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ASSIGNMENT No.1

Q.1 Highlight the importance of Parents' Participation developing school and community relationship.

Education is an important tool in the development of communities and nations at large. The provision and management of quality education lies not only at the heart of central government but remains a shared responsibility of all stakeholders and the building of good working relationship among these stakeholders with particular emphasis on improving the school-community relationship. This stems from the fact point that education is seen as a social enterprise requiring the support of all stakeholders so that its contribution can benefit the entire society. For the attainment of quality education, there is the need for the community in which the school is situated to work in collaboration and harmony with the school not only in the upbringing and welfare of the pupils but must go beyond that to offer support in the provision and maintenance of the school infrastructure as well as playing a critical supporting role in the effective management and administration of the school. The school, similar to other facilities such as the community market, community borehole, is situated in the community belonging to the entire community members. The community therefore has a role to play in shaping the policies and finances of the school just as the school in turn must function to meet the social needs of the community by turning out a literate population and transmitting culture of the community to the youth. Improving the school-community relationship is key because both bodies are interdependent and failure on the part of either body to play its role can lead to a collapse of the education system with its consequent effect on the society as a whole. Again, though formal education is said to have been introduced in Ghana by the Europeans who provided not only the curricular but the infrastructure inclusive, the schools were not cited initially enough to cover all the communities in Ghana. It is against this background that some communities desirous of having formal education took it upon themselves and established basic schools, willingly recruited teachers and contributed to support them with the resources needed for their work including remuneration. As the process continued these schools were later absorbed into the public school system. The management and financing of these schools then shifted from the communities to the central government; this created a situation that witnessed less community involvement in the management of schools, hence the beginning of poor school-community relationship. The Ministry of Education (MOE) and The Ghana Education Service (GES) recognized the importance of reciprocal partnership of school-community leaders and local school authorities in effecting changes in the school. Under the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE), MOE, and GES, who have committed themselves to building a systematic approach assisting community organizations (SMC and PTA) to play a major part in the regeneration of their schools? It is the belief of the MOE and GES that communities have an important role to play in enforcing standards, developing and maintaining school infrastructure, and creating partnership between teachers, pupils and the district authorities to bring about needed changes. In conclusion the school and the community rely on each other for mutual benefit. The need for both to operate on a cooperative atmosphere cannot therefore be overemphasized.

Effective teachers discipline with encouragement and kind words much more often than rebukes or reprimands. The goal is to help students feel good about themselves and their behavior in the classroom. Inevitably, though, misbehavior happens. When it does, keep the collected wisdom of experienced teachers in mind:

- **Take a deep breath and try to remain calm.** It's natural to be overcome with frustration, resentment, and anger. But when you are, you become less rational, and your agitation becomes contagious.
- **Try to set a positive tone and model an appropriate response, even if it means you must take a few moments to compose yourself.** Acknowledge that you need time to think, time to respond. "This is upsetting me, too, but I need a few minutes to think before we talk about it."
- **Make sure students understand that it's their misbehavior you dislike, not them.** "I like you, Jason. Right now, your behavior is unacceptable."
- **Give the misbehaving student a chance to respond** positively by explaining not only what he or she is doing wrong, but also what he or she can do to correct it.
- **Never resort to blame or ridicule.**
- **Avoid win-lose conflicts.** Emphasize problem-solving instead of punishment.
- **Insist that students accept responsibility for their behavior.**
- **Try to remain courteous in the face of hostility or anger.** Showing students that you care about them and their problems will help you earn their respect and establish rapport.
- **Treat all students respectfully and politely.** Be consistent in what you let them say and do. Be careful not to favor certain students.
- **Be an attentive listener.** Encourage students to talk out feelings and concerns and help them clarify their comments by restating them.
- **Model the behavior you expect from your students.** Are you as considerate of your students' feelings as you want them to be of others? Are you as organized and on-task as you tell them to be? Are

your classroom rules clear and easy for students to follow?

