

SCHOOL REFORM RHETORIC: UNCONSCIOUS MOTIVATIONS

Reports of the decline of psychoanalysis are premature. The test below, which requires matching the rhetoric of school reform in Column I with its psychological counterparts in Column II, is designed to assess the unconscious motivations that may underly your school reform preferences. The test is designed for diagnostic purposes only and the results will be held in strict confidentiality. Your individual scores will not be used to determine your eligibility for positions in education or public policy, or even your need for therapy. Nor will rankings by schools, states, or nations appear in the press.

School Reform Rhetoric/Psychological Interpretations

1. My reforms will solve the problem/Grandiosity
2. First in the world by the year 2000/Delusional Thinking
3. We can reduce taxes and improve schools/Denial
4. Back to basics/Regression
5. Increase course requirements/Present pain for future pleasure (Not a Psychoanalytic concept)
6. State takeovers of failing schools/Time out (Not psychoanalytic)
7. We need standards and testing/~~Strengthening the~~ superego # Ego
8. Charter schools won't work/Separation anxiety
9. The bureacracy is to blame/Transference
10. Girls can't do math/Sibling rivalry?
11. Tax cuts/Anorexia ?
12. Long summer vacations/Present pleasure for future pain Not Psychoanalytic
13. Strong principals are the answer/Authoritarian personality Not Psychoanalytic
14. School finance equalization/Fantasizing
15. Vouchers/You won't get better unless you pay for it Not Psychoanalytic

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Iris C. Rotberg, program director, National Science Foundation, Arlington, Virginia. The diagnoses are her own and do not necessarily reflect the views of the N.S.F. For a related analysis from the world of international finance, see the op ed piece by Eugene H. Rotberg in the - - - - - issue of The New York Times.

Correct answers: