

REINFORCING PSYCHOMOTOR SKILL OF CLOTHING AND TEXTILE TEACHERS IN NIGERIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL

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Abstract

Clothing and Textiles is an aspect of Home economics which is capable of equipping Secondary school students with saleable skills and abilities in the world of work and self-reliance. This paper examines the appropriate use of psychomotor skills in teaching by secondary school teachers in the field of clothing and textiles. While exploring the challenges and strategies for improved professional competencies of teachers, the paper recommends among others, teachers retraining programme to promote their knowledge base in practical skills for functional education delivery in Nigeria.

Education is a profitable investment that develops the abilities, skills and imparts knowledge to individuals to meet the challenges of living (Okorie, 2010). Teaching is a systematic activity deliberately engaged in by someone to facilitate the learning of intended worthwhile knowledge, skills and values by another person. It involves planned action designed to make for efficient and effective learning. It is also a deliberate effort to provide directions, guidance, activities and materials so that learning will be enhanced. Clothing and textiles is a skill oriented subject which constitute a vital component of effective teaching of clothing and textiles programming.

Psychomotor skill is the ability to do something practically, expertly and correctly. It is the ability of someone to perform a task to an acceptable standard. Skill is anything that the individual has learned to do with ease and precision and may be by either physical or mental performance involving manipulative proficiency in hand, finger and eye coordination (Okorie, 2010). According to Njoku (2002), to possess skill is to demonstrate the habit of practical acting, thinking and behaving in a specific activity in such way that the process becomes natural to the individual through repetition or practice. The development of skill is an important function of educational institutions since skill acquisition helps in developing intrinsic potentials in individuals.

Home economics is taught as an integrated subject at the junior Secondary school level. At this level, it is divided into three areas; Home Management, Food and, nutrition, and Clothing and textiles (Okeke, 2009). According to Okeke (2009) the study of clothing and textiles at this level, mainly consists of textiles fibres and fabrics, sewing equipment, garment construction, basic and advanced techniques, pattern drafting, designing, care, maintenance of clothes and wardrobe planning, creative use of resources, consumer education and career opportunities in clothing and textiles. Anyakoha (2004), sees clothing and textile as an aspect of Home economics which prepares individuals for employment opportunities in occupations relating to clothing selection, clothing construction, costume designing, clothing care, craft work as well as clothing economics.

Educational institutions are central and must assume a strategic position in the transmission of effective psychomotor clothing and textiles skills in students through regular practice. These institutions are expected to bring out the desirable skills in students that will sustain them in life. This is because, the ultimate aim of education is to provide the necessary population orientation and man-power for scientific and technological development of a nation (Nwangwu 2009). To realize this objective, it is required that clothing and textile teachers acquire professional competencies that will adequately equip the student with

knowledge and skills to perform well in cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. However, it is discovered that most graduates of Home economics lack 'the skills knowledge in clothing and textile education (Okeke, 2009). It is still one of the neglected areas of Home economics.

It is against this background that this paper focuses *on the importance of clothing and textile practical teaching as a prerequisite' to, psychomotor skill development. Appropriate skills needed in various area of clothing and textiles are explored. Problems and strategies for improved professional competencies are equally highlighted.

The Importance of Clothing and Textile Practical Skill in Teaching Learning Process

Home economics involves a lot of practical in various areas of the programme which includes Home management, food and nutrition and clothing and textile. Skill training is the central focus of practical work "in the laboratory. Clothing and textile teacher need to be adequately skilled to enable them impart same in students. Oladele (2013) aptly stated the merits of teaching of Home economics practical skills as;

- i. Providing chances for students to be directly involved in practicing theoretical knowledge, thereby increasing the mastery of knowledge acquired;
- ii. Enabling students to develop imaginative thinking that can enhance their creativity potentials;
- iii. Exposing students to wide variety of equipment and process that can enable them develop imaginative thinking thereby enabling their creativity potential;
- iv. Exposure of students to equipment and processes will enable them to discover relevant new ideas and techniques;
- v. Assisting students to exploit locally available resources mid utilize them to meet developmental needs of the nation and;
- vi. Enabling teachers to assess student abilities and determine areas of correction and reinforcement.