- **Specifically describe misbehavior and help students understand the consequences of misbehavior.** Very young children may even need your explanations modeled or acted out.
- **Be aware of cultural differences.** For example, a student who stares at the floor while you speak to him or her would be viewed as defiant in some cultures and respectful in others.
- **Discourage cliques and other antisocial behavior.** Offer cooperative activities to encourage group identity.
- **Teach students personal and social skills** — communicating, listening, helping, and sharing, for example.
- **Teach students academic survival skills**, such as paying attention, following directions, asking for help when they really need it, and volunteering to answer.
- **Avoid labeling students as "good" or "bad."** Instead describe their behavior as "positive," "acceptable," "disruptive," or "unacceptable."
- **Focus on recognizing and rewarding acceptable behavior** more than punishing misbehavior.
- **Ignore or minimize minor problems instead of disrupting the class.** A glance, a directed question, or your proximity may be enough to stop misbehavior.
- **Where reprimands are necessary, state them quickly and without disrupting the class.**
- **When it's necessary to speak to a student about his or her behavior, try to speak in private;** this is especially true of adolescents who must "perform" for their peers. Public reprimands or lectures often trigger exaggerated, face-saving performances.

When Personalities Clash . . .

Sometimes, despite our best intentions, we find ourselves actively disliking one of the students in our charge. The student may be rude, disrespectful, disruptive, obnoxious, or otherwise annoying. It's just human nature; some personalities clash. But instead of feeling guilty about our feelings, we can take positive steps to improve them, says school psychologist and teacher Shelley Krapes. Here are some of her suggestions:

- **Try to understand where the behavior is coming from.** Is the student distressed by a death, divorce, new baby, learning disability, or some other overwhelming experience? Speaking to the student's parents or guardian may shed light on underlying causes and help you develop sympathy through understanding.
- **Help yourself manage negative feelings by reflecting on a past situation in your life where a similar conflict occurred.** Discuss the situation with a friend or by writing your thoughts in a journal. Making and understanding these connections can help you let go of some of your current hostility or resentment.
- **Use positive strategies when dealing with the child.** One such strategy is addressing specific behaviors with precise language that describes what needs to be done. In addition, try to seat the student near to you or a helpful student, praise the student liberally but sincerely, give the student choices to promote self-worth and feelings of control, be firm and consistent about your rules, and express displeasure with the student's behavior without criticizing the student.
- **Set a goal.** If the situation between you and the child has not improved after two or three months of your best effort, it may be time to recommend professional/psychological/educational testing. Some problems are very complex and beyond your control.

Q.2 How cross and inter cultural sensitivity can be developed in 21st century. Explain its importance for prospective teachers.

Culture is a way of thinking and living whereby one picks up a set of attitudes, values, norms and beliefs that are taught and reinforced by other members in the group. This set of basic assumptions and solutions to the problems of the world is a shared system that is passed on from generation to generation to ensure survival. A culture consists of unwritten and written principles and laws that guide how an individual interacts with the outside world. Members of a culture can be identified by the fact that they share some similarity. They may be united by religion, by geography, by race or ethnicity.

Our cultural understanding of the world and everything in it ultimately affects our style of communication as we start picking up ways of one's culture at around the same time we start learning to communicate. Culture influences the words we speak and our behavior.

Cross Cultural Communication

Cross cultural communication thus refers to the communication between people who have differences in any one of the following: styles of working, age, nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, sexual orientation, etc. Cross cultural communication can also refer to the attempts that are made to exchange, negotiate and mediate cultural differences by means of language, gestures and body language. It is how people belonging to different cultures communicate with each other.

Each individual can practice culture at varying levels. There is the culture of the community he grows up in, there is work culture at his work place and other cultures to which one becomes an active participant or slowly withdraws from. An individual is constantly confronted with the clash between his original culture and the majority culture that he is exposed to daily. Cultural clashes occur as a result of individuals believing their culture is better than others.

Cross cultural communication has been influenced by a variety of academic disciplines. It is necessary in order to avoid misunderstandings that can lead to conflicts between individuals or groups. Cross cultural communication creates a feeling of trust and enables cooperation. The focus is on providing the right response rather than providing the right message.

