

Educational Philosophy Surveys

Please visit the following websites to locate surveys to assist you in determining your educational philosophy:

What is Your Philosophy of Education?

This philosophy of education survey comes from the Philosophy chapter (13) in the Sadker & Sadker foundations text. Sadker, M.P. & Sadker, D. S. (1997). *Teachers, schools and society* (4th ed., pp. 403-405.) NY: McGraw Hill.

Mark your answers on the score sheet below, add your totals and see how your beliefs fit into various educational philosophies and your classmates. Use the following scale:

5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; and 1 = strongly disagree.

1. The curriculum of schools should be centered around the basic subjects such as reading, writing, history, math, and science.
2. The curriculum of the schools should focus on the great thinkers of the past.
3. Many students learn best by engaging in real-world activities rather than reading.
4. The students should be permitted to determine their own curriculum.
5. Information is taught effectively when it is broken down into small parts.
6. The curriculum of a school should be determined by information that is essential for all students to know.
7. Schools, above all, should develop students' abilities to think deeply, analytically, and creatively; this is more important than developing their social skills or providing them with a useful body of knowledge about our ever-changing world.
8. Schools should prepare students for analyzing and solving the types of problems they will face outside the classroom.
9. Reality is determined by each individual's perceptions. There is not objective and universal reality.
10. People are shaped much more by their environment than by their genetic dispositions or the exercise of their free will.
11. Students should not be promoted from one grade to the next until they have read and mastered certain key material.
12. An effective education is not aimed at the immediate needs of the students or society.
13. The curriculum of a school should be built around the personal experiences and needs of the students.
14. Students who do not want to study much should not be required to do so.
15. Programmed learning (sequential, step-by-step) is an effective method of learning.
16. Academic rigor is an essential component of education.
17. All students, regardless of ability, should study more or less the same curriculum.
18. Art classes should focus primarily on individual expression and creativity.
19. Effective learning is unstructured and informal.
20. Students learn best through reinforcement and reward.
21. Effective schools assign a substantial amount of homework.
22. Education should focus on the discussion of timeless questions such as "What is beauty?" or "What is truth?"
23. Since students learn effectively through social interaction, schools should plan for substantial social interaction in their curricula.
24. The purpose of school is to help students understand themselves and find the meaning of their existence.
25. Frequent objective testing is the best way to determine what students know.
26. The United States must become more competitive economically with countries such as Japan, and schools have an affirmative obligation to bolster their academic requirements in order to facilitate such competition.

27. Students must be taught to appreciate learning primarily for its own sake rather than because it will help them in their careers.
28. Schools must place more emphasis on teaching about the concerns of minorities and women.
29. Each person has free will to develop as he or she sees fit.
30. Reward students well for learning and they will remember and be able to apply what they learned, even if they were not led to understand why the information is worth knowing.
31. American schools should attempt to instill traditional American values in students.
32. Teacher-guided discovery of profound truths is a key method of teaching students.
33. Students should be active participants in the learning process.
34. There are no external standards of beauty. Beauty is what an individual decides it to be.
35. We can place a lot of faith in our schools and teachers to determine which student behaviors are acceptable and which are not.
36. Schools must provide students with a firm grasp of basic facts regarding the books, people, and events that have shaped the American heritage.
37. Philosophy is ultimately at least as practical a subject to study as is computer science.
38. Teachers must stress for students the relevance of what they are learning to their lives outside, as well as inside, the classroom.
39. It is more important for a student to develop a positive self-concept than to learn specific subject matter.
40. Learning is more effective when students are given frequent tests to determine what they have learned.

Educational Philosophy Score Sheet

Write the number of your response to each item/statement in the spaces below. Add the number you marked in each column and put your sums in the bottom row. Then indicate your rank order for each column. Use the following scale:

5 = strongly agree; 4 = agree; 3 = neutral; 2 = disagree; and 1 = strongly disagree

Essentialism	Perrenialism	Progressivism	Social Reconstructivism	Existentialism
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
11.	12.	13.	14.	15.
16.	17.	18.	19.	20.
21.	22.	23.	24.	25.
26.	27.	28.	29.	30.
31.	32.	33.	34.	35.
36.	37.	38.	39.	40.
Total				
Rank				

Once you have finished this exercise, look at the types of philosophies heading the columns on the survey response sheet to find out what types are compatible with your beliefs and approaches.

What is your Educational Philosophy?

By Patricia D. Jersin (1972)

Instructions

Please check the answer under each item that best reflects your thinking. You may also want to check more than one answer for any of the question.

What is the Essence of Education?

The essence of education is:

1. reason and intuition
2. growth
3. knowledge and skills
4. choice

What is the Nature of the Learner?

The learner is:

1. an experiencing organism.
2. a unique, free choosing, and responsible creature made up of intellect and emotion.
3. a rational and intuitive being.
4. a storehouse for knowledge and skills, which, once acquired, can later be applied and used.

How should education provide for the needs of man?

1. The students need a passionate encounter with the perennial problems of life; the agony and joy of love, reality of choice, anguish of freedom, consequences of actions and the inevitability of death.
2. Education allows for the needs of man when it calculates the child with certain essential skills and knowledge which all men should possess.
3. The one distinguishing characteristic of man is intelligence. Education should concentrate on developing the intellectual needs of students.
4. Since the needs of man are variable, education should concentrate on developing the individual differences in students.

What should be the environment of Education?