The importance and need for clothing and textile teachers to be adequately equipped with the right competencies cannot be overemphasized. If teachers are well equipped with the required skills, conducive environment to work in, with adequate and functional equipment, it will enhance their class practical demonstrations. This will in turn helps in equipping students with and develops in them creativity practice and artistic abilities for self-employment. Practical instructions teach beneficiaries on how to plan, choose, and maintain good clothing (Olaitan 2002). Clothing and textile as a skill-oriented course helps to equip individuals with saleable skills needed for self-reliance (Njoku, 2002).

The extent to which the rate of learning among students or learners generally can be accelerated depends often on the teaching devices available at his/her disposal (Anozie and Okoli. 2003). The abilities and performance of students in clothing and textiles to a great extent depend on how effective the teacher is able to teach the course content. The achievement of these depend on the human and" material resources available and implementation strategies employed (Njoku, 2002). The human resources are the teachers, students, non-teaching staff and" members of the community. Material resources on the other hand include, school buildings, classrooms, workshops/laboratories, machines, equipment tools and-furniture.

Modification for the Improvement of Psychomotor Skills by Clothing and Textile Teachers

Need according to Adedoja (2008) refers to imbalance, lack of adjustment or gap between the present situation and a new or changed set of conditions assumed to be required and more desirable. Need assessment is a data gathering and analysis procedure for providing information for programme evaluation and modification (Olaitan and Ali, 1997). They further stated that need assessment is done for various reasons, in the educational setting and for the purpose of identifying different types of needs. One purpose of need assessment among others is to determine the needs of teachers in clothing and textile for additional training.

Reinforcing Psychomotor Skill Of Clothing And Textile Teachers In Nigerian Secondary School

National Policy on Education (NPE) (FRN, 2004) states that for any comprehensive teaching to be considered effective, it must be assessed through the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains. Assessment is judgment about what has been taught of quality, especially, in clothing and textile (Hornby, 2012). There is lack of emphasis on the non-cognitive teaching/learning outcome and this has resulted to the neglect of manipulative skills, attitude and value in Nigeria system of education. Secondary school curriculum in clothing and textile lay much emphasis on skill acquisition in textile fibres and fabrics, sewing equipment, pattern drafting, garment construction and basic advanced techniques, designing, care, maintenance of clothes and wardrobe planning, and creative use of resources. The trainin.2 needs pf.-teachers in these areas are very essential.

OIadele (2013) observes that student at the secondary school level dislike clothing and textiles because teachers lack the skills in teaching the subject areas effectively. There is poor teaching of clothing and textiles at all levels of our school system as a result of lack of facilities and inadequate training of teachers (Anyakoha, 1993). The greatest handicaps in the improvement and expansion of vocational and technical education areas is the acute shortage of qualified teachers, lack of teachers in-service training programme and problem of getting qualified and competent teachers in clothing and textiles.

Reinforcing Psychomotor Skills of Clothing and Textile Teachers

Psychomotor skill possesses in this context is the ability of clothing and textile teachers to plan, organize, direct and control practical activities (Olaitan, 2003). Clothing and Textile teachers in Nigerian secondary schools need to improve their professional competencies in the following-areas;

Textile Fabrics and Fabrics

Fibre is known as the smallest unit of a fabric and that fabric results when fibres are twisted into yarns and then made into cloth (Anyakoha and Eluwa. 2004). Knowledge of different fibres (natural and man-made), their characteristics, properties and process of manufacture are essential skills required by the teachers.

Sewing Equipment and Tools

Maintenance of material resources such as selection, types, safe, use and care of the machine and its attachments as well as tools and equipment are essential in enhancing their durability. Clothing and textile equipment are the starting point of teachers in sewing learning activities. These equipment include sewing machines, pins, hand sewing needles, cutting tools; measuring tools, marking tools pleating machines, pattern papers processing tools, over locker, clearing equipment and so on.

