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Role of Guidance and Counseling Programs as Correctional Strategies in Molding Pupils' Socio-Emotional Development in Public Primary Schools in Kericho County, Kenya

By Amanyama, A. K; Ngeno, G. K and Sitienei, E

Abstract

Guidance and counselling services to students are increasingly available and a growing proportion of school administrators have embraced them. Thus, schools have come up with various guidance and counselling programs to support effective curriculum implementation and enhance learners' academic achievement. The purpose of this study therefore is to establish the influence of these guidance and counselling programs on pupils' socio-emotional development. The objective of the study was to establish the role of guidance and counseling as a correctional strategy used by teachers in primary schools and their influence on pupils' socio-emotional development in Kericho County. The study was informed by the Gestalt theory's key concepts and principles. The ontological assumption and the epistemological paradigm of this research were relativism, realism, and pragmatism respectively. This was a mixed research and it employed a survey study design which used highly structured questionnaires to collect quantitative data and the open-ended questions and focus group discussions to collect qualitative data. The target population in this study was 189,946 pupils (95815 boys and 94131 girls) learning in 512 primary schools found in Kericho County and 4955 teachers in these schools. A sample size determination formula and systematic sampling technique was used to sample 50 deputy head teachers, 219 heads of guidance and counseling teachers and 384 pupils. A pilot study was conducted to ensure reliability of the instruments which was estimated using Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha. The reliability coefficients computed for teacher counselors, deputy head teachers and pupils' questionnaires were; 0.96, 0.89 and 0.94 respectively. Analysis of data was done using descriptive and inferential statistics and was aided by Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24. The findings indicated that guidance and counseling as a correctional strategy has a positive influence on pupils' socio-emotional development. It was also established that teacher-counselors and pupils have positive perceptions towards guidance and counseling. The Government, all educational stakeholders, policy makers, school administrators, and teachers are expected to use the findings in formulating and implementing relevant correctional strategies for enhanced pupils' socio-emotional development. The findings are also important as a basis for future research on ways of enhancing pupils' socio-emotional development.

Key words: Correctional Strategies, Socio-Emotional Development, Guidance and Counseling

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1.0 Background to the Problem

The profession of school counselling has continued to grow as new legislation and new professional developments were established to refine and further the profession and improve education (ASCA, 2005). School counselling began to shift from a focus exclusively on career development to a focus on student personal and social issues paralleling the rise of social justice and civil rights movements in the United States (Paisley, 2001). Research evidence showing strong correlations between fully implemented school counselling programs and student academic success was critical to beginning to show an evidence base for the profession especially at the high school level based in the state of Missouri (Lapan, Gybsers & Sun, 1997). But school counselling in the 1980s and early 1990s in the United States was not seen as a player in educational reform efforts buffeting the educational community (Stone & Dahir, 2006).

In 2002, counselling formally celebrated its 50th anniversary as a profession under the umbrella of the ACA. Among the most pressing topics were dealing with violence, trauma, and crises; managed care; wellness; social justice; technology; leadership; and identity (ASCA, 2012). In 2000, 1.8% of the Mexican population suffered some type of disability. Of the total population with disabilities, 75% attended school at some time, but only 70% of that population completed formal schooling. As a result, Mexico needed counselors with multi-cultural and systemic counseling skills rather than traditional strategies that focus on the individual (Hou & Zhang, 2007). In Argentina, in 1992 counseling became an official career. Counseling programs (and graduates) multiplied not only in Buenos Aries but in state capitals and universities around the nation (Huang, 2005).