1. Education should possess an environment where the student adjusts to the material and social world as it really exists.
2. The environment of education should be life itself, where students can experience living-not prepare for it.
3. The environment of education should be one that encourages the growth of free, creative individuality, not adjustment to group thinking nor the public norms.
4. Education is not a true replica of life, rather, it is an artificial environment where the child should be developing his intellectual potentialities and preparing for the future.

What should be the goal of Education?

1. Growth, through the reconstruction of experience, is the nature, and should be the open-ended goal, of education.
2. The only type of goal to which education should lead is to the goal of truth, which is absolute, universal, and unchanging.
3. The primary concern of education should be with the development of the uniqueness of individual students.
4. The goal of education should be to provide a framework of knowledge for the student against which new truths can be gathered and assimilated.

What should be the concern of the school?

The school should:

1. concern itself with man's distinguishing characteristic, his mind, and concentrate on developing rationality.
2. provide an education for the "whole child," centering its attention on all the needs and interests of the child.

3. educate the child to attain the basic knowledge necessary to understand the real world outside.
4. provide each student with assistance in his journey toward self-realization.

What should be the atmosphere of the school?

1. The school should provide for group thinking in a democratic atmosphere that fosters cooperation rather than competition.
2. The atmosphere of the school should be one of authentic freedom where a student is allowed to find his own truth and ultimate fulfillment through non-conforming choice making.
3. The school should surround its students with AGreat Books@ and foster individuality in an atmosphere of intellectualism and creative thinking.
4. The school should retain an atmosphere of mental discipline, yet incorporate innovative techniques which would introduce the student to a perceptual examination of the realities about him.

How should appropriate learning occur?

Appropriate learning takes place:

1. as the student freely engages in choosing among alternatives while weighing personal responsibilities and the possible consequences of his action.
2. through the experience of problem-solving projects by which the child is led from practical issues to theoretical principles (concrete-to-abstract).
3. as certain basic readings acquaint students with the world's permanencies, inculcating them in theoretical principles that they will later apply in life (abstract-to-concrete).
4. when hard effort has been extended to absorb and master the prescribed subject matter.

What should be the role of the teacher?

The teacher should:

1. discipline pupils intellectually through a study of the great works in literature where the universal concerns of man have best been expressed.
2. present principles and values and the reasons for them, encouraging students to examine them in order to choose for themselves whether or not to accept them.
3. guide and advise students, since the children's own interests should determine what they learn, not authority nor the subject matter of the textbooks.
4. mediate between the adult world and the world of the child since immature students cannot comprehend the nature and demands of adulthood by themselves.

What should the curriculum include?

The curriculum should:

1. include only that which has survived the test of time and combines the symbols and ideas of literature, history, and mathematics with the sciences of the physical world.
2. concentrate on teaching students how to manage change through problem solving activities in the social studies...empirical sciences and vocational technology.
3. concentrate on intellectual subject matter and include English, languages, history, mathematics, natural sciences, the fine arts, and also philosophy.
4. concentrate on the humanities; history, literature, philosophy, and art-where greater depth into the nature of man and his conflict with the world are revealed

What should be the preferred teaching method?

1. *Projects* should be the preferred method whereby the students can be guided through problem-solving experiences.
2. *Lectures, readings, and discussions* should be the preferred methods for training the intellect.
3. *Demonstrations* should be the preferred method for teaching knowledge and skills.
4. *Socratic dialogue* (drawing responses from a questioning conversation) should be the preferred method for finding the self.

SCORING THE TEST

This test is self-scoring. Circle the answer you selected for each of the questions checked on the test (Table A-1). Total the number of circles below each column.

Implications

The four answers selected for each of the questions in this multiple-choice test represent positions on educational issues being taken by hypothetical spokesmen from the major educational philosophies heading each column—Progressivism, Perennialism, Essentialism, and Existentialism. If in scoring your test, you find that a majority of your choices, no matter how much doubling up of answers, falls in a single column, you are selecting a dominant educational philosophy from among the four. For example, if you find your totals: Progressivism (9), Perennialism (1), Essentialism (3), and Existentialism (2); your dominant educational philosophy as determined by this test would be Progressivism (9 out of 15 choices being a majority). If you discover yourself spread rather evenly among several, or even all four, this scattering of answers demonstrates an eclectic set of educational values. Indecisiveness in selecting from the four positions could indicate other values and beliefs not contained within one of these major educational systems.

In all formal systems of philosophy, an important measure of the system's validity is its consistency. Your consistency in taking this test can be measured by comparing the answer you selected for item #1 that identifies essences with your other answers. The more of the remaining 10 responses you find in the same column as item #1, the more consistent you should be in your educational philosophy.

Item	Progres	Perenn	Essent	Existe
1	B	A	C	D
2	A	C	D	B
3	D	C	B	A
4	B	D	A	C
5	A	B	D	C
6	B	A	C	D
7	A	C	D	B
8	B	C	D	A
9	C	A	D	B
10	B	C	A	D
11	A	B	C	D

Complete each survey, compare your results and prepare a narrative of your educational philosophy. Please relate this narrative to your current work and associate it with the role of a curriculum specialist.

The narrative will be evaluated on the following criteria:

Identification of a Philosophical School of Thought (10%)

Support for Your Selection of This Philosophy (20%)

Theory to Practice Examples (20%)

Impact on Student Learning (10%)

Connections to Curriculum Leadership (20%)

Quality of Written Expression (20%)