
Philosophies Held by Instructors of Lifelong-learners **(PHIL)**

Directions: For each of the following four items, select the one response that most closely reflects your beliefs. *Follow “Continue to” for your next item.*

1. As an educator, I seek to create a classroom environment that has content and educational activities that are:

___ a. Controlled with careful analysis by me of the material to be covered and concepts to be taught so that learners can systematically move toward the learning objectives.

→ ***Continue to Item 2***

___ b. Considerate of the learner's needs so that each learner can explore and make educational decisions in consultation with me.

→ ***Continue to Item 3***

2. I believe that people learn best:

___ a. From expert instructors who know what they are talking about.

___ b. From instructors who emphasize practice and continually provide feedback to the learners. be pursued.

→ ***Go to the Your Educational Philosophy table for your Philosophy Profile***

3. I believe that educational activities should:

___ a. Start with the educator planning activities by identifying problems that can be solved by the instruction.

→ ***Continue to Item 4***

___ b. Involve the learner in making key decisions in consultation with the instructor about what to include in the educational activity.

→ ***Go to the Your Educational Philosophy table for your Philosophy Profile***

4. I believe that the effective instructor:

___ a. Capitalizes on the learners' feelings during the learning process to accomplish the learning objectives.

___ b. Helps learners increase their awareness of significant social and political issues so that they can have an impact on these situations.

→ ***Go to the Your Educational Philosophy table for your Philosophy Profile***

Your Educational Philosophy

Use the table to identify your Educational Philosophy. Then turn the page over for the Descriptions of Philosophies.

Your Response		Philosophy
1a	2a	Idealist
	2b	Realist
1b	3a plus 4a	Pragmatist/Progressivist
	3a plus 4b	Reconstructionist
	3b	Existentialist/Humanist

Description of Philosophies

Idealism

Idealism holds that ideas are the only true reality. This philosophy goes back to ancient Greece and claims greats such as Socrates and Plato. This school seeks to discover true knowledge rather than create it. The aims of this philosophy are to search for truth and further the character development of learners. The role of the teacher is to serve as a guide for immature learners, judge important material, and model appropriate behavior. The instructional process is holistic, seeks to develop critical thinkers, and deals with broad concepts rather than specific skills. This is a content-centered approach to education with a heavy emphasis on seeking universal truths and values and with a strong and defined role for the teacher.

Realism

Realism holds that reality exists independent of the human mind; matter in the universe is real and independent of man's ideas. This philosophy grew out of the Age of Enlightenment and strongly supports the use of the scientific method. Its aims are to understand the world through inquiry, verify ideas in the world of experience, teach things that are essential and practical, and develop the learner's rational powers. The instructional process seeks to teach fundamentals, encourage specialization, and teach the scientific method. The role of teacher is to present material systematically, encourage the use of objective criteria, and be effective and accountable. Behaviorism is congruent with this broader teacher-centered philosophy.

Pragmatism/Progressivism

Pragmatism or Progressivism is associated strongly with the works of John Dewey. It seeks to inquire and to then do what works best; that is, it seeks to be pragmatic. However, everything centers on the human experience. It seeks to promote democracy by developing strong individuals to serve in a good society. It supports diversity because education is the necessity of life. Its aims are to seek understanding, coordinate all environments into a whole, teach a process of inquiry, and promote personal growth and democracy. The instructional process is flexible with a concern for individual differences and for problem solving and discovery. In this learner-centered approach, the role of the teacher is to identify the needs of the learner and to serve as a resource person.

Existentialism/Humanism

Existentialism or Humanism draws heavily from the ideas of Carl Rogers. This philosophy focuses on the individual and believes that individuals are always in transition. People interpret the world from their own perceptions and construct their own realities. Its aims are to promote self-understanding, involvement in life, an awareness of alternatives, and the development of a commitment to choices. Learning is viewed as a process of personal development which seeks to provide learners with options. The role of the instructor in this learner-centered philosophy is to be a facilitator. The cornerstone of this philosophy is trust between the teacher and learner.

Reconstructionism

Reconstructionism strongly believes that education can be used in reconstructing society. In order to achieve social justice and true democracy, change rather than adjustment is needed. This philosophy is futuristic and takes a holistic view of problems. Its aims are to encourage social activism and the development of change agents. Its purpose is to empower people to think critically about their world, develop decision-making abilities, get involved in social issues, and take action. The role of the teacher in this learner-centered philosophy is to help learners develop problem-posing skills and lifelong-learning skills. This school of thought has been greatly influenced by the work of Paulo Freire and Myles Horton.