

**Intervention of Guidance and Counselling for Students with Special Needs in
College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State**

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Abstract

The study sought to examine guidance and counseling for students with special needs in college of primary education, Epe, Noforija, Lagos State. It is a non-experimental study, which involving the use of a descriptive survey research design where questionnaire was used to acquire necessary data for the research work. Population comprises of all students with special needs in college of education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos. Random sampling technique was used to select 100 students which were randomly selected as sample for study. Two (2) research questions were raised and answered in this study. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha and data collected were analyzed using percentage. The research findings revealed that guidance counsellors having a prerequisite skills and basic knowledge in counselling and monitoring of students with special needs will go a long way in instilling better learning in their various disciplines. Therefore, it is highly recommended that counseling should be viewed as an integral and comprehensive school programme rather than a peripheral one. Also, to reinforce the place of guidance counsellors in the school system, government should continue to make provision for the training of teachers in guidance and counselling and that government should establish and equip counselling clinics, career resource centers, and information centers; and that school authorities should provide adequate number of guidance counsellors for the institution.

Keywords: Counselling, special need students, intervention, guidance, examine

Introduction

Special need students are extremely heterogeneous group of diverse learners, each with unique learning strengths and needs. Special needs students includes learners with(i) hearing impairments, (ii) visual impairments, (ii) physical impairments, (iv) cerebral palsy, (v) epilepsy, (vi) mental handicaps, (vii) down's syndrome, (viii) autism, (ix) emotional and behavioral disorders, (x) learning disabilities (LD), (xi) speech and language disorders, (xii) multiple handicaps, (xiii) albinism, (xiv) gifted and talented (xv) deaf and blind, (xvi) orphaned, (xvii) bused and other health impairments or combinations thereof (Mauro, 2014; Thomas & Woods, 2003).

Students with special educational needs and disabilities have unique characteristics like autistic spectrum disorders, emotional disturbance and/or behaviour problems that require extra care. Students with speech and language difficulties, hearing impairment, visual impairment and multi-sensory impairment among others also fall within the category of students with special educational needs (Greville, 2009). However, they are often misunderstood and frequently less served by the normal school teacher (McDowell, Coven, & Eash, 1979). In actual fact, the special characteristics of these students often create difficulties in respect of their socialization, reading and writing, comprehension, concentration and physical ability.

Education for persons with special needs Act (2004) define special educational needs as restriction in capacity of a person to participate in and benefit from education on account of an enduring physical, sensory, mental health or learning disability or any other condition which results in such individual learning differently from one without that condition. Special educational needs relates to terms like disability, impairment, handicap, and other special needs. UNESCO (2006) refers to people with special needs as those that have emotional, behavioural, sensory, physical or mental disabilities. Students who for a variety of reasons (intellectual, physical, social, psychological) experience learning disabilities which are more significant than those experienced by majority of learners of the same age. Such students need special educational needs.

The learner with special educational needs finds it difficult to comply with the demands and expectations of society, possibly because of his perceived lack of performance or potential (Stakes & Hornby, 1997). He is often treated with little interest or sympathy, with uneasiness, fear, embarrassment and/or even disgust. Special needs exist where learners require special help and support if they are to overcome the particular contextual, social and individual disadvantages they face (Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 1997). The concept of special needs should include personal and social needs, as well as educational needs (Gulliford & Upton, 1992). Special educational needs require the provision of different or additional resources for children on account of some degree of disability or impairment (Riddell & Brown, 1994).

Egunjobi (2013) also asserts that persons with special educational needs refer to persons with visual auditory, physical impairments, the mentally challenged and the learning disabled. But no matter the disability one has, such individual has constitutional right to education. Olusola (2013) sees persons with special needs as those who have difficulties in realizing their full potential; their emotional, physical, social or intellectual performance falls below or rises above that of others. The differences may be related to physical, cognitive, emotional or psycho-social factors or a combination of these. The person with special needs include: those with hearing impairment, gifted and talented, visual, speech and language impairment, orthopaedic impairment, social maladjustment, learning

disabilities and multiple impairment (Olusola, 2013). However, these individuals with all forms of special needs require skilled identification; intervention and special care from trained professional special educators/counselors to enable them achieve their goals and at the same time receive adequate quality education.