When two people of different cultures encounter each other, they not only have different cultural backgrounds but their systems of turn – talking are also different. Cross cultural communication will be more effective and easier if both the speakers have knowledge of the turn taking system being used in the conversation (For example: One person should not monopolize the conversation or only one person should talk at a time).

LarayBarna's Sources of Miscommunication in Cross Cultural Exchanges

- 1) Assumption of similarities** : This refers to our tendency to think how we behave and act is the universally accepted rule of behavior. When someone differs, we have a negative view of them
- 2) Language Differences** : Problems occur when there is an inability to understand what the other is saying because different languages are being spoken. Talking the same language itself can sometimes lead to discrepancies as some words have different meanings in various contexts, countries or cultures
- 3) Nonverbal Misinterpretation** : The way we dress, the way we express ourselves through our body language, eye contact and gestures also communicates something. A simple gesture like nodding the head is considered to be YES in certain cultures and NO in others
- 4) Preconceptions and Stereotypes** : Stereotypes involves putting people into pre-defined slots based on our image of how we think they are or should be. It may consist of a set of characteristics that we assume that all members of a group share. This may be true or may be false. But stereotypes may lead to wrongful expectations and notions. A preconceived opinion of another can lead to bias and discrimination
- 5) Tendency to evaluate** : Humans tend to make sense of the behavior and communication of others by analyzing them from one's own cultural point of view without taking into consideration why the other person is behaving or communicating a certain way
- 6) High anxiety** : Sometimes being confronted with a different cultural perspective will create an anxious state in an individual who does not know how to act or behave and what is considered to be appropriate (For example: A Japanese man and an American having a business meeting where both are unsure of the other's cultural norms)

To reduce the above barriers to cross cultural communication, one can take the effort to develop one's listening skills. This will ensure that we start hearing the real meaning of what is being said instead of understanding at

face value. Becoming aware of our perceptions towards others will ensure that we take steps to not prejudge a person or stereotype them. By accepting people and their differences and acknowledging that we don't know everything will make us open up to people and their differences resulting in us using contextual information for better understanding. Seeking feedback and taking risks to open up channels of communication and being responsible for our feelings and actions will go a long way in ensuring that miscommunication is mitigated.

Communication is a pretty important part of daily life, but what do you do when you need to communicate with someone from another culture? Explore the ideas behind intercultural communication and test your understanding with a brief quiz.

Cultures and Communication

Buongiorno. Salam. Nín hao. Hujambo. Howdy. There are so many ways just to say hello!

No matter where you are in the world, communication is important. But communicating across cultures can be pretty hard. And I don't just mean that there's a language barrier, although that can be an issue. No, I mean that cultures actually have some very different ways of communicating. Some cultures are informal, some cultures use a whole series of ritual greetings before having a conversation, and some cultures consider it rude to show up to a meeting on time.

But what do all these cultures have in common? Well, for one, you can offend each of them if you don't understand their communication practices. And we want to avoid that. So what do we do? Well, to put it simply, we learn to communicate!

Intercultural Communication

So, we need to learn how to communicate all over again, just like when we were children. And just like when we were children, this requires learning language as well as learning behavioral norms for good communication. However, this will be a bit different since we're adults learning how to communicate in someone else's culture, not our own.

Intercultural communication is the verbal and nonverbal interaction between people from different cultural backgrounds. Basically, 'inter-' is a prefix that means 'between' and cultural means... well, from a culture, so intercultural communication is the communication between cultures. Sometimes, this is used to describe a single person trying to interact in a foreign environment but more often, it is a two-way street, where people from both cultures are trying to improve their communication.

Now, if you want to learn about intercultural communication, it's important to understand what this is. But it's also important to understand what it isn't. Intercultural communication is targeted at allowing for positive and productive interaction. You are not joining this culture, you are not becoming a member of another society, you are not abandoning your own culture. That would be assimilation and that's not what we're after.

