

Holistic Education: An Approach for 21 Century

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Abstract

Holistic education encompasses a wide range of philosophical orientations and pedagogical practices. Its focus is on *wholeness*, and it attempts to avoid excluding any significant aspects of the human experience. It is an eclectic and inclusive movement whose main characteristic is the idea that educational experiences foster a less materialistic and a more spiritual worldview along with more dynamic and holistic views of reality. It also proposes that educational experience promote a more balanced development of – and cultivate the relationship among – the different aspects of the individual (intellectual, physical, spiritual, emotional, social and Aesthetic), as well as the relationships between the individual and other people, the individual and natural environment, the inner- self of students and external. world, emotion and reason, different discipline of knowledge and different form of knowing. holistic education is concerned with life experience, not with narrowly defined" basic skills".

Keyword: Education, Holistic education, Wholeness, Spirituality

1. Introduction

Holistic education is a fairly new movement, which began to take form as a recognizable field of study and practice in the mid-1980s in North America (R, Miller 2004). It emerged as a response to the dominant worldview of mainstream education, often referred to the “mechanistic” or “Cartesian-Newtonian” worldview. Rather than attempting to provide a model of education, holistic education seeks to challenge the fragmented, Reductionistic assumptions of mainstream culture and education (R, Miller 2000a, Schreiner 2005). In other words, holistic education is concerned with “underlying worldviews or paradigms in an attempt to transform the foundations of education (Nakagava 2001). As Ron Miller (1992), one of the leaders of the movement, argues, *Holistic education is not to be defined as a particular method or technique; it must be seen as a paradigm, a set of basic assumptions and principles that can be applied in diverse ways.*

Holistic education addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels (Singh, 1996). It aims for the fullest possible human development enabling a person to become the very best or finest that they can be and develop fully 'those capacities that together make up a human being' (Forbes, 2003).

A main element of holistic education is its focus on the *interconnectedness* of experience and reality. Holistic education attempts to develop a pedagogy that is interconnected and dynamic and thus is in harmony with the cosmos. In contrast, much of traditional education tends to be static and fragmented, ultimately promoting alienation and suffering (Neves, 2009). Holistic education focuses on the relationship between the whole and the part and suggests that teaching and learning approaches need to be rooted in a larger vision. If techniques are isolated and unrelated they can become traditional education tends to be static and fragmented, ultimately promoting alienation and suffering (J, Miller 2006). Within this holistic perspective, the student is positioned as an active, participatory and critical learner who perceives and understands him/ dysfunctional. The holistic vision includes a sense of the whole person who is connected to his or her surrounding context and environment. (J, Miller 2004)

Another author, Scott Forbes (2003), has written that:

Holistic education frequently claims that it wants to, 1) educate the whole child (all parts of the child), 2) educate the student as a whole (not an assemblage of parts), and 3) see the child as part of a whole (society, humanity, the environment, some spiritual whole, etc.) from which it is not meaningful to extract the student. (p. 2) Holistic education challenges the present approach to education and its obsessive focus on standards and testing. Holistic educators see this approach as reflecting a materialist and consumerist culture that has reduced schooling to the training of individuals to compete and consume in the global marketplace. In fact, the present thrust can be seen as abandoning any attempt to educate the whole human being. It reduces schooling to training for the workplace that can be easily assessed through standardized tests. (J, Miller 2007)

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Holistic educators are convinced that the further evolution of civilization and human consciousness requires a renewed measure of respect and reverence for the inner life of the growing person. (R, Miller 2006). Holistic education provides students with a sense of meaning and order to things. By introducing students to a holistic view of the planet, life on Earth, and the emerging world community, as a "context of meaning," holistic strategies enable students to perceive and understand the various contexts which shape and give meaning to life. (Clark 1991) Holistic education is a journey for both the educator and the student. For both, the nature of holistic education can change as they each progress through the programme, and draw different experiences from it. The process of holistic education must therefore be flexible and dynamic to accommodate these personal differences and influences and, moreover, differences in the rate of personal progression (Hare 2006). Holistic education is, without a doubt, education for twenty-first century, directed towards developing human beings with a global conscience, a vision of peace, love, and intelligence (Nava 2001).

