



Interview Preparation

Teaching Philosophy & Interview Preparation Workbook

Job Search

[illegible]

Prospective Schools

Date Applied:		Open Positions:	
School District:			
Location:			
Student/Staff #:			
Principal(s):			

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Interview Questions

Background

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me something about yourself that isn't on your resume.
3. What is your educational background?
4. What was your favorite course in college, and why?
5. Tell us about your teaching experience. What subjects and grade levels have you taught?
6. How would you describe your last principal?
7. Are you a member of any professional organizations? Which ones, and why?
8. What are some hobbies, interests, or activities you take part in outside of the classroom?
9. What experience do you have with co-teaching? What is your opinion on it?
10. Have you ever studied a second language? Describe your exposure to second language acquisition.
11. What were you like as a student?

General

12. Why do you want to leave your current position?
13. Why do you want to work here?
14. Why should you be hired over someone else?
15. What can you offer our school that other candidates cannot?
16. Are there other subjects that you could or would like to teach?
17. Are there any certifications or endorsements you're interested in pursuing to further your career?
18. What support or professional development do you need or want from administration to ensure you're successful in a new position?
19. What do you consider to be your greatest strength?
20. What personal strengths do you find especially helpful in your teaching?
21. What do you consider to be your greatest weakness, and how are you working to improve it?
22. In what areas do you feel you need improvement?
23. If I were to walk into your classroom during a 'failed' lesson, what would I see, and how would you pivot in the moment?
24. What have you done to improve your skills or knowledge over the past year?
25. What are your career goals five years from now? Ten years?
26. What five words would you use to describe yourself?
27. How would your colleagues describe you?
28. If I were to contact your references, what would they say about you?
29. Is it important for students to like you? Why or why not?
30. How do you manage your time?
31. Describe your experiences with PLCs.
32. What motivates you?

33. Name the titles of the last three books that you have read.
34. Do you consider yourself a risk taker? Give an example to back up your answer.
35. Are you an objective person? Give an example.
36. What kind of people do you find difficult to work with and why?
37. What makes you an effective teacher?
38. Would you describe yourself as a team player or an individual achiever?
39. Tell me whom you would most like to emulate and why.
40. How have you collaborated with other teachers and staff in the past?
41. Describe a conflict you had with a colleague and how it was resolved.
42. Describe a time when you disagreed with an idea your coworker wanted to pursue. How did you approach the disagreement, and what was the resolution?
43. What questions have I not asked that you wish I would have raised?

Unusual Oddballs

44. If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
45. If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be and what would you talk about?
46. If your students could describe you in one hashtag, what would it be?
47. Describe your teaching style using only three words.
48. If you could redesign the school schedule, what unconventional change would you make?
49. If you had a magic wand that could instantly fix one problem in education, what would you change?
50. Imagine you're scrolling social media. What is clickbait for you?

Teaching Philosophy

General

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54. What is the role of the teacher in your classroom?
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56. Would you describe yourself as a "tough" teacher or an "understanding" teacher? Explain.
57. What is your definition of a life-long learner? How can you promote life-long learning in your classroom?
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59. What is the most exciting thing happening in education today?
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66. How have you contributed to your school in your current position?
67. Why is your field important for a student to study?
68. If you found nonstandard usage in student writing or class discussion, how would you respond to it?
69. What should your students have gained from having taken your course?
70. How would you change public schools if you could make any changes you wished?
71. What do you like most about being a teacher?
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73. What two or three books, concepts, or experiences have influenced you the most in your professional development?
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86. Describe how you teach media literacy and which aspects you find most valuable for students.