Intercultural communication is also not simply a language proficiency. Yes, communication requires the ability to understand language, but just think about how much of your communication with even your own friends is nonverbal: our body language, our attitudes, the rituals from hand-shaking to the stink eye. Some researchers

estimate that up to 93% of all human communication is nonverbal, although according to recent studies, it's actually closer to 60%.

Still, that means that more than half of communication is never spoken. So, intercultural communication is going to take a lot more than just learning a language.

Developing Communication

Intercultural communication is generally explained through three parts. They overlap a bit with each other but together, give you the tools to communicate with people from another culture. Ready to give them a try?

The first is **knowledge**, or an understanding of communication rules within a culture. This is just the practical stuff you need to know to communicate, things like language but also greeting rituals, styles of communication, that sort of stuff. Do people of this culture prefer to talk business in morning or night? Are they generally formal or informal? It's best to try and develop as much knowledge about a culture before going off and trying to master the other two parts of intercultural communication.

Q.3 Critically examine the current Need for Curriculum Revision at secondary level. Identify some of the skills to be added in curriculum.

School districts across the nation have begun revising instructional programs in an effort to meet society's demands for a 21st century workforce. Determining what these needs are, how to address them, and how to revise established curriculum often rests in the laps of many building level administrators. Often these building principals find themselves at the center of a controversy they did not want, do not deserve, and cannot fix. Yet, they are charged with full responsibility for the often mandated "curriculum revision" process. Many times these same educational leaders have not had adequate preparation for, nor do they have a full understanding of, what is expected, with regard to the curriculum revision project. This demand for change to meet the needs of a 21st century educational program is challenging even the best educational leaders.

This study and the subsequent recommendations had their origin in the frustration of two building administrators who were given the responsibility of "designing a curriculum revision project which would upgrade the established instructional program and improve classroom instruction" (the quote of their superintendent assigning the task). In other words, the 'taught' curriculum was to be revised in order to match the newly integrated assessment model mandated by the state. Teachers, community leaders, and students were not necessarily ready for a curriculum revision project, and the need for such a process was certainly not a priority in the minds of many. As a small rural district without a curriculum coordinator, the building principals were given the responsibility for achieving the goal of developing an effective curriculum revision program which would meet the needs of a 21st century workforce. As in so many cases of effective educational change, need born of necessity created this study, the results, and the subsequent recommendations for effective curriculum revision

Within the literature on curricular revision, three major premises were identified. First, the society and culture served by an educational community dictate the needs, obligations, and responsibilities expected of the

educational program. Second, society perpetuates itself with educational programming, i.e. the content and methodology of instruction referenced as **educational curriculum**. Third, systemic change, as in the form of transitioning educational curriculum, is often difficult at best and controversial at worst. These three elements combine to offer a strong foundation from which educators can begin to address what is taught at all levels, the needs of a respondent society, and the changing roles of classroom practitioners.

As noted above, the society and culture served by an educational community dictate the needs, obligations, and responsibilities expected of the educational program. A traditionally accepted view of educational curriculum states that it (curriculum) is the information which should be taught with the underlying purpose of “standardizing” the behaviors of the society by educating the young in the traditions and rituals of that culture (Beyer & Liston, 1996; Borrowman, 1989; Glatthorn, 1987; Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Likewise, Glatthorn (1987) offered that beliefs and behaviors of each ethnic group or geographical area were developed in order to foster and teach children specific skills necessary for the transition from childhood to adulthood, thereby sustaining or advancing the convictions of that culture. In the same vein, but addressing the need for change, Purpel (1972) proposed that the primary responsibility for the child’s learning was historically determined by the parent, but as society became more complex, the needs for specialized training grew, necessitating more formal training. It is obvious, therefore, that the curriculum must meet the needs and current demands of the culture, the society, and the expectations of the population being served. To this end, the educational reform process is still undergoing review, revision, and constant change.

