HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT IN K-12 EDUCATION

BY

BRETT GARVIN GRANT

DISSERTATION

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Doctoral Committee:

Professor Cameron McCarthy, Chair
Professor James D. Anderson, Director of Research
Professor Violet Harris
Professor William Trent
ABSTRACT

In this interpretive study, I raise the possibility that what American public education policy needs in order to address present and future challenges is a “new guiding narrative, a new myth,” (Jones, 2008, p. 104). This “new guiding narrative,” I argue, is to be found in holistic educational thought. Holistic educational thought is the idea that education resides neither in the head, nor in the hands, nor in the heart, but in the aggregate of all of these. In its modern and contemporary forms, holistic educational thought emphasizes education that is academic and vocational – not as separate tracks – but as an integrated curriculum available to all students. At the core, holistic educational thought articulates a vision of education that is both practical and beautiful. Practical in the sense that education is able to satisfy the intellectual and ecological needs of civil society and beautiful in the sense that education is designated to delight the senses and appeal to the imagination. To articulate this relationship – that between beauty and practicality – is the crux of holistic educational thought. The major concepts discussed in the upcoming chapters are competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, and lifelong optimal learning.

Keywords: competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, lifelong optimal learning
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A few years ago, Oprah Winfrey was criticized for the “extravagance” of her Leadership Academy for Girls, which she founded in January, 2007. The Academy was established to provide educational and leadership opportunities for academically gifted girls from impoverished areas in South Africa. Winfrey’s school was criticized for, among other things, having a beauty salon, two theaters (one indoor, one outdoor), and a yoga classroom. In an article about the school’s grand opening, Allison Samuels of Newsweek\(^1\) questioned whether the $40 million that was spent might have benefited more students if it had been spent with less emphasis on beauty and more emphasis on practicality.

What I found interesting about Samuels’ comment was the implicit distinction that she made about beauty and practicality. Samuels seemed opposed to a notion of practicality such as that of Winfrey’s that incorporated aesthetic elements of beauty. Karen Russell of The Huffington Post came to Winfrey’s defense and wrote:

Critics say the school is too lavish for such an impoverished country. How dare Oprah have the audacity to spoil these Black African girls?! Why are so many quick to question if these girls deserve the best education Oprah’s money has to offer?\(^2\)

In her own defense, Winfrey responded to Samuels’ criticism by saying, “If you are surrounded by beautiful things and wonderful teachers who inspire you, that beauty brings out

\(^1\) See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey_Leadership_Academy_for_Girls

\(^2\) See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey_Leadership_Academy_for_Girls
the beauty in you.”³ This is where I begin: with education, beauty, and practicality. By placing beauty at the forefront of education policy, holistic educational thought attempts to transform the aesthetic in education that considers it wrong to talk about beauty. Today, to talk about beauty in the context of education is to be considered less intellectual, less smart, less educational. Why?

Why is education supposed to be this lifeless thing that is only intellectual, rigorous, serious, competitive, difficult, and loveless? Why can’t it also be beautiful? If I had to associate a color with what education is, the color that comes to mind is gray: dull, dreary, gloomy, depressing. If I could choose a color to describe the kind of education that I have always longed for, I would choose a deep purple or a vibrant red – colors that evoke energy and inspiration. If I had to use food to describe what education is, I would say a meal with no flavor. If I could use food to describe what education should be, I would say a meal with lots of flavor.

Before making any policy decisions, I think policymakers should read Langston Hughes’ (1923) poem, Dreams, and heed his words: “Hold fast to dreams for if dreams die, life is a broken winged bird that cannot fly. Hold fast to dreams for when dreams go, life is a barren field frozen with snow” (p.25). Right now, education is a broken winged bird that cannot fly and a frozen field barren with snow. Not all education, for many creative projects are taking place in schools across the country. Yet a “Race to the Top” should not be the overriding metaphor used to describe education. The overriding metaphor should be an image of beauty – a vision that inspires; a vision that delights the senses and appeals to the imagination.

This is not to say that I am not grateful for the formal education experiences that I have had; for I am. I know how hard my parents had to work to ensure that my sister and I received the best education possible. The same is true of so many other parents. For that, I am thankful beyond words. I just think that formal education can be so much more than what it is. I know it can. I would not be writing this if I did not believe that. Education policies are not doing enough to help students see the beauty that is education.

Education policies in K-12 schools are not doing enough to show students how education can bring the world to them - literally. It was through education that I was able to live in Spain. Actually, it was because of my mother that I was able to live in Spain. The point is that Spain is a metaphor that signifies what education can be. It signifies that education can go beyond the classroom; that education can be exciting; that education can delight the senses and appeal to the imagination; that education can be poetic and beautiful.

That is what I talk about in this study – education that goes beyond the boundaries of classroom learning – education that incorporates beauty, love, poetry, music, food, art, travel, gardening, style, fashion, aesthetics, morality, and physical fitness. Education that is practical and beautiful. To me, the poem, *Solomon Grundy*, captures the kind of mundane quality that education is in its contemporary form:

Solomon Grundy, Born on a Monday, Christened on Tuesday, Married on Wednesday,
Took ill on Thursday, Grew worse on Friday, Died on Saturday, Buried on Sunday. That was the end, Of Solomon Grundy. (Halliwell, 1842, n.p.)

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4 Thanks to my mother, I was able to study abroad in college.
5 The poet, Philippe Soupault, adapted this rhyme and called it "The Life of Philippe Soupault"
Unfortunately, that is what defines so much of education today – a routine: Go to class on Monday, take a test on Tuesday, score the test on Wednesday, discuss the test on Thursday, take another test on Friday . . . School does not have to be like that, nor should it be like that. Education ought to be one of the most exciting and interesting experiences that one could ever have. Everything falls under the umbrella of education, whether a dance, a vacation, a visit to a museum, an interaction, gardening, and so on and so on. All of these are educational experiences.

Like poetry, education ought to be the expression of a significant idea, not just in words, but in sound and in image designated to delight the senses and appeal to the imagination. Whether that expression is articulate or inarticulate does not matter as long as the expression leads to a delightful and meaningful experience. That is not to say that learning cannot take place through experiences that are not delightful, or even painful, for it can; in fact, some of the most memorable lessons that I have had have been learned through painful experiences. What I am saying, however, is that if at all possible, the intention ought to be to make education a beautiful experience. Perhaps it is time that we become not just romantic in educational thought and practice, but quixotic.6

I know what the critics will say. They will say that what is lost in a vision of education that focuses on beauty is a loss of focus on academic excellence. They will say that beauty is for art, and education is for science, as though science cannot be beautiful.7 They will find all kinds

6 In The Law of Peoples, political philosopher, John Rawls (2001) articulates an argument for a “realistic utopia.” That, to me, is an example of a romantic vision. A quixotic, or overly romantic vision, would be to argue for a “real utopia.”

7 In the foreword of Charles S. Finch’s (1998, 2007) study, The Star of Deep Beginnings: The Genesis of African Science and Technology, Théophile J. Obenga, argues that the history of science is also the history of taste. He writes, “Beauty and harmony give aesthetic value to scientific theory, beauty being understood as the apprehension of the splendor of truth” (p. xi).
of ways to argue for the fragmentation of knowledge so that what we are left with is the kind of meaningless education that defines the educated person as one who simply does well on standardized exams.

But what about one’s character, or how one treats the environment, or how one treats one’s neighbor? Should not these play into who we consider an educated person to be? The core of what I am saying was explained by cultural theorist, Marimba Ani (2004). During a lecture entitled *Yurugu: An African-centered critique of European cultural thought and behavior*, she said,

We believe only in an academic concept of truth and think that our children’s learning takes place in school … So our children are taken away from us … So our children can be good at math and then totally irresponsible and we think that’s being smart.

The kind of educational thought that I advocate does not lead to the kind of education that says all the right things on paper, but does nothing in practice. Holistic educational thought aims to be more sincere than that. It aims to create the kind of education that defines the educated person as one who can master academic subjects, create employment opportunities that enhance the natural environment, and treat people according to the dictates of moral law. Holistic educational thought is therefore not anthropocentric, but embraces the fact that we live on a planet that, in addition to humans, includes trees, water, air, minerals, and animals. With holistic

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8 How many institutions of higher education with all of their endless amounts of resources and wealth are located near poverty stricken neighborhoods? And how many professors in these institutions study wealth, poverty, democracy, and racism? And yet, it seems that theory still fails to transform practice.
educational thought, I am attempting to persuade policymakers to design polices that are more reflective of who we are as members of this whole planet.

With holistic educational thought, policies in education would start with the premise that our bones are the stones of the earth; our blood is the water of the universe; and our flesh is the surface of the earth. No matter what race, gender, or socio-economic class one belongs to, we are all connected in the sense that when we die – on any part of the earth – the earth will not reject us. When we die, our bodies will decompose and return to the earth and the universe from which it came.

**Holistic Educational Thought**

**Philosophical Foundations**

**Head, hands, heart.** At Northfield Mount Hermon School (NMH) in Mount Hermon, Massachusetts, the curriculum reflects a “communal sense of moral duty and concerned citizenship” (Stone, 2009, p. 96). NMH’s mantra is “head, hands, and heart” (p. 98). One faculty member described it by saying, “All of it – the head, the heart, and the hands; the inclusivity; the WorkJob program – is part of a global perspective and a values system that includes our environment as well as social justice and economic sustainability” (p. 98).

This same philosophy, head, hands, and heart, was discussed by a high school teacher, Karen Bradley, who found that it naturally lent itself to more in-depth studies in her comparative politics class. For example, Bradley introduced a new unit on the planet called “Considering the planet as a system, literally and figuratively” (Stone, 2009, p. 182). As reported by Michael Stone, Bradley explained her rationale in the following way: “I’m trying to help students keep
notion of the nation–state in mind but also think beyond that in planetary terms: that the environment belongs to all of us and is the responsibility of all of us” (p. 182).

This notion of using the head, the hands, and the heart, is a central mantra of holistic educational thought, and has been for years. In his autobiography, Booker T. Washington (1901/1999), talked extensively about “an education of the head, the hands, and the heart” (p. 203). Washington said that Tuskegee students were to be educated in some practical skill. This was an education of the hands. He also said that every graduate of Tuskegee was expected to have “enough skill, coupled with intelligence . . .” (p. 203). This was an education of the head (p. 203). Lastly, Washington said that every student was to leave Tuskegee with “enough skill, coupled with intelligence and moral character, to enable him to make a living for himself and others . . .” (p. 203). This was an education of the heart.

In a later study, The Negro in Business, Washington (1907/2009) recalled a story about George Washington Carver. Carver was one of the instructors in agriculture at Tuskegee who embodied educational principles that Washington valued. As told by Washington, Carver was asked to accompany a southern land-holder in Montgomery County, Alabama, to his farm for the purpose of inspecting it. While doing so, Carver discovered traces of what he thought was a valuable mineral deposit used to make a certain kind of paint. “The interest of the landowner and the agricultural instructor at once became mutual,” wrote Washington (p. 167).

Specimens of the deposits were taken to the laboratories at Tuskegee and analyzed by Carver. The land-owner received a report of the analysis along with a statement showing the commercial value and application of the mineral. As a result, a stock company was organized to
build a factory for the purpose of putting the product on the market. Washington (1907/2009) reflected,

The minute it was seen that through industrial education the Negro youth was not only studying chemistry, but also how to apply the knowledge of chemistry to the enrichment of the soil, or to cooking, or to dairying, and that the student was being taught not only geometry and physics, but their application to blacksmithing, brickmaking, farming, and what not, then there began to appear for the first time a common bond between the two races and co-operation between the North and South. (p. 166)

In my conception of holistic educational thought, I preserve Washington’s (1901/1999) notion of educating the head, the hands, and the heart; in particular, his agricultural intention to cultivate the land and his economic intention to transform students from consumers into producers; however, whereas critics of Washington such as W.E.B. DuBois (1901/1999) and Ida B. Wells (in Duster, 1970) argued that Washington’s educational philosophy did little to enhance the political economy of ex-slaves, I want to be clear that my conception of holistic educational thought takes a position similar to that of political philosopher, John Rawls (1999):

Perhaps some think that a political conception is not a matter of (moral) right and wrong. If so, that is a mistake and is simply false. Political conceptions of justice are themselves intrinsically moral ideas, as I have stressed from the outset. As such they are a kind of normative value. On the other hand, some may think that the relevant political conceptions are determined by how a people actually establish their existing institutions – the political given, as it were, by politics . . . To say that the political is determined by a people’s politics may be a possible use of the term “political.” But then it ceases to be a
normative idea, and it is no longer part of public reason. We must hold fast to the idea of
the political as a fundamental category and covering political conceptions of justice as
intrinsic moral values. (p. 174, n. 91)

Following Rawls (1999), to ignore the political economy of students would be morally
reprehensible. This same view is true from the perspective of holistic educational thought. In
addition to the hands, the head, and the heart, policymakers in education have to consider the
geo-political context of local communities as a “fundamental category” that covers “political
conceptions of justice as intrinsic moral values” (p. 174, n. 91).

Theological and Artistic Foundations

It is impossible to uncover the rich perspectives of holistic educational thought without
considering the viewpoints that come from the arts, the artists, the singers, the poets, the
dreamers, the Romantics – those whom Joseph Campbell (1998) called “seers”: “We have to
have poets; we have to have seers,” he said, “who will render to us the experience of the
transcendent through the world in which we’re living.” In today’s educational climate where the
value of humanity is defined in cognitive terms, such perspectives are sorely needed. One of
those “seers” was the legendary singer, Sam Cooke (1963). In the song, “Touch the Hem of His
Garment,” Cooke presented a theological perspective of holistic educational thought:

Oh there was a woman in the Bible days, she had been sick, sick so very long; but she
heard about Jesus was passing by so she joined in the gathering throng, and while she
was pushing her way through, someone asked her what are you trying to do? She said if I
could just touch the hem of His garment, I know I'll be made whole [my emphasis] again.
(n.p.)
It is only by touching the garment of Jesus – the Holy One – that this woman can become whole, meaning well. From the song’s perspective, to be sick is to not be whole. This is a perspective that would not be found in academic texts alone. Thus, the reason we have to have “seers,” as Campbell (1998) argued, is because the language of wholeness is the language of theology; of art; of music; of spirituality; of poetry; of education. So then why isn’t education policy focused on achieving wholeness?

It is because teaching wholeness is a threat to a status quo that thrives on fragmentation. To teach wholeness requires a new language, a new curriculum, a whole new approach to education. It is difficult to focus on what it means to be whole in a world that focuses on and values only what it means to be part of the whole. It is much easier to reduce everything down to simple and manageable concepts. Even from the perspective of holistic educational thought, it is necessary to reduce things down to manageable concepts. The difference, however, is that the whole is never forgotten.

In talking about how to define the whole, there is another response by Joseph Campbell (1972) that I find useful. Apparently, Campbell overheard someone who had asked an artist to define his or her picture, and this is what he had to say: “Ask an artist what his picture “means,” and you will not soon ask such a question again” (p. 102). What Campbell was saying was that images created by artists often render insights beyond speech. They often render insights beyond the kinds of meaning that speech can define. Art in other words is not to be defined, but experienced.

The same is true for holistic educational thought. What it means to be whole is not for any one person to define for another. That is part of the beauty of what it means to be whole. The concept of wholeness cherishes individual opinion and lets each individual decide for him or
herself what it means to be whole. But that does not make it a useless concept. There are many different ways to explain love. Does that make love a useless concept? The same is true for peace and yet peace is not a useless concept either.

Like love and peace, wholeness is an ideal. It is something to strive for. Thus, the most that anyone can say about what it means to be whole are things that are particular to one’s experience. Yet the concept in and of itself is a universal concept. And that is where its educational value lays – in its universal quality. Therefore, to talk about holistic educational thought, one would have to talk about it in a way that education philosopher, Pradeep Dhillon (2007) did when she wrote,

It is through education that individuals not only come to recognize their humanity, but can begin to act autonomously such that they build a society and a community of societies where relations are based on valuing each other as ends in themselves and not instrumentally. (p. 57)

And yet from the perspective of holistic educational thought, even professor Dhillon (2007) can be challenged; for it might be necessary to build a community where relations are not based on valuing individuals solely as “ends in themselves” but as beginnings as well, or as in a constant state of becoming; and not just individuals, but all beings. Indeed, to talk about holistic educational thought is difficult. It is hard, but the state of education policy today with its fragmented expressions of thought requires an alternative view.

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Major Concepts

In discussing holistic educational thought, there are three major concepts that I utilize: competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, and lifelong optimal learning.\(^\text{10}\)

Competitive Eligibility

With competitive eligibility, I am simply saying that academic preparation in K-12 schools has to go above and beyond the academic demands of today. I see this as a major theoretical intervention. The relationship between competitive eligibility and holistic educational thought is one that has been under theorized, and really, is a relationship that has not been articulated in the literature. My attempt to link the two serves as a point of departure from the way holistic educational thought has been theorized in the past.\(^\text{11}\)

One could easily argue that one of the reasons that the practice of holistic education has been considered a “marginal movement, of interest to only a few educators scattered across several nations, and one that has had little influence on the official education policies of any nation,” as reported by Ron Miller (2005), is due to the fact that as a practice, holistic education has been associated with a kind of “New Age” anti-intellectualism (Ravitch, 1983).

Historically, holistic educational thought was considered as such a radical departure from mainstream educational thought that policy analysts simply rejected it. The same perception exists today. So one of my tasks in this study is to refute this anti-intellectual claim by

\(^{10}\) Each one of these terms is a more contemporary and precise way of explaining what the literature, in reference to holistic educational thought, often refers to as an education of the head (competitive eligibility), the hands (ecological literacy), and the heart (lifelong optimal learning).

\(^{11}\) I have not come across any examples in the literature that attempt to link holistic educational thought to competitive eligibility.
demonstrating that holistic educational thought not only embraces academic preparation, but the highest form of academic preparation in the form of competitive eligibility.

**Ecological Literacy**

Broadly speaking, competitive eligibility is the component of holistic educational thought that represents what Booker T. Washington (1901/1999) referred to as an education of the head. Ecological literacy is the component of holistic educational thought that represents an education of the hands; in particular, the use of the hands to practice and enact the intelligence expressed in the head.

