**GP Term 3 2017 – Comprehension – Topic 3: Education – Moral Education**





Why do the youths need moral education?







**Suggested Answers**

**From Passage 1**

**Q1) 1 What does the phrase ‘exhilarated and depressed’ (line 2) suggest about the writer’s attitude towards young people? [1]**

From the Passage

When you have as many conversations as I do with young people, you come away both exhilarated and depressed.

Inferred Answer

The two words are of opposite meaning, which shows that the author is having mixed feelings/feeling ambivalent about young people today.

**Q2) Explain in your own words as far as possible, the irony in lines 9 – 12. [2]**

From the Passage

The same person who volunteers for a suicide prevention hotline or a domestic violence shelter might tell you, "Well, there really is no such thing as right or wrong. It’s kind of like what works best for the individual. Each person has to work it out for himself.”

Inferred Answer

We would expect a helpline volunteer to be able to give sound moral advice to people who call them for help, yet such individuals feel that there is no real need to be able to discern between what is acceptable and what is not/ are unable to make a stand.

**Q3) Explain in your own words as far as possible what the writer means when he says young people are ‘morally inarticulate’ (line 15). [2]**

From the Passage

We are raising a generation of young people who are not being given the arguments to support the ideals… by which most of them instinctively live.

Inferred Answer

These youths are unable to provide reasons for/justify/articulate/speak up to defend/rationalise their ethical decision. To them, the decision seems to be made without them even questioning/ trying to justify it.

**Q4) According to the writer, explain what ‘the diffidence of many teachers confused by all the talk about pluralism’ (lines 22 – 23) has caused. Use your own words as far as possible. [2]**

meaning of this phrase – how it is linked to issue (moral education) – what kind of impact will this phrase cause

From the Passage

The last few decades of the twentieth century has seen a steady erosion of knowledge and steady increase in moral scepticism.

Inferred Answer

It has caused a gradual decline in the ability to discern right from wrong, and more people are starting to question traditional notions of morality as the society is more diverse and has many views and values.

**Q5) Explain why ‘indoctrinate’ (line 24) is in quotation marks. [1]**

From the Passage

Such teachers actually believe that it is not right to ‘indoctrinate’ our children in their own culture and moral tradition.

Inferred Answer

The writer does not think/ is sceptical that teachers are actually brainwashing their students to accept certain values.

It is to depict that the writers’ doubt that the teachers are actually radicalizing or instilling the students to abide to a set of moral values.

**Q6) Explain in your own words as far as possible the writer’s intention for beginning four sentences with ‘We need…’ in paragraph 5. [2]**

From the Passage

We need to bring the great books and the great ideas back into the centre of the curriculum.

We need to transmit the best of our political and cultural heritage.

We need to hold back on the cynical attacks on our traditions and institutions.

We need to teach our young people to understand, to respect and to protect the institutions that protect us and preserve our humane, free and democratic society.

Inferred Answer

He is emphasising/highlighting the importance of teaching teenagers the right moral values.

**From Passage 2**

**Q7) What does the writer suggest about teacher-facilitators when he says that they ‘often pretend to teach children real values to pacify parents’ (lines 6 – 7)? Explain in your own words as far as possible. [3]**

show what the writer think of the teacher

From the Passage

Today, many school authorities seem to have contempt for traditional moral values.

Inferred Answer

He suggests that the teacher-facilitators are hypocrites as they despise the teaching of orthodox/conventional moral values but they still abide to the parents’ demands of moral education.

**Q8) According to the writer, what do school authorities consider to be a ‘good’ value (line 11)? Explain in your own words as far as possible. [2]**

From the Passage

They teach kids that whatever feels good at the moment or whatever the group considers acceptable is a "good" value

OR

The right value… depends on the situation and the individual. A value is good if it “works” for a particular child at a particular time.

Inferred Answer

School authorities feel that a ‘good’ value is anything which seems right at that point in time or anything which the majority think it is appropriate based on the circumstances and who the person is.

**Summary Question**

**Q9) Turtel strongly believes that public schools in America are not conducting moral education programmes properly.**

**Using material from paragraphs 3 to 5, summarise the criticisms he has towards the way moral education programmes are conducted and the consequences of such programmes. Write your answer in no more than 120 words, not counting the opening words which are printed below. Use your own words as far as possible. [7]**