2. Historical Roots of Holistic Education

The holistic ideal can be traced back to indigenous cultures. In general, the aboriginal or indigenous person sees the earth and the universe as infused with meaning and Holistic educators try to recover this sense of meaning and purpose in education. (J, Miller 2004)

The concept of holism comes from the Greek concept of *holon* that sees the universe as made up of integrated wholes that cannot be reduced in parts. (Lee 1997) The Greeks argued for a holistic approach in learning. Socrates can be seen as a holistic educator because he encouraged each person to examine his or her own life: "know thyself." (J, Miller 2007). The holistic paradigm emerged as a vibrant and coherent intellectual movement in the 1980s and has been expressed by thinkers in diverse fields. Holistic education is not synonymous with the "New Age" movement, nor is it a product of the 1960s counterculture: it has deep roots in ancient spiritual traditions and cosmologies, which Aldous Huxley described as the perennial philosophy. When the so-called Enlightenment of the eighteenth century elevated analytical, scientific reason to near-total dominance in the West, this perennial wisdom - the recognition of humanity's intimate connection to the evolving cosmos - was relegated to a dissident movement labeled romanticism. Holistic education thus has its roots in the "romantic" educational theories of Jean Jacques Rousseau, Pestalozzy, and Froebel (R, Miller 1991a). Rousseau, Pestalozzy, and Froebel along with other holistic educators of 19th and early 20th centuries such as transcendentalists William Ellery Channing, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David

Thoreau, Bronson Alcott, and Francis Parker as well as Montessori and Rudolf Steiner, all emphasized the spiritual nature of the human being. (Brooks 2006)

Rousseau, although more humanistic than holistic in his approach to education, did provide some underpinnings for holistic education. Rousseau viewed the child as essentially good and believed that the soul of the child should be allowed to unfold according to its own natural pattern. This view of the child as good is a basic assumption of holistic education, which rejects the fundamentalist view that children are born in original sin (J, Miller 2007).

Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator influenced by Rousseau, put his ideas into practice. He believed that the classroom should be a place for meaningful activity, and he encouraged teachers to use their intuition. It was his belief that education is connected to a divine plan. He said, "God's nature, which is in you, is held sacred in this House. We do not hem it in: we try to develop it." (J, Miller 2006).

In the past century two of the most important holistic educators have been Rudolf Steiner and Maria Montessori (Grimes 2002). Steiner was the founder of the Waldorf school movement, which began shortly after World War I and has grown since its inception. Steiner distinctly referred to the "soul-life" of children and how it could be nurtured in a school setting (Steiner 1976).

Maria Montessori, the founder of the Montessori school movement, also believed in the importance of nurturing the spiritual development of children. She believed that mental, physical, and spiritual qualities of the human being are supported by a divine life source. With regard to the spiritual aspect, it was her belief that within each person there is a "spiritual embryo" that is developing according to a divine plan, and the most urgent duty of a teacher to a child was to eliminate as many obstacles to this development as possible. (Montessori 1965) Montessori believed that if children were provided with a nurturing environment, Nature would direct the natural unfolding of the child's personality and powers so that he or she would become an independent adult. Montessori firmly believed that making children learn things was not as important as keeping intelligence alive. The key, then, is to develop a learning environment in which the child's intelligence can naturally unfold (Montessori 1965).

3. Worldviews Underlying Holistic Education

Holistic educator points out six major theories or worldviews underpinning contemporary holistic education: perennial philosophy, indigenous worldviews, Life philosophy, ecological worldview, systems theory, and feminist thought (Nacagava 2001).

3.1 Perennial Philosophy

Perennial Philosophy has guided the works of John Miller, Parker Palmer, amongst other contemporary holistic educators. (Nacagava 2001). The perennial philosophy usually acknowledges multiple dimensions of reality. In his classic *The Perennial Philosophy*, Huxley (1968) gives a definition: "The Perennial Philosophy is primarily concerned with the one, divine Reality substantial to the manifold world of things and lives and minds." The main themes of perennial philosophy that have been incorporated into holistic education are: divine Reality, Oneness, Wholeness, and multiple dimensions of reality. (J, Miller 2007)

3.2 Indigenous Worldviews

Indigenous (or aboriginal or native) worldviews from all over the world are filled with reverence for nature, the earth, the universe, and the Spirit. They emphasize the organic interconnectedness of all beings. (Nacagava 2002) The indigenous worldviews are multidimensional in character. According to Black Elk's account, *wakan-tanka* stands for the infinite as well as the finite dimensions; it is "everything, and yet above everything," "the source and end of everything," and "the One who watches over and sustains all life" (Brown 1989). The major ideas included in the indigenous worldview that have been built into the theories and practices of holistic education are: reverence for nature, the earth, the universe, and the Spirit; the interconnectedness and sacredness of reality; and human's reintegration with nature.

