

In a nutshell

This feature covers the essentials of philosophies of education and provides examples of this theory in practice. This resource can be photocopied and used as a revision tool or a prompt for discussion with your peers.

Philosophies of education

<p>Perennialism Sees education as a vehicle for presenting fixed 'truths'. Education is seen as a way of teaching and reinforcing this information.</p>	<p>Idealism Sees ideas as being the most important aspect of education, the teacher's role being to develop individual capabilities and ideas. Idealists see the world as it <i>should be</i>.</p>
<p>Realism Sees the world as 'it is' and recognises the importance of observation. Sees education as a structured and systematic process used to develop rational thinking.</p>	<p>Pragmatism Acknowledges the importance of observation and experience as well as the changing nature of knowledge and advocates experimentation and problem-solving.</p>
<p>Existentialism Has a focus on personal interpretation and choice and advocates an approach which focuses on self-direction.</p>	

Putting it into practice

It is likely that your approach to teaching and learning is influenced by a number of things including your values, your experiences and the way you like learning. It is not suggested that you adopt a particular philosophy but that you recognise the impact your beliefs might have on the approaches you adopt. The following table provides some ideas of teaching strategies matched to each of the philosophies.

Perennialism	Structured lessons Activities to reinforce learning Learning checks
Idealism	Differentiated activities Target setting Unstructured tasks Socratic questioning
Realism	Mastery learning Scaffolding learning Case studies
Pragmatism	Experimentation Problem-solving Group work
Existentialism	Worksheets Choice of activities Use of flipped learning

What else could you do?