

The Guidance Role of the Instructor in the Teaching and Learning Process

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This study examines the guidance role of the instructor in the teaching and learning process. The paper x-rays the need for the learners to be consciously guided by their teachers as this facilitates and complements the learning process. Gagne's theory of conditions of learning, phases of learning and model for design of instruction was adopted to explain the guidance role of the instructor in the learning process. The paper recommends that the teacher should not only have knowledge of the subject matter but should also guide and direct the learning process through application of appropriate learning theories

According to Akinboye (1986), Educational Psychology is conceptualized as an applied psychology in which psychological principles are used to bring about positive changes in the learner, the teacher, teaching strategies, the learning process, the learning situation, curriculum and the assessment of learning. Educational Psychology and Counseling Psychology are under the big umbrella of psychology. Counseling psychology is a specialized area and an applied psychology, which aims at bringing out the best attributes of the individual learner. Counseling is a service under the guidance program. Guidance is a broad term, which subsumes counseling. For the purpose of this paper, the term 'Guidance' can be defined as assistance given to the learner by the instructor in order to facilitate his achievement in the learning process.

Guidance has been severally defined as the assistance given to individuals to enable them make independent and adequate choices, decisions and adjustments in life. According to Mkpa (1989), Guidance is a program of service intended to help students acquire the capacity for self direction or self

guidance. From the foregoing, the instructor is expected to perform some guidance roles while teaching consciously or unconsciously. The major aim of teaching is to impart knowledge, practical skills and understanding to the learner. Teaching therefore can be viewed as a intentional activity aimed at inducing learning. The teacher's priority is to meet the individual student educational needs. The dictionary of Education (Good 1973) defined the teacher/instructor as a person employed in an official capacity for the purpose of guiding and directing learning experiences of pupils or students in an educational institution whether public or private.

The National and Policy on Education (NPE, 2004), rightly stated that Guidance Counseling should feature in teacher education programs. This gives every teacher some background knowledge on how to carry out the guidance role while teaching. Guidance should be a continuous process throughout life but it should be introduced early in life during the formative years when habits, attitudes and behaviors are being developed such preventive guidance reduces remedial guidance later. Guidance is known to be preventive in function while Counseling is curative. If proper guidance is given to the child there may not be the need for specialized counseling which often occurs as a result of maladjustment and underachievement. Guidance program which provides students with information, skill and

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necessary services in the early school years has been found to be effective in preventing problems from occurring later in school years (Bergin et al; 1990; Gerler, 1985) This paper therefore examines the guidance role of the instructor in the teaching and learning process with a view to laying emphasis on the need to consciously guide the learners as this complements and facilitates the teaching and learning process.

The Teaching and Learning Process

For efficient and effective teaching and learning to take place and for the realization of the objectives of the process, the instructor needs to guide the learners. Guidance in the classroom has been described as "teaching at its best". The teacher as a guide also demonstrates some leadership roles which have their impact on the learners behavior. Operationally, Educational Psychology has been defined as one of the many branches of applied psychology which studies the ways in which the learner can be most effectively brought into successful interaction with the materials to be learnt, the learning situation and the teacher who provides the learning opportunity. The role of the instructor is paramount in achieving the objectives of the teaching and learning process. The major objectives of educational psychology are to: (a) understand how learning process in the child can be most effectively guided to achieve the desired result: (b) to determine how teaching can be made more effective and (c) to determine how educational goals can be made more meaningful to the child's needs.

Major Stages in the Learning Process

In order to achieve the major objectives of educational psychology, attention should be paid to some crucial aspects of the learning process by the instructor. These include the learning theories, major stages in the learning process, study techniques and procedures including processes of retention and recall

from the memory. An effective instructor should be very concerned with major stages in the learning process and adopt pragmatic strategies to impact it to the learners while teaching. The teacher apart from having a good knowledge of the subject matter should be conversant with management of the learning process to achieve the optimal. One of the crucial tasks of educational psychology is to know how the learner's behavior is changed by instructional endeavor. Learning has been variously explained to include conditioning, reinforcement strategies, memory process, concept formation, problem solving and creativity. This paper will examine the phases of learning through the memory process. Many factors tend to affect the learner when he is exposed to information; such factors include teacher/personality, ability, concept, and individual differences of the learner, hereditary factor, physical/environmental situations among other factors. It has been observed by psychologists that the average learners do not perform according to expectation mainly due to inadequate processing of the sensory information through the memory process.