A look at the history of holistic educational thought and practice shows a recurring theme of a desire to teach reverence for the natural environment. This desire is often referred to by theorists as “Earth connections” (Miller, 2006), and by others as “Ecological literacy” (Orr, 1992). Both strands of thought (earth connections and ecological literacy) center on ecology, or human relationships with the natural environment as central to an understanding of wholeness. Both strands of thought are also a critique of mainstream environmentalism (Jones, 2008), which has traditionally focused on a narrow scientific approach to nature with absolute disregard for the “sacredness of nature”:

Environmental education has become part of the school curriculum. Unfortunately, in many cases it has focused on a problem-solving approach to the environment where we

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12 These are broad ways of applying holistic educational thought to an education of the head, the hands, and the heart. It is important to understand that there will always be some overlap. For example, ecological literacy can apply to an education of the head and the heart as well as the hands.

13 In the literature, a distinction is usually made between the natural environment (that which we are born into) and the human built environment (that which we build).
can fix things through recycling or other technical solutions. What is needed is an environmental education that centers on a sense of the sacred and how we are deeply embedded in the natural processes of the earth. (Miller, 2006, p. 106)

One of the points that I argue is that a vision of education that promotes “Earth connections” (Miller, 2006) and “Ecological literacy” (Orr, 1992) helps students contend with the contested meanings of words such as “wholeness,” “sustainability,” the “biosphere,” “biophilia,” “living systems theory,” “ecopedagogy” “green collar vocational education,” the “green collar economy,” and even the “environment” with theoretical integrity.

Another reason I see the promotion of ecological literacy as important to holistic educational thought is because, in addition to expanding one’s notion of environmental education, it is also a way for students to become competitively eligible college applicants. Ecological literacy takes students out of the classroom and places them into the natural environment, which enables them to learn academic concepts through practice.

Research (Stone, 2009) shows numerous examples of how school gardens, for example, by incorporating academic subjects such as math, science, history, and even English, can help students perform better academically.\textsuperscript{14} Ecological literacy, furthermore, is perhaps the one message that will suit all demographic groups. Reducing rates of childhood obesity and diabetes, and making local communities healthier through community gardens, and increasing access to

\textsuperscript{14} The literature (Stone, 2009) also suggests that students’ scores on standardized exams in reading, math, and science begin to improve as well.
fruits and vegetables, are messages that tend to resonate with people from different social
perspectives, age groups, and cultural backgrounds.

**Lifelong Optimal Learning**

The last concept that comprises what holistic educational thought embodies is lifelong
optimal learning. With this principle, I argue that holistic educational thought must contend with
that aspect of education that American public education has relegated to a minor role: the heart.
Like environmental science professor, David Orr (2008), I believe that some of the most serious
problems that education policy must address are, first and foremost, ones of heart and empathy,
and only secondarily, those of intellect. Mere smartness, in other words, is overrated and is not,
as widely believed, entirely synonymous with intelligence; but “good–heartedness,” as Orr
suggests, is a kind of long-term intelligence (p. 215).

It is for this reason that I accept the view that education has to distinguish between
lifelong learning and “lifelong optimal learning” (Anderson, 2000b). With holistic educational
thought, I attempt to make that distinction clear. The point that I make is that learning is already
lifelong whether one knows it or not so to argue in favor of lifelong learning is really to argue in
favor of an empty concept. By incorporating the word “optimal” with learning, learning requires
something more from the learner. It requires the learner to improve physical, mental, and
aesthetic conditions of local communities.

To clarify, I will utilize health as an example. Health in and of itself is a neutral condition
– neither bad nor good – but neutral; bad health is a condition to be avoided and good health is a
condition to strive for; but optimal health, which goes beyond good health is the best condition.
The same logic can be applied to lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is a neutral condition;
lifelong bad learning is something to avoid; lifelong good learning is something to strive for; and lifelong optimal learning goes beyond lifelong good learning. Lifelong optimal learning is the best condition.

The language of “optimal learning” is the language of that which goes above and beyond what is good. Optimal is the “best” or “most favorable” condition (Webster’s New World Dictionary, 1982). Thus, lifelong optimal learning is learning which is the best or the most favorable learning. It is learning that must be measured by its ability to improve life for self and for others. As a component of holistic educational thought, lifelong optimal learning is that component that is concerned with beauty in the sense that it is designated to delight the senses and appeal to the imagination.

To have a condition of lifelong optimal learning, competitive eligibility and ecological literacy are necessary components. Students must be able to understand theory, which is what an education devoted to competitive eligibility will provide. They must also be able to put theory into practice, which is what an education devoted to ecological literacy will provide. And they must be able to promote a universal sense of aesthetic beauty, which is what lifelong optimal learning will provide. In a sense, lifelong optimal learning is the glue that binds competitive eligibility and ecological literacy together.

Evidence

In this section, I describe what constitutes “data” or “evidence” in my research. To begin, I will start with the three major claims that I make with regard to holistic educational thought.

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15 I also discuss evidence in the methods chapter
Three Major Claims

First, I argue that holistic educational thought in K-12 schools, as the embodiment of competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, and lifelong optimal learning, can help to establish an educational environment that will give students the resources to become competitively eligible college applicants.

Second, I argue that holistic educational thought in K-12 schools will not only give students the resources to become competitively eligible college applicants, but will also provide students with the needed “green collar” entrepreneurial skills that will empower them to address economic, environmental, and public health conditions in their communities.

Third, I argue that holistic educational thought in K-12 schools that incorporates competitive eligibility and promotes ecological literacy, helps to establish a vision of education that prepares students – theoretically and practically – to promote a universal aesthetic sense of beauty that will enable them to become lifelong optimal learners.

Although examples of studies\(^{16}\) can be found in the literature that allow me to argue for certain aspects (ecological literacy, for example) of holistic educational thought on the basis of empirical evidence, I have not come across examples that allow me to argue for every aspect of holistic educational thought as I describe it here. I cannot, therefore, point to any one school in a certain city as an exemplar to support my argument for holistic educational thought.

Instead, I try to articulate a vision of education that shows policymakers the value of an education that encourages holistic educational thought in a theoretical sense and the potential of

\(^{16}\) Please see David Sobel’s (2005) *Place-Based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities*, pp. 24-35.
holistic educational thought in a practical sense. In order to do that, I craft my argument on the basis of empirical evidence and theoretical principles. The three principles that I use to craft my argument are the principle of reason, the precautionary principle, and the principle of faith.

**The Principle of Reason**

To me, it is reasonable to assume that if colleges and universities generally admit students who go above and beyond minimum admissions requirements, the type of preparation that should be offered to students in K-12 schools is one that prepares them to go above and beyond minimum admissions requirements.\(^{17}\) I do not intend to prove that students will become competitively eligible university applicants if schools implement a competitively eligible curriculum for that is ultimately up to the student. I do, however, intend to argue that the resources must be in place to give all students the opportunity to meet competitive eligibility requirements.

**The Precautionary Principle**

I also argue that in order to inspire students to master academic coursework, holistic educational thought in K-12 schools must provide experiential learning activities that are culturally relevant to students; namely, those that address economic, environmental, aesthetic, and health issues in their local communities.\(^{18}\) That is the value of ecological literacy. Based on literature that shows the academic potential of ecological literacy, I think I have made a reasonable assumption that the best way to inspire students to master academic coursework is

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\(^{17}\) This is not just sound academic policy, but sound pedagogical practice. Does it make sense to teach students that it is okay to be minimal at anything?

\(^{18}\) Here, there are numerous empirical examples in the literature (Lanza, 2005; Stone, 2009) that can be used to support my claims.
through experiential learning activities that promote ecological literacy. Also, as mentioned above, ecological literacy feeds into the extracurricular component of competitive eligibility, thus helping to transform high school students into competitively eligible college applicants. 19

It is also with ecological literacy that I am able to address the question of evidence on the basis of the Precautionary Principle. 20 As explained by Carolyn Raffensperger (2004), the Precautionary Principle was designed by a group of scientists to be used by governments, corporations, schools, and communities when making decisions that affect public health:

When an activity raises threats of harm to the environment or human health, precautionary measures should be taken even if some cause and effect relationships are not fully established scientifically. In this context the proponent of an activity, rather than the public, should bear the burden of proof. The process of applying the Precautionary Principle must be open, informed, and democratic, and must include potentially affected parties. It must also involve an examination of the full range of alternatives, including no action. (n.p.)

Precautionary action can be taken in order to prevent harm and suffering in the face of uncertainty. As Raffensperger (2004) notes, the idea of preventing harm is, at its core, an ethical precept, with its origins in other ethical norms like the physician's Hippocratic Oath to do no harm, or the Golden Rule, which says that we should do unto others as we would have them do

19 Through the creation of ecological clubs, for example, or ecological campus organizations that promote ecological literacy, students are not only able to fulfill the extra-curricular component of competitive eligibility, but can do so in a way that speaks directly to qualities that admissions officer’s value such as leadership, active citizenship, and concern for local communities.

20 Consensus around the precautionary, or the "forecaring" principle, was achieved in January of 1998 when environmental leaders met to develop guiding principles for evaluating decisions that affect human health and the environment.
unto us (n.p.). While several state municipal and county governments have adopted the Precautionary Principle to guide environmental and public health policy, public schools have been at the forefront.  

For example, in the late 1990’s, the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) adopted the Precautionary Principle to eliminate unnecessary pesticides from the buildings and grounds of its schools. LAUSD chose this route because they believed that a child's future health and learning potential should not be compromised by the use of pesticides that include neurotoxins, carcinogens, or mutagens on playgrounds or in classrooms (Raffensperger, 2004, n.p.).

Recently, the governing authority of the Emeryville Unified School District (EUSD) in California adopted the Precautionary Principle as the foundation for all of its environmental policy. This “far-reaching policy,” noted Raffensperger (2004), “will guide everything from curriculum to building materials and the food served at the schools” (n.p.). In adopting the Precautionary Principle, members of the Emeryville School District school board chose to assume the role of guardians of present generations and those to come. As guardians they are taking steps to protect children for the long term. In Raffensperger’s words,

The only way we can guarantee that we leave blessings and an inheritance for future generations, rather than the fruits of our shortsightedness, is to acknowledge that we can’t wait for science to prove everything before we take action. We need to use the

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21 See policy recommendations.
22 The way that I intend the Precautionary Principle to be understood will become clearer in the chapter on ecological literacy. Essentially, I argue that the Precautionary Principle should be used in implementing ecologically designed school buildings (a component of ecological literacy), or schools that use building materials that are “environmentally friendly” and designed to improve student health.
Precautionary Principle and make decisions that are the wisest, fairest, and most preventive of harm. (n.p.)

Raffensperger (2004) is an environmental lawyer who specializes in fundamental changes in law and policy for the protection and restoration of public health and the environment. Below, she explains why she has worked so long and hard to implement the Precautionary Principle:

My generation came of age in a world in which the best minds thought we could measure and manage risk. We believed that economic decisions would take care of any unacceptable risk and the market would make necessary course corrections. That old approach has failed. Measuring and managing risk has led to global warming, emptying the oceans of fish, polluting much of the world with toxic chemicals, and increasing chronic diseases in humans. The GNP may be healthy, but our world and our children are not. (n.p.)

Unfortunately, the kind of “neoclassical economics” (Smith, 1776/2000; von Mises, 1912/2010; 1927/2010; Hayek, 1944/2007; 1960/2011; Friedman, 1962; Keynes, 1964) based on rationalistic and reductionist assumptions that Raffensperger (2004) and others (Sen, 1999; Peters, 2011) criticize so eloquently, does not have the conceptual, ethical, or philosophical resources to recognize the importance of implementing precautionary measures. Peters contends, for example, that environmental ethics has been slow to develop and has suffered from anthropocentrism or ‘human-centeredness’ – a feature embedded in traditional western ethical thinking that has assigned intrinsic value only to human beings considered as separate moral entities from their supporting environment (p. 30). It is this view that has failed to develop the
kind of environmental ethics necessary to, in Peters’ words, “re-conceive the relations between human beings and their environment” (p. 30).

What is needed is an alternative view. The alternative approach has to be, in my view, an educational approach based on holistic (cognitive and non-cognitive [Sedlacek, 2004] systems of measurement), and an understanding of evidence that incorporates the Precautionary Principle. I say this because the Precautionary Principle states two key things forthrightly: (a) optimal health conditions must be at the forefront of every policy decision and (b) we shouldn’t have to wait for someone to get sick or die before it becomes clear that action should be taken.

The Principle of Faith

The last general comment that I will make about what constitutes evidence in holistic educational thought has to do with faith. I would be remiss to have a discussion about holistic educational thought and evidence that did not include a discussion about faith; for at the core, holistic educational thought is based on theological and spiritual thought.

Faith can be defined either as the absence of evidence, or as a different kind of evidence. I prefer to see it as a different kind of evidence. Faith, it has been said, is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of that which is unseen. In theology, faith is utilized as that which goes beyond traditional evidence. It is seen as that which ushers in transformations within the self and allows one to transition from believer to knower:

Transformation…is an experiential process that both encompasses and transcends the inner and outer planes, and indeed, the very idea of planes. Change is left back in the
world of the surface, spinning around on the medieval wheel of fortune – that area in which the manipulation and splitting of experience occur. (Anthony & Moog, 2002, p. ix)

Holistic educational thought is not concerned solely with change, but with transformation. In its traditional form, holistic educational thought attempted to introduce students to a realization of the unseen dimension of the world; that behind the surface phenomenology of the world, there is a transcendent spiritual source that is also the source within the self (Campbell, 1998). I cannot neglect that tradition; for holistic educational thought is about educating in the “grand and noble sense” (Fenstermacher, 1978, p. 159). It is about transforming human beings into something more sublime than just “good” students and citizens.

Achieving such deep and profound transformation will require faith: Faith in the inherent goodness of humanity; faith in the abiding love of humanity; and faith in the creative and redemptive qualities of humanity. That is why faith is important to holistic educational thought – because, to use scriptural language, holistic educational thought is concerned about ushering in that for which there is no blueprint: Heaven on earth.23 It is not logic alone, but the integration of faith and logic that will usher in the kind of world that is beautiful for everyone. Logic alone would have stopped David from defeating Goliath; for logic alone would have told David,

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23 There are many ways to look at this. I do not mean to confine this to any one meaning. It could mean a place of bliss; a field of dreams; nirvana…Mohandas K. Gandhi, during an interview with Dr. Howard Thurman, a well-known minister and writer, spoke of his vision of a Kingdom of Heaven: “There is no royal road, except through living the creed in your life which must be a living sermon. Of course, the expression in one’s own life presupposes great study, tremendous perseverence, and thorough cleansing of one’s self of all the impurities. If for mastering of the physical sciences you have to devote a whole lifetime, how many lifetimes may be needed for mastering the greatest spiritual force that mankind has known? But why worry even if it means several lifetimes? For, if this is the only permanent thing in life, if this is the only thing that counts, then whatever effort you bestow on mastering it is well spent. Seek ye first the Kingdom of Heaven and everything else shall be added unto you. The Kingdom of Heaven is Ahimsa” (Jack, 1956, p. 315). For Gandhi, the Kingdom of Heaven was ahimsa, or non-violence, an ancient Hindu precept, proclaimed by Buddha, by disciples of Vishnu, and by Mahavira, founder of Jainism (p. xvii).
“There is no logical way that you can defeat Goliath.” But David did not use logic alone. He paired it with faith; and with faith and logic, he defeated Goliath.24

**A Preliminary Interpretive Study**

At first, I was hesitant to “name” the kind of research that this study comprises for fear that in naming it, I may miss something. Yet I was told by one member of my committee that the kind of research that this study comprises is social philosophy research. It is true that in this study, I engage in a philosophical discussion about holistic educational thought, and education is a social issue; therefore, I have decided to accept the label of social philosophy research to describe the kind of research that my study comprises; however, by social, I mean to include issues that affect the whole society (e.g., individual and group behavior, politics, economics, ecology, race, gender, religion, beauty, violence, etc.).

**Organization of Chapters**

Chapter two is a review of the literature. Chapter three discusses the methods of research. Chapter four discusses competitive eligibility. Chapter five discusses ecological literacy. Chapter six discusses lifelong optimal learning. Chapter seven concludes the study with a series of policy recommendations.

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24 For a 21st century David and Goliath story, please see The Coconut Revolution at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pjpt6fOYDi8: The world’s first successful eco-friendly revolution, this documentary shows the indigenous people of Bougainville Island who united against the Papua New Guinea army to stop the mining giant, Rio Tinto Zinc. I am grateful to, Dr. Antwi A. Akom, for bringing this documentary to my attention.
CHAPTER 2

A GENEALOGY OF HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

The following review looks at literature that discusses holistic educational thought. While educators have found such thought attractive at certain points throughout history, they have seldom had any enduring success in being able to put it into practice except in times of crisis. Even then, the literature shows that there has often been more rhetoric than implementation.

In recent years, a number of college and university admissions offices as well as a number of educators have argued for a more holistic approach to education. Michelli and Keiser (2005), for example, note in the foreword of their study that “The message from the United States Department of Education has consisted of admonishments to achieve and imperatives to action, but without a holistic and credible perspective on the needs of students throughout the country” (p. xix).

Likewise, Beck and Kosnik (2006), in arguing for a social constructivist approach to teacher education, assert that the process of learning is a holistic process, which they define in an all-encompassing way: “in addition to the social aspect, emotional, aesthetic, bodily, and other forms of expression are involved” (p. 2). That is a claim that they repeatedly return to. Only in this way, they argue, can students “participate in constructing their knowledge and acquire the habits that make them lifelong learners” (p. 2).

Lifelong learning is another theme found throughout the literature, especially in the context of international development. In recent years, holistic approaches have been sought out
by international agencies as a way to promote international development that is both sustainable and inclusive. In 2008, for example, the United Nations released a report entitled *The Challenge of Assessing the Creative Economy: Towards Informed Policy-Making*. The report was the product of a collaborative effort that was led by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Special Unit for South South Cooperation.

Also included was a team of experts from the collaborating UN agencies – the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) – as well as a team of international consultants. In the foreword of the report, the authors asked how to promote international development that was both sustainable and inclusive? Of special concern was the welfare of developing nations. A consensus as to how the international community should proceed was stated as follows:

> As economic models do not function in isolation, the time has come to go beyond economics and look for a more holistic [emphasis mine] development approach that considers their different cultural identities, economic aspirations, social disparities and technological disadvantages. Development strategies also must be updated in order to cope with the far-reaching cultural and technological shifts under way in our society. The world needs to adapt to this new environment by bringing issues relating to culture and technology into the mainstream of economic development thinking. (p. iii)

This sense of looking to holistic practices as some sort of remedy for economic approaches that consider social conditions in fragmented ways was a recurring theme in the literature. In reviewing some of the social and critical theorists with a leaning toward holistic
educational thought such as John Dewey (1954, 1956) and Paulo Freire (1993), wholeness was usually mentioned either implicitly or explicitly in response to some sort of crisis, or oppression. Whether in response to No Child Left Behind (NCLB), or as a remedy for anti-affirmative action laws such as proposition 209 in California, holistic educational thought and its attendant practices have a history of attempting to rekindle some shattered experience of humanity rendered meaningless by the fragmentation of knowledge (Britzman, 2003).