China has at least 1 million people suffering from various psychological problems (Lim, Lim, Michael, Cai, & Schock, 2010). Different authors over the last decade have chronicled the historical development of counseling in China (Qian, Smith, Chen, & Xia, 2002; Yip, 2005). There are three broad groups of counselors in China (Hou & Zhang, 2007). There are efforts at integrating traditional Chinese ideas of holistic health such as Traditional Chinese Medicine with western psychotherapy (Hou & Zhang, 2007; Shu, 2003). Confucianism and Taoism influence the practice of counseling in China, e.g., Chinese Taoist Cognitive Psychotherapy (Zhang, et al., 2002). Gao (2001) noted that Chinese style of counseling tends to be more directive. The CPS together with CAMH, have formulated a code of ethics covering all areas of training, research, and professional practice (Qian, Gao, Yao, & Rodriguez, 2009). In addition, Chinese counsellors utilize the internet for therapy and where available, for supervision (Huang, 2005). A major challenge is few counsellors for effective service provision (Lim, Lim, Michael, Cai, & Schock, 2010).

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The awakening and significance of counseling as a profession is getting wide publicity in Indian newspapers and on various websites. Most recently, with help from the United States India Education Foundation (USIEF) and Vice Chancellor, the first author as Fulbright-Nehru Senior Research Scholar (Sandhu, 2011) started post graduate diploma in mental health counseling at the Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar in July, 2010. Counseling in the Philippines began in 1913-1934 with the American occupation, offering guidance services in two colleges and for a long time, guidance and counseling experienced stunted growth (Dy-Liacco, Piedmont, Murray-Swank, Rodgerson, & Sherman, 2009). In Switzerland, the quadrilingual nature (four national languages including German (64%), French (20%), Italian (7%), and Romansch (.5%)), means that counselor education and practice is divided on regional and linguistic interests (Tuason, 2008). This base serves to strengthen the identity of the psychologically-oriented profession and ensure a solid, accredited training, continuing education and the principles of an ethically sound professional practice (Dy-Liacco, Piedmont, Murray-Swank, Rodgerson, & Sherman, 2009).

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) Article 28 ensures each child's right to a free and compulsory basic education and to the protection of their dignity in all disciplinary matters (UNICEF, 2009). In addition, Article 29 charges state parties to ensure the fullest possible development of each child's ability and to the development of their respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; for parents, cultural values and for the environment. The Kenyan government on the other hand has entrenched the right to education in the constitution, Basic Education Act 2013, Children's Act 2001, Disability Act (2003), Educational Sessional Paper No.1/2005, Educational Sessional Paper No. 14/2012 and various other educational policies (KEMI,2015). In the face of all these policies and measures put in place, the question that begs is; where is the place for guidance and counselling? Is it important?

The Ominde Report of 1964 (Republic of Kenya, 1964) is the first of several post-independence reports to emphasize the need for counseling services in schools and to the general public. The Ministry of Home affairs, Heritage, & Sports (2002) report further emphasized need for counseling services especially among the youth. According to (Oketch & Kimemia, 2012), key factors influencing the growth of counseling are; rural to urban migration and resulting shifts in family structure, unemployment, the onset of the HIV-AIDS epidemic, the establishment of Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) centers to address the HIV-AIDS epidemic, the success of the first counseling psychology program at the United States International University (Africa)-Nairobi, establishment & success of the first Counseling and training center-Amani Counselling Center-Nairobi, High-stakes academic testing in schools, Increased occurrences of student unrest and violence in schools. There are also governmental policies emphasizing the need for guidance and counseling services to the youth in both social and academic settings (Oketch & Kimemia, 2013). Kenya has seen the establishment of the Kenya Association of Professional Counselors (KAPC) which offers professional training programs in counseling (Diploma, BA, MA, PhD in collaboration with the University of Manchester, UK) through its

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School of Counseling Studies; professional counseling services to individuals, groups and corporate bodies; and chartered counselor designations to qualifying members (KAPC, 2009).

The Kenya Counseling Association (KCA) on the other hand provides advocacy for supervision credentials, institutional accreditation, counselor accreditation for KCA members based on their professional training which ranges from level 1, ordinary membership to level 7, senior supervisor” (KCA, 2011). A key element to the success of this process was societal structural stability that resulted from geographical location and proximity (Oketch & Atieno, 2013). A balanced, comprehensive school counselling program provides services to promote student success. It involves school counsellors working in conjunction with parents, teachers and other school personnel and community agencies (Schellenberg & Grothans, 2009). Many developmental concepts that must be covered through a comprehensive program can be incorporated into other classroom studies, giving the school counsellor more opportunities for direct counselling, prevention and remediation functions (Ratts, Dekruyf & Chen-Hayes, 2008). Counsellors should strive to balance their time among all these services, based on the unique needs of their school community. By developing and implementing a comprehensive school counselling plan, school counsellors can establish services and activities that allow them to spend most of their time providing direct services to students (Schellenberg, 2000).