Gagne's (1985) identified four phases of learning listed below:

Phase I: Receiving the Stimulus
Situation

Phase II: Phase of acquisition on input

Phase III: Storage or retention phase

Phase IV: Retrieval or recall.

During phases I and II, the stimulus situation and acquisition of knowledge, information received is processed. Information processing encompasses such topics as attention, perception, thinking, memory and problem-solving strategies. Acquisition of information and concepts in itself is not enough, students should remember what they have acquired. Information received through the sensory register is lost in less than a second, either through spontaneous decay or through entry of new data. Information received in the short term memory can be held indefinitely

if attention remains constant otherwise, decay commences and data are lost in 15 -30 seconds. The longer information is retained in the short-term memory, the greater the chance that it will be transmitted to the long-term memory. If not encoded or rehearsed consciously, the data are forgotten. In phase III, the initial processing of the information received during phases II & I will determine the rate of remembering and which aspects are remembered. Storage or retention implies putting information into the memory, which occurred as a result of attention encoding and the use of memory strategies. Retrieval on the other hand, implies recognizing, recalling and reconstructing what has been previously put in. The ability of the learner to retrieve or recall information when needed very much depends on the mode of acquisition and storage of the information during phases I, II and III.

The instructor should guide the learners through the application of a variety of learning theories especially the connectionism theory of Thorndike and Gagne's theories of leaning conditions among others. Thorndike believed that connections or bonds that are formed between stimuli and responses explain all learning. Thorndike (1913) proposed three major laws of learning; (readiness, exercise and effect). These laws are inter-related and

tend to ensure that the learner's objectives are achieved. Students can only learn when they are ready and learning strategies are strengthened when a connection is made between stimuli and responses. He realized that practice alone was not enough if there was no strengthening of the bond by reinforcement, in which case the law of effect must be in operation.

There is therefore need for the instructor to stress on active participation in reading to remember. Unoh (1969) submitted that reading to remember means reading with a view to being able not merely to recognize and comprehend but also to retain for subsequent recall or reproduction. Archer (1989) posited that we remember 10% of what we read, 20% of what we hear, 30% of what we see, 50% of what we see and hear, 70% of what we say and 90% of what we say and do. This analysis shows clearly that the more we utilize all relevant sensory registers in learning, the better the learning outcome. Figure 1 below shows the pathway of information through the memory process.

Need for Instructor's Guidance in Learning

Since many factors are known to affect the learner, a knowledge of the learners potentials by the instructor will help in supporting

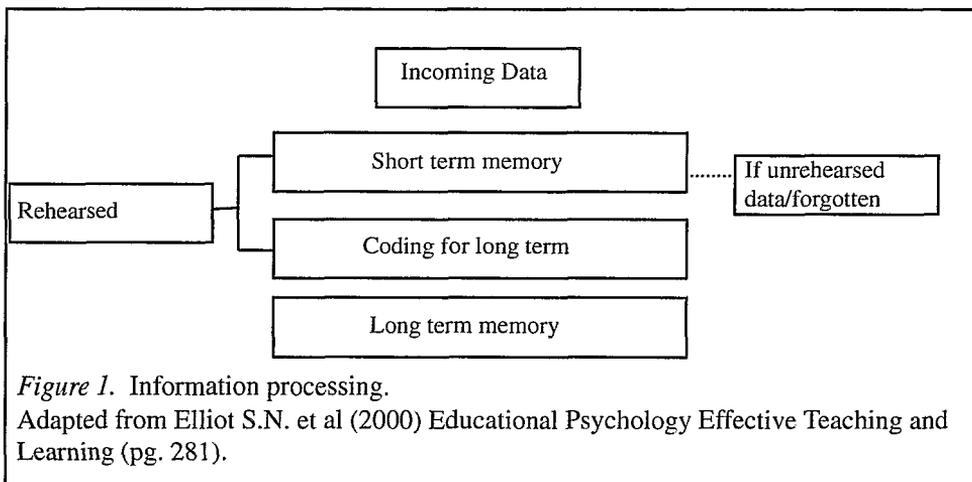


Figure 1. Information processing.

Adapted from Elliot S.N. et al (2000) Educational Psychology Effective Teaching and Learning (pg. 281).

him to learn. According to Day (1976), the instructor should be aware of each child's level of development, style of learning and problems. Among the difficult problems faced by the education system are those associated with teaching effectiveness. The current preparation of teachers for specific subject matters, specific level, specific academic skills etc. does not take into consideration sufficiently the complexity of factors such as student's various characteristics. There is therefore strong need to train teachers to adapt instruction to the diverse students abilities, learning styles, personality traits and needs by using more differentiated teaching strategies.