In the sections that follow, I examine literature that is taken from a variety of sources, including historical databases (JSTOR), educational databases (ERIC), small bookstores (Marcus Books, SF, CA), course materials, as well as personal books, personal communications (emails), online magazines, and online news articles. In some cases, video films (DVD’s) and documentaries, and sources from social media outlets such as You Tube, Black Consciousness.com, Wikipedia, and other websites are utilized as well.

The forthcoming sections are organized as follows: pre-modern sources of holistic educational thought (including the middle ages), modern sources of holistic educational thought (including the Enlightenment and Romantic periods), and postmodern sources of holistic educational thought. In addition to looking at literature that deals with the concept of wholeness and its significance to educational thought, some of the questions I ask and hope to answer are, “How has holistic educational thought been theorized in the past?” “How is holistic

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25 In conducting such a genealogy, I have established imprecise boundaries for what constitutes pre-modern, modern, and postmodern periods. Periods before the 17th and 18th centuries are pre-modern; periods beginning with the 17th century up to the mid-20th century are modern; and periods from the mid-20th century up to the present day are postmodern.
educational thought theorized in the present,” and “How has holistic educational thought been practiced in education?”

**Pre-modern Sources of Holistic Educational Thought**

**What is the Nature of Existence?**

Examples of holistic educational thought can be found throughout antiquity in the most diverse socio-cultural contexts, from Egypt to Sumer; from China to pre-Columbian North and South America; and beyond. In these contexts, such thought seemed to embody the idea that all the properties of a given system (physical, biological, chemical, social, economic, political, ecological, etc.) could not be determined by its component parts alone.

Throughout many cultures in antiquity, mathematics – number and numerical operations – were not merely abstract creations of the human intellect, but were rather expressions of the fundamental material (architectural) and spiritual realities of nature, and represented a complete interpenetration of the empirical, theoretical, and symbolical. Since prehistoric times, the scientific procedure – namely, selection, analysis, observation, hypothesis, and solution involved analysis, synthesis, and intuition. It was, as Finch (1998, 2007) described, “the timeless convergence of . . . love, faith, reason, and imagination” (p. ix).

While the general principle of holistic educational thought – “The whole is more than the sum of its parts” – was concisely summarized by Aristotle (1979) in the Metaphysics; a general theory of (w)holism was outlined by Jans Christiaan Smuts (1929) in *Holism and Evolution*; and a general systems theory was first articulated by Ludwig Von Bertalanffy (1969) during a

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26 For a detailed treatment of some of these concepts in antiquity, please see Time-Life Books (1987).
philosophy seminar at the University of Chicago in 1937, a look at the genealogy of the scientific study of whole systems takes us back some 4,000 years to the Rhind Mathematic Papyrus of Egypt, which originally dates from the Middle Kingdom, and represents the oldest mathematical text on record (Finch, 1998, 2007, p. xv).

A clue into the nature of what modern scientists call science can be inferred from the rubric of the title of the Papyrus, which renders the following transliteration: “tp-hsb n hat m khat nbt rekh ntt nbt snkt shtat nbt. (The correct method of investigating all things in order to know all that exists, each mystery, and every secret)” (Finch, 1998, 2007, p. xv). According to Finch, the question, “What is the nature of existence?” seems to be the issue, and the title rubric infers that mathematics can illuminate the answer(s)” (p. xvii). The rigor, precision, and methods of science are invoked as well as the intent to delve into the hidden domains of religion and mysticism (pp. xvi-xvii).

**Nile Valley Examples of Holistic Educational Thought**

It was Finch’s (1998, 2007) mentor, Cheikh Anta Diop (1974), who emphasized that it was the special character of the Nile Valley (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan) that conditioned the mathematical evolution of the peoples who migrated there. The extensiveness of the floods of the Nile forced all the inhabitants of the valley to face the annual event collectively and to regulate their whole lives around the annual flood season (p. 252). This necessity seems to explain, in Diop’s view, a kind of proto systemic (holistic) view of knowledge amongst the ancient inhabitants of the Nile Valley (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan) (p. 252).

According to others (ben-Jochannan, 1974), the ancient Egyptians, with the reform of Amenophis IV, had also clearly conceived the idea of a universal God responsible for creation
whom all without distinction could adore.\textsuperscript{27} The appearance of Finch’s (1990; 1998, 2007) works on the genesis of Nile Valley (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan) science and technology marked a watershed moment in Afrocentric research and offered one of the clearest examples of the nature and meaning of holistic educational thought from the perspective of Nile Valley civilizations.

In Egypt, for example, Finch (2011) argued that the concept of heaven was seen as a book, which, it was believed, if one could read, could provide one not only with an understanding of the past, but also of the present and the future. Furthermore, as others (ben-Jochanan, 1974; Van Sertima, 1976) have revealed, the stark, aesthetic symmetry of the Great Pyramid at Giza, Egypt, provided a way in which the heavens and the earth could be studied. It embodied several mythic and symbolic functions. It was “solar geometry” in stone, the pinnacle representing the source of the sun’s rays that fanned out toward earth in a “pyramidal” configuration (Finch, 1998, 2007, p. 103).\textsuperscript{28}

It is in the construction of the Great Pyramid in early Egypt where one finds precursors to contemporary features of holistic educational thought such as “green architecture,” or what is commonly referred to as “ecological design” (Orr, 2008). This can be seen in the grand gallery of the Great Pyramid, which serves as the functional equivalent to a telescope.\textsuperscript{29} In fact, everything in the Egyptian cosmos, argued Finch (1998, 2007) – earthly and heavenly, human and divine, material and spiritual – was integrated into a whole where “harmony was the glue”:

More fundamentally, the numbers and numerical proportions underlying harmony were the “chemical bonds” uniting everything: music, math, art, architecture, astronomy, \textit{ad

\textsuperscript{27} According to ben-Jochannan (1974), he was not the God of any particular tribe, nor of any particular city, nor even of any particular nation, but of all.

\textsuperscript{28} Please see Tompkins (1971) for an explanation of the practical significance of this in more detail.

\textsuperscript{29} Please see Tompkins (1971) and Lockyer (1964) for more information on this.
infinitum. That which was Good and Beautiful was that which was Harmonious; the Evil and the Ugly were, by definition, Unharmonious. Moreover, Harmony was not a vague, personalized, subjective sensation or apperception; it was a definite and measurable quality by the ineffable properties of number. (p. 141)

What is promising from Finch’s (1998, 2007) perspective is that south of the Egyptian border, there are, along the stretch of the Nile running the length of the Sudan, thousands of untouched archaeological sites. “Therefore,” speculated Finch, “we have only a fraction of the data on Nubio-Cushitic architecture, spanning at least 3,000 years to 300 A.D., as we do for Egyptian architecture” (p. 141).

The Seven Liberal Arts

The end of antiquity coincided with the triumph of Christianity. “In its hierarchical organization,” exclaimed Diop (1987), “Christianity bore the imprint of the temporal organization of the Roman Empire” (p. 35). The West was technically less advanced than the East at this time and was able to overcome its inferiority only with the help of Arabian scholars (p. 36). Arabian scholars, noted Diop, “beginning in the seventh century spread the achievements of antiquity which had vegetated in Byzantium” (p. 36). It was through the Persian philosopher, Avicenna, for example, and the Muslim polymath, Averroes, that Aristotle became known and discussed in the West (p. 36).

The intellectual influence of Aristotle on the thinkers of the middle ages was considerable. His authority was almost sacrosanct. Thanks to him, scientists, little by little, familiarized themselves with the rational, scientific manner of thinking. His physics helped the most enlightened minds grasp the idea of science divorced from religion (Diop, 1987).
The trivium and quadrivium. “The transmission to modern man of the Trivium (dialectics, rhetoric, grammar) and the Quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) was thus assured,” wrote Diop (1987, p. 37). The different academic disciplines which comprised the curriculum of the medieval universities were drawn directly from Aristotle’s idea that the arts of the mind (episteme) were different from the manual or mechanical arts (techne).

Nearly 40 European universities were founded before 1500. The word universitas originally applied only to the scholastic guild (or guilds)—that is, the corporation of students and masters—within the studium, and it was always modified, as universitas magistrorum, or universitas scholarium, or universitas magistrorum et scholarium. The term “Universitas” is Latin for whole, total, universal (Smith, 1776/2000).

Seven academic disciplines were divided into three verbal arts (trivium): grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic. Grammar was not as mechanical as contemporary grammar, but was an interpretive (hermeneutical) tool that focused on understanding words, contexts, meanings, and expressions. Rhetoric was the art of persuasion, oral skills, strategies of debate, and the cultivation of memory, and dialectic was the use of logic in debates and was also used as a teaching method (Peters & Rizvi, Class Seminar, 2008).

The four other subjects were known collectively as the quadrivium and consisted of the following: arithmetic, astronomy, geometry, and music. Arithmetic was not the study of computations, but rather theories of numbers that were based on Aristotle’s philosophy regarding the relationships and ratios of numbers. Astronomy was based on Plato’s model of the universe,

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30 For more on this, please see [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_university](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Medieval_university)
which held that the universe consisted of ten concentric circles (Peters & Rizvi, Class Seminar, 2008).

Geometry was construed narrowly as the science of measurements, based on the relational values or ratios between objects. Music was unique in that arithmetic and music were perceived to be two different expressions of the same principle. Music was thought to express numerical relationships using sound, while arithmetic was the numerical manifestation of universal ratios (Peters & Rizvi, Class Seminar, 2008).

According to Paul Vignaux (as cited in Diop, 1987, p. 41), “These liberal arts were the culture to be transmitted” (p. 41). It was not until the thirteenth century that the philosophical school of Oxford with Grosseteste and Roger Bacon began to conceive of the idea of “positive physico-mathematical science” (Diop, 1987, p. 41). In the following quote, Vignaux notes that Bacon, who was a disciple of Grosseteste, realized that Grosseteste had not followed the path laid out by Aristotle:

The disciple realized that his master had not followed the path laid out by Aristotle, that having known mathematics and optics, he might have known everything. The mathematicism of Roger Bacon is the sense of potestas mathematicae – the ability of this type of knowledge to discipline the mind and explain nature. (p. 41)

Recollection of the Seven Arts never altogether vanished in Europe. Diop (1987) noted that Arabian scholars were the ones who also introduced the Aristotelian texts into Africa:

The trivium, i.e., the study of grammar, Aristotelian logic (formal logic, grammatical logic), and rhetoric, was on the list of subjects taught, as shown in the Tarikh es Sudan.
Chapter X of that work gives the biographies of seventeen scholars of Timbuktu [in Mali], indicating all the subjects they had mastered. Almost all of them were dialecticians, rhetoricians, jurists, etc. . . . (p. 178)

In an earlier study, Diop (1987) noted that the four disciplines constituting the quadrivium (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music) belonged to the main of science, which Muslims were led to neglect through a certain interpretation of the Qur’an. In a later study, however, Diop (1991) noted that mathematics (one of the subjects of the quadrivium) was one of many subjects taught at the University of Sankore at Timbuktu (in Mali) in the 16th and 17th centuries, and that many of the scholars were known to possess private libraries considerably in excess of 1600 books (as cited in Finch, 1998, 2007, p. 93). 31

Discussion

The purpose of this section was twofold: (a) to show a form of holistic educational thought that existed throughout antiquity in the Nile Valley regions of Africa and (b) to show examples of how holistic educational thought in antiquity morphed into separate academic disciplines: the Trivium – dialectics, rhetoric, grammar; and the Quadrivium – arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music.

If there is any bias on my part it is that I have an interest in the way holistic educational thought was both theorized and practiced in various regions of Africa throughout antiquity. That is why I spend more time looking at literature that discusses Nile Valley regions rather than other regions. This is due to the fact that in addition to being amongst the oldest civilizations, the

31 For a more detailed discussion of this, please see Finch (1998, 2007)
literature seems to suggest that in the Nile Valley regions (Egypt, Ethiopia, Sudan) of ancient Africa, scientific or technical ideas and religious ideas were not separate. The vocation of scientist or engineer was never held distinct from that of priest.

While other scholars may treat the subject of holistic educational thought in antiquity with just as much thought and rigor as Diop (1974) and Finch (1998, 2007), it is Diop and Finch who show in a compelling way how the history of astronomy, for example, in ancient Egypt was comprehended, and in fact, how it was incomprehensible in the absence of the study of the connected activities of the spiritual and intellectual lives of people. While I am aware that the literature reviewed in this section may suggest an over-reliance on a few sources, by their diverse methods and subject areas, both Diop’s and Finch’s treatment of holistic educational thought in the Nile Valley regions of Africa gives the historian and the lay person alike a detailed sense of the range of forms that education took in various regions throughout Africa, and of the values that were generated as a result.

History, according to Finch (1999), is often presented to students devoid of any connection to cosmic events, an observation he condemned by saying, “The mechanistic view of the universe ushered in by Isaac Newton, leaves no room for “astral influences” and even to suggest such a thing is to invite the anathema of “pseudoscience” from learned circles” (p. 115). In the Nile Valley regions of Egypt, Ethiopia, and Sudan, Finch (1998, 2007) shows that in antiquity, what we today call civic and political life, was tied to star movements. “The heavenly bodies were, after all, divine insignia, or, accordingly, divinities in and of themselves” (p. 173).
Throughout antiquity, Nile Valley civilizations integrated their knowledge of astronomical observations within their daily lives.\textsuperscript{32} The architectural design of the Great Pyramid attests to that as does the way the universe functioned in the daily lives of people. For example, within the architectural design of the Great Pyramid, mathematicians have detected the exact value of “\textit{pi},” the exact average distance between the sun and the earth (93,000,000 miles), and the polar diameter of the earth (7,926 miles) (Diop, 1974, p. 233).

**Holistic Educational Thought during the Age of Modernity**

Modernity typically refers to a post-traditional, post-medieval historical period, one marked by the move from feudalism (or agrarianism) to capitalism, industrialization, secularization, rationalization, the nation-state and its constituent institutions and forms of specialization, modernization, and surveillance (Barker, 2005, p. 444).\textsuperscript{33}

It is during the “Age of Modernity” where contemporary historians such as Urban & Wagoner (2004) discuss philosophical terms such as the Enlightenment as a period of youthfulness, “If not always in terms of the actual age of those who gave it definition, then certainly in terms of their spirit of optimism and belief in “the future”” (p. 61). Whereas Christian cosmology held forth the prospect of a better life only after death, the Enlightenment ideology promised a state in which all would be happy in the present world.

The belief in progress that captured the imagination and aspirations of Enlightenment thinkers was, according to Urban & Wagoner (2004), based on yet another revolutionary aspect of the new cosmology. That new aspect was the abandonment of the traditional biblical teaching

\textsuperscript{32} For a more detailed description of this, please see Finch (1990, 2011).
\textsuperscript{33} Also see \url{http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Modernity}
of the natural sinfulness of man and the acceptance instead of a modified if not “totally opposite view” (p. 65). According to Miller (1997), it was during this time that the “natural philosophy” of Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Galileo Galilei, and Isaac Newton became firmly established (p. 12).\(^\text{34}\) No longer would any “enlightened” person accept the artificial inequalities and injustices of life as if they were natural occurrences that could not be changed. They could be changed – and would be changed – as the “light of reason and understanding of the principles of nature spread among the common people” (Urban & Wagoner, p. 64).

All of this had its effect on thinkers who sought broader definitions of life. It especially influenced the thought of figures such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762/1968), a “kind of dervish from the desert,” wrote Berlin (1999), who “. . . was paranoiac, savage and gloomy in some respects, and highly neurotic, as we should say today. . .” (p. 53). Rousseau’s ideas were and continue to be deeply influential among contemporary holistic education theorists such as Forbes (2003), Miller (1997), and Miller (2006, 2007).

Rousseau (1762/1968), that Enlightenment and Romantic thinker who wrote *The Social Contract*, a classical treatise that speaks of the return of man to his original, primary principles, was someone whom Berlin (1999) said understood what . . .

all men have in common; the reign of universal reason, which unites men, as opposed to emotions, which divide them; the reign of universal justice and universal peace as against

\(^{34}\) According to this view, nature was a system of lawful regularities, best understood through reason – the careful use of induction and deduction (ideally expressed through mathematics) rather than subjective experience (Miller, 2005, p. 12). See also Miller (1997, pp. 12-13); Locke (1745/1964); and Smith (1776/2000).
the conflicts and the turbulence and the disturbances which tear human hearts from their minds and divide men against themselves. (p. 7)

**Romanticism and its influence on holistic educational thought.** Whereas the prevailing idea of the Enlightenment was encapsulated in statements such as all genuine questions could be answered through scientific rationality, “it is this that romanticism cracked,” wrote Berlin (1999, p. 21). The other prevailing idea that romanticism cracked was the idea that if the answer was not knowable, or if the answer was in some way “shrouded from us,” then there must be something wrong with the question (Berlin, 1999, p. 21).

There was nothing wrong with the question, argued the romantics, but perhaps with the questioner. To a large extent, remnants of 18th century romanticism continue to inspire holistic educational thought and its conceptions of creativity as a human faculty that exceeds the mundane and routine processes of living (Coyne, 1997, p. 135).35 “We have a great deal to learn from the romantics and rebels whom the guardians of culture have silenced for two hundred years,” asserted Miller (1997, p. 4); “They are voices of the human spirit, calling us back to a profound wisdom that we in the modern age have forgotten” (p. 4).36

The willingness to court uncertainty perhaps best captures the core of romanticism’s numerous aspects. According to Capra (1996), in some strands of Romantic thought, human suffering arose the moment one began to cling to fixed forms and categories of thought (p. 294). Literature shows that for centuries, scholars tried unsuccessfully to define education. Romantics

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35 Long before some of the basic presuppositions about creativity presented by cognitive science took shape, Coyne (1997) asserted that for the Romantics, art, music, poetry, literature, beauty, and even love, were all aspects of creativity.

36 Not surprisingly, in addition to Rousseau (1762/1969) contemporary holistic education theorists (Miller, 1997) continue to find inspiration in the writings and poems of 18th and 19th century Romantic and Transcendentalist figures such as Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1787, 1898), Friedrich Wilhelm August Fröbel (1898/2005), Walt Whitman (1872), Henry David Thoreau (1966), Amos Bronson Alcott (1836), John Henry Newman (1907) and Ralph Waldo Emerson (1971).
did not try to define education, for they understood something far more profound, which was that education was not to be defined, but imagined.

