

## TOWARD DISCOVERING MY PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Each person has a philosophy of education, a set of fundamental beliefs regarding what students needs, how teachers should teach, and how schools should run. To help you discover yours, read each of the following statements and decide whether you agree or disagree with each statement. Use the following numbers to express your degree of agreement:

- 5 Agree Strongly
- 4 Agree
- 3 Neutral or Undecided
- 2 Disagree
- 1 Disagree Strongly

\_\_\_\_\_ 1. Teachers should prepare more lessons that teach students through hands-on activities and focus less the teacher presenting or reading material to students. Students learn concepts best by engaging in problem solving activities rather than reading about them.

\_\_\_\_\_ 2. The classroom is teacher-centered. The teacher as a professional is far more likely to know what students will need to know in the future than do they. S/he is responsible for the education and intellectual growth of his/her students.

\_\_\_\_\_ 3. While communities and cultures have outward differences, human nature remains the same everywhere; hence, the school's curriculum should be the same for everyone.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. Science, health, and economics should be learned through experiences outside the classroom in projects involving the solving of real problems (such as pollution, overpopulation and hunger) that affect the global community.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. The teaching role is not one of guiding students to uncover a pre-existing reality; rather, teachers are involved in an interactive process of knowledge creation, i.e. teachers help students develop a working understanding of reality and life.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. In order for students to be successful in the world outside the classroom, the classroom should encourage cooperation among students rather than competition between students.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. Content knowledge mastery can be assessed efficiently and effectively by a combination of classroom teacher-made tests and standardized tests created by professional testing services.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. Schools should teach children how to use their rationality (the human race's highest attribute) to direct their instinctual nature (humankind's lowest attribute).

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. Education must commit itself here and now to the creation of a new democratic social order that will fulfill the basic values of our culture and at the same time harmonize with the underlying social and economic forces of the modern world.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. The interaction between the teacher and students is often best seen as a dialogue or conversation in which there is mutual influence rather than simple transmission from one to the other.

\_\_\_\_\_ 11. The curriculum of a school should be built around the personal experiences, developmental levels, and learning skill needs of the students.

\_\_\_\_\_ 12. Discipline in the classroom is essential to learning. A noisy classroom is not a desirable place for learning to take place. Order is vital. Self-discipline is fine, but most of the times it is insufficient.

\_\_\_\_\_ 13. It is education's task to bring knowledge of eternal truth into the minds of students. Education should focus on the discussion of timeless questions such as "What is beauty?" or "What is truth?"

\_\_\_\_\_ 14. Children are shaped much more by their environment than by their genetic dispositions or their free will. Teachers should frequently reward students for good behavior and achievement to direct their leaning to constructive ends.

\_\_\_\_\_ 15. There is no central tradition of knowledge (for example, one that is Eurocentric, Christian, or predominantly male) that is more important than other knowledge tradition (for example, Native American, Islamic or predominantly feminist).

\_\_\_\_\_ 16. Composition, music, and art classes or lessons for students should focus primarily on individual expression and creativity.

\_\_\_\_\_ 17. The core of the crucial knowledge that most students need to learn is mostly derived from scientific and technical fields; for example the Scientific Method with its emphasis on data gathering and hypothesis building is key learning technique.

\_\_\_\_\_ 18. Education must focus on character development (engaging in morally relevant conduct or words, or refraining from certain conduct or words).

\_\_\_\_\_ 19. The means and ends of education must be completely re-fashioned to meet the demands of the present social and cultural crisis; students must be equipped with the attitude and skills necessary to create a better society than their ancestors did.

\_\_\_\_\_ 20. Teachers should help students understand how ideas and institutions are tailored to suit people's values and interests: for example, how television programming promotes life-styles that benefit commercial enterprises.

\_\_\_\_\_ 21. The gap between the real world and the world of the classroom can be bridged effectively through the use of frequent films, guest speakers, field trips, internships, and the like.

\_\_\_\_\_ 22. Schools should endow students with a firm grasp and appreciation of traditional American history and values so that students will later function as good citizens.

\_\_\_\_\_ 23. Schools should develop students' abilities to think deeply and analytically; this is more important than developing their social skills or providing them with hands-on knowledge.

\_\_\_\_\_ 24. The teaching of American history should be to evoke discussion and serve as a basis for looking to future democratic reforms, not a subject matter to be transmitted or memorized from textbooks (since these texts are filled with biases and prejudices).

\_\_\_\_\_ 25. Schools must think in terms of teachers and students learning together. This is necessary both so that the values and interests of students are taken into account, and so that the wealth of their everyday experience is made available to fellow students and to the teacher.

\_\_\_\_\_ 26. Since students learn key perceptions about people and their values through social interaction, the ideal classroom would be made up of a variety of students representing different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds.

\_\_\_\_\_ 27. Students should not be promoted from one grade to the next until they have read and mastered the key material. Providing greater educational opportunities for lower achieving students have lowered standards in the schools.

\_\_\_\_\_ 28. Students must be taught to appreciate learning primarily for its own sake rather than because it will help them in their careers.

\_\_\_\_\_ 29. Schools are the basic social institution that can help create a new, more equal American society that is genuinely democratic and a society whose major institutions and resources are used for the benefit of the people themselves.

\_\_\_\_\_ 30. The central role of the school is to provide students with options and choices. Students must ultimately decide on their own what and how to learn.

\_\_\_\_\_ 31. Teaching a child is analogous to cultivation of a beautiful flower; if you provide the child with the appropriate nurturing environment, s/he will grow to be a healthy adult.

\_\_\_\_\_ 32. Education requires the mastery of content, of subject matter. Thus, while other factors may be important, an effective teacher must above all know his/her content.

\_\_\_\_\_ 33. Teacher-guided discussion leading to the unearthing of profound truths (e.g. the Socratic Method) is the key method of teaching students.

\_\_\_\_\_ 34. Through his/her own demonstrated personal commitment and role modeling, the teacher must convince her/his pupils of the validity and urgency of reform.

\_\_\_\_\_ 35. Effective teachers help students to discover and develop their personal values, even when those personal values conflict with traditional ones of family and community.

\_\_\_\_\_ 36. With the decline of the family, community life, and small businesses, young people are losing valuable opportunities to learn the knack of democratic participation. Schools need to make up for this loss and provide opportunities for social experiences and student-run activities.

\_\_\_\_\_ 37. The United States must become more competitive economically with other countries in the world; therefore schools have a responsibility to bolster their academic requirements in order to help the country compete more effectively.

\_\_\_\_\_ 38. The teacher's main goal is to acquaint students with the insights learned over time (e.g. the great works of literature, philosophy) so they can gain wisdom from the great thinkers of the past.

\_\_\_\_\_ 39. In order to better the world for future generations, the school curriculum should focus most of its attention on the urgent contemporary issues facing the modern generation.

\_\_\_\_\_ 40. Because a student may see a question differently, it is unhelpful and inhibiting for a teacher to tell the student s/he is wrong. It disregards that the fact that the student is correct from her/his viewpoint.