

REAPPRAISING FUNCTIONAL EDUCATION THROUGH VOCATIONAL AND EDUCATIONAL GUIDANCE FOR SELF RELIANCE

Ominyi Gabriel Agi and Daniel Onyilo Ejembi

Abstract

Education is functional when the needs of the individual are the most important variable for consideration in the course of educating that individual. Guidance and Counseling services are catalyst towards the attainment of the objective of education. This paper takes a courteous look at the concept and principles of functionality of education. It equally highlights the academic, vocational and personal social service in Guidance and Counseling as avenue for achieving functional education. A review of the national policy on education and giving adequate attention to guidance and counseling service in schools and suggestions, were proffered.

Introduction

Conceptual Clarifications

Education has always been indisputably perceived as the cornerstone for development in an individual and the society at large. Pestalozzi (1746) saw education as the reformation of the society and the improvement of society. This paper discusses how functional education can be acquired through the services of guidance and counseling. Therefore, the areas covered in this paper include the following:

- The Concept of Functionality of Education
- Principles of Functionality of Education
- The Concept of Guidance and Counseling
- Guidance and Counseling as a veritable tool for Functional Education in Nigeria
- Recommendations and Conclusions

Functional Education

According to Zeilberger (1999), the Americans and the Germans view functional education as education that comes spontaneously from the influence of the environment. That is, functional education is directed towards solving the problems of the immediate environment. Zeilberger went further to say that in Western Europe, it refers to the education that come from the child's needs and uses the child's interest as a mechanism for activating the child towards deliberate activities. In functional education, the subject matter to be taught is considered according to the importance in the life of the learner in childhood and adulthood. Functional education within these settings is therefore a function of the learner's environment, cultural and developmental variables.

Functional education therefore is that education which is geared towards the child's interest, abilities and overall developmental processes. It emphasizes skill acquisition which makes the receiver productive and self reliant. It is the education that gives empowerment for the management of an individual's affair in the context of the education received. The end result is an educated personality who is economically efficient, vocationally competent and an embodiment of dignity of labour.

Principles of Functional Education

Zerlberger (1999) outlined the following as principles of functional education:

1. The child has to be judged from the standpoint of his own worldview and described in terms of concept drawn from the child's experience and to teach him according to such criteria.
2. Functional education is based on the natural need of the child to enquire and to know, to observe and to work and especially to play.
3. The child has to be in the center of curriculum that will no longer be made according to the principles exterior to the child.
4. The educator should get to know the interest and the changes that will take place as the child grows up physically and emotionally, hence, teaching should be adapted to the needs of the child.
5. Demands should not be from the child for an action which takes after natural needs or aspirations.
6. Education will develop in the child; the intellectual and moral abilities rather than force-feeding the child with many facts. That are quickly forgotten or are accumulated in the memory like foreign substance without any connection to the life of the learner.
7. The teacher must be prepared with subjects that will introduce the child to the world of work.
8. The teacher should stimulate moral and spiritual needs, cooperate with his students rather than lecturing them. They are to be aided to acquire knowledge through self-study and personal experience. The main thrust of his lesson should be creating enthusiasm rather than scholarship.

Nwoye (1990), defined guidance as the utilization of a point of view in order to help an individual. That is, it connotes acting as a pathfinder to an individual towards decision-making. Shertzer and Stone (1976) in their own contributions define Guidance and counseling as a

process of helping individuals to understand themselves and their world and the relationship between the two. In the contribution of Makinde (1983), guidance as a service is designed to help an individual analyze himself by relating his capabilities, achievements, interests and mode of adjustment what new decisions he has made or has to make. Lewis (1970) defined counseling as

A process by which a troubled person (the client) is helped to feel and behave in a more personally satisfying manner through interaction with an uninvolved person (counselor) who provides information and reactions which stimulates the client to develop behaviours which enable him to deal more effectively with himself and his environment (P200)

Dusytin and George (1973) defined counseling as a learning process designed to increase adaptive behaviour and to decrease maladaptive behaviour. The hallmark of these definitions is that Guidance and Counseling services are academic programmes which are designed to help individuals achieve self-realization, self-development and self-actualization.