2.0 Statement of the Problem

The desired goal of a comprehensive school counselling program is student success. The program's design, delivery and content are dedicated to enhancing the ability of all students to fully utilize the educational opportunities available to them and attain optimum social worth. The guidance and counselling programs should therefore be delivered through direct and indirect services designed to address three domains of student development: academic, personal/social, and career. Professional school counsellors plan the comprehensive school counselling program and facilitate its delivery in collaboration with school administrators, other professional educators and community members to produce measurable results.

In a comprehensive program, the school counsellor serves as a leader, advocate, and collaborator working to recognize and remove systemic barriers to student success. Comprehensive school counselling programs (Career guidance, mentorship, peer counseling, psychosocial support and parent-teacher counseling) are integral to the school's educational environment and partner with other academic and behavioral initiatives to effect positive changes in student academic achievement and behaviour. However, the design, implementation and monitoring of the schools' counselling programs are key to their effectiveness.

Educational stakeholders and policy makers need to consider the entrenchment of effective guidance and counselling programs among other measures of enhancing pupils' socio-emotional development. Effective school counselling programs and practices should demonstrate results in enhanced socio-emotional development among all pupils regardless of backgrounds and circumstances. It is therefore important to know whether guidance and counselling in schools is an evidence based practice and whether the counsellors are making a difference in the

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lives of pupils. This study therefore seeks to establish whether guidance and counselling programs influence pupils' socio-emotional development.

3.0 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to establish the influence of guidance and counselling programs on pupils' socio-emotional development.

4.0 Research Objectives

To examine the role of guidance and counseling programs as a correctional strategy in pupils' socio-emotional development in Kericho County's primary schools

5.0 Methodology

This study used a descriptive survey study design. In survey research design, a survey is used to obtain a description of a particular perception. A descriptive research determines and reports the way things are. This study employed a mixed methods approach where both qualitative and quantitative data was needed to generate insight into the complex social phenomena under study hence mixed -mode designs that combine features of qualitative and quantitative designs and collect both types of data were used. Teddle and Tashakkori (2009) assert that mixed methods are a vehicle for improving the quality of inferences that are drawn from both the qualitative and quantitative methods. Highly structured survey questionnaires collected quantitative data and the open -ended questions were used to collect qualitative data that generated unexpected insights into the subject matter under study.

In this study, probability sampling technique was used where a systematic two stage case selection was developed. In the first stage, the schools to be involved in the study were selected. The study used cluster sampling to select the schools. In this case, the schools were selected as per the percentage of the number of schools in each sub-county in relation to the county. This involved the ordering of the sampling frame per admission numbers of the pupils and selecting the participants at regular interval through the list. According to Bhattacharjee (2012), systematic sampling involves a random start and then proceeds with the selection of every K^{th} element, where $k = N/n$ where k is the ratio of sampling frame size N and the desired sample size n . This study adopted quantitative and qualitative methodology to document and analyzes the teacher counsellors' and pupils' perception of the correctional strategies used on pupils' socio -emotional development. Data was further analyzed using Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS) software version 21. The analyzed data was presented using frequency distribution tables, pie charts and tables.