Teaching Strategies

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139. Describe your approach with a parent who is upset with you—and you know you're right.
140. How do you deal with a large class?
141. If a student refused to take part in some classroom activity, what would you do?
142. Recall a time when you noticed that a student was struggling in class and in jeopardy of failing. What did you do?
143. How do you address issues of academic integrity, such as plagiarism or cheating? Describe the methods of positive reinforcement you use in the classroom. What about negative reinforcement?
144. Without naming names, describe the most challenging student you've ever taught.
145. If you teach a lesson and your students don't seem to be "getting it", what do you do?
146. How do you ensure that all students, including shy or reluctant speakers, participate in discussions?
147. What are your thoughts on the role of AI and ChatGPT in student learning and academic integrity?
148. How do you support students' social-emotional learning in your classroom?
149. How do you balance academic rigor with student well-being?
150. How would you respond if a student made a disrespectful or inappropriate comment in class?
151. What would you do if a student accused you of unfair treatment?
152. You have a student who is very apathetic. She comes late to class, doesn't complete the assignments, doesn't take notes, and simply doesn't try to be successful. She isn't disrespectful. You attempt to reach out to family, but can't get a hold of anyone. What do you do?
153. You have a student who is very disrespectful to you and other classmates. You've called home, but it was clear to you that no consequences were handed down. The student's behavior has not changed since you engaged the family. How do you remedy the situation to ensure all students have equal access to the curriculum?

Assessments

154. How do you use state/content standards to teach?
155. What is your system for evaluating student work?
156. How do you design assessments to accurately measure student learning?
157. How do you assess student writing fairly and effectively?
158. How do you differentiate assessments to accommodate diverse learners?
159. How do you provide meaningful feedback to help students improve?
160. What strategies do you use to ensure students reflect on their assessments and use feedback effectively?
161. What is your stance on the practice of implementing a 50% minimum grading policy (where students receive at least a 50% even for missing or incomplete work), and how do you think it impacts student motivation and accountability?
162. How do you handle late work and retakes in your grading policy?
163. What role does participation and effort play in your grading system?
164. If most of the students in your class failed an assignment, test, or project, how would you respond?
165. How would you use authentic assessment?
166. What kinds of tests do you like to give?
167. Describe an ideal curriculum in your area of study.
168. Describe some of the current curriculum trends in your content area and your opinion on them.
169. Cite the criteria you would use to evaluate a textbook for possible adoption.
170. How do you feel about grading? How do you go about deciding what grades to give students?
171. What is your philosophy on grading? Do you believe in a traditional points-based system, standards-based grading, or another approach?
172. How do you balance formative and summative assessments in your grading process?

DEI

173. How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that values diversity?
174. How do you make sure you meet the needs of students with IEPs?
175. How do you approach English learners in your classroom?
176. How do you handle controversial or divisive topics in the classroom? What do you do when a student says something that is biased or harmful to a marginalized group?
177. How do you create an inclusive learning environment?
178. How do you seek to identify and eliminate barriers for students?
179. How do you define diversity? How do you plan to integrate diversity in your instruction?
180. Describe your experience working with culturally diverse groups.
181. Describe a situation where you encountered inequity and what you did to mitigate the situation.

182. How do you create a classroom culture that intentionally welcomes and supports students from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds?
183. Describe the strategies you use to support equitable success for minority populations.
184. How do you embed cultural competence into your classes?
185. What does trauma-informed mean to you? How does your classroom support students with trauma?
186. Let's say you notice that the scores on your exams are bimodal. Upon further investigation, you have determined that the students in the lower range tend to be Black and Hispanic students. How do you address this situation to ensure student success for all of your students?
187. How do you draw upon your student's prior knowledge, backgrounds, and lived experiences?