3.3 Life Philosophy

The concept of "Life" has a central importance for many holistic educators. Ron Miller (1997) introduced the term "life-centered" to describe "a spiritually rooted [holistic] education" (p. 88). Generally speaking, the "philosophy of Life" or "Life philosophy" assumes that there exists a fundamental Life force, or a universal Life process, such as Bergson's *élan vital* or Nietzsche's *Macht*. The Life in this sense is both a transcendental and immanent principle of the cosmic world. This orientation of holistic education conceives education as an integral part of the greater Life process; that is, education is a manifestation of Life and at the same time a vehicle in the service of reconnecting human life with the fundamental Life. Life philosophy assumes that there exists a fundamental Life force, or a universal Life process. This Life force "generates and organizes all beings in the cosmos. Life philosophy assumes

that our lives have a purpose, a direction, a meaning, and a goal that transcends our personal egos and particular physical and cultural conditioning. It recognizes that we are connected, at deep and profound levels, “to the continuing evolution of life and the universe. (R Miller1991)

3.4 Ecological Worldview

The ecological perspective is so integral in contemporary holistic education that the term “holistic” is often interchangeably used with “ecological.” A large part of holistic education can be seen as *ecological holistic education*. For example, David Hutchison remarks that “the holistic philosophy would seem to forward an ecologically sensitive view of the educational process.” (Nacagava2002). The ecological worldview is often addressed in holistic education through “ecological literacy”, where topics such as environmental issues, dialogues with nature, the interdependence of reality, and sustainability are explored. Edward Clark, David Orr, and Ramón Nava have been some of the most active contemporary holistic educators in this area. (Clark2001)

3.5 Systems Theory

Systems theory is a theoretical attempt to explore comprehensive, cosmological models of the cosmic world. Similarly to the ecological worldview, systems theory also recognizes the interdependence of all things, but its exploration of the subject is based on “systemic explanations of the dynamic structure of the universe,” or the cosmic world.(Nacagava2001) This systemic worldview is present in the “holistic theory” of Ron Miller(1990), a theory based on “multiple levels of wholeness; in the “integrated curriculum” of Edward Clark (2001) , a systemic curriculum built on “system thinking;” and in the work of few other scholars, most notably Thomas Berry and Atsu’hiko Yoshida, in the field of holistic education. Thomas Berry (1988) provided one of the most magnificent visions of education that has ever emerged. Education, in his view, is not a human enterprise but rather an ongoing process of the universe itself. Yoshida (1996), who appeared in the discussion of Japanese Life philosophy, has tried to develop his model of holistic education through his extensive studies in postmodern “non-mechanistic, non-reductionistic” systemic sciences, including Jantsch’s theory of the self-organizing universe.

3.6 Feminist Thoughts

Feminist thoughts have also had impact in the field of holistic education, particularly the ideas articulated by Nel Noddings and Riane Eisler. The most relevant work of Noddings to holistic education has been her ideas on caring relations. Noddings (1992) has proposed a caring-centered education that calls for the cultivation of relations of care in school, which includes: caring for the self, for the inner circle, for distant others, for animals, plants and the Earth, for the human-made world, and for the world of ideas. Similar to Noddings but focusing more on the egalitarian aspects of relationships, Eisler (2000) designed a model of education, which she called “partnership education. Her “partnership model of education” includes themes such as: democratic and egalitarian structure; equal rights to females and males; respect; peaceful conflict resolution; empathy; caring; non-violence; mutual responsibility; and connections to the Earth. Noddings’ thoughts on “caring relations” and Eisler’s ideas on “partnership education” are directly or indirectly present in the works of virtually every holistic educator.

4. Four ‘Pillars of Learning’ in Holistic Education

For methodological purpose only, holistic education has noted four pillars of learning in the twenty –first century. UNESCO has also indicated these same four pillars, although with slight differences. (Nava2001)

4.1 Learning to Learn

This starts with learning to ask. To ask is a natural act of consciousness in its search for knowledge. Its real purpose is not so much for the question to be answered as to be explored. Learning to learn means empowering the attributes of consciousness to exercise skills such as paying attention, listening, perceiving, and developing curiosity, intuitiveness, and creativity. Learning to learn means having the ability to direct and take responsibility for one’s own learning, for keeping one self up-to-date, for knowing where to look for knowledge. It is particularly to scientific awareness. (Nava 2001). This type of learning is radically different from ‘acquiring itemized codified information or factual knowledge’, as often stressed in conventional curriculum and in ‘rote learning’. Rather it implies ‘the mastering of the instruments of knowledge themselves’ (Schreiner2005).