Guidance and Counseling as an Essential Tool for Functional Education

The main focus of guidance and counseling is the development of the total personality of the individual taking cognizance of the needs, interest, abilities and aspirations of the child which is equally the main thrust of functional education. The National Policy of Education (1981) which should have provided bedrock for the functionality of education, has not been realistic. Graduates are churned out every year as job-seekers and not creators as intended by the National Policy on

Reappraising Functional Education Through Vocational And Educational Guidance For Self Reliance

Education. For now, the National Policy on Education is a mere paper-Tiger. The labour market is saturated with prospective job applicants due to the dysfunctional nature of the education system. Guidance and Counseling service is a veritable tool for functional education in Nigeria. Its services provide quintessential platform for following services based on the Nigerian philosophies contained in a compendium called national policy on education (NPE, 1981). There is an urgent need to harmonize the Nigerian philosophy with Nigerian's national objectives. To do this, quality of instruction should be geared towards self-realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards socio-cultural, economic, political, scientific and technological progress (NPE, 1981).

Guidance services in schools should be geared towards identification of problems in children which may be corrected to enable the child function at his full potentiality.

- To prevent abnormalities in normal growth and development of the child
- To motivate the child to keep himself in an optimal state of mind, soul, spirit and body,
- To evaluate the whole child in relation to his own growth and progress of other children in his own peer group.

The main reasons for provision of guidance in secondary school level are: to stipulate the range of courses that students to offer, orient students to their new environment, help students to choose subjects, rendering appraisal services, education services, counseling services, information and vocational services. These help students to adjust emotionally and acquire the knowledge of which the students are, knowledge of the world of work they would fit into and the matching of the persons with the jobs (Okeke, 1991)

Objective of Vocational Guidance in Schools

Vocational Guidance: To most Nigerians, education is a means to an end. It is the preparation of a child towards the world of work. That is why a struggling parent does every thing possible to ensure the graduation of the child from the University. The belief is that by the time this child graduates, he becomes a reasonable source of sustenance for the family. The story has however changed as a result of the dysfunctionality in the Nigerian educational system.

Napier (1972) defined vocational guidance as the process by which all the various factors affecting individual's occupational choices are sorted out weighted and brought into focus. The young person is helped to make his choice in the full knowledge of the facts about his own potential for them. In vocational guidance an individual is able to match his qualities and socio-cultural milieu with suitable employment opportunities. That is, an individual is groomed to the world of work in relation to the individual's potentialities. This could be through the channel of career talks, field trips, working experience, occupational files, audio-visual aids and career information. Okonkwo (1999) highlighted the following as the objectives of vocational guidance in schools:-

- To increase abilities, interests, values and other personality traits distinct from those of others and to use the understanding to identify occupational areas, which may be more appropriate.
- To aid students develop an acceptable self-image and reactive attitude to school achievement as undisputable variables to vocations.
- To inculcate in them the dignity of labour
- To acquaint them with various occupations available

- Making students to take appropriate subjects at the secondary school that are in congruence with their potentials and interests.
- Through vocational guidance occupational skills are developed vocational guidance occupational skills are developed for occupational conferences for self reliance

Summarily, through vocational guidance, potentials are properly channeled, through the various testing and non-testing techniques available in Guidance and counseling, such as personality questionnaire and the vocational interest inventory. Through these instruments, individual's personality can be discovered in relation to the most congruent vocation. It is really true that when the right vocational choice is made, human capacity is magnified. There lead to self-realization and self actualization, for self reliance. Education now becomes more useful and self-sustaining, functional through guidance and counseling .

Functional Education Through Educational Guidance

Shertzer and Stone (1976) defined educational guidance as the help given to pupils individually or in groups to help them function more effectively in their school activities, that is, every organized assistance given to the child will culminate in the full realization of the educational programmes of the child. The child is able to pursue the right type of education that is of immense value to the child. Ipaye (1986) summarized that educational guidance helps to remove or reduce strategies militating against students' academic performance. That is, through the medium of educational information, subject combination, careers and academic counseling are provided. Education cannot be functional when wrong subjects are chosen, no information about admission requirements, which institutions to go and what course to pursue. Added to these is the functional handicap of inadequate reading habits

culminating in poor performance. All these areas can be addressed either by individual or group counseling that eventually bring about functional education.

Functional Education through Personal-Social Guidance:

Personal –social guidance can also be employed to enhance functional education. Personal-social guidance deals with self-interest and the understanding of others especially the significant ones.

