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# Holistic Approach in Education- An Overview

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## Abstract

*Holistic Education is a method to equip students with the skills to tackle various challenges and inculcate themselves in all their academic pursuits. Thus, this paper examines the inbuilt principle of the holistic approach in education to try to provide a definition of the concept itself. Holistic education is built upon diverse philosophical perspectives and teaching methods. It emphasizes the idea of wholeness, striving to include all the important facets of human activities. This approach acknowledges modern cultural influences in guiding young minds which helps them to embrace their humanity. Holistic Education sheds light on significant life challenges and provides opportunities for overcoming obstacles, achieving success, and understanding the foundational concepts necessary for modernize the future goals.*

**Keyword:** Education, Holistic Education, Advantages and Disadvantages, Wholeness, Spirituality

## Introduction

"Holistic education focuses on the fullest possible development of the person, encouraging individuals to become the very best or finest that they can be and enabling them to experience all they can from life and reach their goals."

-Martin, 2002.

The term holistic education is also a term which means whole education or whole learning, which is a kind of education designed to give a whole or well rounded education to a baby to grow up to be a smart, a productive, an efficient person who can contribute in any positive way to his community. The final aim of the unit is to make the person do care for others and respect for the overall society. It pays attention to equal emotional, social and cognitive health of the learner.

In education, holism is a movement designed to continue to give what (holistic) education should be, that is to mind, body, and spirit. The philosophy that is called holistic learning theory, includes also the premise that a person creates his identity, meaning and purpose in his life via the community, natural world and humanitarian values (compassion, peace).

Holistic education involves calling forth of people in intrinsic reverence for life and passionate love of learning, and is characterized

by regard to experiential learning, respects relationships and primary human values in the learning environment. Holistic Education, as the term goes, has been applied to alternative form of education outside the traditional research and evidence based form of education found in mainstream.

### **Holistic Education**

Holistic education is definition is an educative approach that incorporates taking the feelings, social, ethical, and academic needs of those who are scholars so that they will be presented in holistic education. School environments are represented by specifically focusing on positive school environment and fulfilling full child support (services that support learning and academic needs, also called as wraparound supports).

They teach students to think, reflect upon their actions, the reflection of their actions to a global and local community, and to learn from the community around them. These teachers engaged the students into real world projects which the students were not even doing before; also the students developed critical thinking skills to solve real world problems with realistic situation.

### **Holistic Education Methods**

The first agenda of holistic education is to develop a child with all his growing physical, emotional, moral and psychological and spiritual attributes. It means that the child has access to what is personal to the child's skills and feeling, which is exactly what is 'he only child.' Students are trained in a way which does not result in least restrictive method of application of the respective skill in a safe and supportive environment. Due to this, teachers must be able to coddle pupils of all sorts of educational levels and all sorts of learning levels. However, the holistic education is a philosophy that has its whole idea to use various ways and approaches to discover the holistic learning culture.

- **Experiential learning:** Schools that offer experiential learning give students exercise to discover and to learn new things. For example, students might find out what the best way is for them to learn; for example, in groups exploring various learning styles. Often, problem-solving exercises based on holistic, experiential techniques are used to tackle community problems or come up with innovative products.
- **Self Guided Learning:** self guided educational environment that allows the students to learn at their own pace in their own way. Personalization is a self guided culture to avoid the flaws of one size fits all kind of models of learning. To adjust the curriculum content and pace, low stakes assessments are used. Students of different ages and levels of ability may be in the classrooms which are smaller than the regular ones.
- **Community School:** The basis of the Community School idea is that to be having community is to be people in community. Teachers work with the community members, including families, residents, organizations, and officials codifying support, and expanded learning, which encompasses among other things, after school and summer programs. The school is a fit as a ground in which the community settles down to engage, improve, social, development, other activities of the school.
- **Interdisciplinary Coursework:** One part of holistic education is that student are taught that learning multiple subjects at once helps their cognitive growth. Some schools are beginning to create programs of integration in which different discipline teachers collaborate to teach thematic courses concerning the multiple side of issues. This could also include independent travel, research, internships and fieldwork.

## **The Characteristics of Holistic Education**

- It develops the whole person.
- It revolves around relationships (open, egalitarian, and democratic relationships).
- Instead of “basic skills”, it is concerned with life experiences.
- It instead “embraces the idea that cultures are fashioned by people and can be altered by people”; rather than replicating or conforming to the state of existing culture.
- It is based on a ‘deep reverence for life and for the unknown (and never knowable) source of life.’

## **Principles of Holistic Education**

Two principles are upheld by holistic education (Miller, 2000)

1. Learning by individual to the world should begin with the individual themselves—not with an abstract concept of a human being, but with the unique, living person—boy or girl, young man or woman (or even an older adult)—who stands before the teacher. Each individual has a vibrant mix of experiences, emotions, thoughts, aspirations, fears, and hopes.
2. Additionally, we need to engage with the learner using an open and curious mindset, along with a deep understanding of the world they are entering. Advocates of holistic education argue that the ideas central to this approach are not new; rather, they have long been part of our philosophical traditions. In fact, many institutions already implement the principles and practices of holistic education. The first principle emphasizes that learning aimed at connecting the individual to the world must begin with the person present. The second principle concerns the valuable act of being open and curious when interacting with the learner while possessing a great insight of the world the learner will be going through.