4.2 Learning to Do

In the change of era now upon us, this means learning to change society through intelligence, responsible action. Learning to do is linked learning a profession and to productive work: learning to adapt to the needs of work and ability to work in a team, along with the strategic use of knowledge to resolve problems and make rational decisions in generating quality goods and services. Learning to do means knowing how to take risks as well as take the initiative. (Schreiner2005). This pillar of learning implies in the first place for application of what learners have

learned or known into practices; it is closely linked to vocational-technical education and work skills training. However it goes beyond narrowly defined skills development for 'doing' specific things or practical tasks in traditional or industrial economies. The emerging knowledge-based economy is making human work increasingly immaterial. 'Learning to do' calls for new types of skills, more behavioral than intellectual. The material and the technology are becoming secondary to human qualities and interpersonal relationship. (UNESCO 1996).

4.3 Learning to Leave Together

This means learning to live responsibly, respecting and cooperating with other people and, in general, with all the living organisms on the planet. Learning must overcome prejudice, dogmatism, discrimination, authoritarianism and stereotypes, and all that leads to confrontation and war. The fundamental principle of this pillar of learning is interdependence, that is, knowledge of the network of life. (Nava 2001). This pillar implies an education taking two complementary paths: on one level, discovery of others and on another, experience of shared purposes throughout life. Specifically it implies the development of such qualities as: knowledge and understanding of self and others; appreciation of the diversity of the human race and an awareness of the similarities between, and the interdependence of, all humans; empathy and cooperative social behavior in caring and sharing; respect of other people and their cultures and value systems; capability of encountering others and resolving conflicts through dialogue; and competency in working towards common objectives (UNESCO 1996).

4.4 Learning to Be

Learning to be means the discovery of true human nature, and encounter with the essence of oneself, which goes beyond the psychic apparatus of thoughts and emotion. It is learning to belong to the whole. It is the discovery of our universal dimension, where genuine human values, not individual human values, reside. It is the discovery of ones own being and the inner wisdom achieved through self knowledge. Holistic education nurtures this learning in a special way, by recognizing the human being as a basically spiritual being in search of meaning (Nava2001). 'Learning to be' may therefore be interpreted in one way as learning to be *human*, through acquisition of knowledge, skills and values conducive to personality development in its intellectual, moral, cultural and physical dimensions. This implies a curriculum aiming at cultivating qualities of imagination and creativity; acquiring universally shared human values; developing aspects of a person's potential: memory, reasoning, aesthetic sense, physical capacity and communication/social skills; developing critical thinking and exercising independent judgment; and developing personal commitment and responsibility. (Schreiner2005).

5. Levels of Wholeness in Holistic Education

Wholeness holds that every thing in the universe is interconnected to everything else. Everything that exists is related in a context of interconnectedness and meaning, and any change or event affects every thing else. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. This means that the whole is comprised of relational patterns that are not contained in the parts. Therefore, a phenomenon can never be understood in isolation.

Ron miller (2000), for methodological and operative purposes, has identified five levels of wholeness.

5.1 The Whole Person

This is the first level of wholeness with which the holistic educator works. The person is viewed as an integral being with six essential elements: physical, emotional, intellectual, social, aesthetic, and spiritual. These six elements play a fundamental role in the learning process. Even though, traditionally, the cognitive aspect has been favored, holistic education recognizes the importance of balance among the six elements. Holistic educators do not see the student as a brain that must be programmed, but rather as a whole being. (R, Miller 2000, Nava2001).

5.2 Wholeness in Community

In this second level of wholeness the emphasis is upon the quality of human relationships. In the course of human interaction, a community can be comprised of the school, the town, or even the family. When holistic education work with the school as a context, they transform it into a stimulating learning community, and meaning is acquired through the relationship with others. Learning how to establish appropriate human relationships is an objective of education. (R, Miller 2000, nava2001).

5.3 Wholeness in Society

This level refers mainly to a country's ideological and economic dimension, and to the goals we impose upon ourselves as a society. It is a crucial dimension of holistic education, given society's current situation: replete with the prevailing value of exploitation, control, success, and competition. the ideal of unlimited economic growth has resulted in people pinning their hopes for happiness on the consumption of products and superfluous gratifications.

