ENSURING A QUALITY EDUCATION:

"What To Teach?"

How to Evaluate and Choose a Quality Curriculum

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ADVANCE COLORADO INSTITUTE

Dear Readers,

This valuable report, written by Advance Colorado Institute's Fellow in Education Reform, Dr. Debora Scheffel, is a key resource for anyone invested in reforming our education system. Whether you are a school board member, a teacher, a parent, or a concerned citizen, you know that curriculum is at the heart of many education-related conversations and is constantly in the news. If we want to ensure our children are getting a quality academic education, curriculum – what they are being taught – is a vital component.

Dr. Scheffel lays out key questions, statistics, and evaluation tools in this report. Carefully reviewing the information provided here will enable you to determine the quality of the curriculum your children or students are learning from. Rather than leaving you with a conclusion that much of today's curriculum is poor quality, Dr. Scheffel goes further and helps us all identify the type of curriculum we need to look for.

We all agree that, in order to build the next generation, our children need every opportunity to succeed in their education. School choice is a cornerstone of success, and so is quality curriculum.

Please use this report as a tool in your local school district, and pass it on to the education leaders you know. When we work together to identify quality academic curriculum for our children, we set them up for lifelong success.

Sincerely,
Kristi Burton Brown
Executive Vice President, Advance Colorado Institute

Skill Mastery & Content Knowledge is Key

How to ensure our children experience a quality education is an elusive pursuit. Defining a quality education is subjective and the quest to understand the parameters of an educational experience that enhances the learning capacity of a child is a long-standing quest. The term "quality" is value-laden and is linked to what is deemed beneficial and important. (1)

Still, we attempt to define quality education in many ways including by achievement outcomes, resilience, responsibility towards others, virtue, long-term happiness, and using other descriptors.

Karatsiori (2023) selected 8 major education thinkers from ancient times to the digital era, and 6 learning theories to depict the continuation of ideas in education philosophy and curricula through the millennia and across the globe, and quantified the number of education journals mentioning these thought leaders and their respective philosophies. (2)

Each of these philosophers and philosophies have differences and commonalities in terms of perspectives on the learning process, the purpose of education, the role of the teacher, the relationship between teacher and student, the content of teaching, and the over-all elements of a quality education; and each answers the "what (and why and how) to teach"—that is, the curricula, question somewhat differently. However, across the ages, from Plato to Charlotte Mason, from behaviorism to classical education models, one practical outcome of education is shared by all, and that is **the essential importance of skill mastery and content knowledge.**

Before digging into the quality of a given school curriculum, and specifically the role of a curriculum in supporting skill mastery and content knowledge, it can be helpful to first address the underlying assumptions and priorities of teachers, parents, and the community as related to educating the next generation. The self-assessments in Appendices A, B, and C can be a good starting point for conversation. (3)

Once those tools or other similar tools have prompted a discussion with constituents to reach some consensus about the nature, goals, methods, meaning and content of a quality education, a review of current curricula can

commence. Given the central importance of **skill mastery and content knowledge** across the ages in evaluating a quality education, one can start with this as a central lens from which to evaluate current curricula.

Find What the Schools Are Doing

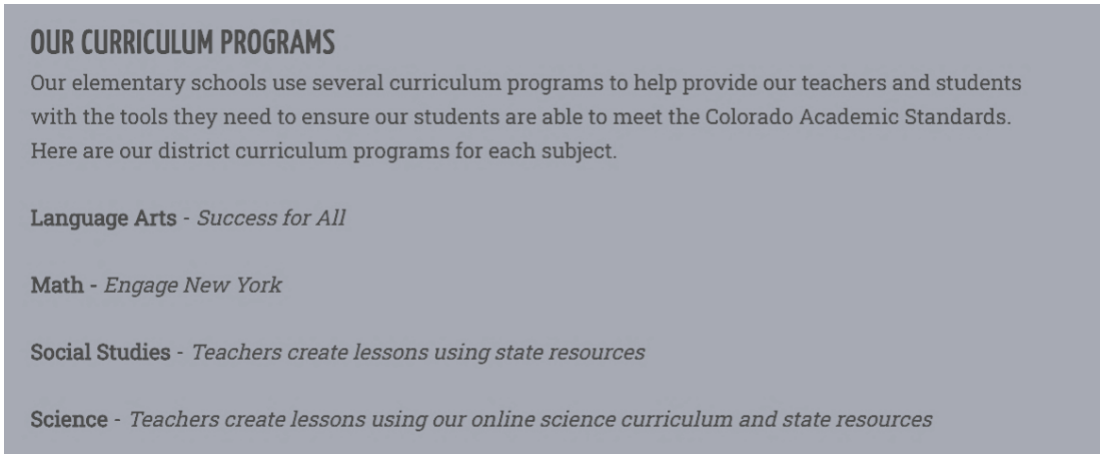
Almost 90 percent of America's public school teachers add, mix, and match a plethora of content from the internet into their district-mandated content, with *Teachers Pay Teachers* the most consulted source, according to RAND. (4) One survey found that teachers spend, on average, seven hours per week searching for materials, and an additional five hours per week creating their own content. (4)