Pattern Drafting

Mba, Orhewere and Osifeso (2001) define pattern drafting as a procedure of a pattern development whereby a tailor or designer uses a detailed pattern. The techniques include; modeling, knock-off design, modifying from a set of patterns (grading), the computer aided design and the flat pattern methods (Igbo and Iloeje, 2003). The skills needed by teachers include; drafting of basic blocks e.g bodice, skirt and sleeves; arid adaptation and use of commercial patterns. Skill is required in free-hand cutting (principles and practice) as well as alteration for fit and style.

Garment Construction

The process of garment construction involves skills in measuring body with tape, and transferred to paper or commercial pattern (Okeke, 2009). The skills required by teachers include; identification of figure types for both male and female, measurements, choice of styles for different figures, selection and estimation of fabrics, selection and purchase of materials, process of producing basic stitches, types of

stitches and their uses, processes and their features such as collars, yokes, pockets, and the process of laying and cutting out (West African Examination Council, 2003).

Designing

Design is the general arrangement of different parts of pattern or garment pieces to produce a garment. It is a process of making drawing of styles in dresses or draping materials on a dummy or forms. Designers plan garment and decides on design, draw, select suitable materials or colour scheme, estimates the quantity needed of a fashion design for male or female, and then work out the cost (Okeke. 2009) Okeke (2009) explained further that design-involves attractive combination of elements on fabric which can be applied in a single garment, e.g line, colour, texture, space, shape and form. Teachers must acquire skills needed in elements and- principles of design in clothing construction.

Care and Maintenance of Clothes

Care and maintenance of clothes is a routine inspection for stains, soil, damage of button and button hole, broken zippers; loosen pockets, collar, side clothes, unstitched hole, and so on. Anyakoha and Eluwa (1991) stated that soil and stains can be removed as soon as possible. It also includes daily care of clothing items, making of soaps and detergents, washing clothes by hand and machine, selecting washing and other cleaning agents such as removing stains, repairing or mending clothing items, renovating clothing items and storage. Teachers need skill in doing all of these.

Wardrobe Planning

It is the process of planning for the clothing needs of an individual or the entire family. Wardrobe planning in this context involves grooming, choice of clothes and dress accessories, family resources e.g skills, budgeting. It also involves taking an inventory to help decide which new clothes would make the biggest impact and which one is to add or subtract from the clothing selected. Grooming is described as careful thought and choice in the selection of colour, style, and fabrics in order that they may enhance the good features (Olaitan, 2002). Adequate skills in wardrobe planning will enhance teaching and learning process.

Challenges of Teaching Clothing and Textile Psychomotor Skills in Secondary Schools

There are certain challenges that militate against the teaching of practical skills in clothing and textiles education. They include:

1. Shortage of Qualified Teachers

Olaitan (2002) stated that there are insufficient number of qualified teachers in Home economics with specialization in particular areas and who are adequately trained to teach technical skills. Thus, the regular retraining of teachers is necessary where the pre-service training period is not sufficient to provide the teacher with adequate preparation to handle the technical aspects of the course.

2. Inadequate Laboratory Facilities

Tools, equipment and materials are very essential for acquisition of skills. Well-equipped laboratories enhances the teaching/learning of skilled-oriented disciplines. The present situation of laboratory inadequacies in almost all schools constitute a great difficulty in the teaching of skills effective. Most of the equipment and tools required for the effective teaching and learning do not exist and even when available are in short supply. (Oladokun, 2007).

3. Insufficient funding

Adequate amount of funding is not provided for the effective teaching of Home economics in schools. Olaitan (2002) noted that inadequate funding is a major constraint which can limit the level of teachers and students participation in practical work.

4. Insufficient period for Practicals

The clothing and textile syllabus runs concurrently with other subjects at the secondary school level. Thus, adequate amount of time is not allocated for the teaching of practicals. Consequently, students will not have adequate, opportunity to cover enough ground in practical.