This type of thinking was especially embraced by theorists such as Dewey (1956) who argued that in a school that allows children to imagine, “The child is taken out of his familiar physical environment, hardly more than a square mile or so in area, into the wide world – yes, and even to the bounds of the solar system” (p. 5). In addition to and even before Dewey, this notion that there was perhaps nothing more beautiful in education than the ability to imagine was a notion that influenced holistic education theorists such as Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1898) and Friedrich Fröbel (1898/2005).

This desire to express truth unapologetically is a recurring theme in the holistic education literature. It is the unending Sehnsucht that Berlin (1999) talked about, namely, the “yearning” to make education beautiful. It is the belief that to live is not just to sit around, but to move: “. . . to live is to do something. . .” (p. 105). It was this kind of thought that Rousseau (1762) was concerned with and that early proponents of progressive education’s liberal wing picked up on. In fact, the seminal text of the child-centered and whole child strands of the Progressive movement in America during the 20th century was Rousseau’s classic, Emile. Since its publication in 1762, it has inspired education reformers in Europe and in the U.S. who have sought alternatives to routinized and formal schooling (Ravitch, 2000, p. 169).

Rousseau (1762) imagined that once upon a time there was a marvelous human unity, a golden age where passion was not divided from reason, and liberty was not divided from necessity. “Then something appalling happened,” wrote Berlin (1999). What happened was, in short, the modern age.
Models of Holistic Educational Thought in the Modern Age

Well into the 19th century, as Enlightenment ideas were seeping into the intellectual life of the period, they were gradually beginning to affect Americans’ attitudes toward education. The leading 18th century advocate of Enlightenment rationalism, secularism, and scientism in education was Benjamin Franklin (1999), whose conception of education as practical training for a life of enterprise and self-improvement was a reflection of a rising urban middle class consciousness (Miller, 1997, p. 22).

By the 1850s, American educators were frequently asserting that parents (especially working class and immigrant parents) were unfit to raise their own children. In 1858, Boston school officials admonished Irish parents that emotional pleasures were “lower pleasures” (Katz, 1987, p. 47). Many children of newly immigrant Irish families were taught that the purpose of education was to control their passions. A “properly educated” person was someone who learned to repress the emotional side of the self. American culture, through schooling, sought to impose a notion of social discipline on the non–rational passions of human nature.

This “culture of professionalism” (Miller, 1997) contributed to what was known as the Progressive movement. In the 1870s, intellectuals like E.L. Godkin, Charles Francis Adams, and Carl Schurz (all cited in Miller), became disgusted with the corruption of Gilded Age politics and launched a crusade for civil service reform, which was essentially a call for professionalism in government. By the 1890s, a group of university presidents, including Charles W. Eliot of Harvard, Nicholas Murray Butler of Columbia, Daniel Coit Gilman of Johns Hopkins, James Angell of Michigan (all cited in Miller), and others, were advocating the view that social affairs should be entrusted to a university trained elite (Miller, pp. 46-47).
Progressivism and Holistic Educational Thought

Although Progressivism was a multi-faceted political and social movement that lent itself to various, even contradictory interpretations, conservative progressives had an optimistic, positivist faith in science as the answer to social problems. New scientific techniques like intelligence tests were developed to help the “experts” manage society efficiently. In many cases, scientific intelligence testing was initiated to demonstrate the superiority of one race over another, and as a result, a eugenics (scientific racism) movement gained a great deal of attention (Miller, 1997, p. 48).

The more liberal wing of the Progressive movement, represented by John Dewey (1938) and Jane Addams (cited in Miller, 1997), launched a “whole child” education movement in the 1920s, which evolved into a radical social critique in the 1930s that was clearly at odds with the mainstream conservative Progressive movement that attempted to impose a social efficiency approach on American education (Miller, p. 49). Dewey wanted schools to concentrate on problems and processes rather than on academic subjects. In a traditional school, children might study science by memorizing the technical names of different plants and their parts, but in Dewey’s school, children would plant seeds, observe how they grew, and consider the soil and climatic conditions that affected plant life (Ravitch, 2000, p. 61).

Those who hoped to create a “new education” were inspired by Dewey’s (1938) ideas, but the “new education” was interpreted differently in private and public settings. In private progressive schools, education was focused on children’s interests. In public school systems, in contrast, the new education was vocational and industrial, and was designed to train the children of the masses to work on farms, in shops, in factories, and in homes (Ravitch, 2000, p. 61). Such
curricular changes appeared to be in line with the social efficiency approach to education and were identified with progress, reform, and modernity; however Dewey did not want schools to turn students into cooks, seamstresses, or carpenters. He wanted to use the occupations to provide insight into how society evolved and how it functioned (Ravitch, pp. 59, 61).

**Gestalt Psychology and Holistic Educational Thought**

School textbooks of the 1930s reported on the new Gestalt psychology, the idea of educating the whole child through life experiential education. By the mid-1930s, it was difficult to find a school that did not reflect the effects of progressive reforms. Nearly every curriculum revision project of the era echoed the rhetoric of progressive education, declaring its intention to meet the needs of the whole child and to achieve democracy in education (Ravitch, 2000, p. 239).

**The activity movement.** The curriculum revision movement paved the way for the activity movement in elementary schools, which was a response to the new Gestalt psychology. The activity program was never quite the same in any two classrooms, reported Ravitch (2000). Whether it was a good program or not depended on the quality and ingenuity of teachers. The activity movement reduced classic literature in the elementary grades, which also led to the gradual removal of history and mythology from the early years (p. 245).

In the 1930s, in state after state, district after district, the social studies curriculum in the early grades changed. Courses in history, myth, and legend began to disappear. By 1937, a national survey of curriculum trends reported that the early elementary grades were increasingly organized around socially real situations such as the farm, the city, the post office, and so forth (Ravitch, 2000, p. 257).
The curricular integration movement. While the activity movement swept the elementary schools during the 1930s, junior high and high schools were influenced by the curricular integration movement. This movement extended the premises of the activity movement into the upper grades and sought to replace subject matter with student experiences, socially significant studies, and life situations (Ravitch, 2000, p. 258).

The experience curriculum. According to Ravitch (2000), the “experience curriculum” was the heart and soul of progressive education. It was interaction with situations involving children’s needs, purposes, interests, and problems. It was not planned in advance. It was not organized into topics or lesson plans but selected by pupils and teachers. Ravitch pointed out that while such conditions might be met in private schools with their carefully selected staff and students, they were nearly impossible to implement in the nation’s public schools (p. 260).

Discussion

According to Ravitch (2000), of all those who criticized progressive education in the 1930s and early 1940s, the one whose work did the most to “skewer” progressive ideology was Isaac I. Kandel (1943). Kandel, who once had written favorably about Dewey and his educational ideas, made the charge in his classic, The Cult of Uncertainty, that progressive education had become a hollow doctrine, empty of any intellectual vitality or moral purpose (Ravitch, 2000, p. 319).

Ravitch (2000) also pointed out that in Experience and Education, Dewey (1938/1998) called upon the progressive education movement to take care not to encourage reactionary forces that wanted to return to the logic of ultimate first principles expressed in the logic of Aristotle and St. Thomas (p. 307). Dewey encouraged Progressives to avoid all intellectual methods and
ideals that arose centuries before the scientific method was developed. Dewey, Ravitch argued, urged progressive educators to stop catering to the whims of students and to recognize the importance of organized subject matter (p. 307).

To some, such as the American philosopher, Boyd Bode (cited in Ravitch, 2000), the greatest weakness of progressive education was its failure to liberate itself from Rousseau (1762/1979). Boyd argued that schools that centered their programs on the needs of children had become trapped in a kind of anti-intellectualism that preferred improvisation to long-range planning (Ravitch, p. 310).

In the first decades of the 20th century, progressive education had many fractious components, including the vocational education movement, the social efficiency movement, the mental measurement movement, the child-centered movement, the activity movement, the curriculum revision movement, the mental hygiene movement, and the social reconstruction movement (Ravitch, 2000, pp. 324, 325). To Ravitch, the common denominator in all of these movements was their antipathy to the academic curriculum and their insistence on teaching the “whole child.”

Less clear was what their supporters wanted to put in place of the academic curriculum. For example, A.S. Neill’s (1960) *Summerhill* was a surprise best seller and one of the most influential books of the era. Echoing Rousseau (1762/1979), Neill renounced all discipline, direction, suggestion, moral training, religious instruction, and so forth. Neill hated

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37 This is interesting, because as Finch (1998, 2007) showed, the scientific method existed throughout antiquity in the Nile Valley Regions of Africa.
examinations, prizes, and marks, and was contemptuous of books, which he considered the least important part of school (Ravitch, 2000, p. 388).

The critics during the 1960s were legitimately angry at the appalling condition of urban schools for poor children. Some saw the nature of schooling as the primary problem. Carl Rogers (1961), for example, a psychoanalyst, asserted that schools should ignore traditional learning and concentrate instead on personal growth through encounter groups and sensitivity training (Forbes, 2003; Ravitch, 2000, pp. 389-390).

Rogers (1961) maintained that the world was changing so fast that the knowledge and skills of the past were obsolete, and that students needed to learn only the processes by which new problems were met. In Rogers’ ideal system, teachers would not teach but would be facilitators of self-directed learning. All this would come about by engaging teachers, administrators, students, and even parents in therapeutic group experiences where they could share their innermost feelings (Forbes, 2003; Ravitch, 2000, p. 392).

Public schools responded to the criticism they received in the late 1960s by embracing the open education movement, a movement that took off in 1967 after the publication of a series of articles by Joseph Featherstone (cited in Ravitch, 2000) in *The New Republic*. In his articles, Featherstone described British activity-centered infant schools as a profound and sweeping change in English primary education (Ravitch, p. 395). Featherstone’s articles created a sensation among education leaders. Unfortunately, many American converts to open education did not realize that the schools in Featherstone’s articles enrolled children between the ages of five and seven and were not necessarily an appropriate model for youngsters of every age (Ravitch, p. 395).
In the early 1980s, the galvanizing event to improve educational standards was the publication of *A Nation at Risk*. In contrast to the national commissions in the 1930s and 1940s, *A Nation at Risk* took as a given the promise that all children by virtue of their own efforts, competently guided, could hope to attain the mature and informed judgment needed to secure gainful employment, and to manage their own lives, thereby serving not only their own interests, but also the interests of society (Ravitch, 2000, pp. 412-413). The commission recommended that all high school graduates study “the new basics”: four years of English; three years of mathematics, science, and social studies; and a half year of computer science. Those who were college bound, it proposed, should also study a foreign language for at least two years (Ravitch, p. 413).

The response to *A Nation at Risk* revealed a major fault in American education. On one side were those who believed that schools had little influence on children’s ability to learn as compared to children’s heredity, families, and social environment. On the other side were those who believed that schools had the responsibility to educate all children regardless of their social circumstances or home life (Ravitch, 2000).

This was a debate that raged throughout the twentieth century, appearing in different guises in different eras. The conditions that led to *A Nation at Risk* prompted others to propose new answers to the problems of schools. Humanistic and transpersonal psychologists (Wilber, 1995) began to discuss “human potential” and unfamiliar states of consciousness. In the academic world, scholars began to describe a “postmodern” worldview that was beginning to influence every area of society (Miller, 2005). In this postmodern worldview, wrote Peters
(2011), “As an integrating principle, excellence is entirely meaningless: it has no real referent” (p. 77).

**Holistic Educational Thought in the Postmodern Age**


Although Ron Miller (2005) saw holistic education as reflecting a new postmodern worldview that was struggling to emerge, upon closer reflection, one finds a similarity to pre-modern worldviews. For example, some of the features of this “emerging postmodern worldview” are essentially pre-modern such as cultivating an interest in astronomy and expressing reverence for the natural environment.

One of the distinctive features of this “emerging postmodern worldview,” however, is a personal and cultural resistance to the imposition of a rational discipline on human impulses, which was uniquely characteristic of the modern era. The holistic perspective also reflects a growing ecological awareness that has become popular as society has become more accepting of efforts to reduce pollution, preserve wilderness and endangered species, and develop new technologies for producing energy and materials from renewable resources.³⁸

³⁸ For detailed and etymological discussions about ecology, please see Owens (1980); Naess (1991); Dobson (1991).
Ecology and Holistic Educational Thought

Slattery (2006) argues that what is essential for ushering in a culture of ecological sustainability are educators who recognize the role of the school curriculum as an opportunity to inform students about the dangers of environmental pollution, global climate change, unrestrained population growth, destruction of rainforests and wetlands, and the depletion of the protective ozone layer. All of these, he says, are necessary for initiating students into holistic practices that contribute to a postmodern global consciousness (p. 199).

In order to uncover the ecological aspects of holistic educational thought, Slattery (2006) argues that attention must be directed to architecture, classroom milieu, the natural environment, and the inner environment of students and teachers (p. 218). According to Miller (2005), a holistic, ecological approach to education does not aim to teach students scientific facts about nature alone, but rather aims to cultivate a direct, active, experiential relationship with the processes of life.

Such an education encompasses what David Orr (1992) referred to as the promotion of “ecological literacy,” a more engaged, compassionate, and even spiritual way of relating curriculum to the natural environment. From an ecological perspective, nature is not something to be mastered, but is rather a tutor and a mentor for human actions.

This view of nature was explained in an essay entitled, “Life in the Margins: Western Science Meets Indigenous Reality.” In that essay, Barnhardt & Kawagley (1999) looked at some of the key elements of ecological literacy by examining a situation that involved local elders from the village of Minto in Alaska, representatives from the State Department of Fish and Game, and representatives from the Department of Natural Resources in Fairbanks, Alaska.
Barnhardt & Kawagley (1999) reported that the University of Alaska–Fairbanks had, since 1989, offered cross-cultural orientation courses for educators. In these courses, instructors took students out to Minto village to work with Minto elders so that students could learn about ecology from the perspective of the Athabascan community as well as the role of education from an Athabascan ecological perspective (p. 122). During one of the planning meetings, a local Minto elder Chief, ninety-year old Peter John debated one of the biologists who wanted to know where pike (fish) went during the winter.

As Barnhardt & Kawagley (1999) recalled, Peter John got up and gave a fifteen minute exposition on the ecology of Minto Flats that connected all of the different elements that made up the area, including the Minto people, and how they influenced one another. During his talk, Peter John explained two things to the biologists: one, that just because the Minto people did not build permanent structures out in the Flats did not mean that they were not using the area; and two, that the biologist, during the course of his presentation, referred to statistics that went back only thirty years (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1999, p. 124). “You are talking about thirty years,” exclaimed Peter John, “but to determine how many pike there have been in the past, our record goes back three hundred years” (p. 124). Peter John then proceeded to explain the seasonal fluctuations that were recorded in the Minto knowledge base that went back more than ten generations (p. 124).

Barnhardt & Kawagley (1999) reported that while the scientists, with their specialized knowledge and elaborate tools were well intentioned, the gulf between their “compartmentalized, limited time frame view of the ecology of Minto Flats,” and the “holistic, multigenerational perspective of Peter John, appeared insurmountable” (p. 125). Barnhardt & Kawagley argued
that one of the fundamental challenges before educators today is to figure out how to make connections between the view of the world that Peter John experienced and the view of the world that the fish and game representatives were describing. Only then would it be possible for both views to enter into a dialogue and bring about a harmonious relationship based on mutual respect (p. 125).

This is a consistent theme found throughout the holistic education literature, particularly among theorists who want to reconcile the differences between “indigenous” and “modern” education. For a student imbued with an indigenous, experientially grounded, holistic perspective, narrow approaches to teaching can present impediments to learning.

Ecological Feminist Theology and Holistic Educational Thought

Another theme found throughout the literature is that the modern worldview promulgated throughout history restricts the possible meanings of human experience and exhibits a patriarchal attitude toward nature that is destructive (Miller, 1990, 1992, p. 7). According to Valerie Goldstein (1995), what is usually called the “modern era” in Western civilization can be called the “masculine age par excellence” (p. 11). What Goldstein (1995) means by this is that the modern era emphasized, encouraged, and set free precisely those aspects of human nature which were “peculiarly significant to men” (p. 11). To deal with this in an emerging postmodern context, Goldstein offered the following suggestion:

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39 Please see Barnhardt & Kawagley (1999); Lipka & McCarty (1994); Manuelito (2005).
40 To the extent that such approaches focus on compartmentalized knowledge with little regard for how academic disciplines relate to one another or to the surrounding community and universe (Barnhardt & Kawagley, 1999, p. 118).
If it is true that our society is moving from a masculine to a feminine orientation, then theology ought to reconsider its estimate of the human condition and redefine its categories of sin and redemption. For a feminine society will have its own special potentialities for good and evil, to which a theology based solely on masculine experience may well be irrelevant. (p. 17)

In dealing with Goldstein’s (1995) observations, Rosemary Radford Ruether (1995) advocated an ecological feminist theological approach to nature, which she explained in the following way: “This theology must question the hierarchy of human over nonhuman nature as a relationship of ontological and moral value” (p. 89). Yet even something as seemingly “good” as “moral value” can find itself trapped within the confines of hegemonic norms.

As a way to deal with some of the hegemonic norms implicit in notions of traditional morality, Nel Noddings (1994) wrote, “I suggest that our forebears were right in establishing the education of a moral people as the primary aim of schooling, but they were often shortsighted and arrogant in their description of what it means to be moral” (p. 173). Noddings, consequently, contrasted an ethics of need and love with an ethics of law and rights as a way to discuss the inherent sense of elitism in philosophical discourses on ethics. This led her to an ethics of care as the focus of a mediating discourse that schools could implement in the effort to describe a more egalitarian view of what it means to be moral.

Building on Noddings (1994) argument, Miller (1997) argued that a human-centered view of education, which invokes a kind of anthropomorphic scientific reductionism as the paragon of academic inquiry, is detrimental to learning. Anne M. Clifford (1995) shared Miller’s sentiments and wrote, “Theologians and scientists, male and female, need to become
companions in responding to the ecological crisis, if nature, human and nonhuman is to survive on this planet” (p. 335).

Like Clifford (1995), Thomas Berry (1995) argued that the primary shift required in the emerging postmodern era is one that requires an acceptance of the unity of the human being; that is to say, both male and female aspects of the human being – an embracing of a kind of sacred androgynous orientation:

This involves an understanding and development of the psychic depths of the unconscious, a new awareness of the unity of the psychic and the physical as two phases of the single earth process, a recovery of symbolism as the main instrument for evoking these energies in an effective manner, a renewal of the sacred meaning of the earth, a new mystique of science and technology and their integration in an integral human way of being, knowing and acting. (p. 69)

**Androgyny and Holistic Educational Thought**

Androgyny is an ancient concept that has been a recurring theme in holistic educational thought since before the time of Pestalozzi (cited in Forbes, 2003). In Pestalozzi’s view of human nature, notions of “manhood” or “Man” were viewed unconventionally. “Man” was seen as someone who was developed in the innermost sense, which, in Pestalozzi’s view, meant both genders and indicated a full maturity into the finest and most complete levels of human development (p. 112).

