

**INTEGRATING COUNSELLING IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN  
SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL IN IMO STATE**

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**Abstract**

*Counselling has significant role to play in bringing out a notable change in people's personal life. It has created a number of roles in the domains of education. As human problems are mushrooming day by day in this hi-tech world, there is a dire need for finding solutions to those problems. It is counselling comes to the aid of resolving human problems and finding solutions to those problems that are psychological and personal. In English language teaching and learning, several problems are encountered by teachers and students during teaching and learning. The purpose of the study therefore was to examine the role of Integrating Counselling in English Language Teaching and learning in senior secondary school in Imo State to enhance student academic performance in secondary schools. The study was guided by humanistic theory of Albert Bandura (1995) social learning model. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design. Population of study was 200 teachers in 20 schools. Simple random sampling was used to select teachers. The instruments used to collect data for the study were questionnaires. The study reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean scores and summary tables. This paper therefore examines how counselling is necessary to English Language Teaching and finding remedies to the problems faced by English language learners. Examining the relevance of counselling to English language teaching and learning, it also highlights the benefits of integrating it with English language teaching and learning. It provides need for introspection of English language teachers to make available counselling to students. It details various counselling skills, and provides an account of problem-solving method in English language teaching and learning, and approaches to counselling.*

**Key words** - Counselling, English language, Learning, Problem-Solving Method, Teaching.

**Introduction**

The results of public examinations were published in Nigeria shows low percentage of students passing examinations. A challenging question that comes to mind is whether education today has truly reduced or prepared the students in facing their life in future. The answer is highly negative when looking into the problems of students. As a result of this, it is necessary to remember where there are problems and the need for counselling.

Despite the fact that counselling is not professionally practised by all human beings, it is an essential part of everyone's life. New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) defines professional counsellor, as a person who has been trained to advice people with problems, especially personal problems. Nevertheless, counselling is perceived in every walk of life in different forms. Parents counsel children; the elders counsel youngsters; teachers counsel students; religious and spiritual guides imbued with spiritual wisdom counsel their disciples. In the educational environment, students face numerous demanding problems. Since English has become an international language, there is a great need for learning it in this globalized world. As a

result, a number of students come across scores of challenges and difficulties in learning English language. Hence, appropriate and relevant counselling for students by teachers would definitely enable those students to get helped from those difficulties and to learn English without difficulties or uncertainty.

Guidance and counselling is described by Birichi and Rukunga (2009) as a practice that had been existing for a period of time and had been passed across from generation to generation. The concept of guidance and counselling carry different but overlapping meaning. Mutie and Ndambuki (2012) perceives that human beings are basically self determining creatures. Most important goal of guidance and counselling is to assist people understand. According to Ajowi and Simatwa (2010) it is essential elements in interaction between people within societies.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Establish the approaches used in counselling in solving students problems in teaching and learning English language in secondary schools in Imo State.
- ii. Examine the status of counselling in teaching and learning English language in secondary schools in Imo State.
- iii. To determine factors that hinder effective counselling in teaching and learning English language in secondary schools in Imo State.

### **Concept of counselling**

Counselling describes the scientific process of assistance that is given by an expert to an individual in a situation to a needy person. It involves relationship between two persons where one of them (counsellor) tries to assist the other (counseee or client) is so organizing himself as to achieve a particular form of happiness, adjusting to a life situation or self actualization. It extends to a relationship of natural respect between counsellor and counseee. The New Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (2005) defines it as professional advice about a problem. Counselling is a professional guidance to an individual by the use of standard psychological methods like collecting case-history data, employing various techniques of interview, and testing interests and aptitudes. The counsellor's objective is to familiarize the individual in the direction of opportunities that can best certification of fulfilment of personal needs and aspirations. Biggs (2010) asserts that counselling is a scientifically respectable way of dispensing personal, social and educational information or advice. In the teaching of English language, the teachers are expected to be good counsellors so as to succeed in the mission of assisting the students to learn English. Even where they are not specialized in psychology, they should have the essential skills of counselling so as to make the target students capable in communication skills in English.

Counselling process is organized around the supposed needs of the counseee. The main intention of counselling is bringing voluntary change in the client. As a result of this, the counsellor provides facilities to help achieve the desired change or make the suitable choice. The client alone is responsible for the decisions or the choice he makes, though the counsellor may assist in this process by his warmth and understanding relationship. Thus counsellor helps counseee to discover and solve his personal problems independently.