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6.0 Results and Discussion

Table 1.1

Pupils’ Perception of Guidance and Counselling Programs

Guidance and counseling programs	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean
Teachers are pupils’ role models	168 (43.8%)	215 (56%)	1 (0.2%)	-	-	1.57
Successful people mentor pupils	76 (19.8%)	276 (71.9%)	12 (3.1%)	20 (5.2%)	-	1.94
Teachers talk about social issues.	175 (45.6%)	202 (52.6%)	6 (1.6%)	-	1 (0.2%)	1.56
Teachers understand pupils and help the accept circumstances.	87 (22.7%)	275 (71.6%)	20 (5.2%)	2 (0.5%)	-	1.84
Guidance and counseling has helped pupils realize talents	116 (30.2%)	241 (62.8%)	23 (6.1%)	1 (0.2%)	3 (0.7%)	1.77
Peer counseling has helped pupils develop effective communication skills.	92 (24.2%)	272 (70.8%)	17 (4.4%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	1.82
Teacher-parent counseling has enhanced pupils’ intra and interpersonal relationships for academic achievement.	128 (33.4%)	226 (58.9%)	28 (7.3%)	1 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)	1.75

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Parent-teachers assist pupil to adopt coping strategies to address challenges.	134 (34.9%)	230 (59.9%)	14 (3.6%)	5 (1.4%)	1 (0.2%)	1.72
Pupils understand their circumstances through group counselling	87 (22.7%)	275 (71.6%)	20 (5.2%)	2 (0.5%)	-	1.84
Social support helps pupils overcome difficulties	92 (24.2%)	272 (70.8%)	17 (4.4%)	1 (0.2%)	2 (0.4%)	1.82
Overall mean						1.76

Emotional well-being of pupils improves not only their ability to perform in school but also their interpersonal relationship with peers, parents and teachers (Kesici, 2007). Pupils should be helped to attain positive behaviors which include the improvement of social-emotional skills, attitudes towards interpersonal relationships, and behavior within the classroom (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor & Schellinger, 2011). In this study, pupils’ and teacher counsellors’ perception on the role of guidance and counseling programs in molding pupils’ socio-emotional development were sought. It is important to note that the acquisition of emotional adjustment may help pupils to act and behave in a desired way, face life situations properly and feel adjusted in the personal and social life (Mangal, 2007).

Pupils were asked to indicate their opinions on guidance and counselling programs used in their school. The findings in Table 1.1 show that, guidance and counseling has crucial role in enhancing pupils’ socio-emotional development in primary schools. In this regard, an overarching concern regarding the notion of evidence-based practice is key. Guidance and counseling programs offered in schools should be able to have positive influence on pupils’ socio-emotional development.

Other concerns focus on a holistic analysis of the pupils’ circumstances. For instance, Carr (2000) felt it necessary to justify an evidence-based approach in the context of a current pre-occupation with a social constructionist view of systemic thinking. In the present study, a majority number of 168(43.8%) participants strongly agreed that their teachers are role models in school, and on whether teachers often brought successful people to talk to pupils, 76(19.8%) participants strongly agreed and 276(71.9%) participants agreed. Pupils were also asked whether teachers talk to them on social issues like living peacefully both at school and at home and 175(45.6%) participants strongly agreed while 202(52.6%) participants agreed.

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The idea of mentors and models is based on the Gestalt's figure/ground principle which is based on the relationship between an object and the surrounding space. Here the pupils are helped to clearly differentiate their goals and focus attention on their achievement thus minimizing perpetual confusion. The concept can be applied to the realm of psychological needs as well. In theory, a need arises and becomes foreground, if it is satisfied, it becomes background (How, 2016). In this case, a teacher works to focus on pupils' needs, to bring about change so that the emerging need may be identified satisfied and enabled to retreat to the background. Awareness of one's experience and needs is considered "the royal road to the cure" (Wagner-Moore, 2004).

The implication here is that various guidance and counseling programs are designed to enhance the pupils' socio-emotional development. These programs should help the pupil to function efficiently in their social set-ups. Gestalt theory uses the word contact as an abstract, formal concept that refers to the exchange between an individual person and the surrounding environment. If the boundary becomes unclear, there is disturbance but when the cycle is functioning smoothly, awareness of internal or external stimuli leads to needs satisfaction (Pivina, 2005).