Also noted above, society perpetuates itself with educational programming, i.e. the content and methodology of instruction referenced as **educational curriculum**. Borrowman (1989) stated that education is the process by which individuals gain knowledge, skills, values, habits, and attitudes. Societal mores, cultural norms, and practical needs compel the incorporation of various components of learning and information. Hence, the educational curriculum is vitally important to a society’s success and may become extremely controversial when conflicting views emerge.

Finally, as noted earlier, systemic change, as in the form of transitioning educational curriculum, is often a challenge to all concerned and in some cases, may even create a negative, divisive environment. It is an accepted fact that without acceptance and **buy-in** by all major constituencies, long-lasting systemic change cannot occur. Cited by Beyer and Liston (1996), James B. MacDonald (1975) suggested that “. . . in many ways, all curriculum design and development is political in nature. . . .” Continuing in that line of reasoning, Olson and Rothman (1993) offered that while the last decade has been one of challenge and excitement for American education, the fragmented and isolationist manner in which many of the reform efforts have been implemented brought about no lasting change. Substantiating this view that change was necessary despite overt resistance, various authors (Henderson & Hawthorne, 1995; Jelinek, 1978; Kallen, 1996; Patterson, 1997; Toch & Daniel, 1996, Wagner, 1998) presented strong arguments that outdated strategies (the implementation of curriculum) had to be discarded and ineffectual methodology eliminated. Concurring with these views that change was not only

necessary but imminent, Scott (1994) declared that curriculum revision projects of the past twenty years had in reality been dismal failures with a high cost to taxpayers, students, and educators.

Monson and Monson (1993) presented the need for collaborative, sanctioned revision by all stakeholders with an emphasis on the performance of teacher leaders. It has been suggested that the educational community must include those not usually considered to be at the leading edge of school reform initiatives. Hargreaves (1995) and Kyriakides (1997) both emphasized the importance of creating coordinated efforts that supported a modification of teachers' roles in policy revision as it related to curriculum review and revision. Despite the fact that the emergent view of teachers' roles are often in conflict with the traditional view of teachers' performance (Monson & Monson, 1993; Hargreaves, 1995; Scott, 1994), the leadership roles of teachers are becoming more prevalent, more dominant, and more demanding. Questions facing the educational community, therefore, revolve around what reforms will be implemented, what process will be used, and how to make the revisions effective and sustaining.

Accepting that changing an educational curriculum can be a challenge, the involvement of all stakeholders, especially individuals who are directly involved in student instruction, is an especially vital piece in successful curriculum revision. The review of literature substantiated the concern that until the parameters of curriculum revision are defined and understood, the process will suffer from confusion and failure for decades to come.

Q.4 Presents some of the recent trends in global education sector which can be used in aligning curriculum contents with Society's Needs.

There are 4 primary Curriculum Ideologies: Scholar Academic, Social Efficiency, Learner-Centered, and Social Reconstruction. Which is the best? We can see countless debates on the best Curriculum. In this piece, I would like to identify top purposes for education in my milieu of Spiritual Intelligence Development, then use these purposes to evaluate 4 Curriculum Ideologies.

My 3 top purposes for education

I believed that as a human, we are entitled to learn for our own lives, not for anyone's purpose. Thus, 3 top purposes for education in my milieu are to help each individual achieve:

1. **The growth of Spiritual Intelligence:** "Spiritual intelligence emerges as consciousness evolves into an ever-deepening awareness of the matter, life, body, mind, soul, and spirit. It can help a person distinguish reality from illusion, and may be expressed in any culture as love, wisdom, and service" (Vaughan, 2002, p. 20). With high spiritual Intelligence, a learner can connect his/ her self-interest with social interest and master their whole lives.
2. **The ability of self-initiated learning from their real-life:** the learners acknowledge that life is a great school, and anything is their lesson, anyone is their teacher to help them achieve their goals / pursue their happiness.

3. **The life of a human being:** the learners can enjoy the life of freedom regardless of circumstance. When facing difficulties and challenges, they are not affected by prejudices and conditions, yet they design solutions for their own lives in a flexible way.