"The Colorado State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards in mathematics and English language arts on August 2, 2010. [...] In December 2010, CDE re-released the Colorado Academic Standards in mathematics and reading, writing and communicating inclusive of the entirety of the Common Core State Standards. [...] Colorado's State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for ELA (CCSS ELA) as part of the Colorado Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, and Communicating (RWC) in 2010, and reaffirmed that adoption with their approval of revisions to the standards in 2018. However, the CCSS ELA are only *a part* of Colorado's reading, writing, and communicating standards, as Colorado is required to have a more robust document that supports the integration of the Colorado Essential Skills and the Minimum Skills Competencies within READ Act." (5)

Schools began using the CCSS, along with various curricula, in the 2013-2014 school year after the CCSS had been integrated into the Colorado Academic Standards (CAS) for Mathematics, Reading, Writing and Communicating. (5) "The Office of Facility Schools adopted curriculum guides for grades k-12 in Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Science in 2015. The guides are aligned to the Colorado Academic Standards. The Office of Standards and Instructional Support has also worked with school districts across the state to develop sample curriculum for schools and districts to utilize in all content areas and grade levels," aligning with the 2010 standards. (6)

Reviewing state education websites is a helpful first step in evaluating skill mastery and content knowledge in schools/districts that use them as curricula.

Of the 179 school districts in Colorado, most use a variety of published curricula, state resources referenced above, and teacher developed content. Districts typically post their published curricula as seen in this example from an elementary school in Montezuma-Cortez:



OUR CURRICULUM PROGRAMS

Our elementary schools use several curriculum programs to help provide our teachers and students with the tools they need to ensure our students are able to meet the Colorado Academic Standards. Here are our district curriculum programs for each subject.

Language Arts - *Success for All*

Math - *Engage New York*

Social Studies - *Teachers create lessons using state resources*

Science - *Teachers create lessons using our online science curriculum and state resources*

Source: Montezuma-Cortez Elementary School Curricula (7)

...and in this example from a middle school in Montezuma-Cortez:

> *"The AVID curriculum, based on more than 35 years of research and rigorous standards, emphasizes teaching which focuses on writing-to-learn, inquiry, collaboration, organization and reading for comprehension..."* (8)

Many districts opt to use a curriculum like this rather than choosing their own. Without something like the AVID curriculum, teachers often use the Teachers Pay Teachers website online to create their own.

Is it Working? Curriculum Matters – Not Only Who Is Teaching It

When districts have adopted published curricula, a first step is to obtain copies of the curricula and evaluate them based on specific criteria.

The central criteria against which curricula can be assessed is student achievement outcomes. Assessment outcomes data include school and district data on the Colorado Department of Education website, which includes school or district-wide results on the CMAS (Colorado Measures of Academic Success) in math, English Language Arts, Science and Social Studies, SAT (Scholastic Assessment Test) and P(preliminary)SAT results, NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) results, and K-3 literacy results.

Research suggests that the effect size of a strong curriculum is larger than many other common education reforms, so the effort to review curricular content is worth the effort. (9)

Effect size is a way to measure the relationship between two variables to indicate the magnitude of the effect of, in this case, a quality curriculum.

Recently, David Grissmer and colleagues studied the impact of the use of high-quality instructional materials (HQIM) like the Core Knowledge Sequence, a curricular approach that explicitly builds background knowledge, on student achievement. (4)

High-quality instructional materials are generally characterized by: standards-aligned instructional content, clear learning outcomes, a coherent scope and sequence, evidence-based instructional strategies and embedded formative assessments, and materials provided for educators and students to ensure all are being supported and learning needs are met. (10)

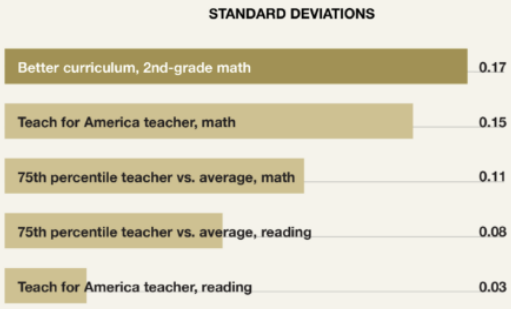
On average, students in schools that used this curriculum scored a statistically significant 16 percentage points higher on end-of-year state tests than a control group of students who did not, after controlling for race, gender, and free and reduced-lunch eligibility.