The writer disapproves of moral education programmes in American public schools because…

| **From the passage** | **Answer** |
| --- | --- |
| 1. This is unfortunately **contrary** to what
2. parents **want**. (*line 13)* (cause)
 | they **do not fulfil parental desires** /**meet parental expectations/ goes against what parents desire**. |
| b. Most parents want schools **to teach their** children **traditional** values like honesty, hard work…(*line 14)* (cause) | of hoping schools **impart/inculcate/nurture** their children with **time-honoured**/**long-established/ conventional** values.  |
| c. They **want** their children **to have a sound moral compass**, to be able to **judge for themselves** what is **right or wrong.** (*line 15-16*) (cause)ORchildren will **no longer be able** to **differentiate** **between mercy and murder, honesty and theft**… (lines 39-40) (consequence) | and ensuring that they have **the ability to distinguish**/**discern/differentiate** between what is **acceptable and unacceptable**/**good and bad/sound and unsound** values**.**  |
| d. Yet, to many teacher-facilitators, there is **no purpose in teaching** that cheating, lying, stealing or having casual sex with other students are undesirable acts in themselves. (cause)*(lines 18-19)*  | Some teachers **do not see a need for**/ **fail to see the need for / significance for/ importance of/ motive behind**/ students to learn that certain behaviours are unacceptable/ objectionable.  |
| e. To them, **such actions** are **just** **unfortunate choices** that students make... *(line 20)* (cause) | These are **merely** perceivedto be **regrettable/ mistaken** **decisions/ mistakes made by** students  |
| f. depending on **circumstances** **and personality**, out of many alternative moral values. *(lines 20-21)* (cause) | that are based on/influenced by **situational factors** **and individuality.**  |
| g. Moral education classes **deliberately** teach children to be **non-judgmental** about moral values. *(lines 21-22)* (cause) | Moral education lessons **intentionally** teach pupils not to **make choices**/ not to **decide what is right or wrong**.  |
|  h. Each student **gives their opinion** about a moral issue but **conclusions** are **never reached**. *(lines 23-24)* (consequence) | Also, students **present their views**/**thoughts** on moral issues but **do not make final decisions**/**arrive at resolutions**. |
| i. teach children **only** **self gratification** and **feelings of the moment matter**, *(lines 33-34)* (cause) | Children are told that **solely** **satisfying their individual desires** and **temporal**/**transient sentiments/ emotions/ acting on impulse** is **important/count**.  |
| j. but moral education programmes are **an assault** on the **time-tested** values most parents teach their children. *(lines 35-36)*(consequence) | Such classes **undermines traditional**/ **conventional/ long-established/ accepted/ entrenched** values the majority of parents teach their kids  |
| k**. corrupt** children at the **deepest level.** *(line 38)* (consequence) | and **causing their belief systems to be totally warped**. |

**Application Question**

**Q10) Both writers believe that schools should guide children in developing a sound moral character. Sommers suggests that schools should engage in a Great Relearning while Turtel criticises the way American public schools conduct moral education programmes.**

**With reference to the ideas presented in the passages, consider how far the young people in your society need a school-based moral education programme. [8]**

**Thinking perspective:**

Use the points given by the writers to explain why Singapore needs a school-based moral education or not.

Justify the reason that explain why the writer‘s point of view is justifiable.

eg1 – why Singapore students are unable to make moral judgement

**Structure of Discussion:**

**Introduction**

**State briefly the requirement of the question – how far you do you agree with the proposition**

**Main body

Point 1:
1. Quote from the passage**

According to Joel Turtel, - students live in a ‘moral haze’ and are ‘morally inarticulate’

**2. Explanation on why this explains Singapore youths need a moral-based education**The writer’s view is that they are unable to make moral judgement and decision and thus, this explains why there is a need for Singapore to have a school-based moral education.

**3. why do you think that the youths in Singapore will need a school-based moral education**

Discuss on how Singapore students are brought up and taught in school and society.

**According to National Crime Prevention Council, most problem youths come from homes lacking in parental guidance and are usually under-achievers in schools and with low self-esteem.**

**4. Example**

According to Department of Singapore Statistics, the number of youth crime has been falling which shows the relentless efforts by Ministry of Education in imparting moral education has become a significant recognition that school-based moral education is needed by youths especially for the group from 12 -14 age groups.

**5. Extent of Agreement:**

There is extensive regulation by the government as imposed by Juvenile Court and social institution like National Youth Challenge Council There also many religious institutions which act as moral institutions to guide the youths. The fact that the number of juvenile delinquents is on the fall explains why there is no need of school-based moral education which is demanding task for the teacher.

**6. linking sentence**

It is a very debateable issue whether school-based moral education is needed. However, it is rational to conclude that all or more means of education by more institutions would be helpful to enrich the moral acumen of our youths.

