

Twenty Question Checklist

for Writing Your Educational Philosophy

From SMART EDUCATION for the Whole Person - guidelines to help you become your best

Answering the following twenty questions and printing a summary will enable you to easily and confidently explain your beliefs, values, and philosophy of education to others – and by the same token, learn what other parents, administrators, teachers, legislators, or others believe about learning.

These questions address the six elements of educational philosophy: Learner needs, learning process, learning content, learning resources, learning climate, learning resources, parental guidance, and support.

A. A. Learner Needs

Q1. Learner agency (Select one)

- ☐ I believe learners should be allowed to use their agency to choose what, how, and where to learn
- ☐ I believe learners must be compelled to learn what and how the teacher/administrator decides.

Q2. Learner Talents & gifts (Select one)

- ☐ I believe each learner has unique talents that enable them, if allowed, to do things in ways no one else can.
- ☐ I believe learners should use their talents and gifts only in after-school and extracurricular activities.
- ☐ I believe learners must focus on listening, reading, memorization, and test-taking.

Q3. Learner curiosity & interests (Select one)

- ☐ I believe learners should be encouraged to follow their curiosity and interests.
- ☐ I believe learners must follow the curriculum set by others.

Q4. Learner aptitude (Select one)

- ☐ I believe learners should excel in academic subjects (language, math, social studies, and science)
- ☐ I believe learners should strive to excel in invention, leadership, invention, production, or marketing
- ☐ I believe learners should strive to become whole and complete rather than excel in one area.

Q5. Learner beliefs and values (Select one)

- ☐ I believe learner beliefs and values should come from the family, church, and community.
- ☐ I believe the teacher and book publishers must set learner beliefs and values.

Q6. Learner self-regulation (Select one)

- ☐ I believe teachers must promote self-regulation by explaining the consequences of wrong choices.
- ☐ I believe students learn self-regulation by being held accountable for their choices and actions.

Q7. Learner purpose and aspirations (Select one)

- ☐ I believe learners who identify their purpose and aspirations are less likely to get into harmful activities.
- ☐ I believe learners who take career guidance courses will likely be prepared for a successful career.

Q8. Learner needs (Select all that apply)

- ☐ I believe one of the greatest needs of learners is supportive parents.
- ☐ I believe learners need the opportunity to do hands-on discovery learning
- ☐ I believe learners who learn pretty much on their own are less likely to forget important lessons.
- ☐ I believe learners who choose what and how to learn are highly motivated and more likely to succeed.
- ☐ I believe learners who rely on the teacher for direction can function well when the teacher is absent.
- ☐ I believe it is healthy to learn from our mistakes without embarrassment or ridicule.

B. Learning Process

Q09. The way I prefer to learn is by (Select one)

- ☐ Classroom learning with lectures, assignments, and tests
- ☐ By doing homework assignments.
- ☐ By studying with peers
- ☐ Help from mentors, tutors
- ☐ Homeschooling – learning from and with parents
- ☐ Self-directed learning, including hands-on discovery learning
- ☐ Learning from an expert as an apprentice or intern.

Q10. I believe focusing on the learning process makes sense for 21st-century learners because (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Learning how to learn can better enable students to meet 21st challenges successfully.
- ☐ Learning *content* is constantly becoming obsolete. The half-life in medicine is four years, and in IT is only two years.
- ☐ Learning to use your agency, curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving abilities for lifelong learning is highly rewarding.
- ☐ Learners can engage in the learning process by using stories that enlighten, empower, and embolden them to think outside the box as they address authentic community needs.
- ☐ Learners can engage in the learning process by engaging in rewarding projects.

C. Learning Content

Q11. I believe those who are best qualified to determine curriculum content **are:** (Select one)

- ☐ School administrators and textbook publishers.
- ☐ Legislators and lobbyists.
- ☐ Parents and students.
- ☐ Business leaders and employers.
- ☐ Professional teachers
- ☐ Other: Specify _____

Q12. For 21st-century learners, I believe the following are the most valuable. (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Knowledge-level – memorizing facts, figures, principles
- ☐ Understanding-level – the ability to explain underlying concepts
- ☐ Application-level – using the information in new situations
- ☐ Analysis-level – drawing connections among ideas
- ☐ Evaluation-level – Justify a stand or decision
- ☐ Creation-level – produce new or original work

Q11. I believe the following about assessment of learning (Select all that apply)

- ☐ Multiple-Choice or True-False questions are primarily useful for knowledge-level learning.,
- ☐ Assessment of understanding, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation-level learning is difficult
- ☐ Competitive grading favors academically inclined who are candidates for college.
- ☐ Cheating on tests is common in school, making grades valueless as learning indicators.
- ☐ The half-life of school knowledge is declining rapidly, yet the cost of education is increasing.

D. Learning Climate

Q14. My preferred physical learning environments are: (rate on a scale of 1-5 with 5-best, 1-worst)

- ☐ In a traditional school (locked down; wearing soggy face masks; moving when the bell rings).

