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UACE S101 General Paper section B: Comprehension story 2

Most schools clearly cannot 'educate' the 'whole' child, especially across the spectrum of intellectual, social moral ethical, aesthetic cultural physical, psychological, spiritual criteria, and they never will be able to without major changes to the ways in which we currently conceive of and operate schools

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To an extent, schools and their systems have brought these high expectations upon themselves by presenting to their potential constituencies statements of aims and objectives which are too idealistic. It not unusual to find school objectives containing statements like 'to educate according to individual needs,' 'to develop a sense of citizenship, social responsibility and national pride', and so on. How many schools purposefully set out to incorporate in the formal curriculum practices reflecting such aims and objectives and if they do, how successful are they? How are such things measured? Can schools adequately demonstrate that they are effectively in achieving these objectives? Further, many of the existing structures and operating procedures in school seem to be designed more for administrative expediency and teacher convenience than the genuinely individual, developmental and educational needs of every child.

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So, the quality, nature and role of schooling are appropriately being questioned. Other changes are being imposed without much social input. Governments in several OECD countries continue to force economic stringencies on to systems and individual schools to raise concern about retention rates in post-compulsory years and to question the relevance of curricular content in the senior years for vocations and employment opportunities. The impetus for such questioning appears to be as much political as educational. Specialist training especially for primary teachers is being eroded in favour of more generalist teacher training. Specialist courses to produce kindergarten/pre-school teachers are systematically being phased out in both Australia and continental Europe in favour of child-care programs. Specialist, curriculum development departments and other support services are being dismantled. Schools are now expected to be responsible for providing these services themselves.

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The integration of those with recognized disabilities into mainstream schools

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while commendable in theory is creating significant difficulty and anxiety in many school communities where there is an under provision of appropriate support. Many of these policies result from a concern for greater economic efficiencies and to reduce the percentage of government budgets expended on education. 35

And there are other pressures. Employers and tertiary institutions are querying the academic standards of exit-students from secondary schools. The moral guardians of society questions discipline standards teenage attitudes the lack of respect for others and for property, codes of behavior, and the general tone of school and, periodically aspects of the curriculum content. 40

All user groups are questioning the efficacy of the schooling process in terms of the 'product'. Teachers unions have become more militant over improvements in teaching conditions salary levels, and in more specifically defining the role of teaching. Teachers are under pressure to take additional school-based responsibility for areas such as curriculum development. 45

Schools are increasingly have to write proposal for additional funding for programmes many would see as essential for meeting the most basic needs of students. They also being called upon to provide school-based responses to proposed structural and operation changes and to establish and increasing number of school-based committees. These increased loads have resulted in rising levels of stress-related absenteeism and in attrition from the teaching service. For many, teaching appears no longer to provide the professional status or job satisfaction it once did. 50

The result is that as governmental and societal pressure for greater accountability at every level of school operation increases, schools are buckling under pressure to deliver the quality service their stated aims and objectives suggest, and that parents and society at large are coming to demand. As they are presently structured and operated schools cannot deliver comprehensive 'education' like this. A normal, healthy and balanced life-style comes from a combination of sound schooling, a stable two-parent family, an accessible extended family of grandparents and relatives, a family affiliation with a local church being a known and respected member of a close-knit and supportive community and so on. For increasing number of children this kind of combination no longer exists. 55 60 65

So schools are being asked to shoulder the responsibilities which were hitherto the province of these other bodies, but without the necessary expertise. Being legally *in loco parentis* does not automatically confer the capacity to be a substitute for all of these other support structures. The teaching role itself has become more demanding but is exacerbated by these additional (and, some teachers would argue, non-teaching) responsibilities. 70

Many parents are also clearly agitated about societal values and they look to

schools to apply some kind of remedy. We witness daily a progressive, subtle acceptance of the permissive society; at almost every level of social communication, there is undermining of moral and ethical standards. An increase in personal gratification and freedom of expression without sufficient responsibility or respect for the rights and freedom of others. Television, video, stage music and cinema are shaper of attitudes as powerful as any school or home. Parents feel powerless to control these influences and they tend to call on the school for the additional personal and social guidance. Teachers appropriately claim that they are unqualified, and do not have the time, to provide this kind of support system.