Holistic education recognize this social crisis and the need to educate people for world citizenship and participatory democracy. (Rudge2008)

5.4 A Whole Planet

The planet is the fourth context of our lives and of the learning process. Traditionally, the planet has not been taken into account because it has not been perceived as a context for holistic educators the planet is Gaia: a complex and harmonious organism of dynamic processes, and integrated whole that is alive and self – regulating, of which human societies as well as economic , political, and cultural systems, are dependent subsystems. All learning processes occur in a global context that must be heeded: holistic educators recognize the environment crisis and thus educate for global awareness and a respect for nature. (R, Miller 2000).

5.6 The Holistic Cosmos

This is the fifth and last context of our lives and education. It is the ultimate and genuine source of our identity, the primary whole, the complete context that gives meaning to our being – the spiritual dimension of human existence. In holistic education, taking recourse in the kosmos is the most significant response to the serious crisis humanity is now facing , since it is there that the individual is in touch with his or her university and perennial human spiritual values.ther , dualism and fragmentation are completely overcome, and the self and all else in existence come together and awaken consciousness to its true nature. It is within this context that universal love, unconditional freedom, brotherhood, peace, and compassion bloom. the essential meaning of the kosmos can only be understood through direct experience.(Nava2001)

6. The Goal of Holistic Education

Scott Forbes (2003), proposed that “the goal of holistic education is best encapsulated by the term ‘Ultimacy.’” He defined *ultimacy* as, (1) the highest state of being that a human can aspire to, either as a stage of development (e.g. enlightenment), as a moment of life that is the greatest but only rarely experienced by anyone (e.g. grace), or as a phase of life that is common in the population but usually rare in any particular individual’s life (e.g., Maslow’s peak-experience); and (2) a concern or engagement that is the greatest that a person can aspire to (e.g., being in service to something sacred). These two meanings can overlap or intertwine. (p. 17)

Ultimacy, also called enlightenment or union with cosmic harmony, is a common theme throughout the holistic literature. It is the highest potential of the student who is involved in a holistic educational process (Nielsen2008). Forbes promotes the theme of “Ultimacy” and through his research, “provides enlightenment as to the philosophical coherence of what distinguishes holistic education from mainstream approaches to education” (Martin, 2004). The notions of Ultimacy lead holistic educators to their views of human nature and meaningful living. Holistic educators claim their view of original goodness stands in opposition to that of original sin, and that different views concerning the need (or lack of need) to control and shape children necessarily follow. Hence, holistic educators feel they have a different view of development which holds that people will naturally go towards the good, and that progress consists largely of unfolding, uncovering, or discovering what is natural or inherent in the child.(Grimes2007)

7. Basic Principles of Holistic Education

The statement, which was entitled, *Education 2000: A Holistic Perspective*, went on to define the central principles of Holistic Education (Flake2000, Nava2001, Schreiner2005).

7.1 Educating for Human Development

The primary purpose of education is to nourish the inherent possibilities of human development.schools must be places that facilitate the whole development of all learners. Learning must be the deepening of relationships to self, to family and community members, to the global community, to the planet, and to the cosmos.

7.2 Honoring Students as Individuals

Each learner is unique, inherently creative, with individual needs and abilities. This means welcoming personal differences and fostering in each student a sense of tolerance, respect, and appreciation for human diversity. Each individual is inherently creative, has unique physical, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs and abilities, and possesses an unlimited capacity to learn.

7.3 The Central Role of Experience

Education is a matter of experience and learning is primarily experiential. Learning is an active, multisensory engagement between an individual and the world, a mutual contact which empowers the learner and reveals the rich meaningfulness of the world. Experience is dynamic and ever growing. The goal of education must be to nurture

natural, healthy growth through experience, and not to present a limited, fragmented, predigested “curriculum” as the path to knowledge and wisdom.

7.4 Holistic Education

The concept of “wholeness” should be at the core of the educational process. Wholeness implies that each academic discipline provides merely a different perspective on the rich, complex, integrated phenomenon of life. Holistic education celebrates and makes constructive use of evolving, alternate views of reality and multiple ways of knowing. It is not only the intellectual and vocational aspects of human development that need guidance and nurturance, but also the physical, social, moral, aesthetic, creative, and — in a nonsectarian sense — spiritual aspects.

