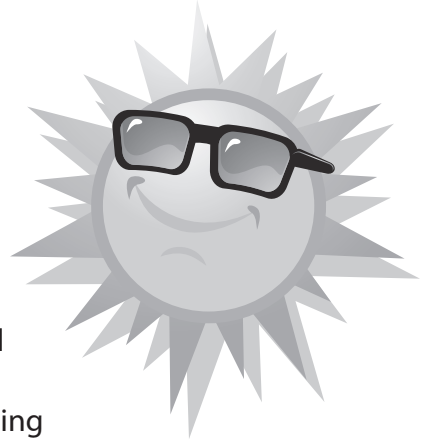


Inspiration: Targeting My Ideal Teaching and Learning Situation

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Background

The ideal teaching and learning situation occurs when students and teachers with common interests come together for the purpose of developing an authentic product or service that is an application of their common interests. Teachers are a rich resource for students when they examine their own interests in ways that reach far beyond their content expertise and general classroom experience. However, when asked what special talents and interests they have, many teachers fail to recognize their own interests as a valuable resource or they recognize only those interests that relate to their current teaching assignment. This questionnaire is designed to help teachers explore their professional and personal interests and talents.



Directions: Part A

The purpose of this survey is to help you explore your interests, experiences, and talents with an eye toward developing an ideal teaching and learning situation. The questionnaire is not a test and there are no right or wrong answers. Past, present, and future interests and experiences can serve as the basis for a rich, authentic educational experience for both you and your students. In short: If you could share anything with a group of interested students, what would it be?

Read through the questionnaire and give your answers careful consideration. Answer honestly and completely. When you've completed the survey, review your answers with the following question in mind: If I could share one of my interests in a learning situation, what would it be?

Professional Experiences:

1. What is your favorite subject to teach?

2. List any special units you've developed for your classroom.

3. What is your favorite area of knowledge? List any areas of knowledge such as astronomy, photography, geology, geography, archaeology, or any other "ologies" or "ographies" in which you have an interest.

4. Name one thing you have always wanted to teach but never had the opportunity to teach.

5. List any special courses or programs that you have taught or would like to teach.

6. Pretend that you have received a federal grant to develop some innovative curricular materials. The only stipulations are that: (1) the materials should span two to three grade levels, (2) the materials must focus on activities that are not ordinarily included in regular textbooks or curricular guides, and (3) you must state the general and specific areas and the topical focus of the materials.

Grade Levels

- Preschool
- Primary (1–3)
- Elementary (4–6)
- Junior High (7–9)
- High School (10–12)
- College
- Special Populations (specify): _____
- Other: _____

General Curricular Area(s) Specified

- Mathematics
- Science
- Humanities
- Social Sciences
- Language Arts
- Music
- Drama
- Art
- Other: _____

Briefly describe the topical focus of the materials and innovative approaches you would develop.

1. Pretend that you can invite four persons (living or dead; famous or not) to give a series of lectures (or workshops) in your classroom related to some aspect of your interests or course content. Whom would you invite?

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

From your choices listed above, place a star next to your very first choice. Why is this person your first choice?

2. Briefly describe the one thing that you feel has been your most creative contribution to teaching.

3. Describe something that you have done to help a single child (or small group of children) develop personally, creatively, and/or academically, but that did not involve instructing or directly teaching something to the child.

Personal Experiences

4. List the clubs, organizations and extracurricular activities in which you have been involved during each of the following stages of your life (include hobbies and services):

Elementary School: _____

Secondary School: _____

College: _____

Adult: _____

5. List any work you've published.

6. Where have you traveled?

7. Which place was most special and why?

8. What do you do in your spare time? If there were no limitations, what would you do in your spare time?

9. Have you ever done any creative things "on your own?" List some of the things you have done (beginning as far back as you can remember) that were not related to school assignments, extracurricular activities, or activities organized by clubs. Such things might include writing poetry, composing music, organizing political action, starting an organization, starting a business, etc.

10. What "cause" would you take up if you had the time?

Developing My Ideal Teaching and Learning Situation

Imagine having the time to work with students in an area that is truly an interest of yours. Imagine that these students share your interest and passion for this area. Picture the time to work with these students scheduled into the school day. Next, think of examples of authentic products and services that you and these students could develop within this area. This type of enrichment learning and teaching closely defines the ideal teaching situation.

Directions: Part B

After reviewing your responses to Part A of this questionnaire, consider which of your interests you would enjoy sharing with students. Answer the following questions and use your answers as a basis for developing a vision about what might take place in your own ideal teaching and learning situation.

If I could share one of my interests in a learning situation, what would it be?

A. What do people with an interest in this area do? List as many different ideas as you can.

B. What materials and resources are needed to address this interest area? Place a star by those things that you already have. Make notes by those you can obtain.

C. What products or services might be produced or offered by people with an interest in this area? List as many varied ideas as you can. Circle those that you think might be adapted to use with students.