Counselling is a personal face to face relationship between two people, in which counsellor by means of relationships and his special competencies, provides a learning situation in which the counseee, a normal sort of person is helped to know himself and his present and possible future situations so that he can make use of his characteristics and potentialities in a way that is both satisfying to himself and beneficial to society and further, can learn how to solve further problems and meet future needs. While guidance is the overall framework personal services within the school, counselling (interviewing) is only one particular service.

Counselling is a process by which a counsellor assists the counseee (client) in making choices, plans, adjustments or decisions regarding his situation. This takes place in a professional setting, initiated and maintained as a means of facilitating changes in the behaviour. Counselling for that reason is a learning – oriented process of assisting one to explore his or her thoughts, feelings and behaviour, gain clearer understanding of self and then use own resources to cope more effectively with life by making appropriate, rightful decisions.

It also goes with intentional, systematic and skill-based interactive process with the intention of client growth in the direction of improving psychological health, facilitating the goals to a specific decent and logistics limits. Akinade (2012) explains that counselling is a process of assisting an individual to become fully aware of his/her self. According to Nnabuike (2012). counselling is a number of procedures in helping an individual to solve his problems. It is more involved emotionally in the affective realm of personalized learning, such as emotions, feelings, values and attitudes. The scholar further describes it as a learning process in which a counsellor assists an individual to learn, understand his/her environment and to choose the right type of behaviours that will assist his/her development, growth and progress. Egbo (2013) describes it as counselling transformative process of assisting people to learn all that are to be learnt within and outside the School.

### **Objectives of Counselling:**

The objectives of counselling are:

- i. to help individuals to overcome many of their future problems.
- ii. to help individuals become self-sufficient, self-dependent, self-directed and to adjust themselves efficiently to the demands of a better and meaningful life.
- iii. to enhance their personal, social, emotional and intellectual development.
- iv. the counsellor's services are preventive, developmental and therapeutic in nature.
- v. the counsellor has the role of understanding the behaviour, motivations and feelings of the counsellee.
- vi. the counsellor's goals is to obtain relief for the client
- vii. to make him/her a "fully functioning person".
- viii. helping the counsellee to gain understanding of himself/herself
- ix. giving the counsellee support and encouragement
- x. helping counsellees unlearn ineffective behaviour and learn more effective ways of doing things
- xi. bringing new hope to the counsellee
- xii. allowing for a purposeful communication process between the counsellee and counsellor.

The process goals containing the facilitation of procedures for enhancement of the effectiveness of counseling reflect the counsellor's philosophy of life such as:

- i. To help the counsellee to become self-actualizing.
- ii. To help the counsellee attain self realization.
- iii. To help the counsellee become a fully functioning person

### **Role of Counselling in Effective Teaching and Learning**

Counselling as an important educational tool helps in shaping the orientation in a child from negative influences that is gotten in the child by his/her peers. The need for the teacher or counsellor is to assist in moulding the child. The school teacher or counsellor has role as a model should be highly respected by students. They are expected to be friends with the students, listen their complains, short comings and offer guidance to them in a quest of moulding them in the right direction. Egbo (2013) posits that the total development of a child only takes place in an environment conducive for teaching and learning. It is the realization of this that all educational services which promote teaching and learning in schools are given proper attention.

Counselling services are in the school helps:

- i. to develop, assess and improve educational programmes; enhance teaching and improve the competence of the teacher and reduce cost for the children.
- ii. to provide a good basis for a broader education for life.

### **Counselling as a Significant Need for Students in English Language Teaching**

Counselling is important in English Language teaching because several learners find it more challenging to learn English. As a result of several years of experience in teaching English mainly for students from

vernacular average schools and for the first generation students, and based on participation in national and international conferences on English Language teaching, a study on students' challenges in learning English was made, and as a result, a number of problems were identified. Some of them are:

#### **Fear on the Part of Students**

The major challenge which learners of English have to overcome is the fear of speaking English. This fear comes from fear of making errors and mistakes in speaking. The fear of making mistakes and errors according to Marcelo (2012) propels that the learners become worried, panicky and become unable to find their confidence in speaking English fluently. This challenge is faced by the Nigerian students. Students are not capable of learning English as a result of their fear of speaking and writing it wrongly. This creates in them to lose interest in learning English.