In addition, Veda and Martinson (2003) suggested that the guidance role of the teacher is designed to provide opportunities to develop a further understanding of children and youth, to enhance positive interaction with students and to help develop skills to create an effective classroom. Strang and Morris (1964) opined that guidance through learning consists in providing the student with suitable tasks, encouraging his progress, giving him enough help so that he can confidently solve problems himself. In order to perform these guidance functions, the instructor will adopt one or more of the learning theories. In this paper Gagne's theory of conditions of learning is suggested as his model design of instruction includes a sequence of nine instructional events and corresponding learning processes that guide the design of the instruction.

According to Gagne, Briggs and Wager (1992), these events should provide the necessary conditions for learning and serve as the basis for designing instruction and selecting appropriate media. Below is Gagne's model.

In Gagne's model, the instructor should stimulate the recall of prerequisite learning through presentation of stimulus material and provision of learning guidance. The goal of education is viewed as facilitating students autonomous learning and self-direction. Divergent approach to teaching should be adopted which stresses open-ended self-directed search. This allows for innovation in the teaching and learning process. An example of such innovation is shown below in the case study curled from the author's classroom teaching.

Instructor's guidance for co-operative learning

Case Study - (excerpt from the author's mini- study during the teaching and learning process)

Cooperative leaning has been defined as a set of instructional methods in which students are encouraged or required to work together on academic tasks (Slavin, 1987; Stevens and Slavin 1995). They noted that such methods may include having students sit together for discussion, or help each other with assignments and more complex requirement This case study involved examining a typical learning process where the students

Table 1
Gagne's Models for Design of Instruction

Instructional Event	Relation to Learning Process
1. Gaining attention	Reception of patterns of neutral impulses
2. Informing learner of the objective (s)	Activating a process of executive control
3. Stimulating recall of prerequisite learning	Retrieval of prior learning to working memory
4. Presenting the stimulus materials	Emphasizing features for selective perception
5. Providing learning guidance	Semantic encoding; cues for retrieval
6. Eliciting the performance	Activating responses organization
7. Providing feedback about performance	Establishment reinforcement
8. Assessing performance	Activating retrieval; making reinforcement possible
9. Enhancing performance	Providing cues and strategies for retrieval

were asked to choose whom to work with if given assignment to carry out in group and also to give reason for their choices. It was observed that in a class of 250 students (all in 300 level Educational Psychology course) the 'stars' of the class were 2 students chosen by almost half of the students in the class. The others were chosen by groups of 5, 4, 2, and 1 student. It is interesting to see an analysis of the reasons given by the students for the choice they made. This will be presented in descending order of importance.

The instructor will use these attributes listed to lead the students into seeking to imbibe them. Generally, learners know what to look out for in others. Social situations have a large influence on our behaviors and motives because the presence of others can motivate us into positive or negative actions depending on our disposition. The instructor should utilize these facts from social psychology to motivate the learner to work and achieve the set goals. The instructor to guide the student into behavior that is desirable can also adopt observational learning or modeling. Bandura (1971) noted that social conditions are determinants of behavior; we learn to be motivated by particular objects in our environment. Observed behaviors are stored symbolically and retrieved at some later time to guide behavior. The attributes in Table 2 are observed behaviors, which are

capable of influencing the observers.

Recommendations and Conclusion

This paper wishes to recommend that in view of the complexity of our education system, the instructor should consciously adopt instructional strategies that will allow for guidance of the learners. This assists the learners to develop self esteem and confidence in their ability to resolve difficult tasks. The instructor should introduce the major phases (acquisition, storage and retrieval) in the learning process while teaching. Also, the instructor to facilitate learning should introduce active participation and directed discovery.

In conclusion, the guidance role of the instructor is challenging because of the diversity of today's classroom, which includes students with a wide range of intellectual skills, social, cultural context and family experience. This paper has examined the guidance role of the instructor in the teaching and learning process. Instructors who are efficient will not only be conversant with the subject matters but also have a good knowledge of the learning theories and conditions and their application while teaching. This approach will definitely yield better learning outcomes when evaluated and will guarantee transfer of learning.

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Table 2

Reasons for Choice

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Hard working and intelligent	Reasons maturely, organized and Serious minded	Serious with academics and diligent scholar	Regular in school, committed, devoted and very serious with academic work	Bright, a motivator, versatile, committed, dedicated and intelligent	Don't want to work with any body.

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