

## YOUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

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So let's start with the big picture. What is the purpose of schools in our society? Why do societies invest so many resources into educating their young? Yes, we teach so that students will learn, but to what end? What is the point? Of what benefit and to whom is a well-educated public? These kind questions have to do with the [philosophy of education](#). (A philosophy is a set of principles based on one's values and beliefs that are used to guide one's behavior.) These kinds of questions greatly affect how we educate students yet, they do not get asked nearly enough. Below is a list of possible reasons for educating young humans. You will most likely find that it is hard to select just one; instead, there seems to be a variety of reasons or purposes.

### ***The purpose of education is to . . .***

1. train students to get jobs and support their families.
2. develop skilled workers to keep our economy running and sustain our way of life.
3. develop students' creativity, reasoning, and problem-solving abilities.
4. give students a body of knowledge and a set of skills.
5. develop good citizens who are able to participate in democratic societies.
6. preserve traditional values and our way of life.
7. promote individual growth of each student and ultimately society.
8. develop caring and compassionate human beings who are able to nurture self, others, and the environment.
9. improve society and the human condition.
10. perpetuate Western culture and tradition.
11. help students discover their unique talents and develop their full potential as human beings.
12. enable students to think critically and free themselves from bias, and misperceptions.
13. develop human beings who are nurturing and compassionate.
14. promote traditional values.
15. enable students to become agents of change in regards to self, institutions, societies, and the global village.

When functioning at its highest, it is my belief that education should help to help each person reach his or her full potential. This belief is based on my personal philosophy. From this perspective, a school's fundamental purpose is the creation of better human beings, which occurs through self-actualization and self-transcendence (Maslow, 1971). Its short term goal then is to bring people, societies, and the global community to a higher place. A higher place defined here as a state where individuals have the knowledge, skills and dispositions necessary for them to nurture themselves, others, and the environment and an inclination for them to act upon their worlds in productive yet responsible ways. Its long term goal is the continued evolution of human consciousness and the global society.

However, the philosophy above is my philosophy, not yours. You can't have it. You

have to go out and get your own.

Even though your educational philosophy may not be clearly defined, it is the basis for everything you do as a teacher (DeCarvalho, 1991). It guides your decision making, influences how you perceive and understand new information, and determines your goals and beliefs (Gutek, 2004). An educational philosophy outlines what you believe to be the purpose of education, the role of the student in education, and the role of the teacher. It asks the following kinds of questions: Why do we educate people? How should we educate people? How does education affect society? How does education affect humanity? Who benefits from a particular type of education? What ethical guidelines should be used? What traits should be valued? Why type of thinking is of worth? How should we come to know the world and make decisions? What is the educational ideal? What is the nature of reality? What do we believe to be true in regards to knowledge and truth? How do we come to know? What do you believe to be true in regards to humans and human learning?

It is beyond the scope of this book to delve further into educational philosophy; however, two points: First, your educational philosophy will continue to change and evolve throughout your career. This is a good thing. With new knowledge and experience comes change. Second, there is no such thing as the “correct” philosophy. Effective teachers and people of good character often have differing educational philosophies. This also is a good thing as it leads to continued reflection, dialogue, and refinement. To insist that others adopt or conform to your philosophy is a form of domination and control, traits not valued in a democratic society.

### **A GUIDED TO DEVELOPING YOUR EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY**

A philosophy is a set of values and beliefs used to guide one's behavior. If you are living and growing, your personal and professional philosophies will continue to grow and evolve. The following questions can be used to guide you in the development of your educational philosophy:

1. What do you believe to be the purpose of education in our society?
2. What is the value of education in our society?
3. As you look back on yourself as a learner, what are three things do you value in a learning situation?
4. As a teacher what are three things do you value in a teaching situation?
5. What are three things you believe to be true about learning?
6. What do you think motivates humans to learn?
7. What are three things you believe to be true about teaching?
8. What do you think motivates people to teach?
9. What do you hope to accomplish as a teacher?
10. What do you hope to accomplish as a person?
11. What do you see as your purpose as a teacher?
12. What do you see as your purpose as a human?
13. What brings you joy?
14. As a teacher, what are three traits or virtues that you value? Choose from the list below or include your own.
15. As a person, what are three traits or virtues that you value? Choose from the list below or include your own.

### Traits or Virtues

creativity, generosity, compassion, passion, gratitude, contentment, humility, kindness, courtesy, purity, respect, wisdom, mercy, dignity, courage, competition, hope, patience, curiosity, perseverance, discipline, self-discipline, knowledge of self, knowledge, skills, understanding, balance, unity, sincerity, responsibility, loyalty, trustworthiness, honesty, spirituality, empathy, self-control, kindness, fairness, non-violence, harmony, truthfulness, non-judgment, service, positive thinking, forgiveness, nurturing, integrity, cooperation, interdependence, resilience, growth, acceptance

### MINI-LECTURES RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

Your Educational Philosophy

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN\\_EymDEGT8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sN_EymDEGT8)

Reflective Teaching

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ofGaDa3o6qQ>

Developing your Teaching Mission or Purpose Statement

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=arpo6jHXwDc>

Reflective Teachers and Your Educational Philosophy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j8oH4xTTxfE>

Teacher Professional Development for Teachers: Journey and Growth

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lqQJBz3aXj0>

Educational Psychology and Philosophy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XmF7Nh415wE>

### REFERENCES

- DeCarvalho, R.J.(1991). The humanistic paradigm in education. *The Humanistic Psychologist* (19), 88-104.
- Gutek, G. (2004). *Philosophical and ideological voices in education*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.