



UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN

**REFLECTION ON HUMAN KINETICS
AND HEALTH EDUCATION:
ONE MOST VITAL TO EDUCATION,
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT,
WELLNESS AND BETTER SOCIETY**

JAMES A. AJALA

A Valedictory Address 2012



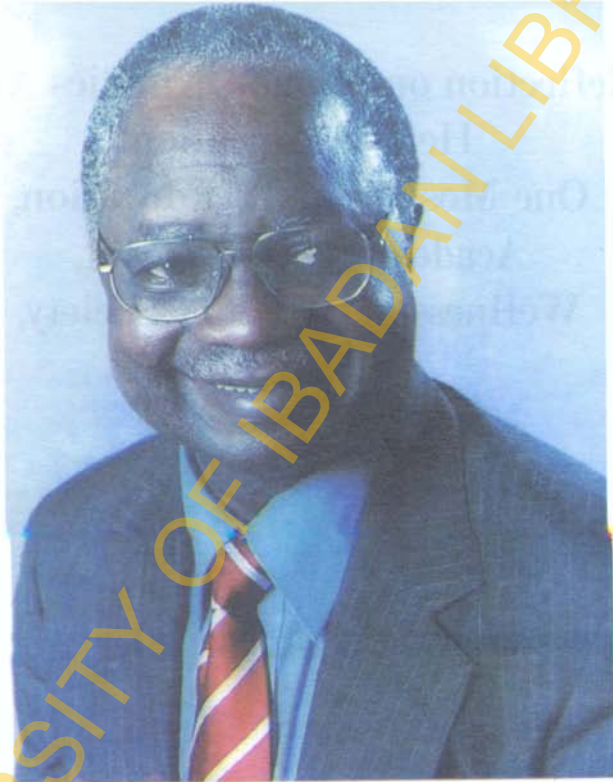
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Reflection on Human Kinetics And
Health Education:
One Most Vital To Education,
Academic Achievement,
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By

James A. Ajala

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Prof. J. A. Ajala
Dean (1997-99)
Faculty of Education

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Prof. J. A. Ajala and Dr. (Mrs) V. O. Ajala

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REFLECTION ON HUMAN KINETICS AND
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WELLNESS AND BETTER SOCIETY.

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Ladies and Gentlemen

Today's event in my honour marks my formal exit from active service (1977-2008) at University of Ibadan into retirement stage of my life. Upon reflection, the period has been very active and prosperous, successful with great achievements through the grace of God. The period will ever remain green in my memory.

With a very profound gratitude to God, I stand before you today to give my reflection on Human Kinetics and Health Education: One most vital to education, academic achievement, wellness and better society. This is not an inaugural lecture, but a valedictory address, serving as my brief farewell remark at today's event of my formal exit from active service. I stand here before you, soul, body and spirit as one entity, not because of my knowledge, not because of my wisdom, not because of my published works, not because of my cleverness but by the grace of God, my creator, the creator of the universe, the creator of mankind, the greatest scientist, the Merciful One, the Omnipotent, the God who created man in His own image. To God be the glory!

The title of my brief valedictory address that I chose to discuss with you, is not a new topic, but one which interests all of us, especially colleagues and students in all the fields of Education. This is a broad topic and one which we can only touch in the time allotted here today. It is therefore necessary that I limit my remark to four broad phases of the title:

1. The connections and essence of human kinetics and health programmes to education and development.
2. The challenges and prospects of the programmes.
3. The track to greatness of the programmes.
4. Concluding remarks.

1. THE CONNECTIONS AND ESSENCE OF THE TWO PROGRAMMES TO EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Education and development are twin brothers. They go hand-in-hand; and in fact one cannot be divorced from the other if a nation, like Nigeria should really survive economically and be generally viable within its frontiers and internationally as well.

The education system of a nation needs to be relevant in order to be an instrument of development. And an education system should satisfy certain educational principles in order to be efficient, one of which is the "Concept of Relevance".

The term "general education" is often concerned with the learners than content, which may be organized with little regard for traditional development, with emphasis on behavior and social usefulness together with intellectual development as an outcome of learning.

General education is concerned with developing a good life and for all people. It seeks to prepare learners for full and meaningful lives as members of families and organizations and as future citizens. Today, general education is looked upon as preparing the individual for a meaningful, self-directed existence. Good education for the children of a nation is the most solid foundation for its future prosperity.

Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education, including human kinetics and health education programmes. It could indeed be concluded that *“education is an ornament in prosperity and a refuge in diversity”*.

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION AND THE GOOD LIFE

According to John Dewey, the philosopher and educator, “the problem of restoring integration and cooperation between man’s beliefs about the world in which he lives and his beliefs about his values and purposes that should direct his conduct is the deepest problem of modern life”. Dewey has further stated that it is through one’s philosophy that this problem can be solved. A philosophy is extremely valuable because it determines one’s thinking and leads one to ultimate goal.

In education, as in any other field, important questions will be answered by one’s philosophy. A philosophy of education is important to all those who intend entering the teaching profession. One cannot be an effective teacher in today’s changing society if he or she does not have a well-thought-through philosophy. A philosophy of education attempts to determine what type of life one should lead. Viewing people in a systematic fashion, a philosophy of education is instrumental in giving purpose and direction to one’s actions.