Grissmer's research builds on earlier findings. Several studies find that the choice of math and science textbooks had significant effects on test scores, and other studies indicate a positive impact in English language arts (ELA) based on better textbooks. (4)

One study favorably compares the impact of a better curriculum with that of other interventions (see Figure 1), and another suggests that the greatest positive impact of HQIM accrues when used by the least experienced teachers (see Figure 2).

Figure 1. Impact of curriculum selection compared with other interventions (effect size)

Curriculum selection has large and statistically significant effects on student outcomes, rivaling teacher effectiveness interventions.



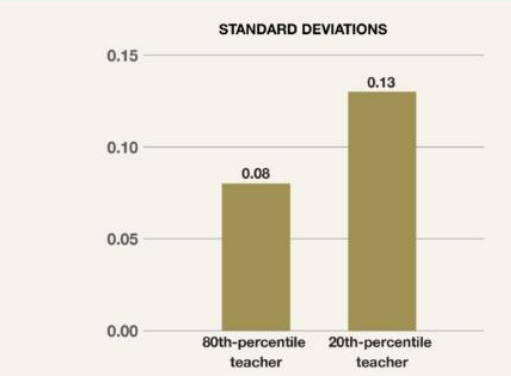
Source: Matthew Chingos and Grover "Russ" Whitehurst, "Choosing Blindly: Instructional Materials, Teacher Effectiveness, and the Common Core," Brookings Institution, 2012.

Once curricula are assessed against student achievement outcomes, a gap analysis can be conducted. If students, for example, are underachieving in reading, the reading curriculum should be reviewed for quality.

To do so, the structure and content of the curriculum is of central importance. Part of the education process is structuring learning so skills can be mastered; and content can make sense, be sequenced logically, and address a given knowledge domain fully.

Figure 2. Impact of quality curriculum by level of teacher effectiveness (effect size)

Curriculum impact is largest for weakest teachers, effectively bringing up the "floor".



Source: C. Kirabo Jackson and Alexey Makarin, "Simplifying Teaching: A Field Experiment with Online 'Off-the-Shelf' Lessons," National Bureau of Economic Statistics, Working Paper No. 229398, 2016.

What are the Features of the Curriculum?

Curriculum developers often use the term “scope and sequence” when referring to this structure. The scope and sequence is based on the constituent parts of a given knowledge domain, in this case, reading. Learning to read is based on the Science of Reading and the constituent parts are depicted below (Figure 3).

Thus, at an initial level, a quality “learning to read” curriculum must address each area below. If a curriculum, for example, de-emphasizes decoding, its use may not translate into proficient reading outcomes for young readers.

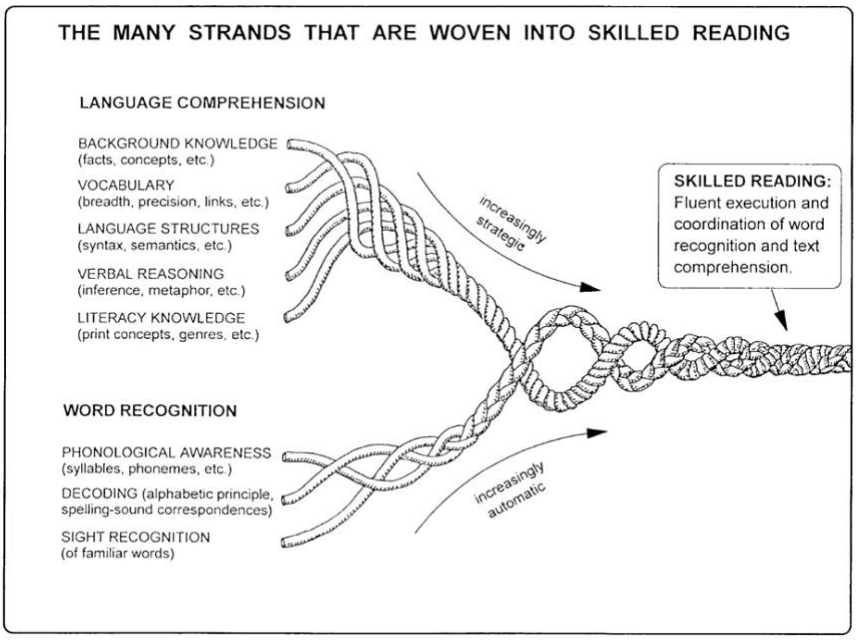


Figure 3. The Reading Rope (11)

