Techniques of Counselling

The three major techniques used in counselling process in schools. The techniques are: (1) Directive Counselling, (2) Non-Directive Counselling, and (3) Eclectic Counselling.

1. Directive Counselling:

In this counselling the counsellor plays an active role as it is regarded as a means of helping people how to learn to solve their own problems. This type of counselling is otherwise known as counsellor-centred counselling. Because in this counselling the counsellor does everything himself i.e. analysis, synthesis, diagnosis, prognosis, prescription and follow-up.

Features of Directive Counselling:

It has the following features:

During the interview attention is focused upon a particular problem and possibilities for its solution.

2. During the interview the counsellor plays a more active role than the client or pupil.

3. The pupil or client makes the decision, but the counsellor does all that he can to get the counselee or client makes a decision in keeping with his diagnosis.

4. The counsellor tries to direct the thinking of the counsellee or client by informing, explaining, interpreting and advising him.

Steps in Directive Counselling:

The following steps are followed in this type of counselling:

(i) Analysis:

In this step data is collected from a variety of sources for an adequate understanding of the pupil.

(ii) Synthesis:

This step implies organizing and summarising the data to find out the assets, liabilities, adjustments and mal-adjustments of the pupil.

(iii) Diagnosis:

Formulating conclusions regarding the nature and causes of the problems expressed by the pupils is the major concern of this step.

(iv) Prognosis: This step implies predicting the future development of the problem of client or pupil.

(v) Counselling:

This step indicates taking steps by the counsellor with the pupil to bring about adjustment in life.

(vi)Follow-up: This step implies helping and determining the effectiveness of the counselling provided to the pupil or client.

Role of the counsellor in Directive Counseling:

The counsellor plays the vital role in this counselling process. He is the pivot of the process and the leader of the situation. The counsellor does most of the talking problems and individual is not the focus. The counselee in fact, works under the counsellor and not with him. The counsellor tries to direct the thinking of the counselee or client by informing, explaining, interpreting and sometimes advising also.

The counsellor collects all possible information about the pupils or counselees and analyses them for an adequate understanding. He summarizes and organises the data so as to understand the abilities and limitations, adjustment and mal-adjustment of the pupils. He formulates conclusions about the nature and causes of his problems. He predicts the future development of his problems.

He prescribes what the pupil should do to solve his problems and follows the consequences or effects of his prescription. Directive counselling is also called the prescriptive counselling because the counsellor prescribes the solutions or the course of action for the pupils.

2. Non-Directive Counselling:

In this type of counselling the counselee or client or pupil, not the counsellor is the pivot of the counselling process. He plays an active role and this type of counselling is a growing process. In this counselling the goal is the independence and integration of the client rather than the solution of the problem. In this counselling process the counsellee comes to the counsellor with a problem. The counsellor establishes rapport with the counsellee based on mutual trust, acceptance and understanding.

The counsellee provides all information about his problems. The counsellor assists him to analyze and synthesise, diagnose his difficulties, predict the future development of his problems, take a decision about the solution of his problems; and analyse the strengths and consequences of his solutions before taking a final decision. Since the counsellee is given full freedom to talk about his problems and work out a solution, this technique is also called the "permissive" counselling.

Pupil's perception of the relationship:

When a pupil seeks the counsellor's help, he soon discovers that the counsellor accepts him as he is and believes in his ability to solve his problem in his own way. He also learns that he can talk about whatever he chooses and sometimes he finds, even to his own surprise, that he can talk about topics which so far he couldn't discuss with his closest friends though previous experiences with counsellors may have taught him that the counsellor is a "giver of advice".

He now finds that he is talking with a person who tries to understand him, tries to follow what he is saying and feeling, tries to help him understand himself, and neither gives advice not attempts to manipulate him into making a decision which the counsellor believes is best for him. He feels that the counsellor understands why he sees the things differently at different times and he learns that if he wishes, he can terminate or avoid the relationship without solving the specific problem which is brought to the counsellor.

Steps in Non-Directive Counselling:

The following steps are adopted in this counselling process:

1. The pupil or individual comes for help as the counselee.
2. The counsellor defines the situation by indicating that he doesn't have the answer but he is able to provide a place and an atmosphere in which the client or pupil can think of the answers or solutions to his problems.
3. The counsellor is friendly, interested and encourages free expression of feeling regarding the problem of the individual.
4. The counsellor tries to understand the feeling of the individual or client.
5. The counsellor accepts and recognizes the positive as well as the negative feelings.
6. The period of release or free expression is followed by a gradual development of insight.
7. As the client recognizes and accepts emotionally as well as intellectually his real attitudes and desires, he perceives the decisions that he must make and the possible courses of action open to him.
8. Positive steps towards the solution of the problem situation begin to occur.
9. A decreased need for help is felt and the client is the one who decides to end the contract.

3. Eclectic Counselling:

Eclectic counselling is a combination of directive and non-directive technique depending upon the situational factors. This approach in counselling is best characterised by its freedom to the counsellor to use whatever procedures or techniques seem to be the most appropriate to any particular time for any particular client. This counselling is one where one who is willing to utilize any procedures which hold promise even though their theoretical bases differed markedly.

This counselling recognizes that each theory may contain some truth and that so long as a final decision between theories can't be made practical necessity justifiably takes precedence over orthodoxy. The counsellor in this counselling may start with directive technique but switches over to non-directive counselling if the situation requires. He may also start with the non-directive technique and switches over to directive techniques if the situation demands.

So the counsellor in this counselling makes use of directive and non-directive counselling and also of any other type which may be considered useful for the purpose of modifying the ideas and attitudes of the counsellee. Hence it is possible for the counsellor to alternate between directive and non-directive techniques depending upon the requirements of the situation.

It can be said that directive and non-directive counselling are at the opposite ends of the pole of guidance. It is eclectic counselling that bridges the gap between the two and makes adjustment between directive and non-directive techniques.

Features/Characteristics of Eclectic Counselling:

This counselling has the following features or characteristics of it:

1. Methods of counselling may change from counselee to counselee or even with the same client from time to time.
2. Flexibility is the key note of this counselling.
3. Freedom of choice and expression is open to both, the counsellor and the client.
4. The client and the philosophical framework are adjusted to serve the purposes of the relationship.
5. Experience of mutual confidence and faith in the relationship are basic.
6. Feelings of comfort are essential.

Competence of the Counsellor in Eclectic Counselling:

Eclectic counselling assumes high level competence and should never be used as a rationalization by the counsellor for indiscriminate use or neglect of particular procedures advocated in other philosophies. The competent eclectic counsellor is well acquainted with all other major theories of philosophies in counselling and uses this knowledge in choosing techniques and in the establishment of a positive working relationship with the client. A rejection of any philosophical framework is justified by the counsellor if he had a better way to achieve the task in hand.

The counsellor must be aware of the fact that problems differ from individual to individual. The counsellee or the pupil must be accepted as he is and attempts be made to understand him. Each problem must be treated as unique. All pre-conceived notions of dealing with all the counsellee's personal problems in the same way should be discarded. The task of the counsellor is very difficult.

He has to shift and interpret all the matter that is available about the individual. The worker should take care in working with the pupils to be warm, co-ordinal, friendly, responsive and understanding but at the same time will be impersonal and objective. To be impersonal and objective, however he needs not to be cold, indifferent or not interested.