

Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory

The Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory is designed to assist the adult educator to identify his/her personal philosophy of education and to compare it with prevailing philosophies in the field of adult education. The PAEI is self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted.

Adult Learning Methods, 1990, 1991, with
Corrections edited by Michael W. Gailbraith.
Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida.
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PHILOSOPHY OF ADULT EDUCATION INVENTORY

INSTRUCTIONS FOR COMPLETION

Each of the fifteen (15) items on the Inventory begins with an incomplete sentence, followed by five different options that might complete the sentence. To the right of each option is a scale from 1 to 7, followed by a small letter in parentheses. For the present, *ignore* the letters; use only the numbers on the scale.

To complete the Inventory, read each sentence stem and each optional phrase that completes it. On the 1-7 scale, **circle** the number that most closely indicates how you feel about each option. The scales goes from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with a neutral point (4) if you don't have any opinion or aren't sure about a particular option.

Continue through all the items, reading the sentence stem and indicating how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the options. Please respond to *every option*, even if you feel neutral about it. **There are no right or wrong answers.**

As you go through the Inventory, respond according to what you *generally believe*, rather than thinking about a specific class you may be teaching. **Have fun!**

PHILOSOPHY OF ADULT EDUCATION INVENTORY

		Strongly Disagree		Neutral		Strongly Agree	
1. In planning an educational activity, I am most likely to:							
• identify, in conjunction with learners, significant social and political issues and plan learning activities around them.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (e)
• clearly identify the results I want and construct a program that will almost run itself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (b)
• begin with a lesson plan that organizes what I plan to teach, when and how.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (a)
• assess learners' needs and develop valid learning activities based on those needs.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (c)
• consider the areas of greatest interest to the learners and plan to deal with them regardless of what they may be.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (d)
2. People learn best:							
• when the new knowledge is presented from a problem-solving approach.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (h)
• when the learning activity provides for practice and repetition.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (g)
• through dialog with other learners and a group coordinator.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (j)
• when they are free to explore, without the constraints of a "system."	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (i)
• from an "expert" who knows what he or she is talking about.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7 (f)

3. The primary purpose of adult education is:

- to facilitate personal development on the part of the learner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- to increase learners' awareness of the need for social change and to enable them to effect such change. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- to develop conceptual and theoretical understanding. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)
- to establish the learners' capacity to solve individual and societal problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)
- to develop the learners' competency and mastery of specific skills. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)

4. Most of what people know:

- is a result of consciously pursuing their goals, solving problems as they go. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- they have learned through critical thinking focused on important social and political issues. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- they have learned through a trial-and-feedback process. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)
- they have gained through self-discovery rather than some "teaching" process. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)
- they have acquired through a systematic educational process. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)

5. Decisions about what to include in an educational activity:

- should be made mostly by the learner in consultation with a facilitator. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- should be based on what learners know and what the teacher believes they should know at the end of the activity. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- should be based on a consideration of key social and cultural situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- should be based on a consideration of the learners' needs, interests, and problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)
- should be based on careful analysis by the teacher of the material to be covered and the concepts to be taught. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)

6. Good adult educators start planning instruction:

- by considering the end behaviors they are looking for and the most efficient ways of producing them in learners. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)
- by identifying problems that can be solved as a result of the instruction. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- by clarifying the concepts or theoretical principles to be taught. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)
- by clarifying key social and political issues that affect the lives of the learners. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- by asking learners to identify what they want to learn and how they want to learn it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)

7. As an adult educator, I am most successful in situations:

- that are unstructured and flexible enough to follow learners' interests. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- that are fairly structured, with clear learning objectives and built-in feedback to the learners. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- where I can focus on practical skills and knowledge that can be put to use in solving problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)
- where the scope of the new material is fairly clear and the subject matter is logically organized. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)
- where the learners have some awareness of social and political issues and are willing to explore the impact of such issues on their daily lives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)

8. In planning an educational activity, I try to create:

- the real world – problems and all – and to develop learners' capacities for dealing with it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- a setting in which learners are encouraged to examine their beliefs and values and to raise critical questions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- a controlled environment that attracts and holds the learners, moving them systematically towards the objective(s). 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)
- a clear outline of the content and the concepts to be taught. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)
- a supportive climate that facilitates self-discovery and interaction. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)

