

# JOINT EFFORT OF THE COUNSELOR AND OTHER MEMBERS OF THE SCHOOL FAMILY FOR QUALITY EDUCATION

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## **Abstract**

Education is regarded as an essential ingredient of National development. The paper noted the need for collaborative effort of the counselor and other personnels in the school for the achievement of quality education. The functions of the school counselor was highlighted to x-ray the need for practical collaboration of the counselor and other school staff. Some strategies for enhancing cooperation among the various staff in the school was recommended among which are organizing teachers forum, publications meeting, organization of parents forum, counseling committee and organization of seminars and workshops. The paper noted that no single individual can carry out all the functions in the school and therefore, called for a collaborative effort between the members of the school family.

## **Introduction**

Education is regarded as the bedrock of national development and is the greatest asset a nation can give to her citizens. Ipaye (1995), noted that in Nigeria, education is the biggest industry which provides for the needs of millions of students, teachers, school administrators and other non teaching staff. Education being a potent factor of national development should be accorded necessary attention in terms of provision of human and material resources. In other words, the human resources such as different groups of personnel within the school setting need to work together to achieve common educational objectives. This is necessary because education is a social process with special objectives and this requires a collaborative effort of all concerned with the education of the child.

Allege (1995), observed that for the school to achieve its objectives, the different school workers should play complimentary roles. This is because no individual can carry out the responsibilities of educating a child alone. So there is need for cooperation among the various staff in order to work in harmony and ensure quality education for the students.

It is pursuance of quality education that the 6-3-3-4 spelt out the need for guidance and counseling Adeoye (1988), described guidance and counseling as a form of assistance provided in a school, where other groups of personnel exist with the aim of assisting students to grow into maturity through personal development effort. In order to provide qualitative education and achieve educational objectives, different group of personnel within the school like the principal, the vice principals, the teachers, the counselors etc. are expected to work hand in hand in order to bring up the child academically and morally. Umo (1987), noted that the high rate of Maladjusted behaviour among students e.g. cultism, examination malpractices, drug and sex abuse, and mass failure call for urgent collaborative efforts, among different group of personnel in Nigeria secondary schools.

## **Functions of the School Counselor**

For a clear understanding of the need for practical collaboration of the counselor and other school personnel, there is need to see the roles which the counselor performs in the school. Makinde (1988), noted that the counselor has the following functions to perform

### **1. Counseling**

The counselor helps the students through counseling relationships to understand themselves in relation to their world, overcome, cope with or prevent problems; develop proper decision-making skills.

### **2. Appraisal**

He plays a leading role in students' appraisal programme by coordinating the accumulation and use of meaningful information about each student. He also interprets information about students relates them to the students themselves, to their parents, to teachers and to others who are professionally concerned. Through appraisal programmes he can identify students with special abilities or needs.

### **3. Information Collections and Dissemination**

The school counselor collects and disseminated vital information to students and parents on school subjects and courses; opportunities for further studies, careers and career training, opportunities within the locality as well as other social or recreational facilities in the locality

### **4. Referral Work**

Because there are limits to the time and skills available to the counselor and because there is limited role expectation for the counselor, referral to other individuals and agencies becomes a necessary part of his functions. These referrals may be made to other specialist like teachers, doctors, dentists, etc. he liaises with such referral agents for co-operation and makes students and parents to be aware of such services.

### **5. Educational and Occupational Planning**

Here, he assists the parents and students to relate the students' interests, aptitudes and abilities to current and future educational and occupational opportunities and requirement, bearing in mind long-range educational plans and choices. Helps students and parents in

understanding procedures for making applications and planning for financing the students' educational goals beyond secondary school level. He equally consults with school administrators and members of the school departments relative to the curriculum offerings which will meet the abilities, interest, and needs of the students.

### **6. Placement**

Through the use of the individual and the information services, the counselor assumes some responsibilities for placement of students by;

- Planning with teachers and administrators for the grouping and scheduling of pupils.
- Helping pupils to make appropriate choices of school programmes and to develop long range plans of study.
- Helping them to make the successful transition from one school level to another, from one school to another and from school to employment.
- Aid college and university entrance.

### **7. Parent Help**

The counselor holds conferences with parents and acts as a resource person on the growth and development of their children. He also interprets the guidance programmes in the school to parents as well as providing them with information about educational occupational opportunities and requirements for their children. He helps them to have realistic perception of their children's aptitudes, abilities, interests etc. for better planning of their children's educational and occupational programmes.

### **8 Staff Consulting**

It is expected that the school counselor will work closely with administrative and teaching staff to the end that all school resources will be wisely used. In doing so, he may share and interpret students data with them with due regard to confidentiality assist teachers to secure

materials and develop procedures for a variety of classroom group guidance experiences; helps them to identify students with special needs and problems as well as helping teachers to participate in in-service training programmes.

### **9. Public Relations**

The school counselor will need to be continuously involved in interpreting the guidance programme of the school to the community. This, he may do through publications, speaking engagements and selected use of mass media community heads, church leaders, PTA and town criers. In his public relations functions, the counselor interprets the character of the schools to those responsible for curriculum modification for example the Ministry and Boards of Education.

