

What Is Your Educational Philosophy?

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 one of the questions.

1. What is the essence of education?
 - A. The essence of education is reason and *intuition*,
 - B. The essence of education is *growth*.
 - C. The essence of education is *knowledge* and *skills*.
 - D. The essence of education is *choice*,

2. What is the nature of the learner?
 - A. The learner is an experiencing organism.
 - B. The learner is a unique, free choosing, and responsible creature made up of intellect and emotion.
 - C. The learner is a rational and intuitive being.
 - D. The learner is a storehouse for knowledge and skills, which, once acquired, can later be applied and used.

3. How should education provide for the needs of man?
 - A. 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.
 - B. Education allows for the needs of man when it inculcates the child with certain essential skills and knowledge, which all men should possess.
 - C. The one distinguishing characteristic of man is intelligence. Education should concentrate on developing the intellectual needs of students.
 - D. Since the needs of man *are* variable, education should concentrate on developing the individual differences in students.

4. What should be the environment of education?
 - A. Education should possess an environment where the student adjusts to the material and social world, as it really exists,
 - B. The environment of education should be life itself, where students can experience living—not prepare for it.
 - C. The environment of education should be one that encourages the growth of free, creative individuality, not adjustment to group thinking nor the public norms.
 - D. 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.

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

6. What should be the concern of the school?
 - A. The school should concern itself with man's distinguishing characteristic his mind, and concentrate on developing rationality.
 - B. The school should provide an education for the "whole child," centering its attention on all the needs and

interests of the child.

- C. The school should educate the child to attain the basic knowledge necessary to understand the real world outside.
 - D. The school should provide each student with assistance in his journey toward self-realization.
7. What should be the atmosphere of the school?
- A. The school should provide for group thinking in a democratic atmosphere that fosters cooperation rather than competition.
 - B. 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.
 - C. The school should surround its students with “Great Books” and foster individuality in an atmosphere of intellectualism and creative thinking.
 - D. 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.
8. How should appropriate learning occur?
- A. Appropriate learning occurs as the student freely engages in choosing among alternatives while weighing personal responsibilities and the possible consequences of his actions,
 - B. Appropriate learning takes place through the experience of problem-solving projects by which the child is led from practical issues to theoretical principles (concrete-to-abstract).
 - C. Appropriate learning takes place 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).
 - D. Appropriate learning occurs when hard effort has been extended to absorb and master the prescribed subject matter.
9. What should be the role of the teacher?
- A. The teacher should discipline pupils intellectually through a study of the great works in literature where the universal concerns of man have best been expressed.
 - B. The teacher should 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.
 - C. The teacher should guide and advise students, since the children’s own interests should determine what they learn, not authority nor the subject matter of the textbooks.
 - D. The teacher, the responsible authority, should mediate between the adult world and the world of the child since immature students cannot comprehend the nature and demands of adulthood by themselves.
10. What should the curriculum include?
- A. The curriculum should 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.
 - B. The curriculum should concentrate on teaching students how to manage change through problem solving activities in the social studies, empirical sciences and vocational technology.
 - C. The curriculum should concentrate on intellectual subject matter and include English, languages, history, mathematics, natural sciences, the fine arts, and also philosophy.
 - D. The curriculum should 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.
11. What should be the preferred teaching method?
- A. Projects should be the preferred method whereby the students can be guided through problem-solving experiences.
 - B. *Lectures, readings, and discussions* should be the preferred methods for training the intellect.
 - C. *Demonstrations* should be the preferred method for teaching knowledge and skills.
 - D. *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—I). Total the number of circles below each column.

	Progressivism	Perennialism	Essentialism	Existentialism
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

Implications

The four answers selected for each of the questions in this multiple-choice test represent positions on educational issues being taken by hypothetical advocates of 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.

Source: Patricia T. Jersin, "What Is Your EP: A Test Which Identifies *Your* Educational Philosophy," *Clearing House*, 46, pages 274—278, January 1972. Reprinted with permission of the Helen Dwight Reid Educational Foundation. Published by Heldref Publications, 1319 Eighteenth St., NW., Washington, D.C. 20036—1802. Copyright © 1972.

You may note that Jersin has identified four philosophies. Since educational practice is reflected in (3) three, we would subsume her philosophies in this way

- **Perennialism (belief in changeless knowledge) grouped with Essentialism,**
- **Progressivism as Experimentalism, and**
- **Existentialism as itself.**