As Norris, Zeran, Hatch and Engek (1976) opined: social information is valid and useable data about the opportunities and influence of the human and physical environment which bear on personal and interpersonal relations. It is that information about human beings, which will help a student to understand himself better and to improve his relations with others. Included but not constituting the whole are such broad areas of information, as understanding self and getting along with others as well as such specific areas as boy/girls relations, manners and etiquette, leisure time activities, personal appearance, social skills, home and family relationship, financial planning and healthy living (p 285).

According to them, this information may lead to:-

- Achieving self-insight and understanding for self actualization
- Achieving mature relationships with the same and the opposite sex
- Understanding masculine and female roles
- Developing healthy personalities
- Understanding one's behaviour and one's characters
- Understanding how one is different from others and in what ways one is like others.

Reappraising Functional Education Through Vocational And Educational Guidance For Self Reliance

- Adjusting, accepting and understanding home environmental family members and parental conditions
- Understanding others behaviour and their aspirations

Personal-social guidance enables the individual to be empowered to be able to effectively maintain cordial interpersonal relationship with other people. An individual who is engrossed with personality problems cannot be educationally functional. An unstable personality who has no insight about him or her self cannot be functional. Such as individual needs information for a turn around which personal social guidance offers. It could be through series of behaviour modification programmes in counseling like modeling, Mal-adjustment could also be corrected through information obtained from individual and group counseling. It is only when an educated individual is properly adjusted that such individual could think of how to make education functional. Trained counselors who are supposed to facilitate these services in the Nigerian schools are made to teach. They are not recognized in the school settings. They are ridiculously made junior/senior secondary school coordinators who merely compile continuous assessments scores. They are not only denied working tools but equally denied an enabling working environment. This has greatly affected the functionality of Nigerian educational system.

Summary and Conclusions

This paper discussed the concept of functional education, principles of functionality of education, the concept of guidance and counseling, how guidance and counseling can be used as a veritable tool to achieve functional education. The education, the vocational and personal-social guidance services are geared towards the total development of an individual needs in relation to abilities, interest, aspirations and physical environment. It is also discovered in this write up

how guidance service can bring about functional education for self actualization.

Recommendations

- I. Every Policy statement made in the National Policy of Education should be faithfully implemented by the various organs and agencies responsible for such implementation. Adequate sanctions should be metred to defaulting organs or agencies.
- II. There is need to train more teachers in technical education. For now, there are no enough teachers for technical education in schools. Education can not be functional without the acquisition of skills that technical teachers provide.
- III. Guidance Counselors are needed in schools. They should not be made to teach as they are made to do now, so that they can provide the needed services for functional education.
- IV. The government should stop undue politicization of educational policies. They should be honest in dealing with them thereby, motivating them for functionality and self reliance.

References

- Claparede, D. (1948). *Functional educational* FranceL Neufchatels Publishers
- Dustin, R & George, R. (1973). *Action counseling for behaviour change*. New York: Intext Educational Publishers.
- Federal Republic of Nigeria (1981). *The national policy on education*, Lagos: Fed min of information.
- Ipaye, T. (1990) .*Guidance and counseling*. Lfe: Unife Press.

Ominyi Gabriel Agi and Daniel Onyilo Ejembi

- Lewis, C. (1990). *The psychology of counseling*. New York: Rinehart and Winston.
- Makinde, O. (1983). *Fundamentals of guidance and Counseling*. London: Macmillan Publishers.
- Norris, W. Zevan, F. Hatch, R. & Engelkes, J. (1972). *The information service on Guidance*. Chicago: Rand MC Nally and Compan6y.
- Nwoye, A. (1990). *Counseling psychology for Africa*. Jos: Fab educational books (Nig.) Ltd.
- Okeke B.A (1996). *Principles of guidance and Counseling*. An outline for beginners. New Havan Enugu: CECTA (Nig.) Limited. Houaton, Mifflin groups of company.
- Okonkwo, O. (1999). *Guidance and Counseling: A New perspective*. Onitsha: West and Solomon Publishing Limited.
- Shertzer, B. & Stone, C. (1976). *Fundamentals of guidance, 3rs Edition* Boston:
- Warters, E. (1976). *The school personnel work today*. New York: MC Graw Hill Book Company.
- Zeilberger, D. (199). *Functional educational*. Jerusalem, Israel: Ministry of education Press.
- Ominyi Gabriel Agi
Integrated Science Department,
College of Education, Oju.***
- Daniel Onyilo Ejembi
Nigerian Languages and Culture,
College of Education, Oju.***