## **Qualities of Holistic Education**

Joseph (2009) says the following regarding the key characteristics of holistic education:

- There is a focus on the inner lives of students, encompassing their emotions, dreams, thoughts, and inquiries that they bring to their education. Modern education is no longer simply about sharing knowledge or spreading ideas; rather, it is a journey that explores both the inner self and the external world. It assists children in gaining insight into their own identities while also fostering a connection to the larger environment.
- Holistic education reflects an awareness of ecological principles; it acknowledges that all things in existence are interconnected. This perspective involves a profound respect for the truth of the natural world, if not a deep reverence for nature itself.
- It is a perspective that values diversity, whether it be in the natural world or among different cultures. It avoids rigid ideologies, classifications, and definitive solutions, instead celebrating the dynamic interconnections of all living beings.

## **Four ‘Pillars of Learning’ in Holistic Education**

While holistic education merely lists four pillars of learning in the twenty –first century for methodological purposes only, there are other holistic learning minded ways we can implement to our strategies towards teaching and learning. These four pillars were also pointed out by UNESCO (2004) with the slightest differences (Nava, 2001).

1. Learning to Live Together: This involves understanding how to live with responsibility, honouring and collaborating with others, and generally fostering harmony with all living beings on Earth. It acknowledges the individuality of each person. Education must break through biases, stubbornness, discrimination, authoritarianism, and stereotypes, as well as anything that fuels

conflict, disagreement, and war. The core concept of this educational tenet is interdependence or awareness of the life network. (Nava, 2001). The educational approach implied by the second principle is based on two paths, at the one hand discovering others and at the other, shared objectives from one's life onward.

2. **Learning to Do:** In today's context, this refers to acquiring the ability to effect change in society through thoughtful, informed, and accountable actions. Learning to do involves developing skills and becoming productive. It also indicates the necessity of adapting in job demands and the capacity to collaborate effectively within a team, using information strategically to tackle problems and make sound decisions that lead to high-quality products and services. Additionally, it teaches us how to manage risks and seize opportunities.
3. **Learning to Learn:** It begins with the ability to ask questions. This curiosity drives the desire to discover and understand a lot in future. Asking questions is a fundamental aspect of consciousness in its quest for knowledge. This true aim isn't solely about finding answers, but rather about exploring possibilities. This process enhances key aspects of consciousness, enabling skills such as focus, active listening, perception, and fostering curiosity, intuition, and creativity. Learning to learn involves taking charge of one's own education, staying informed, and knowing where to seek information. It particularly relates to cultivating scientific awareness or fostering a scientific mindset.
4. **Learning to Be:** The acquirement of knowledge, skills or values through which one acquires the mental function of understanding, the moral and cultural, and physical functions which foster the development of one's person and being, can be expressed as learning to be the journey into becoming more human. This suggests a curriculum designed to nurture and hone qualities like imagination and creativity, embrace commonly shared human values, and unlock individual potentials. It aids in enhancing memory, reasoning skills, aesthetic appreciation, physical abilities, and social communication. Moreover, it supports the growth of critical thinking, encourages independent judgment, and fosters a sense of personal commitment and accountability.

### **Advantages of Holistic Approach in Education**

When we say holistic education, there is a certain learning philosophy behind the same, which is of numerous benefits for the students, teachers, schools, and the community. Life skills empowering students to improve their educational outcomes and one step up to success down the line in your professional career.

1. **Helps in overall child development** – Holistic education develops child in an overall way, than only its academics like physical, emotional, and social development.
2. **It encourages creativity and innovation** – This approach also sparks creativity and innovation by letting students think out of the box to produce some other solutions.
3. **It improves emotional and social skills** – It helps a child to learn about his or her feelings and social skills to interact with others respectfully.
4. **No doubt, Developing self-awareness, confidence and feeling social responsibility is more likely to take place in a place that promotes an environment of Social and emotional learning along with academics.**
5. **Ability to solve the Problems:** Students are provided with real world problems, and have problem on strength critical thoughts. Really is a thing of the community. Similarly, like these are hands of projects where you will help you to learn skills that could be useful for you in your adult career like how to collect, present and report the data and how to work in collaboration to achieve more.

### **Disadvantages of Holistic Approach in Education**

1. Lacks structured learning – Structured learning is usually left of the holistically educated students and it is hard for them to grasp concepts systematically.
2. Time-consuming process – Furthermore, this will take much effort and be a time consuming (not to mention date) by which you go through everything about the subjects.
3. Varies greatly teacher to teacher – Quality of holistic education from a teacher to another teacher is always very varied.
4. Difficult to measure progress – In holistic education, measuring progress can be difficult as it is all about progress in general and not specific achievements of reaching the marks of academic success.
5. Can overlook individual learning styles – Finally, this approach is not as effective due to the fact that learning styles seem to be left out of this approach, as some people will need a more individualized approach to learning.

### **Conclusion**

The holistic education methodology has been utilized to cater the varying needs of all the learners so as to become good future citizens. The first aspect involves the integration of aspects of a global and environmental education, but based on the concept of interdependence and connectivity. The goal with this perspective is to develop a community that lives in equilibrium with the environment. It's an education that's not framed through a mindset based on consumerism in today's modern life, but an education rooted from the deepest truths of nature and the existence itself. Holistic education is about children and youth linking the components to the whole. Ultimately it encourages us to return to the drive of sustainability as the central goal of education.

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