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# GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING IN APPRENTICESHIP AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

BY

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## Introduction

There is the general awareness of the technological changes taking place in present day Nigeria and the implications for the availability of personnel at the intermediate manpower level for the various technical and non-technical occupations now emerging.

To recruit, maintain and keep people in the Nation-wide Apprenticeship Scheme and Vocational Training Center to be established in the country, efforts would need to be made to attract the "would be" personnel at this very much needed level. Provisions would also need to be made to resolve difficulties encountered while in training, the apprentice would need to see prospects in the training itself. To achieve these goals, Guidance and Counselling in Apprenticeship and Vocational Training needs to be given its due consideration.

## Meaning of the terms - Guidance and Counselling

Guidance, as a concept has been defined in many ways and the term (is even) misleading to lay persons who see it mainly as an effort to guide direct and advice. Conceptually, Arbuckle (1966) Peter and Farwell (1967) saw guidance as denoting the utilization of a point of view in order to help an individual. As an educational construct, it refers to the provision of experiences that help pupils to understand themselves while as a service it refers to procedures and processes organized to help the individual. Guidance may thus be broadly conceived as a process of helping an individual to understand himself and his world. It involves a series of steps or actions to assist, and aid the individual, in eliminating and ameliorating any difficulty as he progresses towards a goal.

The term "Counselling" on the other hand, has also being applied to a wide range of activities designed to aid individuals in solving problems. Counselling may simply be defined as a learning process in which the individual learns about himself and his interpersonal relationships. Gustad (1953) arrived at the following composite definition that counselling is a learning oriented process, carried on in a simple, one-to-one social environment, in which the counsellor, professionally competent in relevant psychological skills and knowledge, seeks to assist the client by methods appropriate to the latter's needs.

Regardless of any controversy over the label, it could be observed that Guidance Services in Schools today seem to be organized around the following:

1. *Appraisal*:— collection and analysis of various data on the individual for the purpose of understanding the individual and assisting the individual to understand himself.
2. *Information*: provision of educational, vocational and social - personal informations to the students to enable them make better choices and decisions.
3. *Counselling*: facilitation of self understanding though a dyadic or group relationship.
4. *Planning, Placement and Follow-Up*: promoting the vocational development of the student and aiding him in his selection of jobs.

Shertzer and stone (1971) observed that a statement of specific counselling purposes may not be universally acceptable to all counsellors. For each counsellor, the purpose of counselling reflects his training, value system, perception of role and the needs of the individual being helped. Nevertheless, it is however commonly agreed that the goal of counselling is to effect changes in behaviour which will in turn permit the recipient to live a more productive and self - satisfying life.

The summary of purposes of school counselling from literature review seem to suggest the following:

- 1) helping counselees to obtain information to make decisions, to gain acceptance or clarification of certain personal characteristics that may interfere with, or related to, making decisions.
- 2) assisting counselees to explore, understand and accept themselves so that they can become self directing individuals.
- 3) helping counselees learn what is needed to solve their various problems.
- 4) helping the counselees achieve integration, adjustment and identification with others.

#### Emphasis Placed on Guidance and Counselling in the Nigerian Educational System.

The need for a Guidance Counsellor in the school system has long been recognized in other countries. Teachers, for a variety of reasons, cannot cope with the personal problems of the students in addition to their acade-

mic roles. Most parents also see the need to augment their roles with that of a professional helper, to avoid the pitfalls of growing up. School administrators are also recognizing the needs to decrease maladaptive behaviour while increasing proper behaviour. Pupils themselves, want to live a "worth-while" life. All these seem to suggest the need for effective guidance and counselling in our schools. Today's students, need better counselling to deal with an increasingly complex occupational world and with rapid social change.

Nigeria, in the last two decades has witnessed so many changes in many aspects, some of which have been technological, economical and educational in nature. The economic growth in the country requires occupational specialisation, more jobs are becoming available from which choices have to be made, there is also increase in the number of higher institutions, and technical schools. The universal primary education and the pursuit of free education in some states have implications for the individual and the need for Guidance and Counselling is becoming increasingly important in helping the individual understand himself and adjust to his changing environment.

Despite the fact that the role of Guidance and Counselling has long been recognized by some educators, such as Fafunwa (1969) who remarked:

"When I was in school, we never had such people (Career Masters) around and how I wish we had! may be I would have succeeded better in life...", Guidance and Counselling in Nigeria still had some difficulties inspite of the visible and expressed need for such services. Guidance and Counselling up till middle 70s has not made much impact in the Nigerian School System as observed by Makinde and Gesinde (1975) and Akinboye (1979). However, one may take consolation from the fact that courses are now being offered in Guidance and Counselling in some of the Nigerian Universities, while the Federal Government has also started Guidance and Counselling Units.

Equally frustrating to some of the young graduates in Guidance and Counselling is the resistance of Nigerians to Counselling programmes as observed by Ekpenyong (1970) Gesinde (1976). The continued realization of the importance of Guidance and Counselling in the Nigerian School System seem to have necessitated the pronouncement by the Federal Government in the 1977 National Policy on Education, page 30 stated thus:

In view of the apparent ignorance of many young people about career prospects, and in view of personality maladjustment among school children, career officers and counsellors will be appointed in post primary institutions. Since qualified personnel in this category is scarce, Government will continue to make provision for the training of interested teachers in Guidance and Counselling. Guidance and Counselling will feature in teacher education programmes.

