REFERENCE · ANYONE CHOOSING BETWEEN DESTINATIONS

# Educational philosophy

Principles of place-based education — a framework for cultivating resilient, responsible, and place-aware learners. By Sayako Schwing.

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## Introduction

Education is the cultivation of capable human beings within a society and within the natural world. It requires resources, community commitment, and the willingness of the learner.

Schools exist not only to transmit knowledge but to develop practical understanding, cultural awareness, curiosity, and resilience. Education prepares people to sustain themselves, participate responsibly in their communities, and keep learning throughout their lives. What follows is a place-based philosophy of education grounded in land, culture, and human responsibility.

## Twelve principles

### Education is luxurious

It requires resources and intention. Someone always pays for it — parents or taxpayers. And learning only happens when the student participates.

### Society educates its citizens

Public education during compulsory school ages lets a society transmit civic responsibility, cultural awareness, and ethical foundations. Schools should help students understand diverse religions, philosophies, and belief systems while respecting freedom of belief and avoiding indoctrination.

### Standards give education meaning

Educational standards provide structure and meaning to effort and achievement.

### Support without removing standards

Students who struggle receive support through public resources and continued opportunity, while the value of achievement stays intact.

### Education prepares people for life

It prepares children for real life, not life in bubble wrap. Practical understanding of food systems, economies, and community life is essential.

### Schools introduce children to society

Schools expose children to life beyond the household. Interaction with peers and other adults teaches cooperation, responsibility, and the dynamics of living in community, developing social judgement and maturity along the way.

### Curiosity fuels lifelong learning

Curiosity cultivated in childhood supports learning throughout life.

### Food is culture

Understanding where food comes from and how to eat well connects people to culture, health, and land.

### Humans are part of nature

Education teaches that humans live within nature rather than above it. Understanding the interconnectedness of living systems encourages humility, care for land, and respect for other living beings.

### Knowledge is rooted in place

All knowledge has an origin. Cultural knowledge emerges from relationships between people and place, and is carried through generations.

### Oral and written knowledge are equal

Knowledge expressed through writing, storytelling, song, spiritual tradition, or practice carries equal cultural value. Students should examine diverse systems of knowledge with curiosity, critical thinking, and mutual respect.

### Education builds resilient and mature humans

It develops resilience, adaptability, emotional awareness, and the personal boundaries needed for an uncertain world. Maturity is not determined by age alone but by the capacity for responsibility, judgement, and thoughtful participation in community.

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## Closing

Education connects people to land, culture, community, and responsibility. Through that connection, individuals learn not only how to live, but how to live well within the world they share with others.