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## ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR THE TEACHING OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORTS COACHING IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

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### ABSTRACT

*This paper examines the areas where administrative support are offered by physical education teachers and sports coaches in the discharge of their duties. The paper also analyzes how the administrative support is being offered. It is hoped that such an awareness will make them conscious of the need for them to be effective, dynamic and creative as physical education teachers and sports coaches.*

*The paper discusses the position of Physical Education in the country's educational policy as recommended by Ghana Education Review Committee of 1994 which made the subject a non-externally examinable subject. The paper suggests that the subject should be made a core subject at all levels and an externally examinable subject at Senior Secondary Certificate Examination level. It is concluded that if adequate and genuine administrative support is offered and the subject is made a core and an externally examinable subject it will be more appreciated and a better awareness of its usefulness will be enhanced.*

### Introduction

There is no question about the laudable role that Physical Education as a

discipline plays in the school. Physical Education plays many roles and these roles can be beneficial to individuals, groups and even the society at large depending on how they are viewed and what is to be achieved. One of the key roles as Nixon & Jewett (1980) stated is for health and fitness and every other thing depends on this role.

Other roles of physical education are for cognitive development, social emotional development, physical development, developing body-image and creativity (Freeman, 1982, Fait, 1971 & Dowell, 1975). Through Physical Education we develop the spirit of cooperation as well as build the much desired qualities of life such as endurance and versatility. A well planned and executed programme of Physical Education exposes children to the basic element of social life, human relationship and dynamics of living. According to Dauer (1971), when a child is at leisure, an experience of Physical Education will enable him/her to spend the leisure time wisely and effectively.

It must be realized that the main concern of Physical Education is human movement as it concerns primarily, the gross movements of the body. Physical Education can also be seen as education through the physical in which the aim is to influence all facets of educational development, such as the mental, social and emotional growth. This way, Physical Education develops a person's whole body through the use of the physical means. As Physical Education develops the body, the mind is equally growing and expanding to influence daily living positively. (Nixon & Jewett, 1980 ; Freeman, 1982 ; Fait 1971 and Dowell, 1975).

In the opinion of Dauer (1971), physical education helps in reaching one's full potential intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally through the medium of physical activities and these activities in turn are useful in motivating the learning of other subjects.

Physical Education is interested basically in all human movements and since human movements are so numerous and encompassing, according to Nixon & Jewett (1980), formal studies and programmes in Physical Education in contemporary societies are concentrated in movements designated by such terms as sport, athletics, dance, gymnastics, aquatics and exercise.

In Ghana, Physical Education is accorded a less popular position by the

recommendation of the Ghana Education Reforms Review Committee of 1994. The reform makes Physical Education a compulsory core subject in both 6 years of Primary School, and 3 years of Junior Secondary School. It is compulsory in the last 3 years of the Senior Secondary but not externally examinable. The fact that the subject will not be examined alongside other subjects such as Chemistry, Biology, Mathematics etc, at the SSCE level makes it unpopular and less appreciated. The 1994 Education Reform Review Committee agreed that Physical Education should be emphasised at all levels of education, and be included amongst the subjects from which the syllabus for Integrated Science and Life Skills should be carved. This is a positive development but the subject itself is yet to be fully embraced by the students, teachers and even the parents, because of its status as a non externally examinable subject. The other subjects, such as Geography, Economics and History are more popular than Physical Education in Ghana because they are externally examinable. There is also the need for the evolvement of a comprehensive national syllabus for Physical Education at the Elementary and Junior Secondary School levels.

In order that Physical Education as a subject will adequately play its role both to the society at large and to individuals, it is imperative that there must be effective administrative support for its

teaching and for sports coaching in schools.

Administration has been explained in different ways by writers, researchers and practitioners. A simple definition as presented by Frost and Marshall (1977) is that it is the guidance, leadership and control of efforts of a group of people towards achieving a goal. Providing effective administrative support is one of the most important responsibilities of a physical education teacher or sports coach. With adequate administrative support, students will be motivated to outstanding performance since they will have a better attitude towards physical education, which in turn will elicit more commitment and dedication. By providing adequate administrative support, Physical Education teachers or Sports coaches are increasing the number and kinds of rewards available to students. They are also helping to clarify realistic expectations and reduce barriers to the accomplishment of valued Physical Education objectives (Halpin, 1966 ; Frost and Marshall, 1977 and Onifade, 1994).

Chelladurai (1985), argued that Physical Education teachers and sports coaches as administrators must provide guidance and teach structured activities for children in addition to providing social support especially when these are lacking in the school.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the areas where administrative support should be provided and how Physical

Education teachers and Sports coaches can provide administrative support in discharging their duties.

#### Administrative Problems and Support in the Teaching of Physical Education and Sports Coaching in Secondary Schools

Frost and Marshall's definition of administration will translate to mean that everybody at whatever level in the school system is expected to provide some administrative support to the teaching of physical education or coaching of sports. Some of the administrative problems that need support in the teaching of Physical Education and sports coaching are :

##### A. *Funding*

The bulk of the funding for Secondary School Physical Education is from government grants. It will be an understatement to say that this grant is never sufficient for the teaching of physical education and sports coaching. Almost all African schools are grossly underfunded, thus making the teaching of physical education ineffective, since money is not available to procure needed equipment and build facilities. (Adeoti, 1986 & Onifade, 1992).

What is needed in the area of funding is that physical education teachers, sports coaches and school principals must

solicit more aggressively for funds. This could be from Parent Teacher Associations, Philantropists, Corporate bodies. Students too could be made to pay a special sports levy to improve funding.