Apart from these constraints, Anozie and Okoli (2003) highlighted the major areas of difficulty in the teaching of clothing and textiles as follows:

1. Development of pattern using different methods e.g flat, modeling and draping techniques.
2. Construction and adaptation of basic pattern to fit body measurement
3. Developing styles from basic pattern.
4. Use of free hand cutting and draping techniques,
5. Advanced techniques in clothing.
6. Preparing chemicals for laundry,
7. Craftwork e.g quilting, patchwork etc.

Strategies for the Improvement of Psychomotor skills of Clothing and Textile Teachers

Effective teaching is a function of what to teach, how to teach, to whom it will be taught and the condition under which it will be taught. In order to improve the skills of clothing and textile teachers, the following strategies can be useful:

Pragmatic Teachers Retraining Programmes

Retraining of clothing and textile teachers will help to upgrade their knowledge and skills. This can be through short or long term exposure to specific areas that are more difficult and involving. The benefits of retraining includes;

- I. Upgrading the knowledge and skills of the teachers.
- II. Creating opportunity for teachers to meet experts in the field which be able interact with professional colleagues who can be sources of information needed in teaching/learning of clothing and textiles. The retraining programme could be through in-service training programme, Sandwich programme, workshops, conferences and seminary.

Well - Planned Curriculum

Clothing and textiles Curriculum should be well planned with greater emphasis on technical skills, well of defined objectives and content elements.

Provision of Adequate Facilities

Acquisition of technical skills in clothing and textiles is a function of adequate and functional equipment and facilities. This implies that laboratories, tools and materials of various types must not only be available in the right quantity but must also be functional. This will promote and enhance teaching and learning process. Availability and adequacy of facilities in the teaching and learning: of clothing and textiles practical will stimulate proper Importation of knowledge and recipients (students) will be equipped with useful skills for productive work (Olaitan, 2002),

Funding of Practicals

Skill acquisition requires the use of various materials for both teachers and students. The materials required for clothing and textiles practicals require funds. It is sad to note that government do not provide enough funds for students or teachers' demonstration practicals. Hence, students sometimes fail to gain the required skills for lack of fund or when they are unable to contribute enough money for their practicals (Lemchi2001).

Qualified Teachers

The teaching of clothing and textiles practicals requires proficiency for effective transfer of skills. A clothing and textiles teacher who is not proficient in garment construction, will find it difficult to impart the right skills in students. Such teachers may neglect the practical aspects or carry them out shabbily to the disadvantage of the students.

Students' Participation in Preliminary Practical Work.

Careful planning of instruction based on the specific objectives is necessary. There is need to involve students in the planning process. A preview of the working principles of various tools and materials as well as a discussion of the intended skills and expected outcomes of the practicals are essential in stimulating students interest towards full participation (Badmus, 1992),

Conclusions

Adequate exposure of clothing and textiles teachers to practical knowledge is crucial in enhancing teaching and learning process. Teachers practical proficiency and methods of lesson delivery will assist learners acquire practical skills, problem-solving and self-reliant attitudes for occupational roles. Provision of the right kind of environment and resources (material and human) for meaningful transmission of skill in students by clothing and textiles teachers at secondary school level of education, are necessary for successful implementation of any skill-oriented course. By so doing, teachers will be able and capable of imparting the required skills, knowledge and attitudes in their students for self employment and self-reliance.

Recommendations

On the basis of the identified problems in the teaching and learning of practical skills, the following recommendations are advanced:

1. Long or short-term in-service re-training inform of regular sandwich school training programmes, should be regularly organized for clothing and textile teachers. This will keep them abreast of new knowledge, discoveries and skills in their field.
2. Student teachers should undergo a compulsory students industrial work, experience (SIWES) in clothing and textile establishments. This will expose; student teachers: to more and better equipment and tools than in the school setting which will lead to the improvement of their skills thereby enhancing the teaching capacity of the teachers.
3. Cooperative teaching and learning strategy between the school and clothing and textile establishments can be employed. This gives teachers the opportunity of matching theoretical learning with practice.
4. Clothing and textiles is a science course, therefore incentives inform of monthly science allowance can be given to the teachers handling clothing and textiles to arouse their interest

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Reinforcing Psychomotor Skill Of Clothing And Textile Teachers In Nigerian Secondary School

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