



# Ball State Philosophy Outreach Project Lesson Plan

## Topic: Philosophy of Education

### Time: 50-60 minutes

**Opening Activity (10-15 minutes):** Pass out one copy of the attached worksheet for each student. Students should complete this worksheet. This worksheet is designed to exemplify (in an exaggerated fashion) an essentialist approach to education. It should also act as an introduction to philosophy of education.

#### **Opening Discussion Questions (10-15 minutes):**

- Did you enjoy the printed terms worksheet? Why or why not?
- How does this activity compare to the activities you typically do in school?
- Do you think this worksheet helped you learn? If so, how? If not, how would you rather learn? Why?

**Explanation (1-5 minutes):** That worksheet was meant to reflect an essentialist approach to education. Essentialists believe in a teacher-led classroom. Often students are seen as blank slates coming into school to gain essential knowledge from the teacher. This is the most popular philosophy of education in the United States. However, recently there has been a push for progressivist or constructivist approaches.

**Closing Discussion Questions (20-25 minutes):** Let students take the conversation in different directions as long as it connects to philosophies of education. Remember the major philosophies of education were the terms on the worksheet!

- Which philosophy of education from the worksheet caught your attention? Why?
- Did you have a favorite? Why?
- Are there there any philosophies of education that confused you?
- Which seemed more effective than others?
- If you were a teacher, which philosophy would you use in your classroom?
- What philosophy does your school use? Is this effective for you?
- Why do philosophies of education matter?
- Do you think society should be more concerned about their public education system's philosophies of education? Why?
- Should students or parents have a say in what type of teacher they would like to learn from (progressivist, essentialist, social reconstructivist, etc.)?
- If students are not listening to a lecture, then do they still learn content?

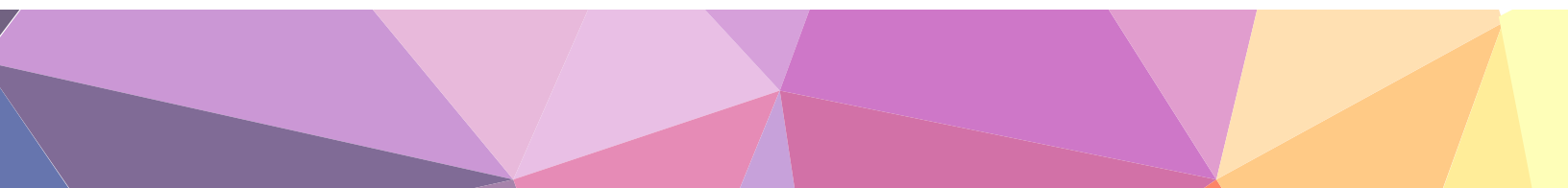
- Does focusing education on teaching morality mean that students are just learning what their teachers think?
- What are the most important goals for education?
- What should students learn in school? Why? Is our current system effective in determining content?

**Closing Statement (1-5 minutes):** For hundreds of years schools have had a huge impact on shaping generations of people. Often people do not recognize the importance of teacher pedagogy or different philosophies of education. It is something to think about in every community, whether you are a student, teacher, parent, or just community member. How do you want to shape the next generation?

**Key Terms:** Definitions of worksheet terms

- Essentialism: a teacher-centered philosophy that is popular in the United States and revolves around teaching basic content that society has proven necessary to adult life.
- Perennialism: a teacher-centered philosophy that revolves around teaching the “great works,” sometimes includes religious content
- Progressivism: a learner-centered philosophy that focuses on developing students’ morals and character.
- Constructivism: a learner-centered philosophy that revolves around shaping students’ world-views
- Democratic Environment: a society-centered classroom environment where interaction and collaboration are encouraged
- Humanism: A learner-centered philosophy that revolves around fostering student potential

**Other Resources:** Philosophy Outreach Project has a Philosophy of Education Starter Pack. Students can check this out for more information! <https://philosophyoutreachproject.azurewebsites.net/philosophy-of-education/>



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Worksheet

Instructions: Copy the definition onto the blank for each term.

**Essentialism** is a teacher-centered philosophy that is popular in the United States and revolves around teaching basic content that society has proven necessary to adult life

1. Essentialism

---

---

**Perennialism** is a teacher-centered philosophy that revolves around teaching the “great works,” sometimes including religious content.

2. Perennialism

---

---

**Progressivism** is a learner-centered philosophy that focuses on developing students’ morals.

3. Progressivism

---

---

**Constructivism** is a learner-centered philosophy that revolves around shaping students’ world-views.

4. Constructivism

---

---

A **Democratic Environment** is a society-centered classroom environment where interaction and collaboration are encouraged.

5. Democratic Environment

---

---

**Humanism** is a learner-centered philosophy that revolves around fostering student potential.

6. Humanism

---

---