#### *B. Personnel and Support Staff*

There is a serious shortage of Physical Education teachers and sports coaches in our schools. Omidiran (1987), confirmed this when he argues that there was only one Physical Education teacher to 922 students in Oyo-state of Nigeria. This situation is similar in most African schools. Some schools do not even have any but make do with a classroom teacher performing the function of a physical education teacher.

Even when Physical Education is on the time table some teachers use the periods for teaching other subjects. Onifade (1988), argued that adequate and quality teachers are what we need to achieve Physical Education objectives in schools. Ideally there should be 1 teacher to 25 students for effective learning of the subject to take place. The inadequate number of Physical Education teachers and Sports coaches could jeopardize the achievement of the objectives of Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme in Ghana. Furthermore, the few available Physical Education teachers are overworked, thus making them unable to give their best. One wonders if Physical Education teachers and Sports coaches alone can achieve their respective objectives.

There is the absolute need to have well trained, qualified, efficient and committed support staff in form of groundsman and store keepers. These support staff are simply not available in our schools.

The groundsman is to function in the maintenance and repairs of some sports facilities and equipment. On the other hand, the store keeper is to ensure proper storage of materials and equipment. Some form of administrative support will be provided if adequate and quality staff are employed. Another administrative support is to ensure that staff improve themselves through attendance of professional in-service training courses, seminars and workshops.

#### *C. Facilities and Equipment*

Facilities and equipment are grossly inadequate for the teaching of Physical Education and sports coaching in our schools. The scientific nature of Physical Education makes the use of up-to-date facilities and equipment for practical physical education, very essential.

Omidiran (1990), Ayodabo (1986) & Onifade (1989) diagnosing the Nigerian schools contended that most schools do not even have what can be referred to as the minimum standard of facilities and equipment. The problem of facilities and equipment is two fold : one is that some schools have spaces which are not developed while some, especially in cities and hilly or undulating low lands do

not even have the space for the construction of facilities. Yet in some other schools, playing spaces are converted to additional classrooms. The case is not different in other West African countries.

The consequence of all these is that the practical activities domain of physical education are not taught, hence the objectives of Basic Education Sector Improvement Programme in Ghana to a large extent cannot be realised with regards to Physical Education. The administrative support needed in this direction is that Secondary School Physical Education teachers especially, and sports coaches should become creative and have a high sense of initiative in improvising for facilities and equipment..

The truth of the matter is that it may be unrealistic to expect government alone to provide adequate and standard facilities and equipment in every school. A new development could be joint provision and joint use. Onifade, (1989) and Omidiran (1990) suggested that all levels of government : national, regional and district as the case may be in any given country should jointly provide and develop one or two sports facilities for a particular school and then do the same for another neighbouring school but this time for a different sport. The idea is that if the three levels of government develop different sports in different neighbouring schools within a walking distance, these schools can still teach their Physical Education classes adequately through a joint use of

facilities and this can be referred to as a "SCHOOL VILLAGE CONCEPT".

Another administrative support in solving the problem of inadequate facilities is the development of multi-purpose facilities. This way a particular facility could be developed to allow for the teaching of up to four different sport skills. (Onifade, 1989 & Imidiran, 1990).

#### *D. Scheduling*

In most Secondary Schools, Physical Education is on the school time table. However, most Physical Education teachers prefer to utilize the period for sporting activities or for teaching of other subjects. Teachers in the profession must ensure and endeavour to enhance and propagate their profession by preparing well for the classes and going out to teach these classes. Teachers, no doubt are accorded low status in our society but this must be changed by physical education teachers by displaying a positive attitude and pride towards their job..

#### *E. Changing Room / Showers*

One serious problem of Physical Education teaching in our schools is lack of changing room / showeres. This has prevented many teachers, especially women from showing interest in teaching Physical Education. Many students too, for a similar reason have refused to choose the subject as one of their school subjects. This facility is just not available in our schools.

more over, most school time-tables are such that there is no opportunity for students to take any shower. This is because students in most cases have to go for another lesson immediately after the Physical Education lesson.

The time has come for a radical approach to the issue of non-availability of changing / shower facility. Physical education teachers must now insist on the provision of changing rooms and shower facility for their students, taking into consideration their peculiar school environment and situations.

#### *F. Textbooks / Materials*

There is a serious dearth of Physical Education textbooks and materials for both teachers and students. The few available ones are not standard and are mostly written by foreign authors with facts based on their own local environment. The facts might not be applicable and relevant to the African environment. With scarcity of textbook materials, students have little opportunity of complementing and clarifying facts given in class. It is difficult for them to read to discover and learn on their own. Another problem is that available textbooks, especially those written by African authors emphasize only games and sports. They do not therefore reflect Physical Education as a subject having both practical and theoretical components.

The needed administrative support on textbooks is that physical education teachers, especially those with a minimum of first degree should either individually or jointly strive to write textbooks, monographs and journal or magazine articles in line with secondary school Physical Education syllabus.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, if adequate and genuine administrative support is provided in the teaching of physical education and coaching of Sports, there could be a change of attitude towards the subject as a profession and an academic entity and the subject could earn the needed respect and recognition it deserves. The subject could also become one of the school popular subjects. In fact if the subject is to be well taught, its relationship with the various physical sciences should be capitalised on in all teaching and learning situations in the classroom, laboratories and on the field of play. Physical Education can only be given a pride of place in Ghana if it is made an externally examinable core subject at the Junior and Senior Secondary School levels.

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