Pupils whose psychological needs are met record higher academic performance. This is key in fulfilling the sixth Education for all goal; to improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (KEMI, 2015). Interestingly, in his study, Anyango, Simatwa and Serem (2013), reported that teachers and pupils perceived guidance and counseling services in schools negatively as a waste of time. An alternative view, however is that cognitive theories among other psychological interventions are relevant to intervening with difficult behavior. Cognitive behavior therapy is concerned with thoughts implicated in selective attention and irrational beliefs in the form of negative automatic thoughts. Interventions are drawn up to address unhelpful thoughts and beliefs (Fuggle, Dunsmiur & Curry, 2013).

The findings also reveal that pupils indicated that teachers understand them and guide them on how to accept their circumstances since 87(22.7%) participants strongly agreed, 275(71.6%) participants agreed. It is important that teachers establish a close relationship with their pupils. This culminates into an attachment that leads to the teacher understanding the pupil and supporting his/her socio-emotional development. Attachment based provision can support and remediate the development of the insecurely attached child (Boxall, 2002). In this way, teachers work in a restorative way aiming to support the wellbeing and social functioning of the vulnerable pupils, through offering a flexible, warm climate for their learning where the teachers respond according to the developmental level of the child, and where the creation of positive, calm relationships is the focus (Cline & Birch, 2015).

They further appreciated that guidance and counselling helped them to realize certain talents within them and attain their best academic performance, 116(30.2%) participants strongly agreed, 241(62.8%) participants agreed. Cognitive behavior therapy uses cognitive restructuring

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and behavioral tasks to intervene with automatic thoughts and maladaptive behaviors, highlighting the relationship between behavior and the environment and in developing new behavior repertoires (Chu, 2013). Using this thought, teachers adopted strategies like peer counseling, and teacher- parent counseling.

The findings in this study indicate that the strategies are successful. However, contrary to these findings, there are studies that report the ineffectiveness of guidance and counseling services in helping individuals with psychological problems and indiscipline. For example, a study by Ileri and Muola (2010) reported that many pupils are beset with physical and psychological problems, and indiscipline yet the guidance and counseling programs are running in schools. On the other hand, Nge'no (2012), reported that students were uncertain on the impact of guidance and counseling services on their emotional needs. The implication of such findings is that some schools have not headed the implementation of functional and effective guidance and counseling departments (Mutie & Ndambuki, 2004).

It is important to note that there are other factors at play in a child's socio-emotional development. For instance, high levels of parent-child conflict during adolescence have been linked to emotional maladjustment and poor quality relationships (Overbeek, Sattin, Vermulst, Ha & Engels, 2007). Children in these kinds of difficulties must be assisted to overcome. On whether peer counselling in school has helped pupils to enhance communication skills, 92(24.2%) participants strongly agreed, 272(70.8%) participants agreed and asked whether teacher-parent counselling has enhanced pupils' intra and interpersonal relationships for higher academic performance, 128(33.4%) participants strongly agreed and 226(58.9%) participants agreed.

It was also found that parent-teachers have assisted pupils to adopt coping strategies to address their challenges, since many 134 (34.9%) participants strongly agreed and 230(59.9%) participants agreed. All these suggest that teachers are not only an integral part of children's social-emotional development, but also can be an active agent in enhancing the socio-emotional well-being of young children. However, to provide support to children under their care, it is also important to ensure the social-emotional competence of teachers as well (Lam & Wong, 2017).

These findings are like those in a study of the relationship of teacher self-efficacy to their sense of responsibility for intervening with behavior (Gibbs and Powell, 2012) reflected on the apparent influence of teachers' self- efficacy to intervene with factors deemed by them to be external influences upon pupils' behavior. Their findings that this collective self-efficacy, alone in their study, may negatively correlate with rates of pupil exclusion from school, is grounds for their commentary that it is important to promote whole school approaches to interventions for behavior and to see individually focused work as part of a wider staff ecology in attributions towards managing behavior.

Teachers should also adopt psychodynamic psychotherapy which seeks to help children process the cognitive and affective components of memories that may be distortions of actual events. Children are helped to obtain some sense of mastery and understanding of their lives and

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learn to manage themselves without having to resort to troublesome defensive (self-protective) strategies (Rutter & Taylor, 2006).