- ☐ Hiking, camping, or exploring nature.
- ☐ At an aquarium, scuba diving, snorkeling.
- ☐ On a Farm, at a greenhouse, or in a petting Zoo.
- ☐ Touring various manufacturing plants.
- ☐ On an athletic field; basketball court or in a performing arts theatre
- ☐ Observing various legislative and judicial sessions.
- ☐ Visiting with leaders and shopkeepers in the community.
- ☐ Self-directed learning at home or while visiting historical or other sites.
- ☐ With a group of peers at a neighborhood learning resource center.
- ☐ Other: Specify: _____

Q15. My preferred cultural environment is one in which: (rate on a scale of 1-5 with 5-best,1-worst)

- ☐ Mutual respect is demonstrated between learners and their peer's parents, teachers, and mentors.
- ☐ There is openness to differing views and opinions.
- ☐ Evidence-based reasoning prevails
- ☐ Learning is engaging and fun,
- ☐ A subject's underlying values and epistemology are clear to all.
- ☐ Each learner's personality, talents, and abilities are celebrated.
- ☐ Collaboration and mutual support replace conformance and competition

Q16. My preferred social learning environment is one in which: (rate on a scale of 1-5 with 5-best,1-worst)

- ☐ Family members volunteer to assist in the classroom, at special events, and on field trips;
- ☐ There are opportunities for families to meet and connect.
- ☐ Homeschool families share activities with other homeschool families about their culture.
- ☐ Self-directed learners interact freely with younger and older learners, including adults.
- ☐ Self-directed learners initiate social activities in their neighborhood.

Q17. My response to the following statements from Dr. Maria Montessori at UNESCO in 1951 regarding the political environment for learning is (1=agree; 2=disagree)

- ☐ "Children and young people make up a vast population, a population without rights, which is being crucified on school benches everywhere, which—for all that we talk about democracy, freedom, and human rights—is enslaved by a school order, by intellectual rules, which we impose on it."
- ☐ "Children and young people make up a vast population, a population without rights, which is being crucified on school benches everywhere, which—for all that we talk about democracy, freedom, and human rights—is enslaved by a school order, by intellectual rules, which we impose on it."

Q18. My response to the following criticism of public schooling from Wikipedia is: (1=agree; 2=disagree)

- ☐ Critics of compulsory schooling argue that it violates the freedom of children; is a method of political control that is ineffective at teaching children how to deal with the "real world" outside of school; and may have negative effects on children, leading to higher rates of apathy, bullying, stress, and depression.

E. Learning Resources

Q19. The various types of learning resources that I prefer are: (rate each as 5-best, 1-worst)

- ☐ Questions that require thinking about current situations
- ☐ Toys, puzzles, games
- ☐ Songs; musical instruments
- ☐ Digital microscopes, telescopes, borescopes
- ☐ Hand tools, power tools
- ☐ Digital instruments for measuring and recording sound, radiation, force, pressure, size, finish, and composition.
- ☐ 3-D rapid prototype printer to quickly turn ideas into products.
- ☐ Other: Specify: _____

F. Parental Support & Guidance

Q20. Finally, my role in providing parental support and guidance is reflected in my rating of the following principles, practices, and strategies (rated on a scale of 1-5 with 5-best 1-worst).

- ☐ Helping my children understand their roots, value, and potential to fulfill their life's mission successfully.

- ___ Helping my children explore life's great questions, who am I? Where did it come from? Why am I here? Where am I going?
- ___ Meeting weekly, perhaps Sunday evening, with spouse and children for a Family planning & reporting meeting – open with a hymn and prayer, followed by a brief report from each family member on what they learned to DO during the week, as well as their plans for the coming week, add refreshments, and games to make the evening fun.
- ___ Helping my children understand the natural consequences of making mistakes as a part of learning and helping them to be accountable for and learn from their mistakes.
- ___ Helping each of my children understand their unique interests, talents, and abilities that can become strengths to them in addressing life's challenges.
- ___ Helping my children learn to express their opinions and values using role-playing exercises that present increasingly difficult choices.
- ___ Helping my children improve their behavior through stories and instruction rather than physical punishment so they won't imitate your behavior by hitting their little brothers or sisters.
- ___ Recognizing that every child is born with a unique temperament, making them easy or difficult to teach as they learn to bug, aggravate, and frustrate them and their siblings and that keeping their cool and providing love and unwavering democratic nurturing while maintaining high expectations is the best solution.
- ___ Helping other parents learn to protect and warn their children about increasing psychological warfare aimed at them, including AI-generated fake news that they must learn to deal with and to discern who are true friends and who are foes dressed in sheep's clothing.
- ___ Demonstrating love for my children by frequently expressing gratitude and appreciation for what your children are doing and showing appreciation with a hug, friendly pat on the back, or love note.
- ___ Setting healthy boundaries and providing supportive guidance by introducing each child to potential mentors, striving to help them discover ways to use their talents to achieve worthy goals and meet life's challenges.
- ___ Respecting my child's agency by letting them decide what and how to learn best rather than blindly forcing them into a compulsory education curriculum simply to get them out of the house.
- ___ Involving my children in setting penalties for violating boundaries so they will comply without complaint.
- ___ Helping my children learn to ask good questions and use the discovery-learning cycle to find answers.
- ___ Write, display, and discuss the family mission statement with the family.
- ___ Learning to understand the cause of negative behavior before reacting or reacting to apparent misbehavior.

SUMMARY: in 1 or 2 paragraphs, summarize your educational philosophy. It is a good idea to share your educational philosophy with other educators as you work to achieve unity in purpose, goals, and methods. It is also a good idea to share your educational philosophy with parents, business, industry, and funding agencies to reassure them of your commitment to helping the next generation of learners become their best.