#### **Inferiority Complex**

The students face and find difficulties in speaking English fluently, which results in the development of a sense of inferiority complex in them. This eventually prevents them from learning English. They tend to have the feeling of being inferior to other students who speak English fluently.

#### **Impediment from Peer Group**

Some students have interest in learning English. With the instruction by teachers, they like to speak and practice English language with their classmates or friends. Sometimes, their classmates or friends attempt to ruin their interest by asking unwarranted questions and mocking them.

#### **Lack of Attentiveness and Understanding**

Most students do not realize the significance of communication skills in English. They are ignorant and unaware of the competitions and challenges that await them in future and requirements and skills that they should have so as to get good opportunities. These are some of the challenges they face in the process of learning English language.

#### **The Benefits of Integrating Counselling with English Language Teaching**

The following are some of the benefits of integrating counselling with English Language teaching:

- ✓ The English language teachers' with appropriate counselling will assist the students conquer fear in learning English.
- ✓ It will encourage and motivate them to learn English very fast.
- ✓ It will create in them self-confidence that is very essential for personal growth and development of communication skills.
- ✓ It will create confidence and self-esteem, which will promote a positive attitude towards learning the target language without hesitation.
- ✓ Finally, it will assist them discover and realize their potentials, and will assist them in have self-actualization.

The English language teachers should encourage the students to speak in English. They should not discourage the students if they commit mistakes while speaking in English. In other words, they should focus on fluency rather than accuracy in the beginning stage. They should create a lot opportunities for them to speak in English.

#### **Self-Examination Needed For the English Language Teachers before Counselling the Students**

The English language teachers require to advise or counsel the students concerning the development of communication skills in English. This should be a kind of self-examination. The following questions will enable everyone to have a better self-examination.

Who am I?

What is expected of me as an English language teacher?

What are my strengths and weaknesses?

What efforts do I make to strengthen my strengths and weaken my weaknesses?

What are the hurdles that prevent the students from learning English?

To what extent, do I take interest to know and understand the problems of students in learning English?

What are the strategies do I adopt to make my students learn English?

To what extent am I committed to my teaching?

With the reflection of these questions and answering them English language teachers can become good counsellors too.

As regards English language teachers, they are the counsellors, and students are the clients. The English language teachers, by developing the skills mentioned above, they can counsel their students to learn English. English language teachers, in order to be good counsellors, should possess the following qualities too:

- ✓ They should be humane.
- ✓ They should be empathetic.
- ✓ They should be patient when the students commit mistakes while attempting to speak in English.
- ✓ They should identify the real situation of a student for a particular way of behaving.
- ✓ They should reward the students for the efforts they make to speak in English, for example, by the way of appreciation, etc.
- ✓ They should have a follow-up of the students' performance.
- ✓ They should have friendly attitude towards students.

### **Problem-Solving Method in English Language Teachers**

In counselling, there are varieties of models of problem-solving. This involves the following factors:

- ✓ Problem definition
- ✓ Goal selection
- ✓ Strategy selection
- ✓ Evaluation.

This approach can be applied to English language teachers. The teachers should first identify the problems faced by the students in learning English. Then, they should set a goal to fulfill their task of making the target students speak in English. To fulfil this goal, the teachers should select the right strategies, and should orient the students toward those opportunities that can best guarantee fulfilment of their personal aspiration of acquiring English. They should make sure that the selected strategies are implemented. Finally, they should make evaluation of their entire performance.

### **Approaches to Counselling and Problem solving in English Language Teaching**

Biggs (2000) identifies some approaches to counselling according to their goals.

- ✓ to provide encouragement to develop socially useful goals.
- ✓ to help clients identify obstacles that block their freedom.
- ✓ to provide a climate for clients to engage in self-exploration.
- ✓ to help clients gain awareness of their present experiences.
- ✓ to help clients examine early decisions in their lives and to make new decisions.
- ✓ to help clients learn more effective behaviours.
- ✓ to help clients apply the rational method for solving the personal problems.
- ✓ to help clients evaluate their present behaviours in terms of their effectiveness in meeting goals.