Gestalt opines a holistic approach to pupils' socio-emotional development as opposed to the mechanistic perspectives of the stimulus response models (Pivina, 2005). He further asserts that pupils must receive help to avoid defense mechanisms and that nothing exists except the now. Genuine knowledge is the product of what is immediately evident in the experience of the perceiver (Wagner-Moore, 2004).

Excerpt 1 gives evidence of the practice of guidance and counseling in schools. However, it should be noted that although guidance and counselling is key and requires thorough evaluation, concerns are expressed that this is a practice that is given insufficient attention. Kratochwill and Stoiber (2000), writing in an American context, point out that owing to pressure of work, school psychologists may fall into "crisis routines", rather than follow systematic procedures for intervention, planning, monitoring and evaluation.

According to Mangal (2007), students require psychological counseling to assist with emotional adjustment. Table 4.6 gives the teacher counselors' responses on the role of guidance and counseling programs on pupils' socio-emotional development. The teacher counselors were asked to indicate their opinion about guidance and counseling programs and their influence on pupils' socio-emotional development. The findings show that, 104(52.5%) participants strongly agreed that the mentorship program greatly influenced the pupils' positive self-esteem, they noted that peer counselling helped many pupils to improve their communication skills since 81(40.9%) participants strongly agreed and 111(56.1%) participants agree. Similar findings are presented by Anyango, Simatwa & Serem (2013) in their study on pupil discipline management in primary schools.

In his study, Ngage (2002) asserts that school rules must be designed to encourage a conducive environment for all pupils. He further asserts that unreasonable rules with no clear purpose may ignite resentment and lead to indiscipline. The findings of this study reveal that school rules and regulations greatly improved the pupils' social competence. Majority (94(47.5%) participants strongly agreed and 93(47.0%) participants agreed). Similar findings are presented by (Gichuki, 2012) who found that over 62.3% of students agreed that school rules and regulations provide control and instill a sense of commitment in learners. Further analysis of the findings reveals that 69(34.8%) participants strongly agreed that teacher counsellors teach pupils skills like assertiveness so that they express their grievances and 125(63.1%) participants agreed to the same fact. This is in agreement with the fact that various psychologists have explored the contribution of attachment theory to pupil and school functioning (Verschuren & Koomen, 2012). The concept of attachment can be translated into the school environment and argued be a developmental need for all children, highlighting the responsibility of teaching staff to provide positive and secure relationships that, although primarily informed by the instructional nature of the environment, reflect students' need for strong positive relationships in school (Boorn, Hopkins & Page, 2010).

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Finally, it was also evident from the findings that teacher counsellors ensure that pupils with good behavior are rewarded, they also use of pupil leaders to improved social problem solving skills among the pupils and that guidance and counseling given to pupils makes them believe in themselves and their capabilities in attaining their goals (self-efficacy).

7.0 Conclusion

Guidance and counseling has a vital role in pupils' socio-emotional development. An advantage of guidance and counseling approach to behavior difficulties is that it makes contact with what is known about normal emotional development and an understanding of the cognitive underpinnings of abnormal behavior. It forges a link between brain and behavior. Although punishment and rewards lead to behavior change, proper guidance and counseling can work miracles around discipline. Guidance and counseling programs assist the individual pupil to achieve independence and can discuss oneself in terms of intellectual abilities and other superior talents and functions towards his/her personal development and self -actualization.

8.0 Recommendation

The present research recommends that guidance and counselling has a crucial role in molding pupils' socio-emotional development. Teachers' mentorship and role modeling to students, nurturing of talents, peer counseling, teacher parent counseling are very effective guidance and counseling programs and have a positive role in pupils' socio-emotional development. It is therefore recommended that guidance and counseling programs be designed to enhance the pupils' socio-emotional development. The aspects of enhanced pupils' socio-emotional development entail improved self-knowledge, emotional expression, pupils identifying their abilities, interests, aptitudes, values, potentialities and developing them to the full, and ability to create and sustain relationships.

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