Mogbo (2002) defined the term “curriculum” as encompassing the content, structure, and processes of teaching and learning, which the school provides in accordance with its educational objectives and values. This includes the knowledge, concepts, and skills that students acquire as well as the factors that inform the ethos and general environment of the school. Mogbo (2002) saw curriculum as all planned experiences, opportunities, and activities provided by a school to assist the learners attain the designed learning outcomes and desired change in behaviour. According to Mogbo (2002), the way in which the curriculum is defined, planned, implemented, and evaluated crucially influences the quality of education provided.

On the other hand, quality teaching (curriculum delivery) is the use of pedagogical techniques to produce learning outcomes for students. Quality delivery should involve features of service that bear on itability to satisfy statedneeds, be exceptional, meets the stated purpose, be efficient and effective, and ensures the delivery of agreed educational standards. It involves guided independent study, project-based learning, collaborative learning, experimentation, soliciting and using feedback, and effective assessment of learning outcomes. It also involves well-adapted learning environments and student support services. Learners with special needs required a barrier free environment to maximize their functional potentials. The physical environment where learners with special needs operate should be accessible and or be disability friendly. The physical environment where students with special needs operate should allow them to access education with minimal hindrance.

One way of helping students with special needs to overcome their challenges in school is by way of guidance and counselling programme. It aims to address the various special needs of students. The programme primarily aims at providing opportunities for each student to reach his/her full potential in the educational, vocational, social and emotional areas of their lives (Lunenburg, 2010). The need for school guidance and counselling, is highlighted in the report that about twenty percent of pupils in schools today would at a point need some form of extra provision to meet their special educational needs (Stakes & Horn by, 2001). Probably, it was for this reason, Nichter and Edmonson (2002) observe that the role of the school counsellor, in recent years has been modified to include helping to meet the needs of students with special educational needs.

Guidance and counselling is described as an enlightened process whereby professional counselors help their clients by facilitating growth and positive adjustment through self-

understanding. Akinade (2012) defines guidance and counselling as a process of helping an individual become fully aware of himself and the ways in which he is responding to the influences of his environment. Corey, Corey, and Callanan (1988) regards counselling as a process which occurs in a one to one relationship between an individual troubled by problems with which he cannot cope with and a professional worker whose training and experiences have qualified him to help others reach solution to personal needs. Okoye (2010) viewed counselling as an interactional relationship designed to facilitate the personal development of information leading to effective decision making and awareness of the self.

Counselling is a transformative process of helping people to learn all that are to be learnt both in and outside the school. Counselling is viewed as a personalized, intimate interview or dialogue between a person experiencing some emotional, social, educational, physical, and vocational problems and a professional counsellor. It can also be seen as a service that helps individual to solve problems and learn to cope with these problems that are not easy to solve. This is why the special needs population can be focused so that they are assisted out of their needs.

Counselling is designed to remove the emotional, psychological and personal social roadblocks placed in the way of an individual by the multidimensional problems of the day to day life. The involvement of counselling with special population therefore is to improve and possibly remedy the challenges, facing people with special needs. The educational challenges facing this category of people are quite obvious and they need new strategies in resolving through counselling. This is because according to Ipaye (1981), the individual learns new ways if interacting, new ways of obtaining information, new ways of making decisions, and new ways of responding to the environment and new ways of interacting. The task of counselling therefore as seen by Ipaye (1981) in Denga (2009) is to give the individual the opportunity to define, explore, discover and adopt ways of living a more satisfying and resourceful life within the social, educational and vocational groupings within which he or she is identified or finds himself or herself. The challenges of life has made some people feeling as not existing well, but through education as a tool for moral, social, economic, political and technological development, has affected some changes in human lives and the society as well (Nweze & Okolie, 2014).