These approaches can be utilized in English language teaching and learning. With regard to the first approach, a lot of students are uncertain to speak in English because they are not encouraged. The teachers have the responsibility to encourage the students particularly the slow learners. They should be helped with set goals of learning English. In the next approach, the students have a lot of problems which prevent them from learning English. The teachers should continuously observe the target students to find out their problems. Students should recognize these problems so that they may take measures to overcome them. To help the students identify these barriers in their learning of English, the teachers should create a climate for the students to engage in self-exploration to identify actual problems in learning the English language. This would as a result enable the teachers to help the students to get freed from their problems. The teachers should make the role of the counsellors and should create awareness in the students on various opportunities and facilities that are available at present to learn English. The teachers should help the students examine their early decisions regarding learning of English. The teachers should help the students to change those behaviours which serve as obstacles to their learning of English. They should enable the students to learn

effective behaviours, which would help them improve their communication in English. They should evaluate their present behaviours to find out to what extent they are effective in meeting their goal of learning English.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by the following theories: Social learning theory.

#### **Social Learning Theory**

Social learning theory as proposed by Albert Bandura in 1986 stress that behaviour is not solely determined by inner drives or the environment, but is a result of an interactive association between inner processes and environmental variables. The inner processes relate to covert events based on earlier experiences and are controlled by external environmental influence in bringing about overt responses observed by Feltham and Horton (2006). Bandura views verbal representation and imaginable representation of the environmental as guide to a person's behaviour. Learning also occurs through observational learning in a process known modeling.

Therefore student can acquire competencies like academic, social and personal through modeling. The counsellor requires to act as a role model to the student in each of the environment. Bandura also according to Mangal (2007) developed the concept of efficacy expectation, which he conceived as conviction of an individual that certain behaviour will produce certain outcome.

Efficacy expectation refers to a person's judgment about his or her ability to plan, execute and maintain a particular action or behaviour. These expectations influence choice of activities and environment settings. For provision of effective counselling, the understanding of student efficacy expectation in his/her prevailing environment is essential. Bandura also explained issues on motivation and based it on representation of future outcomes, which create present motivators of behaviour because of the anticipated future reinforcement.

The anticipation of self-approval motivates or demotivates behaviour student can also be motivated to their academic, social and personal capacities thus meeting their basic objectives in their institutions of learning. Bandura also observed that learning is controlled by the limit of someone's expectation efficacy. Thus people learn from various environment of being modeled reinforced and emotional contacts. Among the environment that Bandura proposed in counselling and learning new behaviour include: modeling, efficacy expectation and phobia reduction. These processes can be enhanced through guided participation, modeling and system desensitization.

#### **Research Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. This method is appropriate for obtaining factual and attitudinal information. The study involved public secondary schools in Imo State. The population of the study was all students in public secondary schools in Imo State. The questionnaire was used to collect the raw data. The questionnaires had open ended and closed-ended items. In the study, the items were considered reliable if they yield a reliability coefficient of 0.70 and above. Reliability coefficient of 0.81 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for data collection.

#### **Results and Discussion**

Data was collected by use of questionnaires and interview schedules. The collected data was analysed. Results were presented for each of the theme drawn from the objectives and were interpreted and discussed.

#### **Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation**

The data collected for the study were presented and analysed in this chapter. The data were presented in tables containing information on the responses.

The analysis on Table 1 summarises the approaches used in counselling. Through counselling students are given solutions on how to deal with psychological problems which might affect their learning of English language. Through this, the students are able to develop problem solving skills which to an extent help them deal with particular issues surrounding their learning of English language. As a result, it was important to establish the approaches used in counselling in secondary schools in Imo State.

**Table 1. The Approaches Used In Guidance and Counselling**

S/N	Items	SA(4)	A(3)	D(2)	SD(1)	X	N	REMARK
1	I employ dynamic interactions of a group of students approach	50 (200)	68 (204)	34 (68)	28 (28)	2.8	180	Accept
2	As school counsellor use small-group counselling approach	68 (272)	52 (156)	26 (52)	34 (34)	2.9	180	Accept
3	I use student-focused interventions	65 (260)	47 (141)	46 (92)	22 (22)	2.8	180	Accept
4	Am sensitive to all levels of communication being used by the student being counseled	34 (136)	45 (135)	50 (100)	51 (51)	2.4	180	Reject
5	I employ open-ended questions to help the child-clients enter into a dialogue	47 (188)	36 (108)	66 (132)	31 (31)	2.6	180	Accept
<b>Grand Mean</b>		<b>2.7</b>		<b>Accept</b>				

From the findings in table 1, it is evident that the teachers employed dynamic interactions of a group of students' approach which aids in shaping and managing the behavior of students. The teachers accepted that they use small-group counselling approach. In addition, the teachers affirmed that they use therapeutic interventions approach which noted that they use student-focused interventions. The teachers confirmed that they are sensitive to all levels of communication being used by the student being counselled. Teachers also make the counselling enjoyable as evidenced by the teachers confirmation to using one-to-one sessions and non-directive counselling.