Content/Language

188. How do you balance the traditional literary canon with the need for diverse, contemporary voices that reflect our student body?
189. What is the primary purpose of a 5-12 ELA education?
190. How do you approach the 'Science of Reading' (phonics, morphology, and fluency) for secondary students who are reading significantly below grade level?
191. How do you use 'Mentor Texts' to teach craft? Can you give an example of a specific author or piece of writing you use to model a specific skill (e.g., imagery, syntax, or transitions)?
192. Research suggests that teaching grammar in isolation (worksheets) has little impact on student writing. How do you integrate grammar and mechanics instruction directly into the writing process?
193. If you were asked to pair a classic text (e.g., *The Great Gatsby* or *Romeo and Juliet*) with a contemporary 'bridge' text or a piece of non-fiction, what would you choose and why?
194. How do you treat non-traditional 'texts'—such as podcasts, graphic novels, or film—as rigorous objects of study in your classroom?
195. How do you balance the 'Whole Class Novel' with the need for independent reading and student-choice literature circles?
196. Writing isn't just on paper anymore. How do you incorporate digital composition (blogs, infographics, video essays) into your ELA curriculum?
197. As an ELA teacher, what are some of your main concerns? What can you do (or what can be done) about them?
198. How do you think people learn second languages successfully? How does instruction help? How can materials help?
199. How do you teach the writing process?
200. What role does independent reading play in your classroom, and how do you encourage it?
201. How do you approach teaching literary analysis to students who struggle with deeper comprehension?
202. How do you balance listening, speaking, reading, and writing in your lessons?
203. How do you scaffold lessons to support students with limited English proficiency?
204. What strategies do you use to build students' academic vocabulary?

- 205. How do you teach reading comprehension to ELLs who struggle with academic texts?
 - 206. How do you collaborate with content teachers to support ELLs in mainstream classes?
 - 207. How do you balance teaching classic literature with including more diverse and contemporary texts?
 - 208. What do you think about the push for more phonics-based reading instruction?
 - 209. How do you teach reading at the secondary level?
 - 210. How do you approach reluctant or developing readers?
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Questions for Interviewers

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27. _____

STAR

Describe a time when _____.

Situation <i>Briefly describe the context or situation.</i>	
Task <i>Explain the goal or objective.</i>	
Action <i>Detail the specific steps you took, focusing on your personal contributions.</i>	
Result <i>Explain the outcome and impact of your actions or the big takeaway. Use quantifiable results when possible; if not, use qualitative comments.</i>	

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Background

Educational Background	Professional Experience

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4. What was your favorite course in college, and why?

5. Tell us about your teaching experience. What subjects and grade levels have you taught?

6. How would you describe your last principal?

7. Are you a member of any professional organizations? Which ones, and why?

8. What are some hobbies, interests, or activities you take part in outside of the classroom?

9. What experience do you have with co-teaching? What is your opinion on it?

10. Have you ever studied a second language? Describe your exposure to second language acquisition.

11. What were you like as a student?

General

12. Why do you want to leave your current position?

13. Why do you want to work here?

14. Why should you be hired over someone else?

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24. What have you done to improve your skills or knowledge over the past year? What are your plans for future improvement of your teaching skills?

25. What are your career goals five years from now? Ten years?

26. What five words would you use to describe yourself?

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28. If I were to contact your references, what would they say about you?

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33. Name the titles of the last three books that you have read.

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37. What makes you an effective teacher?

38. Would you describe yourself as a team player or an individual achiever?

39. Tell me whom you would most like to emulate and why.

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151. What would you do if a student accused you of unfair treatment?

152. You have a student who is very apathetic. She comes late to class, doesn't complete the assignments, doesn't take notes, and simply doesn't try to be successful. She isn't disrespectful. You attempt to reach out to family, but can't get a hold of anyone. What do you do?

153. You have a student who is very disrespectful to you and other classmates. You've called home, but it was clear to you that no consequences were handed down. The student's behavior has not changed since you engaged the family. How do you remedy the situation to ensure all students have equal access to the curriculum?

Assessments

Buzzwords	Notes

154. How do you use state/content standards to teach?

155. What is your system for evaluating student work?

156. How do you design assessments to accurately measure student learning?

157. How do you assess student writing fairly and effectively?

158. How do you differentiate assessments to accommodate diverse learners?

159. How do you provide meaningful feedback to help students improve?

160. What strategies do you use to ensure students reflect on their assessments and use feedback effectively?

161. What is your stance on the practice of implementing a 50% minimum grading policy (where students receive at least a 50% even for missing or incomplete work), and how do you think it impacts student motivation and accountability?