Before a personal philosophy of education can be formulated, the future teacher must have a clear concept on the person he or she wants to produce. Therefore it becomes necessary to define that type of life that reflects the most satisfying and worthwhile type of existence. This is the type of life on which educational aims, methods, facilities, staff and other essentials should be focused. This may be called the “good life”.

HUMAN KINETICS EDUCATION

Human kinetics is an important part of educational process. A study of history reveals that the multiplicity of terms that are sometimes used synonymously for human kinetics includes:

1. **Hygiene:** - It refers to the science of preserving one's health. Hygiene often refers to rules or principles prescribed for the purpose of developing health. Since World War I, the term hygiene has become obsolete. Newer terminology is being used, such as health education and personal and community health.
2. **Physical Culture:** - The term physical culture is obsolete in education. Physical culture has been used synonymously for physical training. It implies that health may be promoted through various physical activities. It is a term, however, that is not in use in today's schools.

3. **Gymnastics:** - It refers to exercises that are adaptable to or are performed in a gymnasium. It is the art of performing various types of physical exercises and feats of skill. Today, when one thinks of gymnastics, what comes to mind is formal drills conducted either with or without the use of apparatus.
4. **Physical Training:** - The term has a military tinge to many people. It is a term that has been used in school programmes of physical activity and also in the armed forces. Most individuals agree that because of the military connections, the term is used to imply training. The term physical education also implies that physical activities serve the field of education in a much broader sense than physical training does.
5. **Fitness and Physical Fitness:** - Physical fitness refers primarily to bodily aspects of fitness. It implies such abilities as that of resisting fatigue, performing with an acceptable degree of motor ability, and being able to adapt to muscular stress.
6. **Health:** - According to the World Health Organization (WHO), health refers to such qualities as physical, mental, emotional and social health. It is not limited to the mere absence of disease and infirmity. It means total fitness.

7. **Recreation:** - It is concerned with those activities performed by an individual during hours not at work. It is frequently referred to as leisure-time activity. Recreation education is aimed at teaching people to utilize their leisure hours in a constructive manner. This implies a carefully selection of activities.
8. **Athletics:** - The term, athletics, refers to the games or sports that are usually engaged in by robust and skilled individuals. Many lay persons usually think of athletics and physical education as being similar in meaning. However, most physical education personnel think of athletics as one phase of a broad physical education programme – that division of the programme concerned with interscholastic or intercollegiate sports competition. The primary responsibility of a director of athletics in a school is the direction of this competitive programme.
9. **Sports Medicine:**- Neal Tremble (1998) of Drake University, a fellow in the American College of Sports Medicine, points out that the meaning involves the inter-professional and interdisciplinary implications of the following components:-

A.. Athletic Medicine

- Accident Prevention
- Athletic training

- Evaluation and management of injuries
- Traumatology

B. Biomechanics

- Anatomic analysis of movement
- Kinetic analysis of movement

C. Clinical Medicine

- Clinical consequences of physical activity
- Health appraisal of physical activity
- Pharmacology
- Physical activity and health
- Prescriptions of activity for patients
- Therapy and rehabilitation

D. Growth and Development

- Maturation and ageing
- Physical anthropology
- Tissue changes

E. Physiology

- Biochemistry of exercise
- Environmental influences
- Human performance
- Nutritional considerations
- Pathophysiological conditions and exercise

F. Psychology and sociology

- Behavior
- Cybernetics
- Group dynamics
- Motor learning
- Perception

Sports medicine involves or means all of the above concepts. Hence human kinetics is a science subject as well as arts subject in the real sense of it.

10. **Movement Education:** - This is a relatively recent concept in physical education that stresses body awareness or an understanding of how the body moves to develop efficient and effective motor development.
11. **Human Movement Phenomena:** - The term may be defined as the broad category under which the body of knowledge (a discipline) labeled as physical education can best be subsumed. The areas that comprise the human movement phenomena each have an individual focus for human movement, but they share a meaningful relationship with other areas.
12. **Physical Education:** - The term is much broader and much more meaningful for day-to-day living than many of those terms discussed previously.

It is more closely allied to the larger area of education, of which it is a vital part. It is concerned with big-muscle activity and the benefits that may be derived there from, and with its contribution to the health and growth of children so that they may realize as much as possible from the educational process without having growth handicaps.

The most recent terms being used are:

13. **Sports and Leisure Management Studies:** - This term has been formulated by Lead City University, Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria.
14. **Health, Environmental Education and Human Kinetics:** - This has been adopted by University of Benin, Edo State, Nigeria.
15. **Sports Science Education:** - This term has also been coined by Afe-Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria.

At this point, it may suffice to describe human kinetics education, according to Charles Bucher (1978), as *“an integral part of the total education process, is a field of endeavour that has its aim in the development of physically, mentally, emotionally and socially fit*

citizens through the medium of physical activities that have been selected with a view to realizing these outcomes”.

AIMS OF HUMAN KINETICS EDUCATION

Through human kinetics programmes in the school, the aim is to:

1. Prepare the student for his role as a citizen in a democratic society.
2. Enable him to function as an active intelligent participant in the society.
3. Create awareness for the need for cooperation with one's fellowmen everywhere for the purpose of developing global citizenship.
4. Develop the physical, intellectual, social and emotional resources of the individual for constructive daily living.
5. Develop a sound strong body so that each individual student can participate in and enjoy physical activities to his/her fullest potentials.