A handful of Guidance Counsellors are now visible in some of our institutions and whereas Guidance and Counselling is a full time job in itself, the few Counsellors in our schools today still teach in addition to counselling students thus limiting the time available for Counselling. The observed inadequacy of Guidance Counsellors even at the secondary school level, seems to serve as an indication of what to expect at the other levels of training such as the Apprenticeship and Vocational Training Scheme.

### **The Place or Relevance of Guidance and Counselling in Apprenticeship and Vocational Training.**

Guidance and Counselling should not be viewed as a service meant for students in the secondary schools or universities only. It is a service that should permeate every educational level. Perhaps further inference could also be drawn from the 1977 National Policy on Education, page 9, which stated thus:

A number of teachers are now undergoing in-service training in the areas of guidance and more will be trained in the future to assist in directing technical graduates to the firms and industries where they are more needed. Colleges of technology, polytechnics and Vocational Schools will be required to have placement officers on their staff. In addition, they will have career officers to advice trainees on suitable areas of choice taking into consideration their aptitudes.

This reference appears to summarize the need and relevance of Guidance and Counselling in providing the needed personnel in the Technical, Apprenticeship and Vocational Training as well. However, there are other important tasks to be carried out to make the apprenticeship and vocational training scheme a success, some of these include:

- a) recruiting prospective apprentices
- b) sustaining the apprentices recruited
- c) selective placement after completion of training.

Whereas both apprenticeship training and university education are both needed in our national economy today, some members of the Nigerian Community still view vocational training centres as a place for would be high school drop - outs. We are also sometimes, unwilling to accept the fact that not all students can enter the university or that not all students could benefit from a university education. Some parents, in addition, in an attempt to make their children have a "better" education than theirs often discourage their children from benefiting from apprenticeship and vocational training which are sometimes considered less desirable while preferences are usually expressed in Law, medicine, engineering and the like. Parents undoubtedly are one of the primary groups influencing children's educational and occupa-

tional aspirations but the question is, Are all parents capable to perform the essential role of providing adequate occupational information to their children?

Thus, one very important function Guidance and Counselling can play in Apprenticeship and Vocational Training is to motivate many young persons who are being discouraged by many factors in the society, to undertake the training programme. The provision of apprentice - ship and vocational training information program to parents, teachers and the prospective students themselves could also make them better informed about the programme. Such information may include:

- a) requirements for entrance
- b) duties to be performed while in apprentice-ship and vocational training
- c) condition of work while in training
- d) advancement pattern existing (if any) while in training
- e) predicted supply and demand for such workers in the labour market
- f) length of training and the like.

Such apprentice - ship and vocational training guidance information must be made readily available not only to high school graduates but also to class three and four secondary school students and those about to leave elementary schools. The Guidance Counsellor, through appraisal, making use of instruments such as Bakare's Motivation for Occupational Preference Scale (1977) or the Vocational Interest Inventory (1977) may be able to identify those who feel more comfortable with working with their hands and they could be encouraged to undertake apprenticeship and vocational training. In addition, any apprenticeship guidance information compiled should enumerate some of the general capacities that could help the prospective apprentice and vocational trainees in fulfilling their roles such as mechanical drawings, blue print, drafting elementary knowledge of mathematics, physics, chemistry, wood work, ability to work with others etc.

After the successful recruitment, another essential task, is sustaining the apprentice or trainee, in the programme. Any training must provide a source of motivation, pride, self confidence and self - respect to the trainee. The trainees admitted for apprenticeship and vocational training would, in addition, need to have a sense of achievement upon the completion of their training. The provision of Guidance and Counselling Services becomes essential in this regard, as some of the functions of the vocational counsellor are helping the individual to make the optimum use of his potentials in work, assisting the individual to get a measure of satisfaction from his job and life as possible and maximizing his opportunity to be productive.

Realizing the attitudes of some of our people in general towards the scheme in apprenticeship and vocational training as a place for the less academic and not "very productive" individuals, it becomes important not only to educate the masses as to the need of this scheme, but also to make efforts to retain those trainees admitted.

The trainees have some needs to be satisfied and their commitment to the programme sometimes depend not only on their social needs and appropriate conditions while undergoing apprenticeship or vocational training but also on psychological factors, as their interests may dwindle if they are frustrated. The provision of Guidance and Counselling to the students could help minimize some of their psychological frustrations as they emerge.

On completion of the apprentice - ship and vocational training, the students would also need informations about the labour market. Guidance and Counselling can be helpful in this regard by interviewing the students and obtaining the relevant data on them that would help in appropriate placement in the labour market.

### Impact on Programme Effectiveness

Various methods have been suggested to increase the motivation, satisfaction and performance of people at work in general. Some of these suggested methods are equally applicable to participants in training such as the apprentice-ship and vocational training: In the first instance, it is usually assumed that increasing worker's participation in decision making could give workers a sense of commitment and more involvement in the organization. Similarly, it may be assumed that involving the trainees in the assessment of their programme to a reasonable degree, that is, to voice any short - coming in the programme as perceived by them, could have some positive effect on the effectiveness of the training itself.

Intrinsic motivation has also be observed by some, to develop, to the extent that the outcomes depend on the individual's own efforts and initiatives. To promote effectiveness of the programme, flexibility may need to be built in the training to allow for vertical growth and changes through the provision of a variety of task operations to make the training more tolerable.

To make the Nation-wide Apprentice-ship Scheme and Vocational Training Centre effective, efforts would need to be made to identify and encourage suitable students who will benefit from the training and the provision of adequate apprenticeship and vocational training information is essential. The resolution of any of the personal or social psychological problem of the student, emerging during training, needs to be attended to. If it is assumed that the individual who understands himself and his world will become more effective and more productive, then the guidance and counselling of the students while in training should not be overlooked.

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