162. How do you handle late work and retakes in your grading policy?

163. What role does participation and effort play in your grading system?

164. If most of the students in your class failed an assignment, test, or project, how would you respond?

165. How would you use authentic assessment?

166. What kinds of tests do you like to give?

167. Describe an ideal curriculum in your area of study.

168. Describe some of the current curriculum trends in your content area and your opinion on them.

169. Cite the criteria you would use to evaluate a textbook for possible adoption.

170. How do you feel about grading? How do you go about deciding what grades to give students?

171. What is your philosophy on grading? Do you believe in a traditional points-based system, standards-based grading, or another approach?

172. How do you balance formative and summative assessments in your grading process?

DEI

Buzzwords	Notes

173. How has your background and experience prepared you to be effective in an environment that values diversity?

174. How do you make sure you meet the needs of students with IEPs?

175. How do you approach English learners in your classroom?

176. How do you handle controversial or divisive topics in the classroom? What do you do when a student says something that is biased or harmful to a marginalized group?

177. How do you create an inclusive learning environment?

178. How do you seek to identify and eliminate barriers for students?

179. How do you define diversity? How do you plan to integrate diversity in your instruction?

180. Describe your experience working with culturally diverse groups.

181. Describe a situation where you encountered inequity and what you did to mitigate the situation.

182. How do you create a classroom culture that intentionally welcomes and supports students from different racial, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds?

183. Describe the strategies you use to support equitable success for minority populations.

184. How do you embed cultural competence into your classes?

185. What does trauma-informed mean to you? How does your classroom support students with trauma?

186. Let's say you notice that the scores on your exams are bimodal. Upon further investigation, you have determined that the students in the lower range tend to be Black and Hispanic students. How do you address this situation to ensure student success for all of your students?

187. How do you draw upon your student's prior knowledge, backgrounds, and lived experiences?

Content & Language

Buzzwords	Notes

188. How do you balance the traditional literary canon with the need for diverse, contemporary voices that reflect our student body?

189. What is the primary purpose of a 5-12 ELA education?

190. How do you approach the 'Science of Reading' (phonics, morphology, and fluency) for secondary students who are reading significantly below grade level?

191. How do you use 'Mentor Texts' to teach craft? Can you give an example of a specific author or piece of writing you use to model a specific skill (e.g., imagery, syntax, or transitions)?

192. Research suggests that teaching grammar in isolation (worksheets) has little impact on student writing. How do you integrate grammar and mechanics instruction directly into the writing process?

193. If you were asked to pair a classic text (e.g., *The Great Gatsby* or *Romeo and Juliet*) with a contemporary 'bridge' text or a piece of non-fiction, what would you choose and why?

194. How do you treat non-traditional 'texts'—such as podcasts, graphic novels, or film—as rigorous objects of study in your classroom?

195. How do you balance the 'Whole Class Novel' with the need for independent reading and student-choice literature circles?

196. Writing isn't just on paper anymore. How do you incorporate digital composition (blogs, infographics, video essays) into your ELA curriculum?

197. As an ELA teacher, what are some of your main concerns? What can you do (or what can be done) about them?

198. How do you think people learn second languages successfully? How does instruction help?
How can materials help?

199. How do you teach the writing process?

200. What role does independent reading play in your classroom, and how do you encourage it?

201. How do you approach teaching literary analysis to students who struggle with deeper comprehension?

202. How do you balance listening, speaking, reading, and writing in your lessons?

203. How do you scaffold lessons to support students with limited English proficiency?

204. What strategies do you use to build students' academic vocabulary?

205. How do you teach reading comprehension to ELLs who struggle with academic texts?

206. How do you collaborate with content teachers to support ELLs in mainstream classes?

207. How do you balance teaching classic literature with including more diverse and contemporary texts?

208. What do you think about the push for more phonics-based reading instruction?

209. How do you teach reading at the secondary level?

210. How do you approach reluctant or developing readers?



Teaching Philosophy

Quiz: Developing Your Philosophy of Education

A Self-Inventory

Following are 20 statements about teaching, students, school/college and the curriculum. Using a five-point scale (5 = strongly agree; 4= Agree; 3= neutral; 2= disagree; and 1=strongly disagree), indicate your beliefs and feelings about each of the following statements.