In addition to learning through motor activities, proper attitude towards everyday living, both in and out of the school, are vital. The programme should have carry-over value for the student throughout his school

and adult life. Such carry-over value should include the following:

1. Fostering leadership and followership traits;
2. Developing courage and initiative;
3. Developing the ability to accept constructive criticism;
4. Developing social poise and creative expression;
5. Developing a regard for the health and safety of self and others;
6. Fostering loyalty, honesty and fair-play;
7. Developing an understanding and respect for the right of others;
8. Developing an understanding and acceptance of rules and regulations.

Through the use of age levels, an attempt must be made to show probable characteristics of the average child in any school. It should be understood that the development of children will vary greatly from child to child.

Children develop at varying rates of speed, dependent upon sex, environmental conditions, home background, emotional and physical health, intelligence, aptitudes and interests. By an

understanding of the characteristics and needs of the child, the teacher will be better able to provide the best possible programme of human kinetics education experiences. These experiences can be organized in three major areas:

1. Understanding and Appreciating Movement

Students will:

- develop skills of movement; understand how and why one moves, and the way in which movement may be organized.
- learn to move skillfully and effectively through exercise, games, sports, dance, and aquatics;
- understand the concepts of space, time, and force related to movement.

2. Physical Fitness

Students will:

- condition the heart, lungs, muscles, and other organic systems of the body to meet daily and emergency demands;
- develop a functional posture;
- acquire an appreciation of and a respect for physical fitness, and for the sense of personal wellbeing which results from optimum physical condition.

3. Lifetime Sports

Students will:

- develop an interest and a desire to participate in lifetime recreational sports;
- express culturally approved patterns of personal behaviour and interpersonal relationships in and through games, sports, and dance.

Furthermore, human kinetics programme can provide the following:

- a setting in which experiences will help students to enjoy physical activity, feel good about themselves, and become more accepting of themselves, and others;
- opportunities for vigorous activities which help alleviate frustrations and tensions;
- many avenues for self-identification and for identification with peer groups;
- coeducational physical education experiences;
- a variety of opportunities to develop self-confidence, individual initiative, and responsibility to self and society;

- an environment that supports the rules necessary for the safety of the participants;
- opportunities for students with severe structural or functional handicaps to participate in special activities adapted to individual needs;
- leadership opportunities for each student.

The human kinetics education programme is based on the knowledge of the general characteristics of school students, combined with attention to providing maximum flexibility for individual differences.

Throughout the country, people are becoming increasingly conscious of the importance of participating and maintaining health and for pure enjoyment. If we can guide the young people in our schools to discover this choice and benefits and to acquire life-time habits of participation in physical activities, we will enrich not only the lives of this young people, but the health and strength of our nation.

HEALTH EDUCATION

Delbert Oberteuff (1980), scientific educator, clearly stated that “one needs to be educated to develop and protect one’s health, and needs abundant health to make full use of one’s education”. Then, health education in schools is vital to enable students to acquire the knowledge and skills to promote health.

The philosophy of health is consistent with the general educational philosophy. If it is the general aim of general education “to meet the needs, interest, capacities and aptitude of individuals in their processes of development into healthy, useful, happy and well adjusted citizens of a democratic society”, it follows that those charged with the responsibility of health education and services within the schools, should strive to focus this general aims upon their own specific areas.

HEALTH EDUCATION – A DEFINITION

According to James Ajala (2005), “health education is a process with intellectual, psychological and social dimensions relating to activities which increase the abilities of people to make informed decisions affecting their personal, family and community well-being. This process, based on scientific principles, facilitates planning and behaviour change in both health personnel and consumers, including children and youths”.

The health educated person is characterized as one who:

- Understands the basic facts concerning health and disease.
- Protects his or her own health and that of his or her own dependents.
- Works to improve the health of the community.

SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION IS:

- Education for health; education for healthful living of the individual, family and community; education that aims at improving the quality of life.
- Any planned activity with specific goals aimed at the improvement of health knowledge, attitude and behaviour.
- An academic field and subject. Although health education occurs in health services, nurse-student relationship and other settings, it is a separate academic field and subject.
- A relatively new discipline. It is derived from the biological, behavioural, sociological and health sciences. Facts, principles and concepts pertaining to healthful living constitute its body

of knowledge. The body of knowledge is identified and synthesized to form the discipline.

- More than the acquisition of facts and information. Although accurate facts and information are important to any discipline, health education's emphasis is not on information memorization, but rather on the use of facts and information in the consideration of attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviour. Through such a process it works towards its goal in improving personal and community health.
- A needed approach to bridge the gap between scientific health discoveries and a person's early application of these discoveries in daily life.
- The teaching-learning component of the school, college or university health programmes (instruction services and environment).
- Best achieved by developing a rational powers of humans (critical thinking), enabling them to make wise decisions and solve personal, family and community health problems.
- Based on, and improved tool, basic and applied research.
- Most effective at the secondary school level when conducted by qualified health educators.