The Reading League is a trusted source for curriculum evaluation guidelines in the area of reading, and their 2023 publication helps educators evaluate how well a curriculum aligns with the findings from the Science of Reading. Similar to reading, mastery of mathematics is also determined by mastery of its constituent parts including concepts, procedures, strategies, and reasoning, across the main branches of mathematics, including arithmetic,

geometry, algebra, calculus, trigonometry, and probability and statistics (The Science of Math).

The graphic below illustrates the many branches of mathematics. IXL is a helpful website that assigns skills by grade to these branches. What Works Clearinghouse and EdReports are both well respected sources for curricular review for Language Arts, Math, and Science.

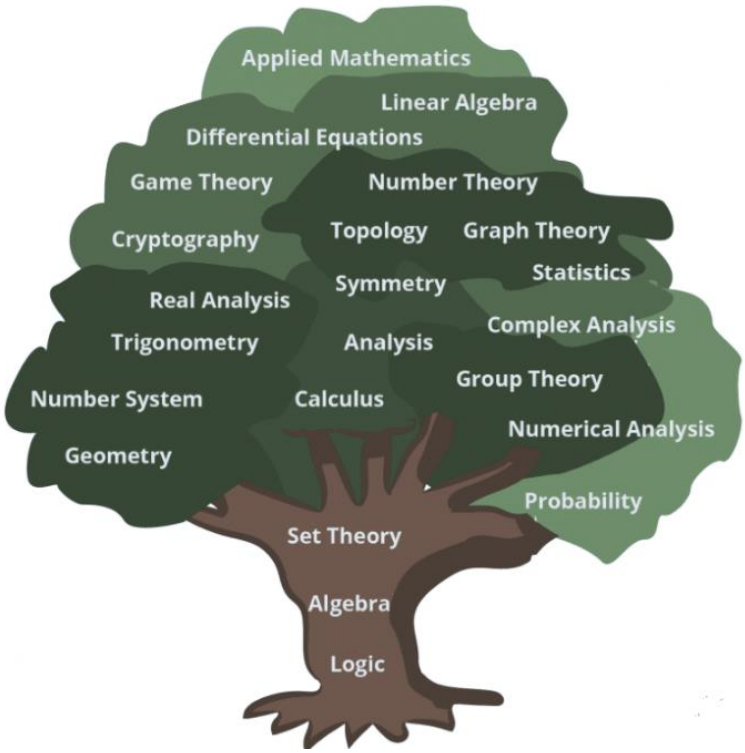


Figure 4. The Branches of Mathematics (12)

Social Studies is the melding of history, civics, economics, financial literacy, geography and technology. Social Studies is a content area that is heavily influenced by perspective. The Civics Alliance, National Association of Scholars, released "American Birthright" in 2023, addressing K-12 content standards and related curricula. The Civics Alliance is a conservative think tank and is written from the perspective of the cultural heritage of western civilization, emphasizing a positive view of U.S. history.

In contrast, Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States,* has influenced teaching of American history for an entire generation of readers, telling the nation's story from the viewpoints of select categories of people—slaves, workers, immigrants, women, and Native Americans whose voices Howard Zinn felt had been typically omitted from the historical record; his *People's History* often depicts American history from a negative perspective, without including the positive aspects. Zinn's book is commonly used in high schools; his text has sold more than 2.5 million copies.

Zinn has also written a version for grades 6-9. Former Emory adjunct professor Mary Grabar has offered an extensive, thoroughly researched critical treatment of Zinn in her 2019 book, *Debunking Howard Zinn: Exposing the Fake History That Turned a Generation Against America*. These contrasting perspectives on American history make the point that parents, teachers, and the community should have input into curricular decisions that have implications for how the next generation views their nation and its history.