9. The learners' feelings during the learning process:

- must be brought to the surface in order for learners to become truly involved in their learning. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- provide energy that can be focused on problems or questions. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)
- will probably have a great deal to do with the way they approach their learning. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- are used by the skillful adult educator to accomplish the learning objective(s). 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- may get in the way of teaching by diverting the learners' attention. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)

10. The teaching methods I use:

- focus on problem-solving and present real challenges to the learner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- emphasize practice and feedback to the learner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)
- are mostly non-directive, encouraging the learner to take responsibility for his/her own learning. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)
- involve learners in dialog and critical examination of controversial issues. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- are determined primarily by the subject or content to be covered. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)

11. When learners are uninterested in a subject, it is because:

- they do not realize how serious the consequences of not understanding or learning the subject may be. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- they do not see any benefit for their daily lives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)
- they teacher does not know enough about the subject or is unable to make it interesting to the learner. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)
- they are not getting adequate feedback during the learning process. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- they are not ready to learn it or it is not a high priority for them personally. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)

12. Differences among adult learners:

- are relatively unimportant as long as the learners gain common base of understanding through the learning experience. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)
- enable them to learn best on their own time and in their own way. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)
- are primarily due to differences in their life experiences and will usually lead them to make different applications of new knowledge and skills to their own situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- arise from their particular cultural and social situations and can be minimized as they recognize common needs and problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- will not interfere with their learning if each learner is given adequate opportunity for practice and reinforcement. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)

13. Evaluation of learning outcomes:

- is not of great importance and may not be possible, because the impact of learning may not be evident until much later. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- should be built into the system, so that learners will continually receive feedback and can adjust their performance accordingly. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- is best done by the learners themselves, for their own purposes. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- lets me know how much learners have increased their conceptual understanding of new material. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)
- is best accomplished when the learner encounters a problem, either in the learning setting or the real world, and successfully resolves it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)

14. My primary role as a teacher of adults is to:

- guide learners through learning activities with well-directed feedback. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (g)
- systematically lead learners step by step in acquiring new information and understanding underlying theories and concepts. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (f)
- help learners identify and learn to solve problems. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (h)
- increase learners' awareness of environmental and social issues and help them learn how to have an impact on these situations. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (j)
- facilitate, but not to direct, learning activities. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (i)

15. In the end, if learners have not learned what was taught:

- the teacher has not actually taught. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (a)
- they need to repeat the experience of a portion of it. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (b)
- they may have learned something else which they consider just as interesting or useful. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (d)
- they do not recognize how learning will enable them to significantly influence society. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (e)
- it is probably because they are unable to make practical application of new knowledge to problems in their daily lives. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 (c)

Instructions for Scoring the Inventory

After completing the Inventory, go back to your responses and find the small letter in parentheses to the far right of each rating scale. This is a code letter for the Inventory.

First, transfer each of your numbers on the rating scale to the matrix on the next page. For item #1, if you circled a 5 for option (e), write the number 5 in the box for 1(e). Item #1 has *five* different responses: e, b, a, c, d. Record *all five* of your responses for item #1, then go on to #2 and continue through #15. When you finish, there will be numbers in *every other square* in the matrix (like a checkerboard.)

Item	a	f	b	g	c	h	d	i	e	j
1										
2										
3										
4										
5										
6										
7										
8										
9										
10										
11										
12										
13										
14										
15										
Sub T										

Final Score

a + f = L _____

b + g = B _____

c + h = P _____

d + i = H _____

e + j = R _____

Note: Final score should be no higher than 105, nor lower than 15.

Now, add all the numbers by columns, from top to bottom, so you have ten separate subtotals. None of these subtotals should be higher than 56, nor should any be lower than 8. For your FINAL SCORE, add the subtotals from the columns as shown in the smaller box above.

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS

Each of your scores reflects a particular philosophy of adult education:

L = Liberal Adult Education

H = Humanistic Adult Education

B = Behaviorist Adult Education

R = Radical Adult Education

P = Progressive Adult Education

On the next page, you will find a synopsis of each of these philosophies. You may want to write your score for each philosophy above the column that describes it. Your *highest* score reflects the philosophy that is *closest* to your own beliefs; your *lowest* score reflects a philosophy that is *least* like yours. For example, a score of 95-105 indicates a strong agreement with a given philosophy; a score of 15-25 indicates a strong disagreement with a given philosophy. If your score is between 55 and 65, it probably means that you neither agree nor disagree strongly with a particular philosophy.