At the primary level, it is most effective when taught by teachers whose professional preparation includes health education.

- Involved in helping students to understand their responsibilities in maintaining personal and community health.

SCHOOL HEALTH EDUCATION IS NOT:

- Hygiene of yester-years. It is not “blood and bone” hygiene, nor is it physiological hygiene.
- Anatomy, physiology, “watered down” biology or any combination of these. Although the fields of anatomy, physiology and biology serve as foundation and are necessary to understand healthful living concepts, they do not contribute all of these concepts, principles and facts that make up its body of knowledge.
- Physical education (human kinetics). Human kinetics and health education are separate and distinct fields that require different kinds of professional preparation. Although some of their goals are similar and sound, human kinetics programmes properly conducted contribute to the health of the individual, their curriculum content, activities and methodology are completely different. With such disparity

between the two fields, the use of human kinetics teachers in health education classes is educationally unsound, unless they have specific broad preparation in health education.

- Physical fitness. Even though physical fitness contributes to the total fitness and wellbeing of humans, it is only a part of health education.
- A required course established to deal with legal provisions as well as biological actions of drugs, alcohol and tobacco. Although these problems are important and should receive attention, a course that deals solely with these topics is not a total health education experience. Rather, it is the “short-gun” approach to crisis problems that has long passed for health education. These problems should be and incorporated with other basic health problems within the framework of a sequential primary-secondary health education programme.
- An assembly lecture programme, a raining-day activity or incidental instruction. To be effective, the health education programme must be carefully planned, must be taught in a wholesome learning environment in which a variety of student activities can be carried out, and must be conducted by a teacher prepared in health education.

- Only grooming practices such as tooth-brushing, hair-combing or health habits such as hand washing before meals. Even though these items are important, health education is much more than grooming and simple health habit development.

2. RELATIONSHIP OF HUMAN KINETICS TO THE SCHOOL HEALTH PROGRAMME

From the foregoing discussion, it can be seen that health and human kinetics are not synonymous and that their activities are different. At the same time, they have common goals and are closely related, and human kinetics personnel can play an important part in school health programmes. Although concentrated or direct health instruction is needed. Health education should take place, not only in the classroom, but on the athletics and sports fields, playground, swimming pool, and gymnasium and in every other room and part of the school plant. The health programme utilizes the services of medical doctors, nurse, dentist, human kinetics teacher, home economics teacher, and other specialized personnel in ordering its programmes on health education, health services, healthful living and environmental activities.

Human kinetics and health education teachers must work closely together, since in many cases, they use the same facilities, perform duties in each other's area, work on committees together, and have professional books and magazines that cover the literature of both fields; both are concerned with the total health of the individual. Both are concerned with the physical as well as the social, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of health. Both should help one another and follow practices that will provide the most benefits for the greatest number of the people.

James Ajala (2005), in his inaugural lecture sums it up that "health education is essential for this day, this age; a joy, a tool, a right, a shared responsibility, of individuals, groups, public and government. Your health must come first....without it you have nothing".

HUMAN KINETICS, HEALTH EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

For some time now, a lot have been said about the relationships that must exist and do exist between sports and academics. The debates took so many forms with the sole aim of getting more people to participate in sports at all levels, erasing the archaic impression that sports participation is meant for school drop-outs, that sports can successfully combine with academics, and above all, it is a scientific way of life that can teach

moral, self-discipline and control, mental alertness, inculcate social values, mutual understanding, to mention a few.

Evidence and research to date firmly establish the fact that a close affinity of physical activities, motor skills and health to academic achievements exists. Indeed, a kind of physical and health education programme which leads to physical and social fitness and health is vital to the education and academic achievements of every student.

This fact has been recognized throughout history by some of the world's most profound thinkers. For example, Socrates stressed that poor health can contribute to grave mistakes in thinking. Comenius noted "*intellectual process is conditioned at every step by bodily vigour. To attain the best result, physical exercise must accompany and condition mental training*".

More recently, such authorities as Arnold Gesell, author T. Gersild, and Swiss psychologist, Jean Piaget (2001), found that a child's earliest learnings are movements in nature and form the foundation of subsequent learnings. As E.H. Radler and Newell C. Kepthart (2004), wrote in their authoritative book "*Success Through Play*", "*motor activity of some kind underlies all behaviours including high thought*

processes. In fact any behaviour...can function no better than through the basic motor abilities upon which it is based”.

With regard to the word, academic, it will suffice to say that to be academic would mean to be scholarly, that is, to be deeply involved and concerned with theory and logic. Anybody who is an academician is said to be somebody in an institution of higher learning, usually for a special purpose.

Sports participation has been frivolously misconstrued to mean a clog in the wheel of progress, especially when we refer to academic achievements. Many years back, our parents would not want us to take part in sports because we might be injured. They used to tell their children not to play football or any other game because they had not sent them to school to do so. The trend then was that any injury sustained in school was attributed to sport participation. On the other hand, if examinations were failed, the parent would strongly blame the children and warn them not to take part in any form of sport because it would retard their education progress.

Hence, what happened therefore had been for those children who wanted to play at all costs to resort to truancy in order to develop themselves physically. If

these children were caught, it would result to their being seriously punished.

