the programmes.

Step 1

In analyzing factors that affect curriculum planning, some numbers of factors that must be considered are: the status of the learners, the community (the family influence children attitudes); Geographic location (climate, length of seasons and natural surroundings); Staffing (trained professional physical education or class teacher); facilities and equipment (budget for equipment and facilities must be adequate to provide maximum activity to all pupils). Educational programme in the school has several implications for physical education. Where possible, physical education classes should be held daily for the period of 30- 40 or minutes respectively.

Step 2.

Establishing programme goals for each child including visually impaired who participates in the physical education program. Such as (1) what motor skills should visually impaired be able to perform? (2) What knowledge they should have: (3) what level of fitness each visually impaired child should aspire? (4) How should visually impaired children behave as they work alone

or with others? These questions are all closely related as goals for establishment and later translated into learning experiences for the visually impaired pupils

Step 3

Determining content and process through which visually impaired pupil will become movement educated. E. g. what kind of experience should visually impaired pupil have to meet the stated goals?

Nichols (1994), suggested the following as guiding principle in selecting content for the primary school physical education programme. These principles according to him can also be employed to visually impaired pupils:

1. The movement content should be the core of the physical education programme.
2. Activities should be selected on the basis of their contributions to the goals of the physical education programme.
3. Content should be selected to address the needs and interests of the pupils.
4. The content should provide for progressions from year to year, with each experience becoming increasingly complex. (From simple to complex).
5. The content should recognize individual differences in the rate of rate of learning. (The child with special need).
6. The program should include variety of activities including special orientation.
7. The content should be integrated with other areas of the primary school curriculum. (Orientation and mobility training is necessary for the visually impaired pupils).
8. The content should be selected with practical limitations in mind. (Use of facilities and special equipments for pupil with visual impairment).
9. the curriculum should meet or surpass the state of professional guidelines

Step 4

Planning evaluation of the programme; should be both formative and summative. Evaluation enables us to look objectively at the curriculum content with regard to the programme goals and learners achievements.

It is an ongoing process that results in changes that sharpen the program focus in meeting the needs of the learner. Planning requires determination of the following:

- (1) What will be evaluated? (2) How will it will be evaluated (3) by whom will it be evaluated? (4) When and where the evaluation will take place: (5) how will changes in curriculum be implemented?

Benefits of having Qualified Teachers for pupils with visual impairment.

Professional in early childhood special education agree that programs should be designed and evaluated with respect to: (Pretti- Frontczak and Bricker 2004)

1. Support families in achieving their own goals
2. Promote child engagement, independence, and mastery
3. Promote development in all important domains
4. Build and support social competence
5. Facilitate the generalize use of skills.
6. Prepare and assist children to normalize life experience with their families, in schools and in their communities
7. Help children and their families make smooth transitions.
8. Assume different roles through social skills.

Early childhood education promotes active engagement, independence and mastery across developmental domains for all children by providing a rich variety of experiences, materials and ideas. This is a right step in a right decision as it would go a long way to integrating the visually impaired into the mainstreaming.

In any special population, a complete medical examination is a reasonable recommendation to help discover problems or the presence of a combination of risk factors that might affect decisions about entry into and exercise programme. This allows the individual to take on movement task without adding more problems to his or her present condition. (Power and Hawley 1994).

GUIDELINES FOR INSTUCTIONAL ADAPTATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS.

Providing specialized instructions in an attempt to remediate delays caused by the child's vision problem and prevent any secondary disabilities from developing is the cornerstone of what early childhood special educators do (Sandal, Schwartz and Joseph 2000). Agree that Teachers who work with young children with visual impairment must be skilled in using a wide range of instructional strategies and tactics. Modifications and adaptations to the physical environments, materials, and activities themselves are often sufficient to support successful participation and learning. Such modifications range from subtle, virtually invisible support (e.g changing the duration or sequence of activities, using a child's preferences as a conservation topic while playing). The challenge is determining how much support a child needs for a given skill in a specific context. Thus, Sandal, Schatz and Joseph (2009) noted

That: Too much support may result In children becoming over Reliant on adult support. Too little Support will result in children being Unsuccessful, and may lead to decreasing Rate of participation and increasing Rates of challenging behaviors. (Pg.3)

One effective method incorporating specialized instruction into typical preschool activities for children with disabilities according to Mc Braide and

Schwartz, (2003) is called embedded learning opportunities. The concept of embedded learning opportunities is based on the premises that although quality early childhood programmes offer opportunities for learning across the day, children with visual impairment often need guidance and support to learn those opportunities. Therefore, Nigerian teachers should look out and plan for ways to embed brief, systematic instructional interactions that focus on a child's individual educational programme. (IEP) objectives in the context of natural, caring classroom activities.

Nigerian teachers in preschool programmes for children with visual impairment face the challenge of organizing the programme of a day into a schedule that meets each child's individual learning needs. They also find it difficult to provide children with many opportunities to explore the environment and communicate with others through out the day. In preschool activity schedule, Cook, Klein and Tessie (2004) suggested a balance of child initiated and planned activities, large and small group activities, active and quiet times, indoor and outdoor activities; and allow easy transition from activity to activity. In short the schedule should provide a framework for maximizing children's opportunities to develop new skills and practice what they have learned while remaining manageable and flexible. Pretty-Frontczak and Bricker (2004) described one of the activities planning scheduling as a process that combines children's individual educational programme objective with group activity plans of primary school level. The activity from Petti – frontczak and Bricker (2004), is an activity based approach to early intervention. It shows how children's learning goals can be integrated into daily classroom activities. Pretty – frontczak and Bricker (2004), Sykes and Ozoji (1992) described the activities schedule in such a way that it involved both the child team members such as the classroom staff and therapists. The activities different children and target goals of different kinds. It also described different daily classroom activities which a visually impaired child should engage in.

CONCLUSION

Exposure of visually impaired pupils to various opportunities is influenced by proposed highly innovative ways to design games and programmes of physical activities prior to programmes planning. Therefore physical education teachers would do well to consider the presence of visually impaired pupils in their classrooms.

Adapted physical education teachers and physical education teachers dealing with regular and special youngsters faced challenges, thus accommodation of special populations, either in a heterogeneous or homogenous setting, entails a number of special considerations and teaching behaviours

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Special provisions have to be made when integrating a special youngster into a regular physical education setting.
2. Teachers confronted with special youngster should arm themselves with a number of skills and attitudes.
3. Adapted and regular physical education teachers should understand and apply principles of behaviour modification, including reward and punishment
4. Teachers of special children be aware of carefully selected information to these pupils.
5. Models and demonstrations, as well as physical prompts should be utilized appropriately
6. variables including classroom space and distractions should be carefully considered in programme planning
7. Physical education teachers should be aware of various models of teaching, appropriate to special children
8. Individualize educational programme (IEP) and individualize instructional plan should be introduced i

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