The following are some suggestions for you to consider as you develop and write your own educational philosophy. Be sure to “identify” your philosophy and explain...

It is important to be aware of your own educational philosophy since it helps you focus on why you make the decisions which you make when you plan for your lessons and implement these lessons. Through the writing of your own philosophy, you will see more clearly your own goals and values. Your Educational Philosophy is a description of your goals and beliefs as a teacher. There really is no such thing as "the" philosophy; our philosophies are a reflection of our own beliefs, experiences and training.

Your philosophy is a statement of PERSONAL beliefs and how these will be put into action in your classroom - the philosophy is not a theoretical essay on education but an action plan for you. Note that your philosophy will change as you mature in the profession and gain additional experiences; it is sometimes a good idea to save copies of your earlier philosophies and compare them to your current philosophy to more clearly understand how your approach to education changes. It is often used by administrators to judge whether the applicant is the "kind of person that I would want in my school or teaching my children."

As you develop your philosophy, some of the items you may wish to address include:
- the identification of your philosophy and why
- the purpose of education
- the role of the student in education
- the role of the teacher in education
- the role of the teacher in the community

1. Your educational philosophy reflects your own approach to education; this philosophy should be based on your personal beliefs, which in turn should show an influence of college work, readings, and thinkers. Consequently, when appropriate, "drop names" in your philosophy. For example, "As Erikson, I believe that children go through a series of mini-crisis as they mature and it will be part of my task is to assist young people in making these transitions." However, be sure you understand the philosophy of the person being quoted since you may be asked questions about it at an interview.

2. Appropriate grammar is mandatory; among other things, be careful with the following:
   a. Watch agreement - for example, "The student should do all of their work."
   b. Be sure to write using COMPLETE sentences.
   c. Use only one idea for each paragraph and be sure to provide a transition between paragraphs. Use topic sentences.
   d. Be aware of you change voice in the paper, i.e., "As teachers, we should treat the parents with respect; they need to understand that parents must be part of the solution." or "It is important for everyone to ... thus you should not be critical of ..."
   e. Alternate the use of "she" and "he" to avoid the clumsy phrasing or "she or he".

3. The following are some of the things that you can address in your philosophy
   - use of cooperative learning
   - management techniques
   - parent involvement
   - technology
   - diversity
4. You cannot write an educational philosophy in one paragraph! But it should be no longer than two pages!
5. Your educational philosophy should have an introduction and a conclusion; your conclusion should provide a "logical" ending to your philosophy.
6. Avoid using the same phrase over and over in your philosophy. For example, avoid using the word "teacher" several times in the same paragraph or near each other - check your thesaurus for alternative choices of words.
7. Your philosophy should be positive. While there may well be problems with our educational system, a prospective employer does not really want to hear how bad things are - s/he is interested in what you are going to do to make the classroom experience a better one of the students. You are writing a personal philosophy, not a critique of the educational system.
8. Avoid the use of jargon. If you do use "educational jargon", explain how you are going to impact the student. For example, rather than writing "I strongly believe in inclusion." write "I believe that inclusion is a key ingredient in the makeup of the classroom and I will support inclusion through practices such as using alternative assessments and preparing lessons which appeal to different learning styles."
9. Your philosophy, along with your letter of interest, is among the first things a prospective employer will see. The appearance of these documents is important. Your word processor may have some pre-formatted documents, such as resumes) that you can use as a starting point.
10. Under no circumstances, should you mail anything (except personal letters of reference) that is not prepared on a word processor or typewriter.
11. Avoid the use of different fonts on a page; use the most "readable" font available - you may have to experiment a bit to get the possible font - remember, what looks good on a screen may look different when printed.
12. Use a font that is easy to read and of an appropriate size - avoid any fonts under 12 cpi.
13. Avoid broad generalizations - while you may want to say "I believe that all children can learn" - the statement is relatively meaningless without examples of how you will put that into action.
14. Avoid overly complex sentences, vague or which offer sweeping generalizations.
15. Your philosophy should be POSITIVE - we know there are problems in education - we do not want to read about those in your own philosophy - rather we want to read how you will make a difference!
16. Use some of the information in your book, i.e., from the section on philosophies, to include in your own philosophy.
17. Some suggestions on word usage:
   - "I believe..." is more forceful than, "My belief is ..."
   - Instead of "Education should ..." or "I will try ..." be more positive and use "I believe that ..." or "I will ..."
   - Avoid the use of "I hope..." or "Hopefully ..." for something more positive, such as "I will ..."
   - Rather than writing "In school students should experience ...." use "In my classroom, students will experience ..."
   - Instead of writing "Teachers will ... " use "I will ..."
18. Have someone review your philosophy for accuracy and eye catching appearance.