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# Curriculum Impact on Educational Philosophy Identification

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# Curriculum Impact on Educational Philosophy Identification

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## Introduction

An educator's teaching philosophy represents their personal beliefs regarding the purpose of classroom instruction and the methods used to facilitate learning. While an individual's educational philosophy often transforms over time, more research is needed to characterize influences on evolving theory and practice. This survey-based study was **conducted to determine if the curricular content has an impact on teaching methodology despite a teacher's philosophical identification.** A secondary objective and long-term goal of the study is to inform future assessment of educational philosophy and its relation to curricular design and actual teaching practice.

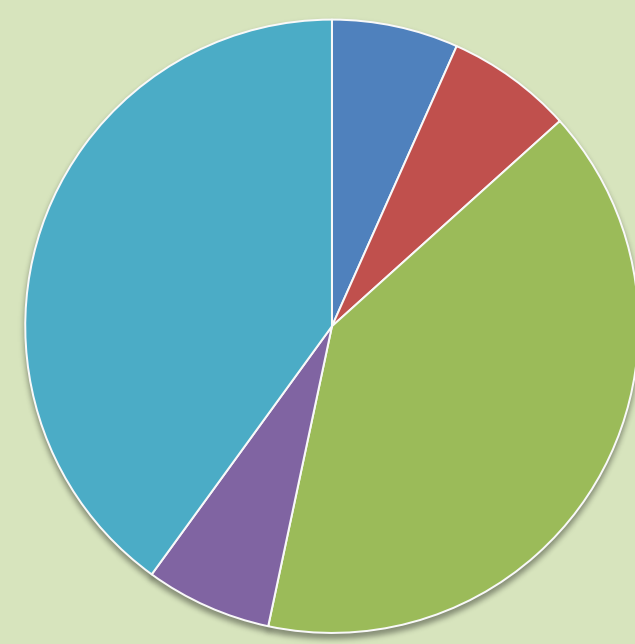
## Methods and Materials

The study population comprised of adult learner-educators enrolled in a graduate educational philosophy class. The subjects were surveyed after completing a term examining the main tenets of five main educational philosophies (Liberal, Behavioral, Progressive, Humanist, Radical). Using an in-person, web-based survey tool, the subjects reviewed situational prompts and answered multiple choice questions representing randomized philosophical identification and specific curriculum-based approaches. The subject-level data was obtained and analyzed for agreement between self-identified teaching philosophy and curricular design using graphical comparisons such as pie charts and a spaghetti plot.

## Discussion

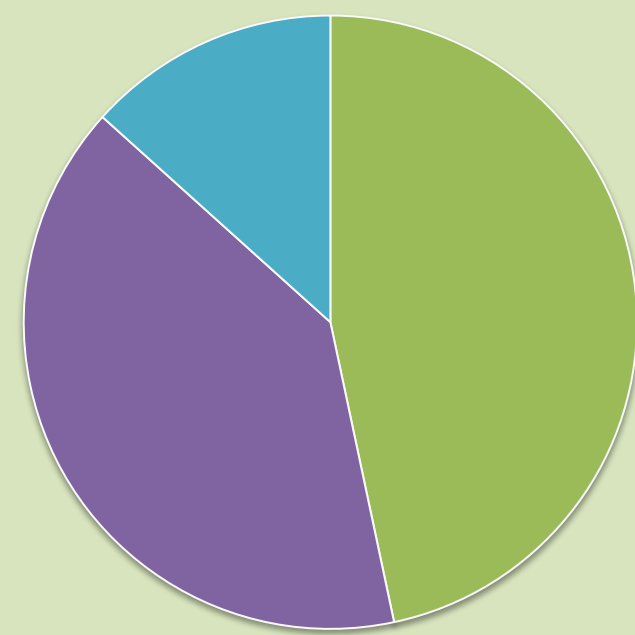
When asked which teaching philosophy classmates had the strongest agreement, the poll results were heavily weighted toward progressive (40%) and radical theories (40%). Interestingly, these philosophical preferences did not match the subjects' practical application. For example, in the context of an anatomy class, responses favored the progressive (A-47%) and humanist (D-40%) lesson plans over radical (B-13%) and liberal (C) or behaviorist (D). In the context of an ethics class, again responses favored the progressive (B-47%) and humanist (C-47%) lesson plans over radical (A-7%) and liberal (E) or behaviorist (D). Finally, in the context of a foreign language class, momentum shifted. The class was much more divided on the approach, with the minority favoring behavioral (B-7%) and humanist (D-7%) and the plurality taking the radical approach (E-40%). Progressive (C-27%) and liberal (A-20%) strategies rounded out the polling results. On subject-level analysis, *no* subjects (0%) had total philosophical fidelity or 100% agreement. Only a minority (23%) had majority agreement with their self-identified philosophy, and the same portion (23%) demonstrated a majority agreement with a *different* educational philosophy. A surprising number of subjects (31%) had *no* agreement with their stated educational philosophy.