1. Essentially, students learn by doing and by discovering things on their own.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
2. The goal of the schooling should be rigorously to prepare students to be productive and engaged members of the society.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
3. The teacher's role is to respond to the learner's information needs, not to be a mere information dispenser.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
4. Teachers should be experts in content knowledge, ready vigorously to engage students in the culture's accumulated wisdom.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
5. Older students should be primarily taught to be trained to uncover key ideas and truths through Socratic questionings.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
6. The teacher's role is to stimulate students' interest and then to be an effective facilitator of those interests.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
7. The true purpose of the education is to make as strong enough to overcome the evils of society.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
8. Students are in college primarily to acquire the knowledge that has lighted the way for human kind from our earliest years.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
9. Because we live in a democracy, schools and colleges should be built around democratic principles, with a major focus on learning how to exist together in democratic harmony.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
10. Students are in college to learn and listen to the knowledge and skills that they will need to function and prosper in a modern economy.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
11. Education is serious business, so teachers should avoid methodological frills and focus on tried and truth teaching strategies.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
12. Colleges should aid students in becoming socially adept and politically literate so they can take up their responsibilities as democratic citizens.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
13. Instructionally, as a teacher must focus on creating an interesting and productive learning environment and, whenever possible, on individualizing instruction.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾

14. Elementary schools should concentrate on basic skills whereas secondary schools and colleges should focus students' learning on disciplined knowledge and scholastic achievement.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
15. Students are naturally good, and their self-esteem must be protected and fostered.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
16. Students are naturally good, and their self-esteem must be protected and fostered.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
17. Teachers need to be skilled in group processing strategies and be able to get students to work together on projects.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
18. The teacher's primary concern should be teaching a common body of useful knowledge rather than focusing on cultivating the intellect, self-esteem, or democratic living.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
19. The curriculum should be fluid, based on the interest of the learner, but students should not be forced to study.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾
20. The college should be devoted to a changeless vision of what is essential for human beings to know.	1-Strongly Disagree ▾

Interpreting Your Self-Inventory

Each of the twenty questions to which you have responded represents one of four philosophies of education (Note: there are more than four philosophies of education but for purposes here the four major ones are used). The four philosophies and the five statements primarily associated with them are listed here. Fill the score you gave each statement and then add up the topic score for each philosophy. The maximum score for any philosophy is 25 and the minimum is 5. These numbers will give you an indication of your philosophy of education preferences as you begin a closer analysis of this topic. You may wish to re-take this inventory as you gain more teaching experience as a means of seeing how your philosophy of education develops and changes over time.

PERENNIALISM	ESSENTIALISM	ROMANTICISM	PROGRESSIVISM
4 ____	2 ____	3 ____	1 ____
5 ____	10 ____	7 ____	6 ____
8 ____	11 ____	13 ____	9 ____
16 ____	14 ____	15 ____	12 ____
20 ____	18 ____	19 ____	17 ____
Total:	Total:	Total:	Total:

Reference

Schools of Educational Philosophy, Chapter 9: What are the philosophical foundations of American Education.

Quiz: 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.

Interpreting Your Self-Inventory

This test is self-scoring. Circle or highlight 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.

Quiz: What is Your Philosophy of Assessment?

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One area of consistent disconnect between faculty, staff, and others involved in assessment of student learning is agreement on what assessment is and isn’t, along with agreement on the value, worth, and purpose for engaging in assessment of student learning in the first place. In part, this is due to conversations on assessment beginning with a focus on the doing of assessment as opposed to why we do assessment. It is also due to disciplinary differences and philosophical stances on assessment – the underlying mental models if you will – that drive decisions around assessment processes and practices (Jankowski, 2017). Without clarity on the philosophy behind assessment, faculty and staff can talk past each other, misunderstand one another, and/or reinforce or obfuscate assessment culture.

