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## **THE PHYSICAL EDUCATOR: A PURVEYOR OF PLAY PHILOSOPHICAL DIALECTIC**

**IGNA E. UDUK, AND INI N. JONA**  
DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF UYO  
UYO - AKWA IBOM STATE

### **ABSTRACT**

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that the product of a good physical education programme is excellence in motor performance. The Physical Educator, by this token is a Human Movement Engineer (H.M.E.). From this baseline, the paper articulates a philosophical prognosis of the leitmotiv. The action plan is that the leaders in the field should build the personality of the youths through a well directed movement education programme with developmental perspectives. To be an effective purveyor of play, the paper concludes, the Physical Educator has to be imbued with administrative savvy.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In a dogmatic superlative, the American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation, (1962) declared that the progress of a profession and the quality of programmes are directly related to the preparation of professional leadership. This learned body was stating the obvious that the propagation of any academic discipline is naturally directly dependent upon its present and future leaders. Good leadership is the safe bridge that links the ideals of a profession to the succeeding generation. This is a unique professional responsibility.

Physical education apart from its intellectual substance uses the medium of play to propagate the ideas of the profession. Physical educators are professional leaders (quality controllers) vested with the responsibility of the survival of the ideals of the discipline.



As an academic discipline, Physical Education has many experiences to provide the learners. In this paper the provision of play is discussed.

Charles Darwin (1809 - 1882) in one of his biological dictions maintained that species are derived by descent or "like begets like". Granted the indulgence to adopt the genetic tenet, one could say that "quality attracts quality". A qualitative programme leader would not encourage mediocrity. The central theme of this discourse is to determine how a competent "purveyor of play", leader of physical education can best supply the services.

### FUNDAMENTALS

Mill (1948) in his essay on Liberty wrote: "Human nature is not a machine to be built after a model, and set to do exactly the work prescribed for it, but a tree, which requires to grow and develop itself on all sides according to the tendency of inward forces which make it a living thing". The regrettable fact is that our educational system and indeed the society pushes learners more and more into a conformity cocoon. The first task of an educational leader should be to redefine the philosophy of Physical Education to reflect and stimulate the play urge in the learners particularly the millions of youngsters in the primary and secondary schools. A good educational leader needs to be conscious of his task to help his pupils grow 'on all sides'. Play in this context is the activities engaged in for the purpose of fun, exercise, amusement or recreation. Physical Education offers ideal opportunities and avenues to promote the natural play instinct of children. The subject recognises and promotes creative and personal expressions in movement education, mime, drama, dance, camping, picnic and marching.

Play can serve as an awakener, test of intelligence, and mind-body builder. It predisposes the heart to conditioning and turns the spring of character towards virtue. To quote Hall (1976): "A balanced play, example dance, can cadence the soul, give nervous poise and control, bring harmony between individuals, enhance the feeling and promote cultural values. In play when unhealthy competition is not emphasised, it helps to articulate appreciation and a feeling of sensitivity about people which certainly is a fulfilment of an educative aim. This agrees with Nunn's (1960) view that the central duty of the school is to encourage love.

Play has mental health values; Bender and Boas (1941) Chace (1953), Rosen (1954), Laymand (1960), Uduk (1993). Play has the following characteristics:

- Channel for movement expressions, fantasies, release of tension and identity with others;
- Non-verbal means of communication
- Helps individual to acquire poise and confidence in social situation
- Is creative and elicits reactions of approval from others so gives the individual satisfaction in achievement.

Play acts as a resolver of conflicts. Play is a mirror from which the child reflects his innermost striving and emotional difficulties. Authorities like Axline (1974), Jackson and Todd (1984) have been very clear as to how play can help as a diagnostic tool. Children absorbed and unaware in their play activities, reveal themselves just as usefully to the psychiatrist as to the physical educationist. In play, weaknesses and strengths are readily spotted. Also Physical cowardice, sissiness, fearfulness, or nervousness become evident. In a disarming corroboration Uduk, (1993) adds: "Physical Education teachers get much more adequate view of personality in action than can be obtained from the narrow confines of the clinical laboratory, the classroom, or "paper and pencil" tests". The informality of the student - teacher relationship in Physical Education (play), is a good avenue for effective guidance. Play is therapeutic and educative.

### ACTION

The ability to desire without the means of fulfilment is a dangerous self delusion. For a physical educator to be a qualitative and successful purveyor of play he has to model a good implementation blueprint. Foremost, he has to model his programme to involve all the children irrespective of age, sex or disability. There should be enough campaign to educate the parents on the merits of play on the personality development of the children. It should be cautioned that though facilities and equipment are indispensable adjuncts of the programme, the lack of them should not adversely affect the programme. Good efforts should be made to improvise



## CONCLUSION

Bucher (1983) grandiosely describes the good physical educator as a "leader, an implementer and an obstacle clearer". To live up to the billing he must be astute in administrative duties acronymed by Gulick (1965), - POSDCORB. The leader of Physical Education has to be a good administrator to be an effective purveyor of play. Therefore he has to be:

- |                           |     |
|---------------------------|-----|
| - an effective Planner    | - P |
| - a good Organiser        | - O |
| - hiring of Staff         | - S |
| - Purposeful in Directing | - D |
| - good at Co-ordinating   | - C |
| - effective in Reporting  | - R |
| - functional in Budgeting | - B |

An administrator who competently performs these functions and polishes them up with time tested theories of administration and leadership is bound to provide play abundantly. He is in the real and a true sense - a purveyor of play.

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