

Educational Philosophies Self-Assessment Scoring Guide

Record the number you chose for each statement in the self-assessment in the spaces given. Add the numbers for each section to obtain your score for that section. The highest score(s) indicates your educational philosophy and psychological orientation.

Perennialism

The acquisition of knowledge about the great ideas of western culture, including understanding reality, truth, value, and beauty, is the aim of education. Thus, curricula should remain constant across time and context. Cultivation of the intellect is the highest priority of an education. Teachers should directly instruct the great works of literature and art and other core curricula.

$$5 + 3 + 3 + 3 + 4 \text{ Total} = 18$$

1 10 23 31 39

Essentialism

Essentialists believe that there is a core of basic knowledge and skills that needs to be transmitted to students in a systematic, disciplined way. A practical focus, rather than social policy, and emphasis on intellectual and moral standards should be transmitted by the schools. It is a back-to-basics movement that emphasizes facts. Instruction is uniform, direct, and subject-centered. Students should be taught discipline, hard work, and respect for authority.

$$5 + 5 + 5 + 4 + 5 \text{ Total} = 24$$

5 7 12 16 17

Progressivism

Progressivists believe that education should focus on the child rather than the subject matter. The students' interests are important, as is integration of thinking, feeling, and doing. Learners should be active and learn to solve problems by experimenting and reflecting on their experience. Schools should help students develop personal and social values so that they can become thoughtful, productive citizens. Because society is always changing, new ideas are important to make the future better than the past.

$$3 + 4 + 4 + 5 + 3 \text{ Total} = 19$$

4 24 26 34 36

Reconstructionism/Critical Theory

Social reconstructionists advocate that schools should take the lead to reconstruct society in order to create a better world. Schools have more than a responsibility to transmit knowledge,

they have the mission to transform society as well. Reconstructionists use critical thinking skills, inquiry, question-asking, and the taking of action as teaching strategies. Students learn to handle controversy and to recognize multiple perspectives.

$$3 + 4 + 3 + 5 + 4 \text{ Total} = 19$$

$$8 \quad 11 \quad 15 \quad 25 \quad 40$$

Information Processing

For information processing theorists, the focus is on how the mind of the individual works. The mind is considered to be analogous a computer. It uses symbols to encode, process, remember, and retrieve information. It explains how a given body of information is learned and suggests strategies to improve processing and memory.

$$3 + 4 + 4 + 4 + 3 \text{ Total} = 18$$

$$6 \quad 14 \quad 22 \quad 29 \quad 37$$

Behaviorism

Behaviorists believe that behavior is the result of external forces that cause humans to behave in predictable ways, rather than from free will. Observable behavior rather than internal thought processes is the focus; learning is manifested by a change in behavior. This is known as the stimulus-response theory of learning. The teacher reinforces what what the student to do again and again and ignores undesirable behaviors. The teacher's role is to develop behavioral goals and establish reinforcers to accomplish goals.

$$3 + 5 + 5 + 3 + 4 \text{ Total} = 20$$

$$20 \quad 30 \quad 33 \quad 35 \quad 38$$

Cognitivism/Constructivism

The learner actively constructs his or her own understandings of reality through acting upon and reflecting on experiences in the world. When a new object, event, or experience does not fit the learner's present knowing structures, a conflict is provoked that requires an active quest to restore a balance. Teachers facilitate environmental conditions and mediate experiences to support student learning.

$$3 + 3 + 4 + 4 + 4 \text{ Total} = 18$$

$$2 \quad 9 \quad 19 \quad 27 \quad 32$$

Humanism

Humanist educators consider learning from the perspective of the human potential for growth, becoming the best one can be. The shift is to the study of affective as well as cognitive

dimensions of learning. Beliefs include: human beings can control their own destiny; people are inherently good and will strive for a better world; people are free to act but must be responsible; behavior is the consequence of human choice; and people possess unlimited potential for growth and development. There is a natural tendency for people to learn, which will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided.

$$5 + 4 + 5 + 3 + 5 \text{ Total} = 22$$

$$3 \qquad 13 \quad 18 \quad 21 \quad 28$$

Return to [Task 4](#)

© 1999 LeoNora M. Cohen, OSU - School of Education