The Scholar Academic Ideology:

Although, the purpose of this ideology, in common with my first purpose about growing spiritual intelligence, is “to help children learn the accumulated knowledge of our culture” (p. 4); the underlying opinions are completely different from mine.

For example, Scholar Academic Ideology’s view is that the authority of the truth belongs to a group of people and the students learn such ready-to-accept truth. “The hierarchical communities consist of inquirers into the truth (the scholars at the top of the hierarchy), teachers of the truth (those who disseminate the truth that has been discovered by the scholars), and learners of the truth (students whose job it is to learn the truth so that they may become proficient members of the discipline)” (p. 4).

In my opinion, no one has the authority to decide what the truth is, so scholars’ knowledge is just a reliable source of information. Hence, all resources are for reference only, leave it to every learner to discover the truth by themselves.

The Social Efficiency Ideology:

This ideology is completely different from my beliefs about the purposes of education.

“Social Efficiency advocates believe that the purpose of schooling is to efficiently meet the needs of society by training youth to function as future mature contributing members of society”. (p. 5).

I think this seemingly implies that the objective of education is to transform humans into slaves, like artificial intelligence machines and humanoid robots.

Moreover, the comment, “Central to Social Efficiency conceptions of scientific procedure is the assumption that change in human behavior (that is, learning) takes place within a fairly direct cause-effect, action-reaction, or stimulus-response context” (p. 5), indirectly denies the power of choice inside each human being

The Social Reconstruction Ideology:

With the purpose of education is “to facilitate the construction of a new and more just society that offers maximum satisfaction to all of its members” (p. 6), this ideology slightly resonates with my point of view about the role of social construction, which serves the happiness of every individual.

However, their assumptions about the status quo and their perspective of society-should-become create a suitable curriculum that will limit the power of humans.

On what grounds can a group of people ensure their envisioned future is the best for everyone?

The Learner-Centered Ideology:

This apparently aligns best with my perspective. “They believe schools should be enjoyable places where people develop naturally according to their own innate nature. The goal of education is the growth of individuals, each in harmony with his or her own unique intellectual, social, emotional, and physical attributes” (p. 5).

I strongly believe that a good society or an effective labor force is simply the sequel to many good individuals. If every person can discover and live with his/her true self, there will be a wonderful harmony for our society.

Q.5 Make a comparison between the quality standards of Non-State providers of Teacher Education (in Private Sector) and public sector Institutions.

Teaching jobs can be found in both the public and private sectors, but most teachers generally apply for positions in one or the other. This is because the two are markedly contrasted and new teachers tend to use these disparities to determine their best fit.

Deciding where to concentrate your job search can be difficult if you don't know how public and private schools differ. Though similarities exist between the types of schools, significant differences that will affect your overall teaching experience are more prevalent. These deserve your consideration before you begin applying for teaching positions.

Teacher Education

Knowing what your qualifications are and what they must be for teaching jobs should be the first step in making your public vs. private decision.

Public

Public schools tend to require and prioritize the same teaching credentials and certifications. A minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Education is needed for all public school teaching positions today and Mathematics and Language Arts concentrations are commonly most appealing. Teaching jobs are usually assigned by area of specialty.

Private

The credentials required for private school teaching positions are not as consistent. Some private schools might mandate that all of their teachers have Master's degrees or particular certifications, while others might not require official teaching degrees at all. Many Montessori schools, for example, will allow you to teach at the Early Childhood level with a high school diploma and training.

Diversity

Consider the differences between students enrolled in public and private schools. Your teaching experience will be influenced tremendously by the makeup of your classroom.

Public

The law requires public schools to admit all students without discrimination. Because of this, teachers in public schools tend to teach a diverse population of students in terms of race and ethnicity, socioeconomic status, levels of need, and more. If you value diversity, public schools might be for you.

Private

Private schools are allowed to choose which students to admit. This generally means that they put their applicants through admissions processes, which often include interviews, and grant admission quite selectively based on their school values.

Private schools also charge tuition, which means that are primarily attended by students with wealthy families with the exception of students who demonstrated enough financial need to receive scholarships. Upper-class, white students and teachers comprise the majority of most private school populations.