Human kinetics as defined earlier on refers to more than athletics for physically gifted students. It refers to instructional programme built around basic motor activities which help to achieve the goal of physical, emotional and mental wellbeing of every student. School health programmes are concerned with modification of behaviour and imparting of scientific health knowledge, leading to the same goal, together with provisions for health services and a healthful physical, emotional environment.

Academic achievement refers to the progress a child makes in school as measured by his scores on achievement tests, his grade-point average, his promotion from grade to grade, and the development of proper attitudes. As any experienced teacher knows, academic achievement requires more than intellectual capacity. Non-intellectual factors such as the will to achieve, health and self-concept are almost certain to play an important part in a student's ability to achieve academically.

Health and human kinetics education programmes are related to academic achievements in at least four ways:

- a. Through emphasis on the development of motor skills,

- b. By promoting physical fitness,
- c. By imparting knowledge and redefine behaviour in regard to good health practices, and
- d. By aiding in the process of social and emotional development which leads to a more positive self-concept.

Also, many research studies have supported the contention that physical fitness is related to academic achievement. Studies conducted at the University of WestPoint have shown a significant relationship between physical fitness and academic success, and between physical fitness and leadership qualities. Marcie Hart and others have done extensive research showing relationships between scholastic and academic success and physical fitness.

A good school health programme, too, makes a definite contribution to good scholarship. In health education classes, students learnt about the harmful effect of alcohol, smoking and dangerous drugs; they obtain scientifically accurate information about such things as good nutrition, the requisites for good vision, the importance of exercise, and the ingredient for healthful personality development and mental health.

Through the development of desirable attitudes and the application of health knowledge, the student achieves his maximum strength, energy, endurance, recuperative power and sensory acuity. Furthermore, the effective school health programme helps students to understand and appreciate the value of good health as a means of achieving their greatest productivity, effectiveness and happiness as individuals in the society.

Human kinetics and health education not only affect social development but emotional development as well. Games and sports provide the release from tension after long periods of study; achievements in physical activities give students a sense of pride which pays dividends in emotional satisfaction and wellbeing.

The value of human kinetics and health education programmes will depend largely upon whether or not they meet the following criteria:

- The human kinetics programme includes a variety of daily movement experiences and instruction in many basic motor activities, aimed not at making the student a superior performer in one or two, but stressing a modest performance in all, consistent with his developmental level. It also helps each student

to achieve physically according to desirable standards.

- The health programme provides student with accurate and significant health knowledge related to their individual needs and interests. There is also concern for health services and a healthful physical and emotional environment.
- Human kinetics and health programmes are accorded educational respectability so that students and parents will more readily appreciate their value and seek the benefits they offer.

By providing these essentials, the school will help to ensure the high standard of academic achievement on the part of all students.

“Get happy to get healthy and to be productive in your chosen career!”

WELLNESS AND BETTER SOCIETY CONNECTION

What Does Wellness Mean?

In his inaugural lecture, James Ajala (2005) stated that the ideas that we can measure wellness and that people can be healthy to which high levels of wellness are relatively new. Most of us think in terms of illness and assume that if we are not ill, we are well. This

assumption is not true. Just as there are many degrees of illness, there are many degrees of wellness.

It follows, therefore, that wellness is any approach to health that focuses on balancing the many aspects, or dimensions, of a person's life through increasing the adoption of health enhancing conditions and behaviours rather than attempting to minimize the conditions of illness. Health education is one of several different formats that can be used to influence health and quality of life for people, and, of course, for the society.

Human kinetics including sports process helps to inculcate:

a. Educational values such as:

- Physical fitness
- Wellness
- Emotional stability
- Mental alertness
- Ethics and morality
- Socialization
- Character
- Intellectual scholarship, etc.

b. Societal values such as:

- Great nation
- Boosting economy
- Business and trade

- International and mutual understanding
- Respect
- Friendship
- Advertisement
- Patriotism
- Nationalism
- Democracy
- Governance
- Leadership and followership, etc.

c. Also further contributes to promotion of peace by:

- Respecting cultural diversity
- Fostering:
 - ✓ Tolerance
 - ✓ Solidarity
 - ✓ Cooperation not confrontation
 - ✓ Dialogue
 - ✓ Reconciliation, etc.

Human kinetics and sports are man's means of developing and preserving group moral, group pride, group sense of belonging and coherence, security within the group; the going spirit and the wellbeing.

Working together or vicariously participating in the common goals seems to be a need of man. Some national solidarity seems to result from national teams. For example, former President Olusegun Obasanjo

(2004), stated that, football game is the only thing that unites Nigerians. Football tournaments always bring out the best in the average Nigerian. When there is a football match to be won or lost, Nigerians suddenly become patriotic. At such movements, they do not talk about ethnicity or religion. There is no protest about the application of Quota System in the National Team. Rather the people are driven by determination to win and excel.

It is, therefore, the duty of human kinetics educators to promote not only fine sportsmanship but also sound notions of the competitive process. “*May the better man win*”. For those who lose, there is no humiliation unless a faulty education has taught them to expect always to be right and never to lose.

Competition in human kinetics activities should always reflect the highest standards of sportsmanship. “To brag a little, to show up well, to crow gently when you win, and to own up, pay up and shut up when you lose are virtues of a sportsman”. This is a lesson for our Nigeria democracy, for politicians and their followers in order to have a better Nigerian nation.