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41 For more on this see Charles S. Finch’s (1999) *Echoes of the Old Darkland: Themes from the African Eden.*
It was in the innermost sanctuary of one’s being that Pestalozzi (cited in Forbes, 2003) believed that a person could find a genuine foundation for future love and power (p. 111). Taken as a metaphor for human transformation, the practice of androgyny would involve an entirely new pedagogic relationship between student and teacher, one which holistic education theorist, Scott Forbes, articulated in the following way:

The correct pedagogic relationship also requires trust in the students’ inherent goodness. It would be difficult, at best, to have affection and empathy for an entity seen as inherently evil or sinful (which still exists as a vestige from our medieval European past).

(p. 44)

Androgyny means that humans no longer think of the self as exclusively masculine or feminine, but as whole. As a practice, this means that one must learn to embrace who one is in totality and that one must learn how to function in ways that are complementary. “This does not mean that men must necessarily become more sensitive or emotional,” explained Miller (2007), “it only means that we can awaken to the polarities that are within us” (p. 61).\footnote{For a really interesting discussion on androgyny and human anatomy, please see Jewell Pookrum’s (2010) \textit{Straight from the Heart: A Physician’s Loving Message of Healing & Wellness.}} In the acceptance of an androgynous state of being, either/or conceptualizations are problematic to say the least. They force one to accept a limited identity, and according to some (Olds, 1981), they prevent one from being able to achieve higher levels of consciousness (cited in Miller, 2007, p. 62). According to Miller, androgyny is another metaphor for wholeness: “The word is derived from the Greek \textit{Andros} (man) and \textit{gyne} (woman)” (p. 62).
Jungian analyst, June Singer (1976), who was one of the main proponents of androgyny, used it as a metaphor for wholeness and saw it as a rediscovered archetype and an inner guide. In her view, it was also possible to see androgyny as a cultural social norm rather than as a purely psychological term. To clarify, Miller (2007) provided the following explanation:

For example, Bern (1972, 1974, 1975) has focused on androgyny as a social norm that can promote a less exploitative society. From this perspective androgyny is not limited to the struggle for equal rights for women. Its broader aim is to balance our Western emphasis on technology, competitiveness, individualism, and logical thinking with the feminine values of nurturing cooperation, relatedness, and love. (p. 62)

Miller (2007) warned that there was a danger in being too rigid in our ideal of androgyny. “It is more useful,” he said, “to view it as a metaphor”:

If we define too limited an ideal, then people will feel a need to conform to this ideal and feel guilty if they do not live up to it. Thus, the woman who stresses caring as a principle focus for her life might feel uneasy if she were working, and the man who works long hours might become guilty about not spending enough time at home. Again, we need to turn to our center as a guide in working with inner polarities. (p. 63)

It is understandable to see why contemporary holistic education theorists find critical feminist theory useful. It provides a discursive space for more expansive notions of what it means to be human. Such a discourse not only broadens notions of motherhood to include “other mothers” (Weselmann & Wing, 1999), but by doing so, creates ways to confront patriarchal and paternalistic attitudes and policies in productive ways.
Discussion

Among its various descriptions, postmodernism has been called a world view, a historical epoch, an attitude, an eclectic aesthetic sensibility, and a change in our view of nature (Slattery, 2006, p. 2). It is a view that is comfortable with paradox, mystery and emergence, and seeks an epistemology that embraces synthesis and integration rather than fragmentation and division. Consequently, a major intellectual source of postmodernism is the revolution in scientific thinking that began with relativity theory and quantum mechanics.

Quantum mechanics challenged the basic premises of both Newtonian physics and Einstein’s general theory of relativity. One of the consequences of quantum mechanics was the elimination of the dichotomy between the subjective and the objective realms. In addition to Einstein’s (1931) dimensions of time and space, quantum theory added a third dimension – consciousness – which encompasses time and space, and therefore, transcends the limits of time and space. “Therefore,” Finch (1998, 2007) argued, “we are right back at the door of the Hermeticists, who said all along that “the Universe is Mind” (p. 268). This was a point that he had made much earlier:

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43 It could be said that three dates stand out in bold relief as inaugurating a change over our views of nature: Darwin’s (1859) *Origin of Species*; Becquerel’s (1896) discovery of Radioactivity; and Einstein’s (1915) *General Theory of Relativity*. The discovery of radioactivity by Becquerel in 1896 at Paris was the first indication that the atom was not indivisible and could break up spontaneously in nature (Smuts, 1926, p. 39). This was followed by the isolation of the ultimate unit of negative electricity in the electron by Sir J. J. Thomson in 1899; and in the following year, 1900, Max Planck, of Berlin University discovered what came to be known as the *quantum*, the unit of radiant action emitted by all radiant bodies or even dark bodies (p. 39).

44 In quantum theory, the properties of an electron or a photon do not exist until they are perceived and measured. Whether a photon is to be a wave or a particle depends on how and when it is measured (Finch, 1998, 2007, p. 263). “The perceiver and the thing perceived are indissolubly linked,” noted Finch; “absolute objectivity is impossible” (p. 263). In other words, the most neutral and controlled scientific experiment is altered simply by observing it.

45 The work of quantum theorists, Niels Bohr (1961), Louis de Broglie (1964), Wolfgang Pauli (1907), Werner Heisenberg (1974), and Paul Dirac (1971), essentially proposed that space and time collapsed into space-time and that consciousness encompassed and suffused space-time.
Moreover, we find that certain aspects of quantum theory border on mysticism. It is thus clear that the epistemological separation of science and religion, empiricism and myth, matter and spirit is a recent occurrence, not fully realized until the time of Descartes 350 years ago. But if modern quantum theory is any indication, the rupture does not seem to have been permanent; particle physics now acknowledges a “web of existence” in which all phenomena are related to one another. (p. xvii)

The scientific and educational research implications of Finch’s (1998, 2007) observations were revealed by Elizabeth Adams (2002) in an article entitled “Science” Rejects Postmodernism.” In that article, Adams claimed that by adopting narrow definitions of science, the National Research Council (NRC) report outright rejected postmodern theories of education as well as other theoretical stances such as queer theory, feminist theory, critical race theory, postcolonial, and post structural theories (p. 25).

Among holistic educational thinkers, such attitudes seem to reflect a scientific professional ethos that most societies have come to identify as modern (Miller, 1997, p. 46). According to Miller, ideologies and social institutions that arose to serve specific purposes in the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries need to be reexamined and reapplied to the conditions of an emerging postmodern age (p. 7). In order to embrace the complexity, chaos, and uncertainty of our experiences, Slattery (2006) proposed a “quantum curriculum,” which would help to uncover the layers of meaning of phenomena that could enrich student’s lives and institutional educational research practices (p. 295).

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46 This is a metaphor that recurs throughout the literature on holistic education.
General Discussion

The emergence of a postmodern worldview suggests that education policies address economic, ecological, social, health, theological, and spiritual issues, all of which contribute to the optimal preservation of the world. From an education standpoint, Slattery (2006) argued that “University professors and K-12 teachers must teach and write with a critical prophetic voice” (p. xvii).

In Slattery’s (2006) view, creating a reflective postmodern environment in school flows out of school architecture, school schedules, teacher attitudes, and classroom environments that encourage flexibility, critical literacy, agency, diversity, autobiography, ecumenism, global interdependence, ecological sustainability, and narrative inquiry (p. 110). A central concern among holistic educational thinkers who see in contemporary society an emerging postmodern era is the fragmentation of society, the fragmentation of disciplines and departments in schools, and their effects on individual persons (p. 287).

Recently, a school of thought known as “spiral dynamics” (Beck and Cowan, 1996) has become prominent in holistic educational thought. The fundamental beliefs of this worldview were identified by Anna Lemkow (1990) in her study, *The Wholeness Principle*. In describing this principle, Lemkow wrote, “The oneness and unity of all life; the all-pervasiveness of ultimate Reality or the Absolute; the multi-dimensionality or hierarchical character of existence” (p. 23, as cited in Miller, 2005).

Scientists of recent decades such as physicists, David Bohm (2002) and Fritjof Capra (1996); biologists, Rupert Sheldrake (1991), Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1987); and chemist, Ilya Prigogine, have all articulated conceptions of the universe as dynamically
unfolding, as comprised of intricate patterns and relationships, as being more than mechanistic, and as being something that reductionism does not adequately explain (Miller, 2005).

Finch (1998, 2007), like Capra (1996) before him, spoke about a “mysterious web of life” that binds the world together; Sheldrake (1991), about a “morphogenetic field”; and Bohm (2002), about an “implicate order” as the unseen but real context for the design of physical forms. In his study, Howard Gardner (1993) challenged classical definitions of intelligence with his theory of “multiple intelligences.” In his study, Gardner highlighted the complexity of the human mind and the different ways it processes information.

Gardner’s (1993) observations are consistent with a line of thought that extends back into antiquity. This is based on a conception of the human being that was explained by Finch (2002) in a lecture called the “Dogon Worldview of Dark Matter.” In that lecture, Finch explained the different conceptions of the human being that were explained to him by a group of traditional healers whom he met while in Senegal, West Africa. One of them, a licensed physician, told Finch,

. . . there are two kinds of medicines that are based on two different conceptions of man. If you look at the traditional conception of man, in Africa, there is the biophysical; there is the emotional; there is the mental psychic; there is the spiritual; and then there is a cosmic; and then there is the God consciousness . . . all of those make-up the human being; and in the process of healing, which is a restoration of the balance of forces, you have to take all of them into account . . . modern medicine and therefore modern science only takes the first and smallest and least significant portion into account: the biophysical.
According to Finch (2002), what must be done in the educational process is to incorporate techniques that advance the awareness of the invisible or transparent components of the self. One of these educational practices is ritual, which, according to Na’im Akbar (1998), is a method of systematically reminding us of invisible presence by visible and tangible practices. This can be done by offering information that serves as a reminder of those components of the Self, but it can also be done by developing practices that help the collective community remember. (p. 29)

Examples of how the practice of ritual have been incorporated into educational practices for K-12 students can be found in the works of theorists such as John P. Miller (2006, 2007); Rachel Kessler (2000); and Nathan and Julia Hare (1985). “I know that these rituals are usually thought of as “religious” practices,” said Akbar (1998). “But as we redefine our concept of the self, we are compelled to rethink our concept of education” (p. 29).

Concluding Remarks

This chapter looked at the major concepts, arguments, themes, and applications that were utilized throughout history to explain and inform holistic educational thought. What holistic educational thinkers attempted to do was place all of the properties of a given system (romantic, transcendental, physical, biological, political, social, economic, mental, linguistic, religious, spiritual, etc.) in a framework that could neither be determined nor explained by its component parts alone.

Although contemporary holistic education practices are a product of the intellectual and cultural ferment of the 1960s and 1970s, what I tried to show in this chapter is that the roots of
holistic education go back well before the 1960s. As an intellectual stance, holistic educational thought is grounded in a synthesis of several well established scientific, philosophical, and pedagogical perspectives.

In addition to Rousseau (1762/1979), Pestalozzi (1787, 1898), Fröbel (1898/2005), Thoreau (1966), Emerson (1971), and Dewey (1938, 1956), holistic educational thought draws from the work of Alfred North Whitehead (cited in Miller, 2005), especially his concept of “process philosophy”; Carl Jung’s (cited in Forbes, 2003; Miller, 2005) concept of archetypal psychology; Sri Aurobindo’s (cited in Miller, 2005) integral philosophy; Gregory Bateson’s (cited in Miller, 2005) view of cybernetics; and Ludwig Von Bertalanffy’s (1960) concept of general systems theory.

The theoretical and philosophical foundation of holistic educational thought, “Holism” (Smuts, 1929), asserts that the universe is an undivided, interconnected whole, and that this whole embodies an all-encompassing creative source through many layers of contexts. Theorists such as Ken Wilber (1995) use the term “holarchical” to indicate a reality that is essentially comprised of wholes within wholes within wholes ad infinitum.

Aldous Huxley (1932, 1945) called this perspective the “perennial philosophy,” a term which described the core of most of the world’s mystical and spiritual traditions. This conception of reality recognized an “Absolute” or “Source” that existed behind physical surface appearances (Campbell, 1998; Miller, 2005). For holistic educational theorists, spirituality has never been

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47 The term “holism” was coined by Smuts (1926), who, ironically, served as Prime Minister of South Africa during a period which precipitated the era of Apartheid.
48 For a discussion on spirituality and holistic educational thought, please see Bowers (1995); Cajete (1994); Kessler (2000); Miller (1997).
confined to religious institutions and practices, but is larger and more whole than our cultural portrayals of it. It is, in Miller’s view, infinitely expansive, creative, and evolving:

By starting from a position of oneness, unity and essential spirituality, a holistic perspective emphasizes the complementarity of all phenomena; in place of division and opposition, it sees the world as a dynamic balance of forces. Wholeness includes light and shadow, joy and suffering, feminine and masculine, mind and matter, human and nonhuman, and so on. (2005, p. 2)

A major philosophical source of contemporary holistic educational thought is an emerging globalist or trans-nationalist perspective, often associated with an ideology of pacifism. Not to be confused with globalization, this holistic trans-nationalism emphasizes ecological commonalities among cultures and the universality of human wants and needs. Another major influence on contemporary holistic educational thought is the emergence of contemporary feminism, which leading American philosopher of education, Nel Noddings (1992), argued is essentially concerned with caring – that is, with forming bonds or connections between people such that every person’s experience is of concern to others.

Holistic educational thought is also built on the foundation of various alternative pedagogies that first emerged in the early twentieth century and gained in popularity during the cultural upheaval of the 1960s and 1970s: Maria Montessori (cited in Miller, 2005) in Italy; Rudolf Steiner (cited in Miller, 2005) in Germany; J. Krishnamurti (cited in Miller, 2005) in India; John Dewey (1938, 1956) in the U.S.; Francisco Ferrer (cited in Miller, 2005) in Spain; and A.S. Neill (1960; Miller, 2005) in England.
In an article entitled “The Nature of Disadvantaged Youth,” William Amos (1968) argued, “. . . no matter how the disadvantaged youngster is viewed, the counselor acknowledges that he is a whole human being, bringing with him the cumulative background of a life affected by the forces he has encountered along the way” (p. 25). Amos went on to say that in counseling, a host of factors must be taken into account in relation to the conflicts of life in one’s local community, the nation, and the world. In my opinion, one simple yet powerful expression of holistic educational thought came from Coretta Scott King, who said,

Nonviolence is not just about one person, one family, or one community, it is a holistic philosophy. All life is interrelated; we are all tied together. Problems that affect people in Beijing, China, also affect people in Harlem, U.S.A., and everywhere else in the world. We must be concerned about others as well as ourselves; we cannot just focus on our own problems. We must study the cultures and languages of the whole world. We need to study the history of people who are different from ourselves, those who are outside our borders as well as those who are inside. Martin used to say that we are all tied together in an inescapable network of mutuality. What affects one directly affects all indirectly.

(cited in Slattery, 2006, p. 201)

From the perspective of holistic educational thought, it is possible to teach students that “All life is interrelated,” as Coretta Scott King said, and that “We are all tied together in an inescapable network of mutuality,” as Martin Luther King, Jr. said. These are themes that are explored in the forthcoming chapters.
CHAPTER 3

ARTICULATING HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

In this chapter, I take a position similar to that taken by education researcher, Mark Berends (2009). In an article entitled “The Need for Better Theory, Data, and Methods to Inform Education Policy,” Berends made the following statement: “Careful operationalization of key constructs within different nested levels and clear articulation of hypotheses relating these constructs would advance the field [of education]” (p. 851).

Part of my task in this study is to operationalize holistic educational thought so that it applies to K-12 education. The other part of my task is to argue for its implementation in K-12 schools. In order to do this, I have chosen two research methods – articulation and argumentation. However, for the sake of simplicity, I have decided to collapse both methods into one: articulation. Aside from the fact that it is the articulation of holistic educational thought that I am after, there is another reason why I focus on articulation.

From the perspective of holistic educational thought, the process of education has to be poetic. It has to be an expression of a significant idea or experience designated to delight the senses and appeal to the imagination. This way of looking at holistic educational thought is taken from a definition of poetry that I learned in high school. The original definition says, “Poetry is an articulate expression of a significant idea or experience in words designated to delight the ear and appeal to the imagination and feeling.”

In applying this definition to holistic educational thought, I have revised it because holistic educational thought is not designated to delight the ear only, but all of the senses; and not
in words alone, but in image as well. My intention in this study is to articulate a vision of educational thought that bears witness to this revised definition of poetry. It is this sense of poetry and beauty that I hope to convey through the method of articulation.

At the same time, I want to be clear that I am making a policy argument. That is why, methodologically speaking, argumentation is important. Whether in written or oral form, argumentation is central in all stages of the policy process; not only to clarify positions with respect to an issue, but to gain adherence on an issue. Giandomenico Majone (1989), author of *Evidence, Argument, & Persuasion in the Policy Process*, makes this clear when he writes, “We miss a great deal if we try to understand policy-making solely in terms of power, influence, and bargaining, to the exclusion of debate and argument” (p. 2). Argumentation is the key process through which citizens and policymakers arrive at moral judgments and policy choices:

Public discussion mobilizes the knowledge, experience, and interest of many people, while focusing their attention on a limited range of issues. Each participant is encouraged to adjust his view of reality, and even to change his values, as a result of the process of reciprocal persuasion [argumentation]. In this way, discussion can produce results that are beyond the capabilities of authoritarian or technocratic methods of policy-making. (p. 2)

In Majone’s (1989) view, argumentation is always directed to a particular audience and attempts to elicit or increase the adherence of the members of the audience to the claims that are presented for their consent (p. 22). Argumentation does not aim to gain purely intellectual agreement but to incite action, or at least to create a “disposition to act at the appropriate moment” (p. 23). What makes argumentation relevant to my study is that it is a deliberate
method of communication where the selection of facts and values are designed to convince a particular audience. Argumentation allows me to be explicit about my advocacy of holistic education and to be explicit about the fact that I am using rhetoric to facilitate a wide-ranging discussion about holistic educational thought in K-12 education.