Summary: How to Choose a Quality Curriculum

So, to summarize, in choosing a quality curriculum:

1. Focus on skill mastery and content knowledge.
2. Engage in conversation with stakeholders, finding common ground on the role of curriculum and philosophy of education
3. Conduct a curricular review, identifying what resources teachers are using including academic standards, state resources, published criteria, and other teacher resources (e.g. *Teachers Pay Teachers*)
4. Benchmark curricular review against student outcomes achievement data, available research evidence (e.g. the science of reading) and a comprehensive knowledge of the subject
5. Analyze scope and sequence or a curricular map of curricula across all resources in each subject area to ensure a well-organized curriculum and one that articulates well from grade to grade
6. Pay attention to teacher implementation quality; teacher professional development is necessary to ensure quality implementation

Some broad questions that may be helpful in reviewing and evaluating curricula from the book, *Curriculum Leadership,* follow: (13)

The Written Curriculum

Scope and Sequence of Level Objectives

1. Have the goals of this field been analyzed into a set of grade-level (or achievement level) objectives that identify the important concepts, skills, and attitudes to be attained?
2. Are those level objectives sufficiently comprehensive so that they adequately reflect the goals of this field?
3. Are those level objectives clearly displayed in some form (such as a scope-and-sequence chart) that facilitates understanding and use?
4. Are the level objectives in accord with and do they reflect the recommendations of experts in the field?
5. Does the grade placement of objectives reflect the best current knowledge of child development?
6. Does the grade placement of objectives provide for sufficient reinforcement without undue repetition?
7. Is the grade placement of objectives appropriate in relation to their difficulty for learners at that level?
8. Are the objectives appropriately distributed over the grades so that there is balance between the grades?

Written Course Guides

1. Are there written course guides for this field covering all grade levels?
2. Are those guides readily available to administrators, teachers, and parents?
3. Does the format of the guides facilitate revision and amplification?
4. Do the guides clearly specify grade-level objectives in a format and manner that facilitate use?
5. Do the guides make appropriate distinctions between mastery, organic, and enrichment outcomes and focus primarily on the mastery outcomes?
6. Do the guides indicate clearly the relative importance of the mastery outcomes and suggest time allocations that reflect their importance?

7. Do the guides suggest ways of organizing the objectives into learning units, without requiring a particular type of unit organization?
8. Do the guides recommend (but not mandate) teaching/learning activities that seem likely to lead to the attainment of the relevant objectives?
9. Do the teaching and learning activities recommended reflect the best current knowledge about teaching and learning, and are they qualitatively excellent?
10. Do the guides suggest appropriate evaluation processes and instruments?
11. Do the guides recommend appropriate instructional materials and other resources?

The Supported Curriculum

Time

1. Has the school district clearly specified time to be allocated to this field of study at each level of schooling?
2. Does the time allocated to this field seem appropriate in relation to the district's goals, the goals of the field of study, and the recommendations of experts?
3. Do school master schedules and administrative guidelines on time allocation appropriately reflect district allocations?

Staff Development

1. Does the district provide ongoing staff-development programs that help the teachers use the curriculum guides effectively and involve teachers in improving the guides?

The Taught Curriculum

1. Do the teachers allocate time to this field of study in accordance with district and school guidelines?
2. Do the teachers allocate time to the several components of this field of study in a way that reflects curricular priorities?
3. Do the teachers teach for the objectives specified for that grade?

4. Do the instructional methods used by the teachers reflect the best current knowledge about teaching that field of study and are they qualitatively excellent?
5. What unintended effects does this curriculum have on teaching?

The Tested Curriculum

1. Does the district provide curriculum-based tests that adequately reflect and correspond with the objectives stated in the course guides?
2. Are such tests valid and reliable measures of performance?
3. Does the district make use of standardized tests that provide norm-referenced data on achievement in this field of study?
4. Do any standardized tests used by the district adequately reflect and correspond with the objectives stated in the course guides?

The Learned Curriculum

1. Do pupils believe that what they are learning is useful and meaningful?
2. Do pupils achieve the specified objectives at a satisfactory level?
3. What unintended learning outcomes are evidenced?
4. What are the opportunity costs for pupils involved in this field of study?