From the aforementioned findings, it is clear that a number of approaches have been put in place to address the problems experienced by the students though the efforts are not sufficient. Further, through counselling students are given advice on how to deal with emotional conflicts and personal problems both in school and how to incorporate the same in their daily life hence the need to enhance the approaches used in guidance and counselling.

### Status of Guidance and Counselling

The analysis here is in relation to **Status of Guidance and Counselling** in Table 2.

**Table 2. Status of Guidance and Counselling**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	N	Remark
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6	Available guidance and counselling curriculum	68 (272)	56 (168)	43 (86)	13 (13)	2.8	180	Accept
7	Time allocation	68 (272)	51 (153)	42 (84)	19 (19)	2.9	180	Accept
8	Communication facilities	55 (220)	56 (168)	49 (98)	20 (20)	2.8	180	Accept
9	Career materials	54 (216)	55 (165)	40 (80)	31 (31)	2.7	180	Accept
10	Individual students files	29 (116)	36 (108)	53 (106)	62 (62)	2.1	180	Reject
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.7</b>						<b>Accept</b>

In relation to the status of guidance and counselling, table 2 showed that guidance and counselling is available in the curriculum. In the same way the respondents were neutral on whether there was time allocated to guidance and counselling. In addition, the respondents accepted that there were communication facilities in place. Additionally, the respondents strongly agreed that career materials were available. From the foregoing, it is evident that guidance and counselling lacks the required resources for enhancing individual student files.

#### **Role of Guidance and counselling in students in English language**

the analysis here is in relation to role of guidance and counselling in students in english language.

**Table 3. Role of Guidance and counselling in students in English language**

S/N	Items	SA	A	D	SD	X	N	Remark
11	Behave according to the school expectation of school family and society	68 (272)	58 (174)	41 (82)	13 (13)	3.0	180	Accept
12	Improve in English Language and academic performance	61 (224)	51 (153)	27 (54)	41 (41)	2.7	180	Accept
13	Know when to seek help and information from peer counsellor and teachers counsellors	60 (240)	55 (165)	36 (72)	29 (29)	2.8	180	Accept
14	Balance leisure time with sports, games, clubs, societies and academics	59 (236)	60 (180)	39 (78)	22 (22)	2.9	180	Accept
15	Plays a key role in enhancing student English Language learning	62 (248)	53 (159)	36 (72)	29 (29)	2.8	180	Accept
	<b>Grand Mean</b>	<b>2.8</b>						<b>Accept</b>

From the findings in table 3 the respondents affirmed that guidance and counselling has improved the behavior of students according to the school expectation of school family and society. Similarly, the respondents noted that that they know when to seek help and information from peer counsellor and teacher counsellors as well as improve in English Language and academic performance. Guidance and counselling has also promoted a balanced leisure time with sports, games, clubs, societies and academics as shown by of the respondents. Besides, the respondents agreed that it has played a key role in enhancing student English Language learning.



### **Conclusion**

The different points that have been discussed so far disclose that the English language teachers are required to develop their counselling skills in order to achieve and realize their responsibility of creating in the target students the required communication skills in English. In addition, the teachers' right counselling to students at right time enables them to discover their hidden talents and help them to develop those potentials. This is enough proof that lack of counselling students leads to academic success in schools. Counselling helps students to make realistic decisions and overcome personality deficit. It helps students learn to deal with difficulties.

### **Recommendations**

1. From the study findings, it was conceived that proper approaches are needed in enhancing role of counseling in English language teaching. As a result, there is need for teachers to use small-group counselling approach to understand and respect the society created by students.
2. Online systems should also be used to provide individual and group counselling.
3. Additionally, student-focused interventions should be implemented in order to enhance counseling in English language learning.
4. Students should be guided on how to take care of their challenges and also the need of taking care of learning materials.
5. Study findings have also shown that guidance and counselling is crucial in enhancing discipline among the students. It is therefore necessary for the Ministry of Education to organize in-service training for teachers on how guidance and counselling should be used to manage students' academic performance in school.

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