The basic guidance services rendered by a trained counsellor in the school system includes academic counselling services, orientation services, placement, information service, careers week programme, appraisal/testing services (continuous assessment), and cumulative record keeping services, consultancy services (with parents, guardians/teachers), excursion services, referral services and the use of standardized psychological tests. The foregoing are the major services expected to be carried out by counsellors in the schools in an organized manner for the total benefit of the school child, the educational system and the society at large.

In the revised National Policy on Education (2004), Section 1(5), it is clearly stated that Nigeria's philosophy of education is based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen. In addition, it laid emphasis on the provision of equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels, both inside and outside the formal school system. In order to achieve qualitative education, the quality of instruction at all levels of education should be oriented towards the inculcation of the following values stated in Section 1(8) of the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2004, pg 8): Respect for the worth and dignity of the individuals, faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual values in inter-personal and human relation; shared responsibility for the common good of society, respect for the dignity of labour; and promotion of the educational, physical and psychological health of all children.

The above values and guidelines have the indices of quality in all its ramifications. The inculcation of these values into the students can be adequately realized through a unique programme of services provided by guidance specialists in the school system; be it in the primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education. Often times, people with special educational needs are very difficult to handle and teach. The counselling strategies that can be employed for such people or groups should include the following: a) Confrontation b) Accurate education c) Assertiveness training d) Decision making strategies e) Peer cluster involvement.

It is the responsibility of guidance counselors to guide and assist students with special needs, as well as those without disabilities, to accept differences and make a diversity of friendships; and create opportunities for them to cooperate, become resourceful and creative, and enhance their self-respect. In the same line of thought, Smith, Pollo way, Patton and Dowdy (2004), pointed out that having a learner with special needs in the classroom might seem overwhelming, as the learner may require a variety of modifications in classroom management and in certain instructional practices.

The establishment of guidance and counselling centres in Nigerian tertiary institutions and employing professionally trained counsellors to man the centres would relieve parents and school the problems of managing students with special needs and learning disabilities. As the establishment of fully functional counselling centres has implication of producing better-adjusted students who will find themselves more useful to the society despite their disabilities and special needs. This study therefore examine guidance and counseling for students with special needs in college of primary education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State with the purpose of finding out the various ways professional counsellors can help in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos State, as well as examine ways professional counsellors utilize counselling skills in helping students with special needs in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos State.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised in this study.

1. What are the various ways professional counselors help in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos State?
2. In what ways do professional counsellors utilize counseling skills in helping students included special need in Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe.

Methodology

The study adopted a non-experimental design of descriptive survey research type. Population comprises of all students with special needs in Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State. Random sampling technique was used to select 100 students which were randomly selected as sample for study. A self developed questionnaire was used as instrument for data collection. The questionnaire contained information of items on the main title of study. The instrument was given to experts in the measurement and evaluation department for “construct and content validation”. Reliability of the instrument was determined using Cronbach Alpha. Data collected was analyzed using percentage.

Results

Research Question one: What are the various ways professional counselors help in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs?

Table 1:

Various ways professional counsellors help in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		TOTAL	
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %
1.	Education is one of the ways a professional counsellor helps in repositioning counseling services in colleges Of education	96.00	96.00	4.00	4.00	100.00	100.00
2.	Sense of industry is another Way a professional counsellor helps in repositioning counselling tips in colleges of education.	52.00	52.00	48.00	48.00	100.00	100.00
3.	Problem solving is very important way a professional counsellor helps in monitoring and promoting learning for Students with special needs	84.00	84.00	16.00	16.00	100.00	100.00
4.	Planning is one of the ways a professional counsellor helps monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs	70.00	70.00	30.00	30.00	100.00	100.00
5.	Professional counsellors apply in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs.	74.00	74.00	26.00	26.00	100.00	100.00
	TOTAL	376.00	75.20	124.00	24.80	500.00	100.00

Table 1 shows that that majority of the respondents 96.00% chose 'Yes' for item 1 while the

remaining 4.00% chose 'No'. For item 2, majority of the respondents 52.00% selected 'Yes' while the remaining 48.00% selected 'No'. Majority of the respondents 84.00% opted for 'Yes' for item 3 while the remaining 16.00% chose 'No'. For item 4, majority of the respondents 30.00% chose 'Yes' while the remaining 70.00% chose 'No'. Finally, majority of the respondents 74.00% in items 5 chose, 'Yes' while the remaining 26.00% chose 'No'. Therefore, since the cumulative value of agreed is greater than No value, it therefore shows that professional counsellors can use various ways in monitoring and promoting learning for the students with special needs in Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State.