RESOURCES

Finally, there are a number of helpful resources by area listed below:

READING:

- The Science of Reading
- Science of Reading Curriculum Guide
- Comprehensive K-12 Evidence Based Reading Plans
- Reading League Curriculum Evaluation Guidelines: Reviewer Workbook
- 4-12 Literacy Instructional Rubrics Reference List

WRITING:

- Classical Writing: The Method
- Circe Institute: Lost Tool Writing: writing curricula focusing on inventing, generating, and arranging ideas
- Institute for Excellence in Writing: writing curricula focusing on structure and style
- Reading Rockets: Evidence Based Practices for Writing Instruction

MATH:

- Institute for Education Sciences: What Works Clearing House: What Works in Math
- Iris Center: Evidence Based Mathematics Practices
- The Science of Math: The "Science of Math" movement advocates for a more structured, explicit instruction focused on algorithms and basic facts, while critics argue that this approach is overly rigid and neglects deeper conceptual understanding and student engagement; likely both serve the needs of students best.
- Colorado Department of Education - Mathematics Curriculum Support

SOCIAL STUDIES:

- Woodson Center Curriculum resource
- Civics Alliance American Birthright Standards
- Fordham Institute Civics and US History State Standards
- *4 Centuries of American Education*, David Barton

SCIENCE:

- Evaluation of Resources and Materials Aligned to the 2020 CO Academic Standards/NGSS
- John Locke's Franklin Standards: Model Content Standards for K-12 Science

GENERAL RESOURCES:

- Standards vs. Curriculum Communications Document
- District Curriculum Sample Materials
- IXL K-12 Curricula
- Well Trained Mind Press: secular, classical education curricular resources, K-12
- Classical Academic Press: K-12 curricula across content areas
- Best Evidence Encyclopedia: Empowering Educators with Evidence on Proven Programs

CASE STUDIES

Case Study 1:

How One Texas School District Is Repurposing Staff Development Time to Embrace the Science of Reading:
https://www.the74million.org/article/case-study-how-one-texas-school-district-is-repurposing-staff-development-time-to-embrace-the-science-of-reading/

Case Study 2:

Strengthening Math Instruction in Peoria:
https://tntp.org/case-study/strengthening-math-instruction-in-peoria-il/#navigation-the-challenge

Case Study 3:

Embracing the Implementation Journey:
https://riveteducation.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Mt.-Horeb-Case-Study.pdf

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APPENDIX A

Educational Philosophies Self-Assessment

This questionnaire will help you recognize and name your own educational philosophy. Respond to the given statements on a scale from 1, "Strongly Disagree," to 5, "Strongly Agree." Record the number of your answer along with the question number for scoring.

1	The curriculum should be universal; a given body of information about western civilization should be taught through discussion and lecture.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Students are makers of meaning and construct their understandings from active experience, rather than through transmission from teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Education should emphasize personal growth through solving problems that are real to students.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Curriculum should not be predetermined; rather, it should spring from students' interests and needs.	1	2	3	4	5
5	It is necessary and good that schools instill traditional values in students.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Representing information as symbols in the mind is an important part of learning.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Schools exist to provide practical preparation for work and life, not to nourish personal development.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Teaching the great works of literature is less important than involving students in activities to criticize and shape society.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Teachers, rather than imparting knowledge, are facilitators of conditions and experiences so students can construct their own understandings.	1	2	3	4	5
10	The aim of education should remain constant regardless of differences in era or society, it should not vary from one teacher to another.	1	2	3	4	5
11	Schools should encourage student involvement in social change to aid in societal reform.	1	2	3	4	5
12	The emphasis in schools should be hard work, respect for authority, and discipline, rather than encouraging free choice.	1	2	3	4	5

13	If encouraging and nourishing environments are provided, learning will flourish naturally because people have an inherent tendency to learn.	1	2	3	4	5
14	Students, like computers, are information processors who must make sense of events and objects in their environments.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Schools should guide society towards significant social change rather than merely passing on traditional values.	1	2	3	4	5
16	Teachers should concentrate on conveying a common core of knowledge rather than experimenting with modifying curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
17	The curriculum should focus on basic skills instead of students' individual interests.	1	2	3	4	5
18	Students must learn to make good choices and to be responsible for their behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
19	Conflicts to current understandings trigger the need to learn and to make meaning.	1	2	3	4	5
20	Rewards controlled by the external environment lead to and result in all learning.	1	2	3	4	5
21	Transmitting traditional values is less important than helping students to develop personal values.	1	2	3	4	5
22	The heart of understanding learning is concerned with how information is encoded, processed, remembered, and retrieved.	1	2	3	4	5
23	Advocating the permanency of the classics is a vital part of teaching.	1	2	3	4	5
24	Perceptions centered in experience should be emphasized, as well as the freedom and responsibility to achieve one's potential.	1	2	3	4	5
25	Education should help drive society to better itself, rather than restricting itself to essential skills.	1	2	3	4	5
26	Teachers should encourage democratic, project-based classrooms that emphasize interdisciplinary subject matter.	1	2	3	4	5
27	A knowledgeable individual facilitates or scaffolds learning for a novice based on understanding the learner's developmental level and the content to be learned.	1	2	3	4	5
28	The role of the teacher is help create a nurturing atmosphere for students and to promote the growth of the whole person.	1	2	3	4	5