Curriculum

What you are actually expected and allowed to teach in a public or private school comes down to government involvement.

Public

In public schools, state mandates determine subjects offered and topics covered. Further, public schools must use government-assigned standardized tests to measure learning. Most public school curriculums are constructed around state standards and provided to teachers. In addition, teaching religious topics is strictly prohibited.

Private

Private schools are allowed to choose and use their own tests and lesson plans and some private schools don't have curriculums at all. The government wields little power over the day-to-day administration of private schools because they are not funded by taxes. Some private schools provide religious instruction in addition to academics and may be closely aligned with a church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious institution.

Resources

Resource availability represents perhaps the biggest difference between the public and private school sectors.

Public

Public schools are tax-funded but different districts receive different levels of funding. This means that the resources available to you will depend on the specific school in which you teach. Public school funding tends to be consistent with the financial resources of the surrounding community.

Private

The price of attendance often becomes a factor in determining the socio-economic makeup of the student body, although some private schools offer scholarships to students with demonstrated financial need. Because of limited funds and a lack of mandates, teachers encounter fewer special needs students in private schools than in public schools, so if you specialized in special education, you might not find many available positions in the private sector.

Class Size

Is a bigger or smaller class your sweet spot? If you know that you teach a particular group size best, decide where you will find it.

Public

While public school districts prefer to keep class size down, overcrowded classes due to teacher shortages and underfunding are common in public schools. Even the more affluent districts face issues with class size when they are forced to admit more students than they can accommodate.

Private

Private schools often tout small class sizes as an advantage over public schools. private schools teachers find it easier to remove disruptive students from classes and the school itself. It takes a pretty serious offense to get a student permanently removed from the public school system.

Parental Involvement

Teaching takes a village, but there are stark contrasts between public and private schools when it comes to family communication.

Public

The degree to which parents and families of students in public schools engage in their children's education is entirely dependent on a school's community and population.

In some public schools, student families are privileged with enough time and money to attend events and meetings, even volunteer, regularly. In other public schools, families do not have the option of taking time off of work, lack transportation, or cannot afford babysitters to watch younger children when they come to school.

Private

Private schools naturally see parents that are more involved in their students' lives because it takes more effort to get students into private schools in the first place. Wealthy families with time to spare are likely to give their time to education. With greater parental involvement, private school teachers often feel well-supported.

Salary

One of your greatest concerns when choosing a teaching position might be the salary you receive. Of course, public and private schools differ greatly in this respect.

Public

Public school teaching salaries are relatively constant. Elementary school teachers make less money than secondary teachers and starting salaries across schools are comparable. With the exception of higher-needs schools with more government funding, you can expect about the same salary from any public school.

Private

Private school teaching salaries are commonly a major disadvantage for teachers. Private school teachers generally earn less than their public school counterparts, with teachers at parochial schools at the lowest end of the salary range. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, private school teachers earn an average of \$10,000 – \$15,000 less than comparable public school positions.

Teacher salaries in private schools are drawn from student tuition. Because these schools charge different admissions prices, their teacher salaries can represent a wide range. Some private schools may pay much more than public schools, but most pay less.

This particular list of teaching characteristics appears in an excellent book that is all but unknown in the states, Learning to Teach in Higher Education, by noted scholar Paul Ramsden. In the case of what makes teaching effective, he writes, "...a great deal is known about the characteristics of effective university teaching.

It is undoubtedly a complicated matter; there is no indication of one 'best way,' but our understanding of its essential nature is both broad and deep." (p. 88-89). He organizes that essential knowledge into these six principles, unique for the way he relates them to students' experiences.

1: Interest and explanation – "When our interest is aroused in something, whether it is an academic subject or a hobby, we enjoy working hard at it. We come to feel that we can in some way own it and use it to make sense of the world around us." (p. 98). Coupled with the need to establish the relevance of content, instructors need to craft explanations that enable students to understand the material. This involves knowing what students understand and then forging connections between what is known and what is new.