Research Question Two: In what ways can a professional counsellor utilize counselling skills in helping special needs of students in Micheal Otedola College of Primary Education, Noforija, Epe, Lagos State?

Table 2: Ways professional counsellors utilize counselling skills in helping special needs of students

S/N	ITEMS	YES		NO		TOTAL	
		Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %	Freq (N)	Percent %
1.	Placement is a good skill a professional counselor can utilize in repositioning maladjusted students better learning in college primary education, Epe, Lagos state.	64.00	64.00	36.00	36.00	100.00	100.00
2.	Leadership is another best skill a professional counsellor utilizes in repositioning maladjusted students better learning in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos	46.00	46.00	54.00	54.00	100.00	100.00
3.	Communication is another best tool utilizes by a professional counselor in repositioning maladjusted student's proper learning in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos State.	50.00	50.00	50.00	50.00	100.00	100.00
4.	Educational/vocational/ Socio-personal is another best skill a professional counsellor utilizes in repositioning maladjusted students proper learning in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos	46.00	46.00	54.00	54.00	100.00	100.00
5.	Lack of motivation is a skill a professional counsellor utilizes in repositioning maladjusted students for proper learning in college of primary education, Epe, Lagos state.	40.00	40.00	60.00	60.00	100.00	100.00
	TOTAL	246.00	49.20	254.00	50.80	500.00	100.00

Table 2 shows that that majority of the respondents 64.00% chose 'Yes' for item 1 while the remaining 26.00% opted for 'No'. For item 2, majority of the respondents 46.00% chose 'Yes' while the remaining 54.00% selected 'No'. 50 of the respondents 50.00% selected 'Yes' for item 3 while the remaining 50.00% chose 'No'. For item 4, 46.00% chose 'Yes' while the remaining 54.00% chose 'No'. Majority of the respondents 60.00% in items 5 opted for 'No' while the remaining 40.00% chose 'Yes. This therefore shows that professional counsellor utilize counseling skills in helping special need students in tertiary institutions in Nigeria.

Discussion

Findings from research question one revealed that problem solving and proper planning are various ways professional counsellors help in monitoring and promoting learning for students with special needs. These findings are in line with Ebrim (2011) who sees education as a tool for contributing to the academic development of students with special needs. Onyilio for (2012) also argues that counseling promotes self-reliance and limit learning disabilities among students with special needs. Grisham (2005) supported that proper counselling promotes learning skills that will help in building self-esteem/self-worth, self-confidence, assertiveness, sense of control, coping skill, problems solving among students with special needs.

Findings from research question two revealed that placement, leadership, communication, unconditional positive regard/silence and educational/vocational/socio personal are skills professional counselors utilize in repositioning maladjustments students for proper learning ability. This is in line with Ifelunni (2003) and Onyiliofor (2010) who emphasized that it is the duty of the counsellors to do placement for students on their right courses in assessing them individually to find their dexterity, interest, ability, potentialities, and hobbies, among others, which will place them on their right job/career.

Conclusion

There is need to promote the notion of guidance counsellors having a prescribed role in schools as a useful goal, driven by monitoring of and attention to human rights, and specifically the rights of students with special needs.

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The professional counselors should make sure that individual differences among their students are catered for and the right placement is put in place for them.
2. Counselling Association for Nigeria should work towards professionalization of counselling to accord it due recognition as a noble profession.
3. Professional counselors should man counselling centers in Nigerian schools for more effective counselling services delivery to students.

4. The teachers should also be trained to work closely with professional counsellors such that whenever the need to manage the disabled and special need student arises, it would be very easy to handle such situation.

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