29	Teaching involves the support of memory storage and retrieval.	1	2	3	4	5
30	Successful teaching creates an environment that controls student behavior and assesses learning of prescribed outcomes.	1	2	3	4	5
31	The greatest education centers mainly around the student's exposure to great achievements in subjects such as arts and literature.	1	2	3	4	5
32	Learning requires modifying internal knowing structures in order to assimilate and accommodate new information.	1	2	3	4	5
33	The role of the teacher is to create an atmosphere that rewards desired behavior toward achieving goals and extinguishes undesirable behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
34	The primary goal for educators is to establish environments where students can learn independently through purposeful reflection about their experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
35	Principles of reinforcement (anything that will increase the likelihood that an event will be repeated) and contiguity (how close two events must be chronologically for a bond to be created) are pivotal to explaining learning.	1	2	3	4	5
36	Students' involvement in choosing how and what they should learn is central to education.	1	2	3	4	5
37	Students need to develop declarative, procedural, and conditional knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
38	One's behavior is shaped by one's environment; elements within that environment (rather than the individual learner) determine what is learned.	1	2	3	4	5
39	The most distinctive quality of human nature is the ability to reason; for this reason, the focus of education should be on developing intellect.	1	2	3	4	5
40	Learning should guide students to active participation in social reform.	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

Educational Philosophies Self-Assessment Scoring Guide

Record the number you chose for each statement in the self-assessment in the spaces given. Add the numbers for each section to obtain your score for that section. The highest score(s) indicates your educational philosophy and psychological orientation.

Perennialism

The acquisition of knowledge about the great ideas of western culture, including understanding reality, truth, value, and beauty, is the aim of education. Thus, curricula should remain constant across time and context. Cultivation of the intellect is the highest priority of an education. Teachers should directly instruct the great works of literature and art and other core curricula.

__	+	__	+	__	+	__	+	__	Total =	_____
1		10		23		31		39		

Essentialism

Essentialists believe that there is a core of basic knowledge and skills that needs to be transmitted to students in a systematic, disciplined way. A practical focus, rather than social policy, and emphasis on intellectual and moral standards should be transmitted by the schools. It is a back-to-basics movement that emphasizes facts. Instruction is uniform, direct, and subject-centered. Students should be taught discipline, hard work, and respect for authority.

__	+	__	+	__	+	__	+	__	Total =	_____
5		7		12		16		17		

Progressivism

Progressivists believe that education should focus on the child rather than the subject matter. The students' interests are important, as is integration of thinking, feeling, and doing. Learners should be active and learn to solve problems by experimenting and reflecting on their experience. Schools should help students develop personal and social values so that they can become thoughtful, productive citizens. Because society is always changing, new ideas are important to make the future better than the past.

__	+	__	+	__	+	__	+	__	Total =	_____
4		24		26		34		36		

Reconstructionism/Critical Theory

Social reconstructionists advocate that schools should take the lead to reconstruct society in order to create a better world. Schools have more than a responsibility to transmit knowledge, they have the mission to transform society as well. Reconstructionists use critical thinking skills, inquiry, question-asking, and the taking of action as teaching strategies. Students learn to handle controversy and to recognize multiple perspectives.

__ + __ + __ + __ + __ Total = _____

8 11 15 25 40

Information Processing

For information processing theorists, the focus is on how the mind of the individual works. The mind is considered to be analogous a computer. It uses symbols to encode, process, remember, and retrieve information. It explains how a given body of information is learned and suggests strategies to improve processing and memory.

__ + __ + __ + __ + __ Total = _____

6 14 22 29 37

Behaviorism

Behaviorists believe that behavior is the result of external forces that cause humans to behave in predictable ways, rather than from free will. Observable behavior rather than internal thought processes is the focus; learning is manifested by a change in behavior. This is known as the stimulus-response theory of learning. The teacher reinforces what what the student to do again and again and ignores undesirable behaviors. The teacher's role is to develop behavioral goals and establish reinforcers to accomplish goals.