This activity can be undertaken individually or within a larger group setting.¹ It can serve as a useful tool to explore your own perceptions and philosophical approaches regarding the purpose and value of assessment. As a group activity, it provides a means to determine where people stand in relation to the different approaches and schools of thought around assessment. The purpose of this activity is two-fold. The first is to help uncover underlying tendencies towards different philosophies of assessment based on assessment-related beliefs. The second purpose is for assessment professionals to be better prepared and informed on how to engage in conversations about student learning with people from different philosophical positions and viewpoints such that they do not talk past each other. Knowing the philosophical stances of

people, disciplines, units or departments on assessment can help improve communication and lower misunderstanding. For example, one would not be overly successful talking to a person about teaching and learning who believes assessment to be about compliance. Thus, this activity is designed to enable assessment professionals, and faculty and staff within departments and units, to know which philosophies they are aligned with to help them approach different conversations and communicate about assessment to different groups based on different perspectives.

The activity presents statements related to four different philosophical viewpoints on the purpose and function of assessment of student learning as well as beliefs about the best means by which to measure student learning. The four philosophies explored are:

- **Teaching and Learning:** Assessment is viewed as part of pedagogy and student learning, driven by faculty questions about their classroom and programmatic practices in ways that guide future developments in both teaching and learning. The purpose of assessment is formative, and to enhance faculty teaching and student learning. Thus, the process of assessment is viewed as one of learning and as embedded within teaching and learning.
- **Measurement:** Concerns about determining valid and reliable approaches to gathering data on student learning drive decisions and discussions on assessing student learning. Assessment is about measurement and determining the most appropriate and accurate measures to document and record learning as well as programmatic or institutional impact on learning. Comparisons, longitudinal data, and controls are viewed as an integral part of measurement issues.
- **Compliance/Reporting:** Assessment is viewed as undertaken solely to meet the requirements and demands of administrators, accrediting bodies, and state agencies. Assessment is simply about meeting the needs and requirements of external entities for purposes of reporting. It is about doing what is asked, checking a box, and moving on with your day.
- **Student-Centered:** Assessment is viewed as a mechanism by which students can learn about their own learning by being an active participant in the assessment process. Assessment here is about a reflective and engaged process in which students learn about themselves as learners, how they learn, what they know, and are actively involved in and an agent of their own learning process. Students are not simply the object of assessment, but the primary beneficiaries.

Please note, it is highly unlikely that an individual will fall into only one of the four areas but will instead have several to which there are strongly held beliefs – some stronger than others. For that reason, the scores are based on the direction to which one leans, to understand a picture of the different elements that combine for how assessment is viewed, not to determine which “camp” one aligns with.

Activity Instructions

1. For each of the philosophical statements, indicate your level of agreement ranging from 0-4, where “0” = do not agree and “4” = absolutely agree. It is fine to have a score of 0, 1, 2, 3, or 4. It is even

acceptable to give .5 or .7 scores. The only consideration is that you do have to add the scores at the end and sticking with 0, 1, 2, 3, and 4 does make the addition process easier.

2. On the second page of the activity, add together each of the scores for each color, or if not in color by each abbreviation (TL, M, C, SC) and put total amounts in the result table. Total sum will range from 0-24 for each of the sets of statements. The colors and abbreviations align with the different philosophical understandings of assessment.
3. For each of the statement types, the closer your score is to 24 (the highest amount you can get by giving all 4s to each statement in an individual category), the stronger you agree with the statements in that group. It is highly unlikely that an individual will fall solely into one category, but instead have two or more to which they align. For instance, it might be that someone is student-centered (score of 19) and focused on teaching and learning (score of 17), but also cares strongly about how best to objectively measure learning (score of 15).
4. If doing this as a group activity, take time to discuss the results with those at your table or participating in the virtual break out room. What do the results mean about how you go about assessing student learning, the types of changes made, and the types of questions asked? If doing this individually, reflect on what that means for your own work and the processes and practices of assessment within your institution. You might even want to examine your beliefs over time, completing the activity again at a later date.