From a methodological point of view, argumentation is also important because it situates both policy analysis and planning as important components of argumentation. No policy proposal, no matter how objective, will be adopted unless it is communicated persuasively and meets the practical demands of the political environment, both of which require effective planning and analysis. Two editors of *The Argumentative Turn in Policy Analysis and Planning*, Frank Fischer and John Forester (1993), stated this clearly when they wrote, “Policy analysis and planning are practical processes of argumentation” (p. 2).

Fischer and Forester (1993) not only recognized the actual performance of argumentation and the practical rhetorical work of framing and articulating analyses, but also the importance of constructing a sense of value and significance through argumentation. One of the important things that they observed about argumentation is that all policy analysis and planning requires “attention to content and performance, to technical analysis and political articulation” (pp. 4, 5). In acknowledgment of this finding, J. A. Throgmorton (1993), who was featured in their study, asked the following question:

What kinds of communities, characters, and cultures do we want to help create?

Eventually I will argue that planning analysts should strive not to speak purely scientifically or purely politically but to find a rhetoric that helps to create and sustain a public, democratic discourse. This should be a persuasive discourse that permits analysts
(and others) to talk coherently about contestable views of what is good, right, and feasible. And I will argue that analysts should strive to create arenas that facilitate and encourage just such a persuasive, public discourse. (p. 122)

It is important to keep Throgmorton’s (1993) suggestion to “find a rhetoric that helps to create and sustain a public, democratic discourse” (p. 122) in mind. A central goal of mine is to create a “thirst” for holistic educational thought among education policymakers to the extent that a public and democratic discourse about it is created and sustained. That is no easy task; for in my effort to articulate a vision of holistic educational thought that is both practical and beautiful, I am forced to contend with history.

Historically, as a practice, holistic education has represented a kind of avant-garde educational movement that even today is still perceived as pushing the boundaries of what is accepted as the norm or the status quo. At certain points, it has also been perceived as a countercultural philosophy of education that reflects anti-American values. While argumentation might not necessarily promise relief from that perception, articulation might help to show that holistic education is not anti-American but that it actually represents the best of American values. Utilized together, my hope is that articulation and argumentation will describe an ideal theory of education – one that is universal and compelling.

In the following sections, I explain why articulation is uniquely suited as a method for this study. I begin by discussing the two objectives of this study which merit its use. After describing these two objectives, I discuss the methods of articulation and argumentation in detail. These sections are followed by a general discussion section where I distinguish policy analysis from policy advocacy and make the case that it is the unique role of policy advocacy that
warrants the use of articulation and argumentation. I then conclude with a few remarks about why articulation is important to holistic educational thought.

**Toward a Policy Brief**

One of the purposes of my dissertation is to serve as a preliminary research document that can be distilled into a policy brief. A policy brief is a document that outlines the rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative or course of action in a current policy debate, and is commonly produced in an effort to advocate for a position (Trent, 2012, class lecture).

A policy brief is also designed to convince a target audience to adopt a preferred alternative or course of action that serves as an impetus for change (Trent, 2012, class lecture). Although my primary audience at this juncture is my dissertation committee, my main target audience outside of my committee is college and university deans.\(^{49}\) While the most common audience for a policy brief is/are the decision-maker(s), it is also not uncommon to use the brief to support broader advocacy initiatives that target a wide and knowledgeable audience. In this case, that audience includes teachers, principals, and school administrators.

A policy brief also needs to provide an adequately comprehensive but targeted argument within a limited space. This means that the focus of the brief needs to be limited to a particular problem or area of a problem.\(^{50}\) Because the practice of holistic education may seem broad on the surface, I have tried to deal with this broadness by operationalizing holistic educational

\(^{49}\)My intention is to convince college and university deans to establish holistic educational departments that offer courses in the theory and practice of holistic educational thought to local superintendents, school board members, principles, teachers, education researchers, and essentially anyone having anything to do with the implementation of education policies.

\(^{50}\)Please see Smith & Smith (2009)
thought to mean the embodiment of three principles: competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, and lifelong optimal learning.

A policy brief should also create a favorable impression and be an action-oriented document that targets policy practitioners. As such, it must provide arguments based on what is actually happening in practice with a particular policy and propose recommendations that seem realistic to the target audience (Trent, 2012, n.p.). It is important to reiterate that this study is not intended to be a policy brief, but rather the preliminary research component of a policy brief. At this stage, I am principally concerned with examining holistic educational thought in as much detail as possible, and it is my belief that the general format of a policy brief will enhance my ability to do that.\footnote{The format of a policy brief that I use is taken from a series of worksheets that were presented in an advanced policy research graduate seminar taught by Dr. William Trent at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign during the spring semester of 2012.}

**Implementation**

Another reason why the method of articulation is important to this study has to do with its practical aims. No research study, no matter how compelling its findings, is valid if policymakers are not persuaded to implement its recommendations. Thus, in addition to being an articulation of holistic educational thought, this study is devoted to the implementation of holistic educational thought in K-12 schools. While implementation is not guaranteed by the method of articulation, implementation research is valuable in that, according to Alan Werner (2004), it keeps a researcher in the process of refining his or her articulations.\footnote{In that sense, implementation research, like the policy brief, serves as a resource to help in the refinement of my articulation of holistic educational thought.} For example,
implementation research may be designed to include the following questions about a program’s resources and capacities:

Has the program model been translated into concrete resource requirements? Is program funding sufficient to meet those requirements? Are the right staffing numbers and skills available among the agency’s workforce or within the community? Can facilities handle client processing in the numbers and at the rate required? Are the necessary services available in adequate supply throughout the system? Can the current administrative and information systems accommodate the new program, and, if not, what more is required?

(p. 3)

As a way to deal with and work through some of the issues identified by Werner (2004) above, I argue for the implementation of holistic educational thought departments at colleges and universities. This way, local teachers and school administrators can work in academic spaces to discuss how curricular materials that are reflective of holistic educational thought can be articulated, implemented, and sustained in local schools. I also see these departments as valuable ways to deal with some of the limitations of implementation research that Werner identified.

Two important limitations of implementation research are (a) implementation research does not provide direct and accurate estimates of program impacts or cost-effectiveness; and (b) implementation research makes some judgments on the basis of qualitative and/or subjective data. This last point was addressed by Werner (2004) with the following remarks:

Some researchers consider the reliance on qualitative and subjective data to be a drawback to implementation research. Nevertheless, those judgments are often of value
to program managers and can be a critical dimension to program evaluation when considered with other indicators of operations and results. (pp. 11-12)

Education policy research overwhelmingly favors what Werner (2004) describes as “hard statistical data to back the assessment up” (p. 11). Yet this attitude reflects a positivistic ideological position that is not only limited in scope but also unjustified; for no education research method alone over the last century can lay claim to any one enduring achievement that would warrant such an attitude.

Questions with multiple correct answers often come into play in implementation studies. This is certainly the case with holistic educational thought. The application of holistic educational thought to K-12 education may work differently in different schools, in different communities, and especially when administered by different individuals. Thus, the answer to the question, “how will holistic educational thought be applied?” will vary for different teachers and different principals in different schools.

In thinking about how to apply holistic educational thought to K-12 education, implementation research is a valuable resource in that it forces me to be aware of the following issues: the content and quality of proposed curricular approaches; how curricular implementation will vary by locality? What the proposed outcomes of the curriculum are and whether or not they are practical, and how to measure the overall well-being of curriculum recipients?

I do not pretend to have answers to these questions at this time; however, one of the values of implementation research is not necessarily in being able to offer answers, but in being able to ask thoughtful questions. Another value of implementation research, as Werner (2004)
explains, is that it is an approach that “... sometimes rests on paradigms taken from different social science disciplines” (p. 134).

While seeing this as one of the strengths of implementation research, Werner (2004) also acknowledges that this may be one of its greatest weaknesses; however from the perspective of holistic educational thought, the fact that implementation research values the use of methods from different disciplines with different theoretical paradigms and different substantive domains, is one of its greatest assets.

**Articulation**

Based on these two objectives – constructing a policy brief and implementing holistic educational thought in K-12 schools – the method of articulation becomes increasingly important. The particular method of articulation that I use was explained in an essay by cultural theorist, Jennifer Daryl Slack (1996).

**The Role of Articulation in Cultural Studies**

Slack’s (1996) essay, “The Theory and Method of Articulation in Cultural Studies,” was featured in a study entitled *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, which was edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (1996). In that essay, Slack argued that the concept of articulation was perhaps one of the most generative concepts in contemporary cultural studies. The reason for this, she argued, was due to the unique status that culture holds within the field of cultural studies.
Slack’s Method of Articulation

Slack’s (1996) essay begins with an explanation of the difference between articulation as theory and method. Theoretically, Slack notes that articulation can be understood as a way of characterizing a social formation without falling into the twin traps of reductionism and essentialism (p. 112). “But,” she adds, “articulation can also be thought of as a method used in cultural analysis” (p. 112).

In Slack’s (1996) view, articulation, on the one hand, suggests a methodological framework for understanding what a cultural study does. On the other hand, it provides strategies for undertaking a cultural study – a way of contextualizing the object of one’s analysis (p. 112). Articulation also works on additional levels: epistemological, political, and strategic:

Epistemologically, articulation is a way of thinking the structures of what we know as a play of correspondences, non-correspondences and contradictions, as fragments in the constitution of what we take to be unities. Politically, articulation is a way of foregrounding the structure and play of power that entail in relations of dominance and subordination. Strategically, articulation provides a mechanism for shaping intervention within a particular social formation, conjuncture or context. (p. 112)

It is the strategic level of articulation that most supports my advocacy of holistic educational thought, for it is in articulating a rationale for applying holistic educational thought to K-12 education that I hope to provide a mechanism for shaping intervention through policy within K-12 schools. Slack’s (1996) suggestion that the function of articulation as a research method in cultural studies does not suggest a rigid step by step way of conducting research, but rather functions as a kind of practice is also supportive of advocacy positions in general:
‘Method’… can suggest rigid templates or practical techniques to orchestrate research. But again, cultural studies works with a conception of method as ‘practice,’ which suggest both techniques to be used as resources as well as the activity of practicing or ‘trying out’. In this double sense, techniques are borrowed and combined, worked with and through, and reworked. Again, the commitment is always to be able to adapt our methods as the new historical realities we engage keep also moving on down the road. (p. 114)

This understanding of research method as practice is useful because it enables researchers in general to deal with complexity and me in particular to articulate a vision of holistic educational thought in a way that creates connections on multiple levels while maintaining the ability to adapt to change at various levels. This is significant because it means that through articulation, I am able to engage current education policy in order to change it, or as Slack (1996) says, “… to rearticulate it” (p. 114).

Slack (1996) also points out that working with the understanding of articulation as theory and method requires keeping in mind two general insights. First, that articulation is a “complex, unfinished phenomenon that has emerged and continues to emerge genealogically,” and second, that articulation has never been configured as simply one thing. Her thoughts on this last point are particularly insightful:

The ways in which articulation has been developed, discussed and used tend to foreground and background certain theoretical, methodological, epistemological, political and strategic forces, interests and issues. As theory and method, articulation has developed unevenly within a changing configuration of those forces. It carries with it
‘traces’ of those forces in which it has been constituted and which it has constituted. To understand the role of articulation in cultural studies is thus to map that play of forces, in other words, to track its development genealogically. (p. 114)

Following Slack’s (1996) logic, I find no contradiction in the decision to subsume argumentation under a broader method of articulation; for my project, like Slack’s, is not a beginning, but rather an attempt to “map some particularly profound forces and moments that contribute to a genealogical understanding” (p. 114). In my case, I am not attempting to contribute to a genealogical understanding of holistic educational thought in a general sense, but rather in a specific sense of applying it to K-12 education.

**Different Conceptions of Articulation in Cultural Studies**

**Stuart Hall.** Slack’s (1996) notion of articulation was influenced by cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, who wrote extensively about articulation. Lawrence Grossberg (1996), in an interview with Stuart Hall, asked Hall to describe his conception of articulation in the context of ideology and ideological struggle. Hall told Grossberg that although he always used the word “articulation,” he did not know whether the meaning he attributed to it was perfectly understood. “In England,” said Hall, “the term has a nice double meaning because ‘articulate’ means to utter, to speak forth, to be articulate” (cited in Grossberg, p. 141). Hall told Grossberg that articulation carried that sense of “language-ing, of expressing, etc.” (p. 141). Hall went on to say,

But we also speak of an ‘articulated’ lorry (truck): a lorry where the front (cab) and back (trailer) can, but need not necessarily, be connected to one another. The two parts are connected to each other, but through a specific linkage, that can be broken. An articulation is thus the form of the connection that can make a unity of two different
elements, under certain conditions. It is a linkage which is not necessary, determined, absolute and essential for all time. (p. 141)

What I think Hall is saying here is that it is important to ask under what circumstances a connection can, or rather, needs to be made. The unity is a linkage between an articulated discourse and the social forces with which it can, under certain historical conditions, “but need not necessarily,” be connected (Grossberg, 1996, p. 141). One of the ways I deal with what Hall is saying in my study is by establishing a connection between holistic educational thought and some of the larger environmental forces that encapsulate social forces. For example, one of the questions that I ask and answer is the following: Do changing environmental conditions necessitate the use of the curriculum to teach students how to reduce environmental pollution in local communities?53

**Jacqueline Bobo.** In explaining Hall’s notion of articulation, Jacqueline Bobo (1998), Professor of feminist studies at UC Santa Barbara, noted, “When an articulation arises, old ideologies are disrupted and a transformation occurs” (p. 316). She continued by saying,

The cultural transformation is not something totally new, nor does it have an unbroken line of continuity with the past. It is always in a process of becoming. But at a particular moment the reality of the cultural transformation becomes apparent. The group that is the catalyst for it recognizes that a change is occurring and that they are in the midst of a

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53 Does global warming, for instance, necessitate the need for a curriculum that incorporates the promotion of ecological literacy as a way to deal with climate change?
cultural transition. The formal elements of the transformation are then recognized and consolidated. (p. 316)

In Bobo’s (1998) view, articulation results from a “coming together of separate discourses under certain specific conditions at specific times” (p. 316). I presume that is what she means when she says, “the formal elements of the transformation are then recognized and consolidated” (p. 316). What might be unclear is what she means when she says that the transformation is consolidated. Bobo clears this up, however, when she argues that when an articulation arises, cultural transformation is “always in a process of becoming” (p. 316).

Bobo’s (1998) view is not so unclear after all and in fact is rather helpful. Her view, in my opinion, is no different from Slack’s (1998), which defined articulation as something that “continues to emerge genealogically” (p. 114). Both Slack and Bobo point out that Stuart Hall’s conception of articulation was influenced by Ernesto Laclau (1977, 1979) who, in his book, *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, argued that the political connotation of ideological elements had no necessary “belongingness,” and as such, elicited a need to think the contingent, the “non-necessary, connection between different elements within ideology, and between different social groups composing a social movement, etc.” (p. 142).

**Holistic educational thought and articulation.** While Hall’s analysis of articulation goes beyond the boundaries of what I initially meant when considering articulation as a research method, his analysis is useful in that it enables me to address some of the ideological questions of holistic educational thought with a degree of theoretical and methodological integrity. Even more important, it enables me to be aware of the perception of holistic educational thought as an
ideological stance. After all, holistic education is a practice that is influenced by the ideology of holism.54

The fact that the method of articulation asks how an ideology discovers its subject and how an ideology empowers people are questions that I did not consider initially. These are questions that I explore through “ecological subjectivity,” which is a kind of subjectivity that I believe holistic educational thought helps to foster. It is my hope that through the method of articulation, I will come closer to understanding how holistic educational thought can help students foster a sense of care for self where self encompasses care for other selves and the environment, thereby enabling students to “make some sense or intelligibility of their historical situation.” (Grossberg, 1996, p. 142).

It is through the articulation of this sense of care for oneself to mean care for other selves that holistic educational thought can help one see the value of drawing from the natural environment for one’s principal informational base in defining one’s identity. From a holistic perspective, it is more useful to look to the natural environment to define identity rather than to notions of nationalism, which might be too narrow in their conceptions of self to be useful. For example,

Although national citizenship and cultural heritage are important elements of our identity, there is a larger context – a more inclusive whole – that embraces all of humanity; writers in this literature sometimes refer to the “human family.” This perspective challenges the

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54 See Smuts (1929)
limitations and prejudices of nationalism, which, as we have seen in recent years, have spawned partisan violence in many parts of the world. (Miller, 2005, p. 3)

That is not to say that loyalty to the nation-state should be abandoned or that certain concepts of nationalism are not useful. That is not what I argue. With ecological subjectivity, I advocate a kind of subjectivity that goes beyond narrow anthropocentric conceptions of self. Ecological subjectivity is a philosophical, theological, and spiritual principle that transforms the practice of care for self into an ethical act that simply extends care to other selves.

The ability to cultivate a subjectivity that is ecological, I believe, not only enables one to adapt to changing historical realities in the sense that Stuart Hall was referring to, but to transcend those realities with a sense of dignity, integrity, and grace. It is through this ecological interpretation of the self that I believe a useful answer will be found to Hall’s question of how an ideology is able to discover and empower its subject.

It is fitting that this question would be found in the field of cultural studies – the place where culture is always at the center of discourse. Cultural theorists have explicitly claimed culture as the main context from which all theoretical suppositions flow and as that particular domain where life takes on meanings that are culturally driven. Cultural theorists argue that culture is the context that gives order to human life and is that which either potentially unifies or divides us; that is, culture is presented as that which gives one a sense of identity and tells one who one is and what it is that one should be doing (Ani, 1994).

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55 Please see Kok-Chor Tan’s (2004) *Justice Without Borders: Cosmopolitanism, Nationalism and Patriotism*, for a discussion of how cosmopolitan justice can accommodate the obligations of nationalistic and patriotic principles without forfeiting its commitment to global egalitarianism
This acknowledgment by cultural theorists that culture directs one’s collective behavior and gives one’s life a sense of commitment and purpose is what makes the method of articulation relevant as a method for this study; for at the core, holistic educational thought recognizes and attempts to honor the fact that at the base of collective behavior in the formation of education policy is the formation of groups of people from different cultural backgrounds who give rise to multicultural thought.

Holistic educational thought honors multicultural thought. It is, therefore, important to articulate a vision of holistic educational thought that attempts to help students do the following: conceptualize their place in the world; analyze the world and their place in it; and discover how to participate in shaping the world to make it beautiful (Freire, 1993; Slack, 1996, p. 112). In discussing the effects of colonialism on his native land, South African Jazz musician, Abdullah Ibrahim said, “They took away time and gave us a clock” (Austin & Bond, 2003). Holistic educational thought allows students to particularize who “they” are in Ibrahim’s statement so that through dialogue the work of critical analysis can begin.