There are many imaginative and educative things happening in schools, and all schools have dedicated, well qualified and energetic teachers. But the original question remains. What constitutes an excellent school in the eyes of parents and society? Can schools provide within existing structures and operation patterns what parents and society want? And can the stated charter of schools continue to be education of the 'whole child'?

Whose responsibility does it then become to ensure that children and young people grow up with a healthy attitude to society and self, treasure the best of the past and work to develop a secure future for the whole of mankind? Since most countries have laws which make school attendance compulsory between certain ages of one's life, it may not be proper that schools and teachers in particular, walk away from both the profession and moral responsibility to develop the whole child. But it is a question of capability rather than culpability.

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)
- (b) What does the writer meant by;
 - (i) "...designated more for administration expediency and teacher convenience than for genuine individual, developmental and educational needs of every single child." (04 marks)
 - (ii) "... schools are buckling under pressure to deliver the quality of service their stated aims and objectives suggest"
- (c) Summarize in about 120 word, the change in school operations that government and society in general expected schools and teachers to adopt to meet their stated goals, according to the passage. (10marks)
- (d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible
 - (i) spectrum (line 02)
 - (ii) potential constituencies. (line 06)
 - (iii) economic stringencies (line 20)
 - (iv) impetus (line 23)

- (v) integration (line 32)
 - (vi) efficacy of the schooling process. (line 42)
 - (vii) exacerbated (line 70)
 - (viii) subtle acceptance (line 75)
 - (ix) personal gratification (line 76)
 - (x) capability rather than culpability (line 94)
- (20 marks)
- Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

Suggested answers

- (a) Suggest a suitable title for the passage (02 marks)

The Schools

or

Current education challenges

Or

Current School challenges

Or

School curriculum

Etc.

- (b) What does the writer meant by;

(iii) “...designated more for administration expediency and teacher convenience than for genuine individual, developmental and educational needs of every single child.” (04 marks)

Are intended to ease work of school administration and teachers rather than for the benefit of children

(iv) “... schools are buckling under pressure to deliver the quality of service their stated aims and objectives suggest ...”

It means that schools struggling to fulfill their objectives of delivering quality education as expected

- (c) Summarize in about 120 word, the change in school operations that government and society in general expected schools and teachers to adopt to meet their stated goals, according to the passage. (10marks)

CHANGES ADVOCATED BY SCHOOL’S STAKE HOLDERS ACCORDING TO PASSAGE

Stakeholders in education like government, employers, parents, and guardians expect schools and teachers to change strategies and tactics that will enable

schools to produce candidates with acceptable qualities. These include employable skills, positive attitude towards work and life in general, discipline, respect for others and self and so on. The new strategies to be adopted include development of appropriate curricula in structural and operation changes to meet the educational and societal demands; to accommodate successfully students with disabilities in mains stream schools; to cause a reduction in school dropouts and take up the missing parental and counseling roles. The teachers should strive to overcome the stress that comes with these additional roles.

(d) Explain the meaning of the following words and phrases as used in the passage, using you own words wherever possible

- | | | |
|--------|---|-----------|
| (i) | spectrum | (line 02) |
| | range or variety | |
| (ii) | potential constituencies. | (line 06) |
| | customers/public | |
| (iii) | economic stringencies | (line 20) |
| | strict regulation on expenditure | |
| (iv) | impetus | (line 23) |
| | force, impulse, pressure | |
| (v) | integration | (line 32) |
| | mixing, teaching together | |
| (vi) | efficacy of the schooling process. | (line 42) |
| | worthiness/usefulness/value of teaching | |
| (vii) | exacerbated | (line 70) |
| | worsened/intensified | |
| (viii) | subtle acceptance | (line 75) |
| | agree indirectly to take | |
| (ix) | personal gratification | (line 76) |
| | personal pride | |
| (x) | capability rather than culpability | (line 94) |
| | ability rather than responsibility | |

(20 marks)

Spellings, Punctuation and Grammatical Expression (SPGE) (10 marks)

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Thanks

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