## Results



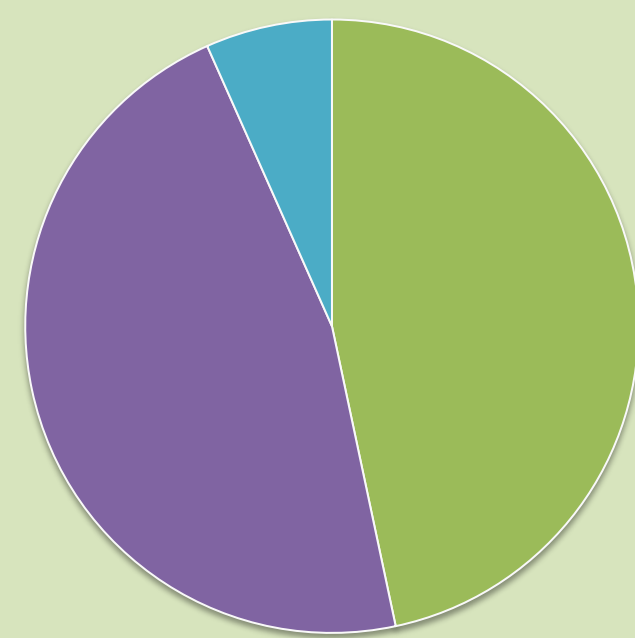
**With which teaching philosophy do you have the strongest agreement?**

- A. Liberal
- B. Behavioral
- C. Progressive
- D. Humanist
- E. Radical



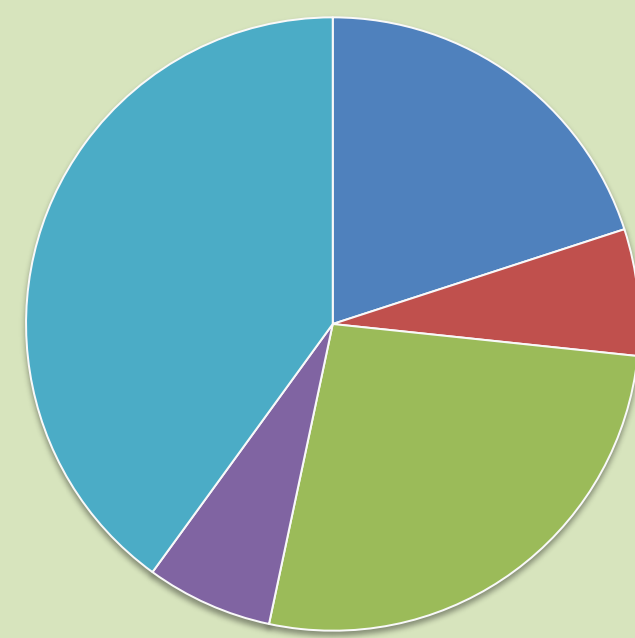
**You are substituting for an anatomy class. What might your lesson plan look like?**

- A. Students perform the dissection, teacher walks around for support
- B. Watch a video about body donors then write letters thanking families
- C. Teacher models the dissection at the front, students take notes
- D. Students dissect then cross-check each other's work
- E. Students follow a checklist to identify pre-selected structures



**You are substituting for an ethics class. What might your lesson plan look like?**

- A. Students write letters to the jail about prisoner conditions
- B. Students debate the current prison conditions, teacher moderates
- C. Students tour the local prison then write a reflection
- D. Students read a chapter then take a quiz with teacher feedback
- E. The teacher lectures about pros and cons of the current system



**You are substituting for a foreign language class. What might your lesson plan look like?**

- A. Speak to the students in French
- B. Have students repeat after you in French
- C. Students talk among themselves in French
- D. Students write an essay on France in French
- E. Students host a French culture and movie night for the school

	Phil. ID	Behavioral	Liberal	Progressive	Humanist	Radical
Q1	Behavioral	1				
	Liberal		1			
	Progressive			6		
	Humanist				1	
	Radical					4
Q2	Behavioral				1	
	Liberal			1		
	Progressive			3	3	
	Humanist			1		
	Radical			1	1	2
Q3	Behavioral			1		
	Liberal			1		
	Progressive			3	3	
	Humanist			1		
	Radical			1	2	1
Q4	Behavioral					1
	Liberal			1		
	Progressive	1	1	1	1	2
	Humanist					1
	Radical			1		3

## Resources

Conti, G.J. (2007). Identifying Your Educational Philosophy: Development of the Philosophies Held by Instructors of Lifelong-learners (PHIL). *MPAEA Journal of Adult Education*. 36 (1), 19-35.