Consequently, a major theme guiding holistic educational thought is ecology. Rebecca Martusewicz, Jeff Edmundson, and John Lupinacci (2011), in their study, *Eco Justice Education: Toward Diverse, Democratic, and Sustainable Communities*, argue that the ecological crisis is really a cultural crisis – that is, a crisis in the way that people have learned to think (in terms of root metaphors) and behave in relation to larger life systems and toward each other:

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56 In education, it is important to have a vision that from the outset establishes one’s culture as the center of human life. Thus, to have Slack (1996) state that the method of articulation is perhaps one of the most generative concepts in contemporary cultural studies was a rather welcome find.

57 Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, (2011), discuss the concept of “root metaphors” (Bowers, 1995) as being the buried ideological sources from which the culture draws strength and reproduces itself inter-generationally, often
While monitoring streams, studying forests, or monitoring habitat loss are certainly positive topics to engage with students, they are little more than band-aids unless they are accompanied by an examination of the cultural mindsets creating pollution, deforestation, or species extinction. (p. 10)

In their view, this cultural crisis can shift if one learns to “think differently about our relationships to each other and to the natural world, and if we help students identify and revalue those critical practices of mutual support and interdependence that still exist in communities all over the world” (Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2011, p. 8).

Education philosopher, Walter Feinberg (1998), said that culture “creates feelings” and in so doing, “builds a world” (p. 79). The important question from the perspective of holistic educational thought is what kind of world? More and more, educators (Sleeter, 2005) talk about a “culturally relevant curriculum” as having the potential to improve student learning (p. 3). What better basis is there for a culturally relevant curriculum than that which binds all cultures, namely, ecology?

Ecology is perhaps the only way to establish a “culturally relevant curriculum” that satisfies the needs of all students. Any articulation of a curriculum in today’s formal education climate that diminishes the importance of one’s particular culture under the notion of a culturally blind approach might actually do more harm to the idea of promoting multicultural dialogue than over hundreds of years. Examples include words such as mechanism, progress, freedom, individualism, and so forth – all of which, if not addressed by education, can lead to a posture toward the environment that is anthropocentric, ethnocentric, and harmful even in the face of political and economic approaches to civil life that propose to be new, creative, and transformative. In contrast to the “mechanistic thinking” of the modern world, sustainable societies tend to have “holistic” root metaphors that emphasize relationships: “reciprocal relationships of interdependence” (p. 80).
good. In education, the objective ought not to be to diminish one’s particular culture, but rather to apply it to ecological issues faced by all cultures.

**Argumentation**

With argumentation, I intend to utilize communication in a deliberate way. While it is true that arguments are something that we all do, to claim argumentation in a deliberate way introduces some of the more formal aspects of argumentation. Argumentation is the communicative process of articulating, advancing, supporting, criticizing, and modifying claims with reasons so that appropriate decision makers may grant adherence. This definition of argumentation is one that I borrow from Rieke & Sillars (1993).\(^{58}\)

The objective of argumentation, as noted by Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (cited in Rieke & Sillars, 1993, p. 2), is to gain adherence, which is the “informed support of others” (p. 2). As a deliberate process of communication, argumentation involves engaging people’s minds through calculated interaction with the understanding that different people make different demands on arguments before going along with them (p. 2). The appropriate decision-makers are those whose consent it is necessary to gain for the ultimate implementation of a decision. For example, while I may win adherence from fellow students to the proposition that holistic educational practices should be implemented in K-12 schools, little is gained if the appropriate decision-makers refuse to grant adherence to my claims.

Argumentation takes the act of communication from a passive act to a deliberate act with a particular goal in mind. The deliberate act of argumentation requires the use of evidence in a

\(^{58}\) To their definition, I would like to add that it is Slack’s (1996) and Stuart Hall’s notion of articulation that is meant when I use “articulation.”
way that appeals to one’s intended audience. In the case of holistic educational thought, I utilize evidence in the form of testimonials and case studies to gain adherence from my intended audience that a vision of education that is designed to meet the needs of the whole student, the whole school, and the whole community is a vision that is consistent with the needs of a democratic society.

**Argumentation and Evidence**

I make the following policy claim: K-12 schools *should* implement holistic educational practices. I make this claim based on the following grounds: academic, social, economic, and environmental gains achieved under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) have been minimal at best and Race to the Top (RTTP) offers neither a compelling vision nor a comprehensive solution to the environmental issues that plague certain local communities such as climate change, dilapidated schools, poverty, child obesity, diabetes, and inner city violence.

One can look to Jonathan Kozol’s (1991) study as a basis to support the claim that K-12 schools should implement holistic educational practices. One can also look to the low performance levels of American students on international exams such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), as well as national exams such as the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). Performance levels on both exams can be used to make compelling arguments that methods imposed by NCLB in schools are not leading to competitive scores on national and international exams among American students.

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59 For two years, Kozol (1991) visited schools in neighborhoods across the country and spoke to teachers, principals, superintendents, and students. He found that schools for working class students and affluent students were unequal and that the gulf between the two extremes was widening.
Yet from the standpoint of holistic educational thought, performance levels on standardized exams are not the important questions. The important questions have to do with broader questions about testing in general. These are questions that were articulated by education researchers, Charles Saylan and Daniel Blumstein (2011): “Testing and evaluation clearly have an important role in educational reform, but do scores on standardized tests allow us to evaluate education, or do they just allow us to evaluate how students do on standardized tests?” (p. 167).

This is the important question. Like many holistic education theorists, I do not want to see the promise of formal education reduced to scores on standardized exams. To articulate a position that is more consistent with holistic educational thought, I look to arguments made by post-colonial theorists such as Marimba Ani (1994) and multicultural theorists such as Christine Sleeter (2005) and Sonia Nieto & Patty Bode (2008), all of whom argue for the implementation of culturally relevant pedagogy and curricula in schools.60

It is this kind of evidence that Majone (1989), who, in discussing the role of evidence in the context of policy argumentation, noted is valuable. Evidence, he said, is not entirely synonymous with data or information alone, but rather with information selected from an available stock. It is the introduction of that information at a specific point in the argument, he said, that is the most crucial aspect of evidence:

Selecting inappropriate data or models, placing them at a wrong point in the argument, or choosing a style of presentation that is not suitable for the intended audience, can destroy

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60 The Schott Foundation for Public Education (2012) continues to publish data on Black and Latino males in public education, which shows that the necessary systemic reforms and investments to significantly improve educational outcomes continue to come at a “painstakingly slow pace or not at all” (n.p.).
the effectiveness of information used as evidence, regardless of its intrinsic cognitive value. Thus, criteria for assessing evidence are different from those used for assessing facts. Facts can be evaluated in terms of more or less objective canons, but evidence must be evaluated in accordance with a number of factors peculiar to a given situation, such as the specific nature of the case, the type of audience, the prevailing rules of evidence, or the credibility of the analyst. (pp. 10-11)

Majone’s (1989) point is important because while some of the evidence that I use illustrates the merits of holistic education on the basis of empirical studies, some does not. In that sense, I implicitly challenge my audience to, in the words of the late Bobby Wright (1980), “. . . take the position that I’m not crazy and prove it . . . That’s called by the way the null hypothesis” (n.p.). While giving a lecture on the study of psychology and whether it had the ability to deal with psychopathic issues unique to the Black community, Wright asked his audience to take this position – that he was right and to prove it.

There is a large body of research literature in education (Hursh, 2008; Oakes, 2005; Oakes & Saunders, 2010; Sedlacek, 2004) that can be used to prove that the current vision of education in K-12 schools that tracks students and defines education narrowly in terms of test scores is a partial yet important cause for the lack of academic performance among students, particularly among low income students. To adapt what Wright (1980) said, I say to my audience that if you do not believe that the way a school feels and looks, and what is emphasized in the curriculum contributes to student academic performance, take the position that it does and prove it.
General Discussion

In this section, I discuss my position as a policy advocate. While policy analysis is certainly a part of my task in articulating a vision of holistic educational thought, I do not approach this study as a policy analyst, but rather as a policy advocate. Two sociologists, Lauen & Tyson (2009) noted that “neutral problem definition and interpretation of research findings is quite difficult to carry out in practice and, in fact, much policy research reflects the interests of the client and is advocacy-oriented” (p. 78).

“This tendency,” they continued, “conflicts with academic norms to retain objectivity, at least with respect to the analysis and interpretation of results. For this reason, policy research is not as highly valued in the academy as is academic research” (Lauen & Tyson, 2009, p. 78). “Moreover,” they added, “translation of research findings into policies that can be implemented often requires attention to practical considerations of little interest to other academics but of great interest to policy makers” (p. 78).

As a way to respond to Lauen & Tyson (2009), I want to look at something David Baker (2009) said. In discussing what he believed to be the unique role of K-12 education and why it is important for research studies in K-12 education to have both practical and theoretical (academic) value, Baker wrote the following:

As more people undertake formal education and longer school careers, education continues to assert its authority over their lives. Probably most illustrative of this increased integration of schooling into modern life is the consistent finding from social stratification research that adult social status (i.e., social mobility) is now overwhelmingly dictated by educational performance, attainment, and a general culture
of schooling (e.g., Shavit & Blossfeld, 1993). The education revolution has reconstructed heavily traveled pathways to adult status in pre-modern society: inheritances, sinecures, prebends, and apprenticeships have all but vanished worldwide (e.g., Collins, 1979; Hout, 1988). (p. 959)

Within the practical realm of civic life, education is seen as “the” way to prepare oneself to move up within the ranks of society to a position of “high wage employment” (Keynes, 1964). Yet while some K-12 public schools, especially those in affluent communities, can afford to maintain quality curricula and enhance public school facilities, thus keeping students on track with the competitive eligibility requirements of universities, many K-12 public schools in low income communities cannot (Kozol, 1991).

Research (Béteille & Loeb, 2009) also shows that teachers choose schools with more high-achieving and wealthy students because these schools often offer other characteristics that teachers prefer, such as “better facilities or more preparation time”:

A recent survey of teachers in California, Wisconsin, and New York found that schools serving large numbers of low-income students had a much higher incidence of inadequate facilities relative to other schools, evidence of vermin (cockroaches, mice, and rats) in school buildings; dirty, closed or inoperative student bathrooms; inadequate textbooks and science equipment; and higher personal expenditures by teachers to compensate for

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61 President Obama, during his annual (2013) state of the union address, promised to increase funding levels for early childhood education because numerous studies show that the road to success in higher education begins by establishing a solid foundation in early childhood education: “If we want America to lead in the 21st century, nothing is more important than giving everyone the best education possible — from the day they start preschool to the day they start their career” ([http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education](http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education))
insufficient classroom materials and supplies (Carroll, Fulton, Abercrombie, & Yoon, 2004). (p. 602)

According to Béteille & Loeb (2009), salaries are only one criterion influencing teachers’ decisions about whether and where to teach. There are also “Non-wage job characteristics,” by which they mean attributes of students, class size, school culture, facilities, teaching assignments, leadership, and safety that also affect teachers’ choices (p. 602). Research (Fuller, 2009) also shows that school choice, one of the market based alternatives for students in low income schools, is no solution when it comes to dealing with root causal issues. As Fuller explained,

> It is a discovery that is repeated over and over again – what parents demand of schools and what children bring into classrooms are conditioned by their immediate context. In the absence of economic incentives (like jobs) and sustainable social institutions (churches, civic groups), awarding parent “choice” may help at the margins but do little to alter underlying cultural and economic conditions. (p. 863)

These are the kinds of practical issues that K-12 public school teachers deal with on a daily basis. It is, therefore, not just a matter of aligning middle school and high school curriculum and instruction with college expectations and incentivizing high school administrators to work in partnerships with local colleges that is the issue, but rather a matter of listening to the research literature which “presents a need to integrate research, policy, and practice on K-12 and transitions to college” (Williams, 2009, p. 923).

It is for these reasons that I approach holistic educational thought in K-12 education as a policy advocate. To conduct academic research on K-12 public education that does not attempt
to address and propose some solution to these aforementioned disparities through a form of policy advocacy fails to consider a fundamental fact: that the ultimate well-being of any civil society is contingent upon a K-12 public school system that is designed to make all students competitively eligible college applicants, ecologically literate, and “lifelong optimal learners” (Anderson, 2000b).

Academic researchers who attempt to examine K-12 public education with any semblance of integrity do not have the luxury of capitulating to the ideological considerations of institutions of higher education that attempt to inhibit a broader notion of academic research that encompasses policy advocacy; not while conditions of poverty preclude some students from being able to attend schools with sufficient facilities that would make them competitively eligible college applicants.

The long term prospects for improving public education in grades K-12 depend on a continual flow of policy research that informs policy choice (Weimer, 2009, p. 95). That is, again, why I approach holistic educational thought as a policy advocate. I see nothing wrong with advocating a vision of education that attempts to prepare all students for college; that attempts to address environmental issues; and that attempts to inspire all students to become lifelong optimal learners.

**Concluding Remarks**

The education research literature makes it clear that when making a policy argument, one must not underestimate the power of articulation. In terms of holistic educational thought, articulation is not just the sense of being able to “express oneself clearly” (Webster, 1982), but is rather closer to what Lawrence Grossberg (1996) expressed when he wrote,
‘Articulation’ refers to the complex set of historical practices by which we struggle to produce identity or structural unity out of, on top of, complexity, difference, contradiction. It signals the absence of guarantees, the inability to know in advance the historical significance of particular practices. It shifts the question of determination from origins (e.g., a practice is defined by its capitalist or working-class genesis) to effects. It is the struggle to articulate particular effects in history that [Stuart] Hall seeks to find at every level, and in every domain of social life. (p. 154)

If the American system of public education fails to articulate a vision of education that is designed to embrace the hearts and minds of a society reflective of multicultural citizenship, it is my belief that America will witness, as numerous educators (Glass, 2008; Ravitch, 2010) have argued recently, the death of the American public school system. It is for this reason that I have chosen articulation as a research method: to articulate an alternative. Each type of research question, as explained by Laura M. Desimone (2009), corresponds to a different set of research methods.

For instance, identifying factors that predict reading achievement necessitates a correlational study (Desimone, 2009, p. 165). Choosing the best method for teaching reading requires a series of impact studies with an experimental or quasi-experimental design. Examining differences across groups requires a comparative descriptive analysis with quantitative assessment data. Characterizing how teachers instruct reading requires an implementation study, which may use both quantitative and qualitative measures for instruction (p. 165). To articulate a

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62 The recent closing of nearly fifty schools in the Chicago Public School system, the largest school closure in Chicago's history, is a frightening testament to this.
vision of educational thought that pertains to K-12 education broadly necessitates an interpretive study guided by a method that looks at research as practice, as a way of “trying different things out” (Slack, 1996, p. 114).

Such a method is to be found in articulation. Holistic educational thought naturally lends itself to this method because it aims to help contemporary education policy address one of the key challenges of our time, which is how to create schools that can nurture sustainable communities. Since no blueprint for developing sustainable communities exists as of yet, the ability to do this requires a method that looks at research as practice. Sustainability in a holistic sense means more than the conservation of a watershed or saving a certain animal species. It goes to the core of what it means to be human in relation to the natural environment. In a poetic sense, the objective is for students to usher in a world of beauty that delights the senses and appeals to the imagination.

These are questions that cannot be resolved by one single cultural or methodological approach alone, but will take a multicultural approach that is inherently holistic. Lastly, I utilize articulation as a research method to advocate a vision of education that is truly universal. In my search for a research method, I sought one that would give me the discursive space to argue, not for low income students alone, or for affluent students alone, but for all students. Articulation enables me to state that objective with clarity.
CHAPTER 4

COMPETITIVE ELIGIBILITY

Historically, holistic education has had little influence on the official education policies of any nation (Miller, 2005). One of the main reasons for this is because holistic education has long been associated with a kind of “New Age” anti-intellectualism (Ravitch, 1983). Critics are not totally wrong in lodging this critique. A.S. Neill’s (1960) bestselling book, *Summerhill*, provides a clear example of the antipathy to the academic curriculum that most critics use to discount the practice of holistic education.

In Neill’s (1960) book, when students arrive at Summerhill, it is up to them to ask for lessons. If they do not want lessons, they are left undisturbed to play all day if that is what they want to do for months or even years. Neill hates examinations, prizes, and marks, and he is contemptuous of books, which he considers the least important part of school (Ravitch, 2000, p. 388). It is this vision of education that is conjured up in the minds of many when holistic education is mentioned.

I offer a different picture. With holistic educational thought, I attempt to demonstrate in a theoretical way that holistic education can not only address the academic needs of students, but that it can do so in a way that goes above and beyond those needs. By focusing on competitive eligibility, which is a term used in university admissions to describe students who go above and beyond minimum admissions requirements, the practice of holistic education can depart from the image of education that Neill (1960) espoused in *Summerhill*.
Linking holistic educational thought to competitive eligibility also provides a critique of university admissions for failing to adhere to the requirements of the holistic review process – a process they claim to use to evaluate incoming students. If education research shows, and it does, that it is in the best interest of society to establish policies that ask public schools in grades K-12 to give all students access to a competitively eligible curriculum, the least that college and university admissions officers can do is ensure that incoming students reflect a student body that has been evaluated according to the dictates of holistic review. Doing so would not only ensure a student body that is diverse in all categories of the holistic review process – academic, extra-curricular, cultural, socio-economic – but would also ensure a student body that reflects an equal number of students in all categories.

Holistic review became popular among university admissions offices following the passage of proposition 209 in 1996, the California anti-affirmative action law which ended the use of race as a factor to help determine college and university admissions rates. At the University of California (UC), for example, the Office of the President (UCOP) sought holistic review as a way to increase diversity among the student body. The rationale was that a holistic review process would enable factors other than test scores and academic grade point averages to be used to determine admissions; however, a look at the admissions statistics for incoming freshmen at selective University of California campuses suggests that grades and test scores are still the overwhelming factors used to determine admissions.