	Philosophical Statements	Rate 0-4	
1	Assessment of student learning is a necessary element of effective classroom teaching.		TL
2	Results of assessment of student learning are used to improve teaching processes and practices.		TL
3	Assessment of student learning should be held to the same evidentiary standards as objective, empirical research.		M
4	Assessment of student learning does not provide evidence to improve teaching and learning.		C
5	Assessment measures should be responsive to different student populations.		SC
6	Assessment of student learning is for reporting to external entities.		C

7	Assessment of student learning is not a faculty responsibility.		C
8	Principles of scientific measurement (i.e., reliability, validity, sample size) should drive assessment of student learning measures.		M
9	Involving students in assessment (beyond completing an assessment) makes the results inherently invalid.		M
10	The only reason to assess student learning is to meet accreditation or programmatic requirements.		C
11	Assessment of student learning is a waste of faculty time.		C
12	Evidence of student learning is used to inform students about their learning.		SC
13	Assessment of student learning is a shared responsibility of faculty, staff, and students.		TL
14	Students are active participants in assessment processes.		SC
15	Assessment is a part of the teaching and learning process whereby faculty learn about their own practice.		TL
16	Students, when appropriate, should be able to provide their own evidence of learning outcome attainment.		SC
17	Assessment of student learning is an integral part of faculty responsibilities.		TL
18	To determine if learning has occurred, pre- and post-measures are necessary.		M
19	Students should co-design learning outcomes and related assessments with faculty and staff.		SC
20	Assessment evidence is composed of embedded assignments in courses.		TL
21	Consistency in assessment measures is the most important element of assessment practices.		M
22	Student learning can only be assessed through tests or exams.		M
23	Students are a valuable source of information on what could be improved to advance student learning.		SC
24	There is one, right way to assess student learning, for reporting purposes.		C

For each of the statements on the prior page, indicate your level of agreement ranging from 0-4. Add your score for each of the following statement types.

Statement Types	Total (0-24)
Teaching and Learning (TL)	
Measurement (M)	
Compliance/Reporting (C)	
Student-Centered (SC)	

For each of the statement types, the closer your score is to 24, the stronger you agree with the statements in that group. The statement groupings are related to different philosophical views on the purpose and function of assessment of student learning as well as the best means by which to measure student learning.

Teaching and Learning: For those with higher scores on teaching and learning, assessment is viewed as part of pedagogy and student learning, driven by faculty questions about their classroom and programmatic practices in ways that guide future developments in both teaching and learning. The purpose of assessment is formative, and to enhance faculty teaching and student learning. Thus, the process of assessment is viewed as one of learning and as embedded within teaching and learning.

Measurement: For those with higher scores on measurement, concerns about determining valid and reliable approaches to gathering data on student learning drive decisions and discussions on assessing student learning. Assessment is about measurement and determining the most appropriate and accurate measures to document and record learning as well as programmatic or institutional impact on learning. Comparisons, longitudinal data, and controls are viewed as an integral part of measurement issues.

Compliance/Reporting: For those with higher scores on compliance and reporting, assessment is viewed as undertaken solely to meet the requirements and demands of administrators, accrediting bodies, and state agencies. Assessment is simply about meeting the needs and requirements of external entities for purposes of reporting. It is about doing what is asked, checking a box, and moving on with your day.

Student-Centered: For those with higher scores on student-centered, assessment is viewed as a mechanism by which students can learn about their own learning by being an active participant in the assessment process. Assessment here is about a reflective and engaged process in which students learn about themselves as learners, how they learn, what they know, and are actively involved in and an agent of their own learning process. Students are not simply the object of assessment, but the primary beneficiaries.