### **Relationship between the Counselor and other Members of School Personnel**

Adeleke (1989), noted that, in most Nigerian schools that the different groups of people working in the school have different focus or areas of specialization. The above reason has made some of these workers to feel that counseling duties should be means for counselors alone.

The teacher believes that his duty in the school is only teaching, the principal and vice principal believe in administration etc., all things being equal they are expected to help the counselor in his job by referring the maladjusted students to the counselor. The counselor in turn makes references to the above personnels after identification of the child's actual needs. This call for re-orientation of different groups of personnels within the school system. They need to be enlightened on the positive impact of collaboration for the overall achievement of educational objectives. There will be a great improvement in the quality of education in Nigerian secondary, schools if the counselors and other school personnel perform their duties harmoniously.

### **The Counselor and the Principal**

The principal is the father of the school, an authority figure, decision maker, a planner, a motivator and an evaluator in the school administration. What he permits goes on in the school. For either the counselor or principal to discharge his duties in the school successfully, both need the cooperation and support of the other. If they do not cooperate with one another, the school and students in particular will suffer. Iwuama (1999), noted that in our present schools system, the counselor occupies a powerless position while the principal is the power base. He therefore, stated that, the counselor needs the support of (he principal in order to implement his guidance programme in the school and to get staff and students cooperation. The principal should know that the counselor is a partner in the educational progress. The counselor should encourage the principals ideas and help by trying to maintain good relationship at all times.

### **The Counselor and the Vice Principal**

The vice principal plays an important role in the day-to-day administration of the school. He is second in command in the administration of the school, he plays the role of the principal when the principal is not around and so there is need for cooperation within the schools counselor and the vice principal for the smooth running of counseling programmes

### **Counselor and Teachers**

The teacher comprise of the heads of departments, subject teachers and form teachers. The primary assignment of the teachers of which is of trained for is teaching. Both the teacher and counselor have similar goals of maximization of students' academic and moral growth in the school. The concern of the counselor is to facilitate personal growth in students, so that they are better and able to take advantage of what they teachers have to offer. The counselor and teachers should develop a healthy respect for each other's strength with a conscious effort to minimize each other's shortcoming.

### **The Counselor and the Parents**

Parents are very much interested in and anxious about the wholesome development of their children mentally, physically, emotionally, socially and morally. They have common goals with both counselors and teachers as far as the welfare and development of the children are concerned. The counselor does the following;

- b) Inviting and involving parents in school guidance seminars, workshops, conferences, career weeks day (s) etc.
- c) Asking parents to observe their children at home and in the community and make reports of their observations to counselors
- d) Seeking the opinion of parents in certain vital issues that concern their children.
- e) Assigning specific roles to parents in some guidance activities such as publicizing guidance programmes.

### **The School Health Team**

The school health team is made up of the school nurses, physicians, dentist and psychiatrist. In Nigeria, schools rarely have full-time services of any of the above specialists except in the privileged schools where full-time nurses could be employed. The school nurses and other members of the school health team should be responsible for providing basic preventive health services for the students. They can identify children who need special medical treatments or referrals for the alleviation or correction of defects. They screen the child's health history and note health factors such as accidents, operations, impaired hearing, poor eyesight or developmental difficulties.

### **Counselor Student Relationship**

There is need for the counselor and students to have good relationship because the students are the recipients of the counseling services. The counselor should therefore, have the interest of the students in mind. The counselor should create awareness of his

functions to the students by being active in his counseling duties. The counselor should try as much as possible to make students have confidence in him. The counselor is expected to be fond of the students. Denga (1983), noted that, because of the counselors helping relationship in the school, he becomes very popular among students to the extent that most of them prefer to take their problems to the counselor instead of the principals or any other staff. Without establishing good relationship with the students the counselor can do little or nothing.

### **Technique for Establishing Cordial Relationship Among Personnel in the School**

The aim of everybody in the school setting is to provide quality education for the students and to achieve this, there is need for hard work, discipline, dedication to duties as well as cooperation among members of staff irrespective of status. The following recommendations are put up as means of enhancing collaboration among staff members.

#### **1. Organizing Teacher Forum**

The school counselor should organize a forum for teachers and other staff where every member of the staff will be enlightened on the need for cooperation of every member for the achievement of a common goal.

#### **2. Meetings**

There should be regular meetings held among staff to promote positive interaction and exchange of ideas. The issue of common concern should be addressed and each member should be allowed to make contributions.

#### **3. Organization of Parents Form**

Parents should also be involved in the discussion of the welfare of their children during such forum.

#### **4. Counseling Committee**

The school counselor should form an inter guidance and counseling committee for the school. The major aims of the committee should be the provision of adequate guidance services to students to promote cooperation among staff and enhance quality education.

#### **5. Organization of Seminars and Lectures**

The school authorities should organize seminars and lecture from resource persons on the need for healthy relationship among staff. This will provide opportunities to staff to appreciate the duties being performed by different groups of personnel.

#### **Conclusion**

The task of providing qualitative education to students is a collaborative effort between the counselor and other members of the school family. For this reason every personnel regardless of status, interest and affiliation should work together to ensure that students benefit from educational programmes. It is therefore, expected that every personnel involved with the progress of the students interacts more, understand one another and avoid bitterness and disharmony. It is only when different groups within the schools setting collaborate and cooperate that quality education will be achieved.

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