Point 2

**2.1 Quote**

According to Joel Tutel, ‘there is no purposes in teaching that cheating, lying, stealing, or having casual sex with other students are undesirable acts in themselves’

**2.2 Explanation – why this explains that the youth of Singapore does not need a school-based education**

**2.3 Why you agree with this view that Singapore does not need a school-based education**

**2.4 Example**

**2.5 Extent of Agreement – why you may not agree**

**2.6 Linking sentence**

**3. Conclusion**

**Q10) Both writers believe that schools should guide children in developing a sound moral character. Sommers suggests that schools should engage in a Great Relearning while Turtel criticises the way American public schools conduct moral education programmes.**

**With reference to the ideas presented in the passages, consider how far the young people in your society need a school-based moral education programme. [8]**

Both writers have expressed their views on the need of school-based moral education and provided reasons for the justification on why we may need a school-based moral education. Their views are justifiable but at a certain level only.

In paragraph 2, Joel Turtle makes the claim that students today are living in a “moral haze” and are “morally inarticulate”. Based on this view, he is suggesting that students are confused about their moral compass as they are unable to distinguish between right and wrong, and they are unable to justify their moral judgement and decisions. As such, I agree that this bring about an pressing need for Singapore to have a school-based moral education. This is especially the case for our Singaporeans youth who may be lack of parental guidance in cultivating their moral compass. Living in our fast paced and competitive society, many parents end up prioritising their careers over spending time with their children as a means of sustaining their livelihood. As a result, their children lack a strong guiding pillar as they do not have anyone to turn to for advice regarding the moral struggles that they face as their parents fail to be there for them. Thus, this leads to a compromise in their moral compass as they lack the moral acumen to resolve their moral dilemmas. Additionally, it has been difficult to educate our youths on such matters due to the complexity of the morals - they are subjective and would differ across people due to their growing environment and upbringing. As such, it is difficult to set a yardstick for morals as there is no right or wrong, which makes it so much more difficult for the youth to decide how to best approach their moral dilemmas with the lack of guidance that they have. This compromise on their moral compass due to this lack guidance and complexity of the issue can be seen from the National Crime Prevention Council, where it was reported that most problem youths come from homes lacking in parental guidance and are usually in schools with Low self-esteem. As such, it is imperative to have a school-based moral education to fill in this direct and cultivate value these youths are lacking in.

However, despite the lack of parental guidance, there is no pressing need for school based moral education due to the relentless efforts by other organisations in our society in cultivating moral values and judgement in students. For instance, there is extensive regulation by the government as imposed by the Juvenile Court and social institutions like National Youth Challenge Council. Apart from the many other religious institutions such as churches to guides the youth, we can see from the fall of youth crimes, as reported by the department of Singapore statistics, proving that there is no need for a school-based moral education which is a demanding task for the teacher. Thus, it is very debatable to whether school-based moral education is needed. Therefore, it is rational to conclude that all or more means for education by more institutions would be helpful to enrich the moral acumen of our youth instead of just a school-based moral education.

In paragraph 4, Joel Turtel makes the claims that “there is no purposes in teaching that cheating, lying, stealing or having casual sex with other students are undesirable acts in themselves”. The writer is suggesting that it is unnecessary to educate students on such matters as these are merely poor choices that students make in their lives depending on their situation at that point in time, thus implying that there is no need for the youth to have a school-based moral education. However, I do not agree with this, instead I feel that it tells us that there is now a greater need for such education in our Singaporean youths. Adolescent is a period where many youths are susceptible to the peer pressure and the environment they grow in, and the period where undesirable actions that they make can have dire consequences on their lives. As such, it imperative that they receive proper guidance on what to and not to do in their life. Without a doubt, an effective moral education on such matters are effective as these interventions would prevent the youths from committing the wrong acts that would likely to ruin their lives. This importance of educating them on such matters can be seen from the Department of Singapore statistics, where the number of youth crimes have been failing due to the efforts of MOE in imparting moral education for the youths in recent years. Such acts would bring such issues to light to the youth and ensures that they do not make similar mistakes as they grow up.

However, they is some truth to the authors claim where there is no purpose to have a school based moral education as current measures taken by society are ineffective in solving the situation. Most of the efforts by our society in correcting such issues are consequential ramification - where action is only taken when youths become delinquents. More than just a consequential ramification, there is a greater need for a preventative measure in order to alleviate the problem. As such, school based moral education will do little to solve this problem, as measures such as consultations and lessons is merely a reflection of what society is currently doing. The juvenile law, that deals with youth below the age of 18 commuting unlawful activities is one such example consequential ramification, which only intervenes when the problem surfaces rather than prevent. As such, there is little purpose in having a school based moral education which would bring about a similar effect.

In view of the above discussion, school-based moral education are functional in helping to nurture morally upright youths but the focus on whether it is needed or not is not the issue. The main point of discussion is on how it is properly implemented to educate the youths as this writer would advocate.