

# Unconscious (Rhetorical) Motivations

By Iris C. Rotberg

**R**eports 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 underlie 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. (Correct answers are listed below.)

## School Reform Rhetoric

1. My reforms will solve the problem.
2. First in the world by 2000.
3. We can reduce taxes and improve schools.
4. Back to basics.
5. We need standards and tests.
6. Charter schools.
7. The bureaucracy is to blame.
8. Cooperative learning.
9. Put the kids in residential academies.
10. Girls should be encouraged to do math.
11. Budget cuts.
12. Shorter summer vacations.
13. Strong principals are the answer.
14. School-finance equalization.
15. Vouchers.

## Psychological Interpretations

- A. Resolving the Oedipal complex.
- B. Overcoming the id.
- C. You won't get better unless you pay for it.
- D. Delusions of grandeur.
- E. Anorexia.
- F. Transference.
- G. Fantasizing.
- H. Strengthening the superego.
- I. Delusional thinking.
- J. Symbiosis.
- K. Regression.
- L. Authoritarian personality.
- M. Denial.
- N. Splitting.
- O. Fueling sibling rivalry.

*Iris C. Rotberg is a program director for the National Science Foundation. 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 New York Times (April 9, 1995).*

Correct answers: 1-D, 2-I, 3-M, 4-K, 5-H, 6-N, 7-F, 8-J, 9-A, 10-O, 11-E, 12-B, 13-L, 14-G, 15-C.