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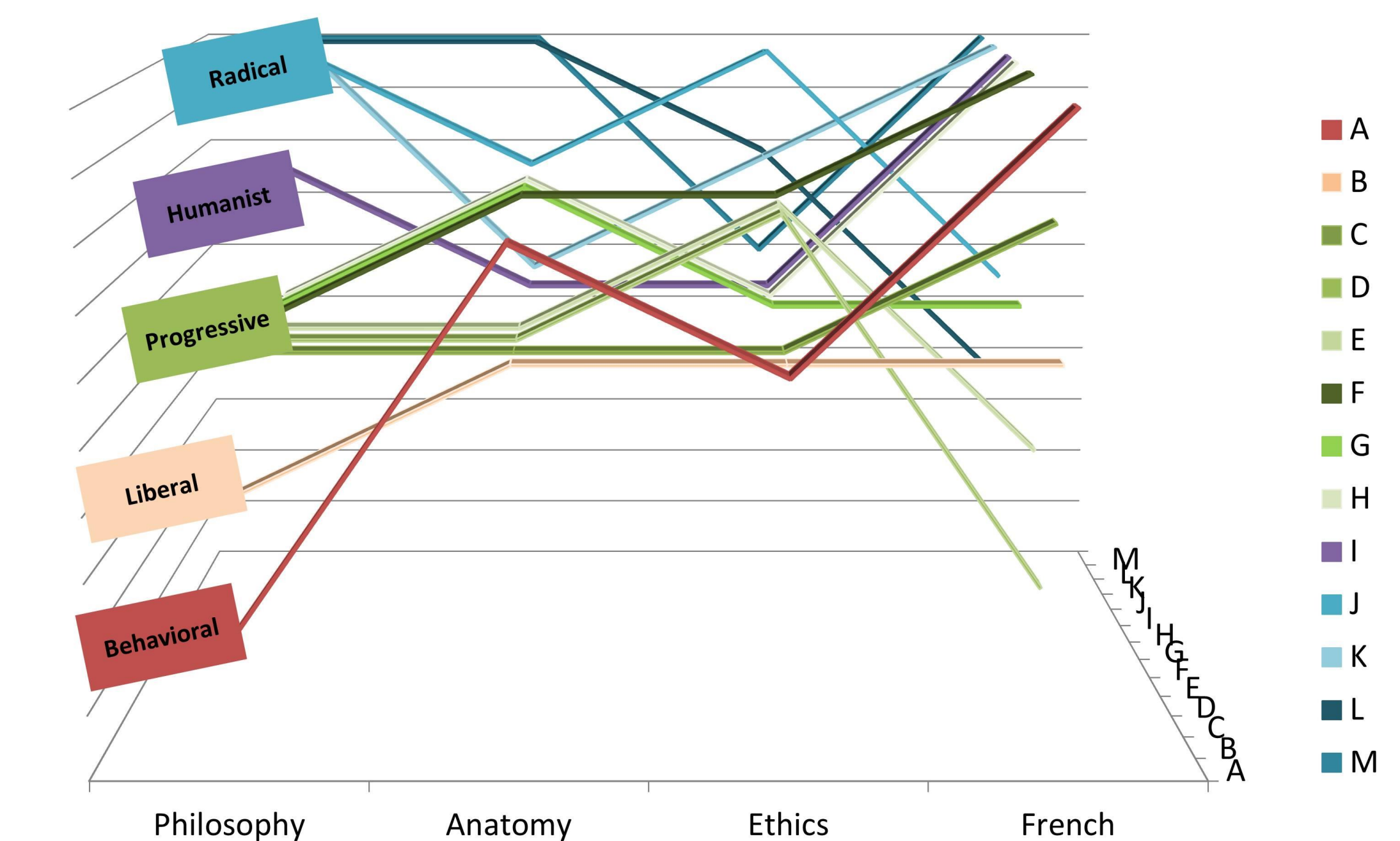
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## Conclusions

In general, the subjects in-practice lesson plans did not mirror self-identified philosophical beliefs. When given scenarios involving various subject content (anatomy, ethics, and foreign language), curricular design and teaching approaches usually differed from the anticipated philosophical identifications. These preferences should be interpreted with caution because only thirteen replies were tallied, and most members of the class felt that it was hard to pick just one philosophy. While the data set is too small to draw definitive conclusions, the study supports trends toward a correlation between curriculum content and philosophical methodology. This study would have been improved with higher power and more questions/data points. Further investigation into situational and curricular impacts on educational philosophy identification is needed.