7.5 New Role of Educators

Many of today’s educators have become caught in the trappings of competitive professionalism: tightly controlled credentials and certification, jargon and special techniques, and a professional aloofness from the spiritual, moral and emotional issues inevitably involved in the process of human growth. Holistic educators hold, rather, that educators ought to be facilitators of learning, which is an organic, natural process and not a product that can be turned out on demand. Teachers require the autonomy to design and implement learning environments that are appropriate to the needs of their particular students.

7.6 Freedom of Choice

Students and parents should have opportunities for real choice at every stage of the learning process. Genuine education can only take place in an atmosphere of freedom. Freedom of inquiry, of expression, and of personal growth are all required. In general, students should be allowed authentic choices in their learning. They should have a significant voice in determining curriculum and disciplinary procedures, according to their ability to assume such responsibility.

7.7 Educating for a Participatory Democracy

Education should be based on democratic values and should empower all citizens to participate in meaningful ways in the life of the community and the planet. The building of a truly democratic society means far more than allowing people to vote for their leaders— it means empowering individuals to take an active part in the affairs of their community. A truly democratic society is more than the “rule of the majority” — it is a community in which disparate voices are heard and genuine human concerns are addressed. It is a society open to constructive change when social or cultural change is required.

7.8 Educating for Global Citizenship

Each individual is a global citizen. Education therefore, should be an appreciation for the magnificent diversity of human experience. Human experience is vastly wider than any single culture’s values or ways of thinking. In the emerging global community, we are being brought into contact with diverse cultures and worldviews as never before in history. Holistic educators believe that it is time for education to nurture an appreciation for the magnificent diversity of human experience and for the lost or still uncharted potentials within all human beings.

7.9 Educating for Earth Literacy

Education must spring organically from a profound reverence for life in all its forms and nurture a relationship between humans and the natural world. We must rekindle a relationship between the human and the natural world that is nurturing, not exploitive. This is at the very core of our vision for the twenty-first century. The planet Earth is a vastly complex, but fundamentally unitary living system, an oasis of life in the dark void of space.

7.10 Spirituality and Education

Holistic educators believe that all people are spiritual beings in human form who express their individuality through their talents, abilities, intuition, and intelligence. Just as the individual develops physically, emotionally, and intellectually, each person also develops spiritually. Spiritual experience and development manifest as a deep connection to self and others, a sense of meaning and purpose in daily life, an experience of the wholeness and interdependence of life, a respite from the frenetic activity, pressure and over-stimulation of contemporary life, the fullness of creative experience, and a profound respect for the numinous mystery of life.

In addition to *Education 2000*, which includes most of the principles related to holistic education, there are other definitions of holistic education, which are worth

examining as they complement the above illustration. John Miller (2007), for instance, frames holistic education within a “transformation model” of education, arguing that the core motto of holistic education is to seek

transformation, that is, to seek the continuing growth of the individual and society. John Miller synthesizes holistic education as an approach that encompasses three main principles: 1) "Connection" – entails integrating school subjects; establishing connections with the community; fostering student's relationship with the earth; and encouraging students to connect to their souls, their deeper sense of selves. 2) "Inclusion" – refers to including students of diverse races and abilities and providing a range of educational approaches to attend the differences in learning styles. And 3) "Balance" – means reaching for equilibrium between complementary energies (individual learning and group learning, analytic thinking and intuitive thinking, content and process, and learning and assessment).

8. Conclusions

Holistic education is an approach to pedagogy that can meet the needs of all types of learners, that can be a source of fulfillment and gratification for teachers, and that prepares future citizens who will contribute a concern and mindfulness for others, for their communities, and for the planet. It is compatible with both global education and environmental education, which are also based on the principles of interdependence and connectedness. Based on this interdependent perspective, holistic education seeks to create a society where we live in harmony with the surrounding environment. It rejects consumerism as the dominant mode of being in modern society. Instead, it seeks an education that is rooted in the fundamental realities of nature and existence. Holistic education seeks to connect the part with the whole. We have tended in education to forget the larger vision of wholeness and connectedness, and holistic education calls on us to restore that vision. Such a vision, of course, is a primary goal of Education for Sustainability. Overall, we can describe holistic education as containing the following broad characteristics: 1) it nurtures the development of the whole person; 2) it revolves around relationships (egalitarian, open, and democratic relationships); 3) it is concerned with life experiences (instead of "basic skills"); 4) it "recognizes that cultures are created by people and can be changed by people" (instead of conforming and replicating an established culture); and 5) it is founded upon a "deep reverence for life and for the unknown (and never fully knowable) source of life."

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