Note that there is no “right” or “wrong” philosophy. The Inventory is designed only to give you information about your own beliefs; not to make judgments about those beliefs. You may want to give some thought to how your beliefs influence your actions as an adult educator.

PHILOSOPHIES OF ADULT EDUCATION*

	LIBERAL ADULT EDUCATION (CLASSICAL, TRADITIONAL)	BEHAVIORIST ADULT EDUCATION	PROGRESSIVE ADULT EDUCATION	HUMANISTIC ADULT EDUCATION	RADICAL ADULT EDUCATION (RECONSTRUCTIONIST)
PURPOSE	To develop intellectual powers of the mind; to make a person literate in the broadest sense – intellectually, morally, spiritually, aesthetically.	To bring about behavior that will ensure survival of human species, societies, and individuals; to promote behavioral change.	To transmit culture and societal structure; to promote social change; to give learner practical knowledge and problem-solving skills.	To enhance personal growth and development; to facilitate self-actualization.	To bring about, through education, fundamental, social, political, and economic changes in society.
LEARNER	“Renaissance person”; cultured; always a learner; seeks knowledge rather than just information; conceptual, theoretical understanding.	Learner takes an active role in learning, practicing new behavior, and receiving feedback; strong environmental influence.	Learner needs, interests, and experiences are key elements in learning; people have unlimited potential to be developed through education.	Learner is highly motivated and self-directed; assumes responsibility for learning.	Equality with teacher in learning process; personal autonomy; people create history and culture by combining reflection with action.
TEACHER	The “expert”; transmitter of knowledge; authoritative; clearly directs learning process.	Manager; controller; predicts and directs learning outcomes.	Organizer; guides learning through experiences that are educative; stimulates, instigates, and evaluates learning process.	Facilitator; helper; partner; promotes but does not direct learning.	Coordinator; suggests but does not determine direction for learning; equality between teacher and learner.

CONCEPTS/ KEY WORDS	Liberal learning; learning for its own sake; rational, intellectual education; general education, traditional knowledge, classical humanism.	Stimulus-response; behavior modification; competency-based; mastery learning; behavioral objectives; trial and error; skill training; feedback; reinforcement.	Problem-solving; experience-based education; democracy; lifelong learning; pragmatic knowledge; needs assessment; social responsibility.	Experiential learning; freedom; individuality; self-directedness; interactive; openness; cooperation; authenticity; ambiguity; feelings.	Consciousness-raising; praxis; non-compulsory learning; autonomy; critical thinking; social action; deinstitutionalization; literacy training.
METHODS	Dialectic; lecture; study groups; contemplation; critical reading and discussion.	Programmed instruction; contract learning; teaching machines; computer-assisted instruction; practice & reinforcement.	Problem-solving; scientific method; activity method; experimental method; project method; inductive method.	Experiential; group tasks; group discussion; team teaching; self-directed learning; individualized learning; discovery method.	Dialog; problem-posing; maximum interaction; discussion groups.
PEOPLE/ PRACTICES	Socrates, Aristotle, Adler, Kallen, Van Doren, Houle; Great Books; Lyceum; Chautauqua; Elder-hostel; Center for the Study of Liberal Education.	Skinner, Thorndike, Watson, Tyler; APL (Adult Performance Level); competency-based teacher education; behavior modification programs.	Spencer, Dewey, Bergevin, Sheats, Lindeman, Benne, Blakely; ABE; ESL; citizenship education; community schools; cooperative extension; schools without walls.	Rogers, Maslow, Knowles, May, Tough, McKenzie; encounter groups; group dynamics; self-directed learning projects; human relations training; Esalen Institute	Brameld, Holt, Kozol, Freire, Goodman, Illich, Ohliger; Freedom Schools; Freire’s literacy training; free schools.

* Descriptions excerpted from J. Elias and S. Merriam (1980), *Philosophical Foundation of Adult Education*, Malabar, FL: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Company.

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