__ + __ + __ + __ + __ Total = _____

20 30 33 35 38

Cognitivism/Constructivism

The learner actively constructs his or her own understandings of reality through acting upon and reflecting on experiences in the world. When a new object, event, or experience does not fit the learner's present knowing structures, a conflict is provoked that requires an active quest to restore a balance. Teachers facilitate environmental conditions and mediate experiences to support student learning.

__ + __ + __ + __ + __ Total = _____

2 9 19 27 32

Humanism

Humanist educators consider learning from the perspective of the human potential for growth, becoming the best one can be. The shift is to the study of affective as well as cognitive dimensions of learning. Beliefs include: human beings can control their own destiny; people are inherently good and will strive for a better world; people are free to act but must be responsible; behavior is the consequence of human choice; and people possess unlimited potential for growth and development. There is a natural tendency for people to learn, which will flourish if nourishing, encouraging environments are provided.

__ + __ + __ + __ + __ Total = _____

3 13 18 21 28

APPENDIX C

Philosophy and Education Continuum Chart

General or World Philosophies	**Idealism:** Ideas are the only true reality, the only thing worth knowing. Focus: *Mind*	**Realism:** Reality exists independent of human mind. World of physical objects ultimate reality. Focus: *Body*	**Pragmatism:** Universe is dynamic, evolving. Purpose of thought is action. Truth is relative. Focus: *Experience*	**Existentialism:** Reality is subjective, within the individual. Individual rather than external standards. Focus: *Freedom*
Originator(s)	Plato, Socrates	Aristotle	Pierce, Dewey	Sartre, Kierkegaard
Curricular Emphasis	Subject matter of mind: literature, history, philosophy, religion	Subject matter of physical world: science, math	Subject matter of social experience. Creation of new social order	Subject matter of personal choice
Teaching Method	Teach for handling ideas: lecture, discussion	Teach for mastery of facts and basic skills: demonstration, recitation	Problem solving: Project method	Individual as entity within social context
Character Development	Imitating examples, heroes	Training in rules of conduct	Making group decisions in light of consequences	Individual responsibility for decisions and preferences
Related Educational Philosophies	**Perennialism:** Focus: Teach ideas that are everlasting. Seek enduring truths which are constant, not changing, through great literature, art, philosophy, religion.	**Essentialism:** Focus: Teach the common core, "the basics" of information and skills (cultural heritage) needed for citizenship. (Curriculum can change slowly)	**Progressivism:** Focus: Ideas should be tested by active experimentation. Learning rooted in questions of learners in interaction with others. Experience and student centered.	**Reconstructionism/ Critical Theory** Focus: Critical pedagogy: Analysis of world events, controversial issues and diversity to provide vision for better world and social change.
Key Proponents	Robert Hutchins, Jacque Maritain, Mortimer Adler, Allan Bloom	William Bagley; Arthur Bestor, E. D. Hirsch, Chester Finn, Diane Ravitch, Theodore Sizer	John Dewey, William Kilpatrick	George Counts, J. Habermas, Ivan Illich, Henry Giroux, Paulo Freire

Related Theories of Learning (Psychological Orientations)	**Information Processing:** The mind makes meaning through symbol-processing structures of a fixed body of knowledge. Describes how information is received, processed, stored, and retrieved from the mind.	**Behaviorism:** Behavior shaped by design and determined by forces in environment. Learning occurs as result of reinforcing responses to stimuli. **Social Learning:** Learning by observing and imitating others.	**Cognitivism/ Constructivism:** Learner actively constructs own understandings of reality through interaction with environment and reflection on actions. Student-centered learning around conflicts to present knowing structures.	**Humanism:** Personal freedom, choice, responsibility. Achievement motivation towards highest levels. Control of own destiny. Child centered. Interaction with others.
Key Proponents	R. M. Gagne, E. Gagne, Robert Sternberg, J.R. Anderson	Ivan Pavlov, John Watson, B.F. Skinner, E.L. Thorndike, Albert Bandura	Jean Piaget, U. Bronfenbrenner, Jerome Bruner, Lev Vygotsky	J.J. Rousseau, A. Maslow, C. Rogers, A. Combs, R. May

About the Author

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Dr. Debora Scheffel serves as the CUS Dean of the School of Education at Colorado Christian University. She earned a PhD in Communication Sciences and Disorders from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, and completed a National Institutes of Mental Health post-doctoral fellowship in cognitive science at the University of California, San Diego. Her research interests are in education reform policy, reading, and oral language development and disabilities in children. She is currently serving a second 6-year term as a member of the Colorado State Board of Education representing Colorado's 4th Congressional District. She is passionate about quality education and providing a range of available educational options for all children.

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