From all these, there is reason to believe that health and human kinetics are panacea to wellness and illness-free society, good life, purposeful living, or healthy lifestyles and graceful ageing. In all, these are

keys to growth and development for a better society. We, however, hope that tomorrow or in the future, human kinetics and health education will merge as “wellness” field of study to achieve the foregoing objectives: “Maximum wellbeing” and “a most joyous and richer way of being alive!”

3. CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF THE PROGRAMMES

The need and demand for education will know no bounds. Human kinetics and health education, as a crucial phase of the total educational process helps in realizing its expressed purposes. The two programmes are dynamic force in education; hence share the challenges of general education.

Briefly, the major challenges confronting education system today can be highlighted, such as: - funding qualitative education of students, quality of staff and indiscipline, infrastructure facilities – serious strain on the facilities as a result of overpopulation of students, for example, students being educated under tree, no chair, no table; poor environment for learning and teaching situation; ramshackle materials, various academic staff strikes; large enrolment/admission; and institutional autonomy, etc. These are factors affecting academic achievement seriously in our society. As a result our two programmes are at crossroad, which way forward?

PATH TO GREATNESS OF OUR PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMMES

The solution lies with us by making the programmes focus on the following:

- Quality programmes relevant to the needs of the society.
- Quality professional preparation of staff.
- Relevant creativeness/creativity; appropriate innovation, related research.
- Making student learning experiences truly effective.
- An evaluation and development of the curricula and of programmes for the preparation of teachers, etc.
- Availability of library to be current in contents and to enhance performance.
- Publicizing the programmes for acceptability of all concerned.

Nigerian education, human kinetics and health education can only be renewed or transformed by ideas shared and discussed by a multitude of our professionals who are bounded by common purposes and vision. It is not unfounded to expect that ideas for such renewal survive more in atmospheres of

commitment, hardwork, steadfastness, focus, justice, fair-play and freedom.

HUMAN KINETICS AND HEALTH EDUCATION RELATIONSHIP

At this point, I invite you, especially professional colleagues and students, to think with me about walls and bridges – and about those who build them.

Walls and bridges! Not simply the physical structures of wood and masonry and metal, but in their larger sense – things that divide and things that unite. Almost everything we do in our interpersonal relations and as a group or society builds either a wall or a bridge. Either we separate people from their natural destiny by means of a wall or we connect them to it by a bridge. The builders of walls, on the other hand, made a cohesive and progressive profession infinitely more difficult. The builders of walls usually operate from fear. The walls are built, for the most part, by individuals who honestly fear that unless one programme is walled off and kept in its place – there will be fewer privileges left for themselves. This should not be so after all, the sky is wide enough to accommodate all birds to fly without disturbing one and another.

The bridges of understanding between human kinetics and health education will not be finished this year or

this decade, or perhaps in our life-time. But if the mind and purpose of man can unite to construct the bridges to peaceful related professions, they will serve as no other thing than to bless the generations yet unborn.

It's also important to note and remember that "education is the bridge to human effectiveness and progress". "Human kinetics and health education need to succeed if education is to succeed". Clearly the two programmes play an important role in the education process.

The mind and body represent a unity in man, one gives strength to the other, and both function harmoniously in the educated person. When the two programmes are applied to education, it can readily be seen that both play an instrumental role in the educational process.

My professional colleagues and students, my advice: "Please don't build walls between Human Kinetics Education and Health Education and I hope you will be builders of bridges between the two programmes. There lies our professional greatness. So be it!"

GOVERNMENTS AND EDUCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Education standards have declined over the years and there are factors (already mentioned earlier on) that

account for this. More importantly Federal Government, at present, is over-loaded with too many responsibilities such that her transformation agenda will be too difficult to accomplish. One most critical issue affecting academic standards is over dependence of universities on the Federal Government. Federal Government should provide appropriate and consistent educational policies and consider stepping down gradually certain roles such as appointment of university vice-chancellors, students admission exercise being handled by the Joint Admission and Matriculation Board (JAMB) and the Post-Universities Tertiary Matriculation Examination (UTME) etc will be a step in the right direction so that universities can become autonomous eventually.

JAMB was put in place to address specific issues. There is no doubt, it has performed well and still coming up with innovative ideas. To my mind, the time has changed with overpopulation of applicants to federal, state and private universities numbering about 105 institutions in the country - the task is not easy and it's going to become more and more difficult to manage the admission process. We should be courageous also to change with the time.

University Autonomy is the answer. Let the universities admit students of their own choice. This is a progressive and positive act that can help reduce

corruption; put an end to the issues of conflict between JAMB and UTME screening activities, Academic Staff Union of Universities (ASUU) and other staff union strikes will be effectively controlled.

Hopefully, academic standards as a result will be drastically improved upon. Additionally, there will be healthy competition in various ways between federal, state and private universities across the country. And this can also lead to better and improved national and international excellence in the university education and ranking. University autonomy is the practice in most developed nations like, United States of America, Great Britain, etc. Why not in Nigeria? For academic excellence, autonomy for universities is the best option.