2: Concern and respect for students and student learning – Ramsden starts with the negative about which he is assertive and unequivocal. "Truly awful teaching in higher education is most often revealed by a sheer lack of interest in and compassion for students and student learning. It repeatedly displays the classic symptom of making a subject seem more demanding than it actually is. Some people may get pleasure from this kind of masquerade. They are teaching very badly if they do. Good teaching is nothing to do with making things hard. It is nothing to do with frightening students. It is everything to do with benevolence and humility; it always tries to help students feel that a subject can be mastered; it encourages them to try things out for themselves and succeed at something quickly." (p. 98)

3: Appropriate assessment and feedback – This principle involves using a variety of assessment techniques and allowing students to demonstrate their mastery of the material in different ways. It avoids those assessment methods that encourage students to memorize and regurgitate. It recognizes the power of feedback to motivate more effort to learn.

4: Clear goals and intellectual challenge – Effective teachers set high standards for students. They also articulate clear goals. Students should know up front what they will learn and what they will be expected to do with what they know.

5: Independence, control and active engagement – "Good teaching fosters [a] sense of student control over learning and interest in the subject matter." (p. 100). Good teachers create learning tasks appropriate to the student's level of understanding. They also recognize the uniqueness of individual learners and avoid the temptation to impose "mass production" standards that treat all learners as if they were exactly the same. "It is worth stressing that we know that students who experience teaching of the kind that permits control by the learner not only learn better, but that they enjoy learning more." (p. 102)

6: Learning from students – "Effective teaching refuses to take its effect on students for granted. It sees the relation between teaching and learning as problematic, uncertain and relative. Good teaching is open to change: it involves constantly trying to find out what the effects of instruction are on learning, and modifying the instruction in the light of the evidence collected." (p. 102)

“Excellence is an art won by training and habituation. We do not act rightly because we have virtue or excellence, but we rather have those because we have acted rightly. We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act but a habit.” Aristotle

The concept of excellence can be hard to define. Quite often we know it when we see it, but have trouble articulating how it can be achieved. As a parent, it is important to be able to define and recognise excellence when you are choosing a school for your child. Here are some key things to consider when choosing a school.

Defining excellence in schools

To demonstrate excellence, you need to be specific about what you are aiming for in a practical and tangible sense. In schools, we can define excellence against a set of values and outcomes that students strive to achieve. These are constructs that make the research results meaningful.

The New South Wales Department of Education specify five categories of excellence in their **School Excellence Framework:**

1. Culture

A clear set of values and beliefs that is practised and reinforced by all authorities in the school. A school that achieves excellence sets out their expectations for students, staff and parents – and they communicate that message regularly to their community.

2. Wellbeing

This relates to the collective and individual needs of students including, but not limited to, psychological, physiological, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualisation – according to **Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs**. Wellbeing in schools revolves around the key ways that different groups can come together, get involved and be fulfilled in their learning journey.

3. Curriculum and Learning

This is a structured plan of action that delivers a high standard and equitable academic opportunities for students. The NSW Department of Education states that, “curriculum programs and teaching practices effectively develop the knowledge, understanding and skills of all students, using evidence-based teaching practices and innovative delivery mechanisms where appropriate.”

4. Assessment and Reporting

This refers to the ability and resources needed to effectively monitor, plan and report on student performance to parents and carers. Consistent practices in this category should be evident school-wide and across all learning areas. Schools that demonstrate excellence excel in this area.

5. Student Performance Measures

Schools that achieve excellence in the four categories already covered, tend to be successful in student performance as well. Their students consistently excel in their performance across learning areas.

Teaching excellence

Quality teachers are the backbone of great schools. Excellence in teaching is evident in the qualifications of staff, as well as the professional learning opportunities offered by the school to its teachers. Schools that excel pride themselves on staff excellence.

Boys who are enrolled in a school that demonstrates excellence are more likely to thrive and succeed. It's important to remember that true excellence moves beyond a set of principles and outcomes – they are a set of beliefs at the core, that determine a school's way of thinking and being.

