

TEACHING

And

TEACHER

PREPARATION

In The

TWENTY FIRST

CENTURY

Edited by:

A. M. L. W. D.

**TEACHING AND TEACHER
PREPARATION IN THE
TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

A
Book of Readings
in
Honour of
Professor Taju Adedokun Balogun

Edited by

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17 Preparing Health Teachers for Health Challenges in the Twenty-First Century

O.A. Moronkola & J.O. Odelola

Introduction

The nation's health is the nation's wealth. Nigeria today is still suffering from various health problems like venereal diseases, drug abuse, water-food borne diseases, pollution, malnutrition, dental health problems and several communicable diseases.

Many of the diseases are related to poverty, ignorance and the lifestyles of Nigerians. However, most of these diseases are preventable which means the people themselves can do a lot to free themselves from the scourge of health problems in their communities.

The current health problems coupled with the current economic downturn make health situation in the years ahead to be bleak. Though the activities of Petroleum Trust Fund (PTF) in solving the dearth of necessary health services inputs is usually orchestrated by the media, a lot stills need to be done. Also the recent introduction of Health Insurance Scheme in the country is a right step in the right direction, its success depends on proper funding, committed workers etc for it to have impact in the nation's health sector.

It is a truism that even in developed countries wherein health care services are of high standard, there are still health problems which on several occasions are caused by the lifestyle of people. Therefore, there is always a need to sensitize citizens on how to take care of their health and that of the communities. The discipline that does this task is HEALTH EDUCATION.

Moronkola (1993) posited that health is a state in which an individual or group of people can perform to their optimum satisfaction, physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and spiritually at a particular time in a particular situation or environment. Health education is that section of health field that promotes healthy behaviour. It is more than giving of health information, but using health knowledge to promote healthy attitudes and practices especially in health promotion and disease prevention.

Health education in schools should provide a systematic programme that ensures the development of desirable attitudes, habits, concepts and knowledge in the field of individual and community health (Brooks and Brooks, 1979).

With the above, it is not out of place to say that health education is one of the strong determinants of the present and future health status of Nigerians.

Health Education In Nigerian Schools

Health education or health science is yet to be accorded a very high status at all levels of education in Nigeria. According to Udoh (1986) health education teachers in schools, colleges and health educators in government agencies in the country have been dissatisfied with the fact that health education does not feature prominently

in primary and secondary school curricula.

Adeniyi (1993) asserted that the present content of health education curriculum, for the primary schools is basically health science and for it to have health education outlook, it must focus mainly on the identification of those behaviours of school children and their community which are significant to the onset and control of diseases rampant among school children. Udoh (1996) believed that no organised health education takes place in public primary schools. At secondary school level the teaching of health is in the subject healthscience which even few schools offered despite the fact that it has after school carry over values for students. This may be due to the fact that health science is erroneously viewed as a subject meant for those who are less scientific to cope with biology offering. The sorry state is that most of those who offered biology do not pass the subject due to poor preparation of students for examination and so lose both ways.

At tertiary institutions level, apart from those in physical and health education department, nursing, medicine etc most other students do not have health courses as part of their academic requirements for graduation. With the daily recognition of the need for safety education, AIDS education, family life and sexuality education, drug education etc in schools, it will not be long before health education takes a pride of place as a subject and outstanding profession in Nigeria.

Training Health Teachers For 21st Century Health Challenges

The professional preparation of teacher according to Conant (1964) involved conscious efforts in the development of characteristics that are compatible with and necessary for teaching effectively in the classroom. These include:

- (a) knowledge of learners and learning processes
- (b) knowledge of instructional strategies and
- (c) understanding of the processes, functions, structures and problems of the school.

It is disheartening that despite the technological gain in health research, the developing countries continue to suffer from poverty and insanitary environment induced diseases (Akhtar, 1995) Hellen (1995) observed that the emergence of new problems of health development in the contemporary Third World presents an extraordinary varied, complex and challenging range of tasks to those who must seek practical solutions from inside and outside the medical and health sciences.

The National Policy of Education (1981) stated that the purpose of teacher education in Nigeria educational system should be;

- (a) to produce highly motivated, conscientious and efficient classroom teachers
- (b) to encourage further the spirit of enquiry and creativity in teachers
- (c) to help teacher fit into the social life of the community and society at large and to enhance their commitment to national objectives.
- (d) to provide teachers with the intellectual and professional background adequate for the assignment and to make them adaptable to any changing situation not only in the life of their country but in the wider world.

With the earlier write-up in this section in mind, to meet the present and future health challenges in Nigeria and the world in general, the following are recommended for health education teacher education curriculum or professional prepara-

tion of health teachers

- (a) **Basic Courses:** Basic courses should include; education, biology, chemistry, anthropology, ethics, psychology, sociology, religion, agriculture, economics and communication.
- (b) **Specific Courses:** Family Life and Sexuality Education, Health Education, Population Education, Personal Health, Nutrition Education, First Aids, Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases, Mental and Social Health Education, Health Communication, Dental Health Education, Consumer Health Education, International Health and Careers In Health; Industrial Health Education, Epidemiology, Anatomy and Physiology, Vital Statistics, Alcohol and Drug Education, Community Health, Health Programmes In The School, Safety Education and Accident Prevention, Tourism, and Health, Recreation and Health, Exercise and Health, Methods and Materials in Health Education, Curriculum and Evaluation In Health Education etc.
- (c) **Professional Core-Courses:** Health education teaching exposure in schools and community settings, Health counselling skills, Health Communication Skills. Teaching materials for health education production, practicum in various health related organisations.
- (d) **Basic Laboratory Experiences:** Human Anatomy and physiology, Health screening and Appraisal.

Conclusion And Recommendations

Towards the end of the 20th century new diseases including AIDS came to limelight and how to curtail them is still a daunting task. In most developing nations of the world including Nigeria, socio-economic and political terrains are very sloppy. What these point to is that health care will cost more and new health challenges will face mankind. Prevention is not only cheaper than treatment but also lies within the arm pit of the health consumer.

Health education/health science teaching in schools is a strong force in meeting the various health challenges as Nakajima (1992) noted that schools provide excellent opportunity for children to be able to acquire health knowledge, skills and values which will enable them have brighter future. It is therefore necessary to urgently place school health high on the educational agenda of schools.

The children of this century, will be the adult of the next century. The authors therefore recommended that;

1. Health education/health science be made compulsory at all levels of education. Not only because of the factual knowledge it possesses but life time inbuilt health attitudes and practices that can be acquired through its study.
2. Health teachers must be healthy, motivators, listeners, leaders and not just bosses inspirator, researchers, counsellors and people with pleasing personalities. For health teachers to prepare today's youths to meet the 21st century health challenges they must have professional preparations in basic, specific professional core-courses and basic laboratory experiences.
3. Health teacher professional preparation should be adequately funded and supported.

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