Extending retiring age of professors to 70years, is it really worth it? Do we really want the young staff members to grow? How about the National University Commission (NUC) policy on staff mixed criterion - would it be respected? To lift up quality education, our universities must be autonomous

The young shall grow principle should be more of concern than extending *retiring* age of professors to 70years. The old ones should quit the scene when the ovation is loudest. They should not die at the chalkboard. Bowing out honorably is a respected decision globally.

The uncertainties surrounding university education have generated and sustained severe anxieties and crisis, and the primary victims have been the enrolled and would-be university students, most of whom have been thoroughly traumatized and, of course, their parents and other sponsors. Such uncertainties have also contributed greatly towards many of the problems, especially student cultism, staff indiscipline and corruption, student harassment, etc, which have plagued and debased the Nigerian university education system.

University autonomy can bring about desired progress and development. The university council, with the vice-chancellors adequately equipped, should be in better position to address the possible challenges. The students can be better groomed effectively in “character and learning”.

If education is so “essential”, how come it is being funded so inadequately by government? How come most Nigerian universities lack basic things, such as adequate libraries, well-equipped laboratories, facilities for healthy recreation, and so on? How exactly can the prohibition of staff strikes be enforced? All these issues call for change and the change must come steadily and cautiously to achieve academic excellence comparable with developed countries of note, for example, U.S of America, Great Britain and all that.

The universities will be better-off for autonomy system. The passion with which the university administrations who are blessed with intelligence and wisdom to pursue academic standards will be surely more effective. They will be more hardworking and more committed in handling the affairs of their universities.

They must be able to overcome the challenges and obstacles no matter their nature if they are committed, steadfast, focused and prayerful.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

How can we fix the falling standards in our education system? Federal Government is carrying a load that is heavier than that of 36 states and Abuja. Logically it should be the other way round to be able to achieve her transformation agenda which includes providing qualitative education for the citizens. Falling standards of education require a more logistic approach to problems that confront our education system. Human kinetics and health education as unique phase of general education can play substantial role in improving our broken education system. Education, the most potent weapon can be used to fight the societal impediments militating against growth and development.

In addition to maximizing participation and enjoyment in the human kinetics and health education classrooms and laboratories, changing teaching methodologies, streamlining management techniques, revising the curriculum, modifying games and activities, and actual teaching, it is necessary for teachers to add the play element in classes.

Teachers need to educate students in the belief that play is a worthwhile and necessary activity. The fun element must be induced in physical programme, to increase the chances of people becoming actively involved in physical recreative activity later in life.

Human kinetics and health education teachers need to critically analyze participation in classroom, become more aware of it, and take corrective measures on the spot to alleviate the problem. Perhaps, if we can make the classroom an enjoyable learning experience, maximizing fun and participation, guided by the activities, we can help create more physically recreatively active people for the future. "Promoting better health for young people through activity and sports" is critical for a better Nigeria. And as a matter of fact, it must be our national priority.

Human kinetics educators must strive to develop educational philosophies in a rational, logical, and scientific manner and to represent the best interests

of all humans. This means that scientific facts must be assembled and workable theories applied that support the worth of human kinetics as an important and necessary service to humanity. However, theory and practice for relevance must be blended.

Nigerian universities should develop broad-based, diverse and career-focused curricula, which link school-based learning with work opportunities. This will help so much in developing physical, mental, and the overall wellbeing of the youth. Universities being the melting point for different classes of youth should ensure the development of skills on how to relate in the work place and society.

Health is a personal need, but it must also be a public concern. The combined efforts of individuals and governments can lead to a higher level of health for all citizens of the nation and beyond.

Now, education stakeholders have unanimously agreed on revised basic education curricula at the instance of the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC). The review panel succeeded in reducing the number of subjects to only seven after bringing computer studies / ICT and physical and health education under basic science and this new structure is expected to commence in September 2012. This is a challenge before human

kinetics and health educators to be creative, innovative and practical, to meet the needs of our society.

The proprietor of Afe Babalola University, Ado-Ekiti (ABUAD) has recently (Guardian Newspaper, Jan. 5, 2012) called for the immediate return of tertiary institutions to the glorious past in which moral values and sports were regarded as core parts of a complete university education. He, further, stressed that it was after a student had successfully passed through these important training modules that he or she would be fully prepared to face life after graduation.

Chief Afe Babalola, a model in everything that is noble, especially education, has already incorporated compulsory moral and sporting education into ABUAD extra-curricular programme, which all students must go through before graduating from the university. Besides, the proprietor has made it compulsory for all students to go for a two-hour sport training from 5a.m to 7a.m daily. What a fantastic policy!

Certainly, ABUAD is on the right track by establishing the “department” of sports science education. Proprietor Afe Babalola is surely an apostle of qualitative education and good character!

It may be possible in the future that human kinetics and health education can be merged and become “Wellness Programme” to provide a course on

balanced diet and regular exercise in the university general studies that all students must take and pass for graduation and life-time practice.

I remember the sport banquets in Athens, Greece (2004) and the speakers who recounted great victories, great feats of strength and speed, great athletes who seemed always to be the finest. These stories were usually filled with famous sayings and slogans which decorated the locker rooms, "*A winner never quits, and a quitter never wins,*" said one. "*Nothing risked, nothing won,*" "*There is no such thing as the indispensable man,*" "*Pride goeth before a fall,*" "*What is worth doing is worth doing well,*" "*The will to win is great, the will to prepare to win is greater*" and "*The margin of greatness is extra effort*". "*What a glorious, what a perfect world is this world of sport,*" I thought! "*What a wonderful way in which to build character.*"

It occurs to me then that what is needed is not only a return to the past but a rededication to the present and a greater commitment to the future. While there are claims for the role of sports as a wonderful medium for development of desirable character traits, the evidence is not conclusive. There is a great deal of testimony on the part of those who have competed indicating the lessons learned and the values of such participation in sports.

It is our contentions, however, that sport has an important role in the development of character and can make a real contribution in this respect.

If individuals can and will apply the principles learned in competitive sport much can be accomplished in life.

Mr. Vice chancellor, Sir, if University of Ibadan is to remain "first and best," human kinetics and health education can be one most vital medium to be utilized toward the realization of this essential goal in the future.

The earlier we wake up to this reality the better. To begin with, we can have human kinetics and health education course designed as general course of study that all students must take and pass to be able to graduate from the university. I strongly believe that human kinetics and health education will go on to change lives of Nigerians for the better.

Second, it will be a nice idea for University of Ibadan Vice-chancellor to be apostle of "university autonomy" in Nigeria. It is a tough challenge, but it can be achieved. Nothing is impossible with God.

And now I should like to conclude with these wonderful words of our Msgr. John Aniagwu (2009) of Catholic Church in Lagos, when he wrote:

“No society is ever so good that it cannot get better. It has been said that the largest room in the whole world is the room of improvement.”

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is now right and proper to thank several individuals who have been a source of joy to me throughout my journey of service at this University of Ibadan, "First and Best".

I really appreciate my parents, for giving me root and my Alma maters and teachers for giving me wings to fly. May I express, on behalf of my family, sincere appreciation to the Departmental Send-Off Committee under the able leadership of Head of Department, Prof. B.O. Ogundele, a humble and fine gentleman, for the opportunity to present my Valedictory Address and to share this moment with you. I appreciate the Faculty of Education under the Dean Segun Kolawole, an academic politician of repute, and the university community with the Vice Chancellor, Prof. I.F. Adewole – a distinguished Physician of international status for your honour and attendance.

Special appreciation to Late Prof. J.A. Adedeji, first Head of Department of Human Kinetics and Health Education, who purposefully facilitated my recruitment from ABU, Zaria to University of Ibadan. My deep appreciation goes to the Late Vice Chancellor- Prof. Samson Olajuwon Olayide, an unusual dynamic scholar, who supported me officially

and encouraged me personally to remain with the University of Ibadan, despite all international juices in place for me. May his soul find peace with the good Lord.

On behalf of my wife, may I say thank you to the entire university members – friends and colleagues especially from my own Department, for the honour, hospitality of today, thank you for the warmth of your friendship, thank you for **the beauty of this spot**.

I am very grateful to the past and present students – with you, we the teachers could only make humble contributions because you're there. Several individuals have expressed appreciation to me in form of spoken and written words during my time at the university, which will ever remain fresh in my memory.

For the record, I have selected two of such as follows:

1. “My Head of Department, Professor J.A. Ajala has been very helpful, not only by giving me this opportunity but also through his encouragement and scholarly guiding hand. But for his wisdom and magnanimity during my turbulent moments at this Department I would not have been here now, to pick up this opportunity.” —Prof B.O. Asagba (Faculty Lecture, 2005).

2. "If the world could have people like you, it would be a great place to live in. Just to say thank you"
—Dr. G.I. Odewumi, Director of Sports, U.I
(Compliments, 2008).

The above which I deeply appreciate speak volumes.

I thank Nigerian School Health Association, which I served for nine years as President, but happily enough, Prof. O.A. Moronkola, a trusted, loyal, valued colleague, and also a strong member of the Association, is presently the President of our great Association.

I cannot forget the turbulent time of the armed robbery attack I suffered just two weeks into my deanship of the Faculty of Education in August 1997. Neither can I forget in a hurry the many consoling expression of sympathy and support by kind-hearted University of Ibadan community. If I succumb to the pressure of mentioning names, the list would be longer than my entire speech today. For now, let me say this. Beginning from the then top management of the university, the medical personnel at Jaja Clinic and UCH; the bursary; academic, non-academic staff; students of the Faculty of Education; my colleagues in KHE to the entire University of Ibadan Community, my friends in Nigeria and in Diaspora, this probably is my last chance to pay back in that unique way of showing appreciation – THANK YOU!

Last but not the least; my heartfelt thanks go to my immediate family, especially my good wife, **Victoria Olufunmilayo**, who remains my best friend. I will continue to love you forever!

DEDICATION

To all who specially graced this event in my honour to mark my official exit from active service of University of Ibadan; to the glory of God and for the love of humanity!

Mr. Vice-Chancellor, the Registrar, I seek your permission to leave the stage. I thank you and wish you all wealth of health. Good Lord will bless you all richly.

Prof. James A. Ajala

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Prof. J. A. Ajala and Family



Prof. J. A. Ajala with children and some grand children.



Departmental Staff (2009)



My Green Revolution Mission for the Faculty (1984)

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