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63 Some universities were using holistic review before 1996
64 Each year, UC releases preliminary data on undergraduate applications (usually in January) and admissions (usually in April). The data released at these points in the 2000-11 admissions cycles are provided at [http://www.ucop.edu/news/studstaff.html](http://www.ucop.edu/news/studstaff.html). The data often change somewhat after their preliminary release. The preliminary data tables, however, may be useful in that they provide breakdowns by gender, geographic region and other criteria not displayed in the final summary table. Also, please see the University of California Percent Change
And this is not just a University of California phenomenon. A look at the incoming freshman statistics at universities such as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) suggests that grades and test scores are still the overwhelming factors used to determine admissions as well. For example, on the webpage of the UIUC office of admissions, the following statement can be found: “A variety of factors are considered upon review. Primary among the criteria is academic performance and rigor [Italics mine]” (UIUC, 2012). This statement is followed by the following statement, which makes the previous statement confusing:

When reading applications, the admissions and college professionals rank the application using a holistic approach [italics mine] by combining the criteria being evaluated. Most applications receive at least two readings. The Office of Admissions checks all preliminary decisions in order to assure a high level of consistency while recognizing that professional judgment is being used to make individual decisions about each applicant. In fact, individual applicants are evaluated in the context of the opportunities available. The multiple readings and the review for consistency creates a system of quality control that leads to the best possible decisions of professional judgment. (UIUC, 2012)

These statements are confusing because the admissions office states that a variety of factors are considered for admission, but that “primary among the criteria are academic performance and rigor,” while at the same time claiming that students are ranked using a “holistic approach.” This statement suggests that their process is not holistic. Even more confusing is when they explain the significance of extracurricular activities. For example, even

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65 http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html#selectivity
though they say, “We know that grades and test scores do not paint the entire picture of who you are,” they still claim to use grades and test scores as the primary criteria of holistic review (UCOP, 2012). A true holistic review would have to weigh all criteria equally. In a recent interview, education historian, James D. Anderson, discussed the threat holistic review is under as it pertains to college and university admissions:

I think it’s a serious challenge for the court to overturn the Grutter decision within a decade. That would lend further credibility to the very prevalent belief that the court is increasingly an instrument of political partisanship. Nonetheless, the questions posed so far indicate opposition to the Grutter principle that universities could employ a “holistic review” that uses multiple factors, including race, to determine the admission of a diverse student body. (Forrest, 2012, October 22)

Anderson was responding to the U.S. Supreme Court case of Fisher v. the University of Texas, which challenges the use of race-based affirmative action in college admissions. Ironically, since Grutter v. Bollinger, 539 U.S. 306 (2003), campuses such as the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign have actually become less racially diverse, not more. It seems to me that if universities were committed to evaluating students according to the criteria of holistic review, campuses should be more racially diverse. To state that incoming freshmen applicants will be reviewed holistically yet admit a freshmen class selected primarily on academic performance and rigor is not holistic. This suggests that admissions officers might not understand what “holistic” means and therefore, might not understand how to implement a process of holistic review.

http://admissions.illinois.edu/early/prepare/extracurricular.html
These are some of the issues that I address in this chapter. It is my hope to persuade admissions officers to revisit the original intent of holistic review and to bear witness to that intent when they review applicants. I begin by laying out the admissions requirements for selective universities in detail. I utilize admissions criteria taken from the undergraduate admissions websites at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) and the University of California (UC). I selected these universities because, having worked with their admissions offices, I am familiar with their policies.

After laying out the admissions requirements, I look at the relationship between holistic educational thought and competitive eligibility, and address the question, “Why should selective university admissions standards serve as the model for holistic educational thought”? I then revisit the process of holistic review in a general discussion section and conclude with a personal reflection about what competitive eligibility does not and perhaps cannot address.

**Minimum Eligibility vs. Competitive Eligibility**

There are two paths of eligibility that high school students can take to get into college: minimum eligibility and competitive eligibility. In terms of coursework requirements, there are a minimum number of courses that a student can take and there are a recommended number of courses that a student can take. If a student fulfills the minimum required years of coursework, he or she will be minimally eligible for admissions. If a student goes above and beyond minimum admission requirements and fulfills the recommended years of coursework, he or she will be competitively eligible. Both forms of eligibility are explained in detail below.
Minimum Eligibility

The important thing to note about minimum eligibility is that it means doing only what is necessary, only what is asked, only what is required; and because admission to selective universities is *competitive*, applicants who complete *minimum* course requirements are *rarely admitted*. The UIUC office of admissions webpage is extremely clear about this: “Because admission to Illinois is so competitive, the minimum course requirements rarely satisfy admission expectations” (UIUC, 2012, n.p.). In general, the minimum course requirements consist of the following subjects: history (social science), English, math, science, foreign language, visual performing arts, and a college preparatory elective. To be minimally eligible for admission, each one of these courses has a minimum yearly requirement.

For example, at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), to be minimally eligible, applicants are required to have two years of history (social science); four years of English; three or 3.5 years of math; two years of science; two years of one foreign language; and two years of flexible academic units. To be minimally eligible, applicants are also expected to show some evidence of achievement outside the classroom that demonstrates a fair amount of personal strength and skill. They are also required to take either the required ACT and/or SAT test.

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67 [http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html](http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html)
68 At the University of California (UC), these subjects are referred to as the A-G courses.
69 3.5 years of mathematics, including trigonometry or higher are required for the following majors at UIUC: Agricultural, Consumer, and Environmental Sciences (ACES); Business; Engineering; Fine and Applied Arts; Liberal Arts and Sciences (UIUC, 2012, n.p.).
70 Flexible Academic Unit courses can be satisfied by fulfilling the “F” and “G” categories of the UC A-G subject requirement: one year of a visual performing arts course and one year of an approved college preparatory elective course.
At the University of California (UC), the minimum GPA for California applicants is 3.0, and 3.4 for nonresidents in all university approved courses completed in grades 10 and 11 with no grade lower than a C. Also, at UC, a corresponding SAT or ACT exam score must accompany the grade point average to achieve minimum eligibility. At UIUC, no minimum grade point average is posted on the admissions website, nor is there a corresponding SAT or ACT exam score that prospective students must have to achieve minimum eligibility.71

Again, what is important to keep in mind with regard to minimum eligibility is that it means only doing what is necessary, asked, and required to be considered for admission. Yet because admission to selective universities is competitive, applicants who complete minimum requirements are rarely admitted. Applicants who complete competitive eligibility requirements stand a much better chance of being admitted. The question for policymakers in K-12 education is does it make sense to establish policies that prepare high school students to meet minimum eligibility college entrance requirements as opposed to competitive eligibility entrance requirements?

**Competitive Eligibility**

When a campus has more qualified applicants than it has room to accommodate, it applies standards that are more demanding than the minimum requirements. Competitive eligibility means to go above and beyond minimum requirements. In the context of coursework,

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71 At UC, a state resident who has met the minimum requirements and is not admitted to any UC campus to which he or she applies will be offered a spot at another campus if space is available, provided he or she ranks in the top 9 percent of California high school students, according to the UC admissions index, or he or she ranks in the top 9 percent of his or her graduating class at a participating high school. UC refers to this as "Eligible in the Local Context" (ELC). At UC, if a student’s “UC Score” total meets or exceeds the minimum score shown for the GPA range on the UC admissions index, he or she will be guaranteed admission to a UC campus. See [http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/california-residents/admissions-index](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/california-residents/admissions-index/) UIUC does not include information about a minimum grade point average to be eligible for admissions on their website.
universities refer to competitive eligibility requirements as “recommended years of coursework” (UIUC, 2012; UCOP, 2012).

For example, at UIUC, the “recommended years of coursework” are four years of history (social science); four years of English; four years of math; four years of science; four years of one foreign language;\(^\text{72}\) four years of a visual and performing arts course; and four years of a college preparatory elective course.\(^\text{73}\)

**Evidence of rigor.** In addition to the recommended yearly subject requirements listed above, university admissions officers will review the rigor of individual courses and the grades earned in university approved courses when evaluating the strength of a student’s academic record. At UIUC, evidence of rigor is demonstrated in the following way:

Evidence of rigor is demonstrated in the number of honors, Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and/or college-level courses included in the student’s four-year academic program. Readers will take the student’s high school course offerings into account. Recognizing that different high schools provide different levels of opportunity and rigor, we expect each applicant to challenge themselves with the best offered at their school. In-progress courses are included in the review, and a senior year with strong academic rigor is an important factor in evaluating an applicant’s academic record. (UIUC, 2012, n.p.)\(^\text{74}\)

\(^{72}\) To be minimally eligible, prospective applicants must have at least two years of one foreign language. To be competitively eligible, students should have four years: either two years of a different foreign language after having satisfied the two year minimum requirement of one foreign language, or the same foreign language for all four years of high school.

\(^{73}\) See High School Coursework Requirements: [http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html#selectivity](http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html)

\(^{74}\) [http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html](http://admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html)
At UIUC and at UC, university applicants who earn an acceptable score\(^75\) on either an Advanced Placement (AP) exam or on an International Baccalaureate (IB) exam will receive college credit. At the University of California (UC), applicants may receive additional points in their academic grade point averages for completing UC-certified honors courses with a grade of “C” or better (UCOP, 2012, n.p.).\(^76\)

*Community college courses.* Another way that university applicants can enhance their competitive eligibility status is through dual enrollment (concurrent enrollment at UC), which means that they can take university approved courses at a community college while in high school.\(^77\) As with university approved honors courses, prospective applicants at UC may receive additional points in their academic grade point averages for completing university approved community college courses with a grade of “C” or better as well. At both campuses, applicants who earn a grade of “C” or better in such courses may also receive college credit. This means that once they are admitted to a university such as UIUC or a UC campus, community college coursework can be used to satisfy general education course requirements. These are requirements that all college and university students must complete in order to graduate with a bachelor’s (B.A. / B.S.) degree.

\(^75\) For acceptable scores at UIUC, please see [http://www.admissions.illinois.edu/academics/placement.html](http://www.admissions.illinois.edu/academics/placement.html) At UC, see [http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/a-g-requirements/index.html](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/a-g-requirements/index.html)

\(^76\) For example, a grade of “C” becomes a “B” and a grade of “B” becomes an “A.” For a detailed explanation of competitively eligible requirements at the University of California, please see *Urban high school students and the challenge of access* (Rev. ed.), by Tierney & Colyar (2009).

\(^77\) This is called “concurrent enrollment” at the University of California.
**Exam requirement.** Another factor which selective\textsuperscript{78} universities consider when making admissions decisions is how well applicants perform on college entrance examinations. At UIUC, applicants are required to take either the SAT or the ACT:

Illinois does not have any minimum scores or “cutoffs” for making any undergraduate admissions decisions. Readers evaluate the results of the required ACT and/or SAT test results. The highest composite score is used for evaluation. Colleges will often evaluate results from the sub-scores (English, Math, etc.). If an applicant submits scores from more than one test date, the highest sub-score(s) will be used in this evaluation. However, Illinois does not combine the highest sub-scores from different test sittings to create a “super-score” composite. (UIUC, 2012, n.p.)

While admissions officers at UIUC state that they do not have any “minimum scores or “cutoffs” for making any undergraduate admissions decisions,” a look on the admissions webpage at the index entitled “College Selectivity for 2012 Admitted Freshmen” shows that the average range of ACT scores for admitted freshmen was somewhere between 25-32; and somewhere between 1200-1500 for SAT scores (UIUC, 2012, n.p.).\textsuperscript{79}

At the University of California (UC), admissions officers look at scores on the “ACT With Writing Test” or the “SAT Reasoning Test” (UC, 2012, n.p.). A look at the campus profiles of admitted freshman students at selective UC campuses shows an ACT composite score\textsuperscript{80} of 30

\textsuperscript{78} By selective, I mean universities such as UIUC, UC Berkeley, UCLA, Harvard, Stanford, and so forth: universities that receive far more applicants than spaces available. For example, each year, UIUC receives over 30,000 applications for its freshman class, which means there are more qualified applicants than can be admitted. \textsuperscript{79} These scores indicate a competitive range of scores at UIUC. \textsuperscript{80} ACT composite scores and each test score (English, Mathematics, Reading, Science) range from 1 (low) to 36 (high). See [http://www.actstudent.org/scores/understand/#multchoice](http://www.actstudent.org/scores/understand/#multchoice)
and an SAT score\(^1\) of 1375 at UC Berkeley; an ACT composite score of 30 and an SAT score of 1360 at UCLA; and an ACT composite score of 29 and an SAT score of 1300 at UCSD (UC, 2012, n.p.).\(^2\)

At both UC and UIUC, while it may not be the most important part of the admissions criteria, exam scores are still an important part of admissions: “At UC, we use admissions test results not only to assess your academic preparation and achievement, but to help us determine your qualifications beyond what we see in your grades” (UC, 2012, n.p.).\(^3\)

**Achievement outside of the classroom.** With regard to extra-curricular activities, the University of California undergraduate admissions homepage states, “As we consider each individual application - and rest assured, we do consider each one - we look beyond grades and test scores” (UC, 2012, n.p.).\(^4\) In addition to grades and test scores, UC looks at the following:

- Special talents, achievements and awards in a particular field, such as visual and performing arts, communication or athletic endeavors; special skills, such as demonstrated written and oral proficiency in other languages; special interests, such as intensive study and exploration of other cultures; experiences that demonstrate unusual promise for leadership, such as significant community service or significant participation in student government; or other significant experiences or achievements that demonstrate the student’s promise for contributing to the intellectual vitality of a campus; completion

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\(^1\) SAT scores are reported on a scale from 200-800. See [http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/understanding-sat-scores](http://sat.collegeboard.org/scores/understanding-sat-scores)

\(^2\) Average exam scores are derived from the highest official reported scores from a single test administration. See [http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/profiles/index.html](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/counselors/freshman/profiles/index.html). UC Berkeley, UCLA, and UCSD are the most selective campuses within the UC system.

\(^3\) See [http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/examination-requirement/index.html](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/examination-requirement/index.html)

\(^4\) See [http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html](http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html)
of special projects undertaken in the context of your high school curriculum or in conjunction with special school events, projects or programs; academic accomplishments in light of your life experiences and special circumstances, including but not limited to: disabilities, low family income, first generation to attend college, need to work, disadvantaged social or educational environment, difficult personal and family situations or circumstances, refugee status or veteran status; location of your secondary school and residence. (UC, 2012, n.p.)

As mentioned above, in order to meet their educational missions, selective universities seek students who exceed standards for incoming freshmen and have the potential to be leaders in their chosen fields upon graduation. When students apply to UIUC, for example, their achievements outside the classroom must demonstrate personal strength and skill:

Illinois is looking for students who have the personal qualities, as well as the academic qualities, to succeed and thrive on our campus. Readers expect that students with strong academic achievement will also demonstrate strong achievement outside of the classroom in school and/or community activities. Through such activities, applicants have the opportunity to demonstrate leadership ability, perseverance, creativity, generosity, determination, motivation, concern, intellectual curiosity, etc. In the application, students have the opportunity to provide the readers with evidence of their strongest qualities by submitting careful and complete information in the listing of activities and their essays. (UIUC, 2010, n.p.)

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85 See [http://www.admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html](http://www.admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/how-applications-reviewed/index.html)
86 See [http://www.admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html](http://www.admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html)
Selective universities often utilize the following rationale to justify why achievement outside of the classroom is an important part of the admissions criteria: “Students on college campuses thrive when studying and working with the other students who contribute to the intellectual, cultural, and social life of the campus. Therefore, readers look for evidence of an applicant’s potential to contribute to a vibrant, diverse, and talented campus” (UIUC, 2012, n.p.).

I found this to be the case at UCLA and UC Berkeley where I served as an admissions reader. At both campuses, admissions evaluators valued applicants who demonstrated sustained levels of achievement in a variety of areas of endeavor (intellectual, creative, artistic, athletic, entrepreneurial, employment, leadership, etc.). They especially valued applicants who demonstrated a significant impact or level of accomplishment in school, community, state, international and/or national activities.

**Personal statement.** The personal statement is designed to tell admissions evaluators something about the applicant that the objective sections of the application cannot reveal. It is designed to gain more insight about how applicants have taken advantage of the educational opportunities they have had to prepare for college; how they have utilized their talents, experiences, contributions, or personal qualities to achieve in high school, how those talents will contribute to the vitality of the university; and how they were able to overcome any obstacles that might have prevented them from becoming a competitively eligible applicant such as attending a resource challenged school with few honors and advanced placement courses.

In general, the rationale offered by selective universities with regard to the personal statement can be summarized in the following way: the university seeks to enroll students who

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87 From 1996-2001 (UCLA); and from 2002-2005 (UC Berkeley).
take initiative in pursuing their education (for example, becoming involved in educational preparation programs such as Upward Bound, EAOP, MESA, Puente, or other similar programs).  

UIUC considers additional factors such as how well the applicant ties his or her academic interests to their desired major; how well the applicant showcases his or her passion through chosen activities, work experience, research, or course selection in high school; and how well the essay reveals maturity and growth through past experiences, evidence of character development, cultural insight, community awareness, and/or leadership (UIUC, 2012, n.p.).

Other Paths to Admission

In addition to the ways mentioned above, there are other ways to gain admission to selective universities; for example, at the University of California (UC), state residents who have met the minimum requirements and are not admitted to any UC campus to which they have applied will be offered a spot at another campus “if space is available, provided”:

You rank in the top 9 percent of California high school students, according to our admissions index, or You rank in the top 9 percent of your graduating class at a participating high school. We refer to this as "Eligible in the Local Context" (ELC). (UC, 2012, n.p.)

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88 Universities seek to understand a student’s motivation and dedication to learning.
89 See http://www.admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html
90 See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/index.html
At UC, applicants who do not meet UC's minimum requirements may also be considered for admission to UC if they earn high scores on the ACT Plus Writing or the SAT Reasoning Test, and two SAT Subject Tests:

To qualify by examination, you must achieve a minimum UC Score total — calculated according to the instructions below — of 410 (425 for nonresidents). In addition, you must earn a minimum UC Score of 63 on each component of the ACT or SAT Reasoning Test and on each SAT Subject Test. You may not use an SAT Subject Test to meet these requirements if you have completed a transferable college course in that subject with a grade of C or better. (UC, 2012, n.p.)

The University of California (UC) also allows some applicants to be admitted by exception: “Sometimes even the most creative, focused and intellectually passionate students aren't able to fulfill our admission requirements. Even these students have a chance to attend UC” (UC, 2012, n.p.). Applicants who fall into this category are those who are home-schooled and do not have transcripts. Others who fall into this category might have life circumstances that may have prevented them from living up to their promise. The list is endless. Applicants who fall into this category are encouraged to explain their unique story in the personal statement portion of the application and contact the admissions office at the campus(es) they wish to attend (UC, 2012, n.p.).

91 See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/examination/index.html
92 See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/examination/index.html
93 See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/admission-by-exception/index.html
94 See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/admission-by-exception/index.html
At UIUC, applicants have the opportunity to apply directly into a college and major. Due to this, an applicant’s strengths and experiences as they relate to their intended program of study will be taken into consideration:

For example, the College of Engineering will focus on the student’s proficiency in math and science as shown through sub scores on the ACT or SAT and grades and rigor in those areas. Applicants to talent-based programs in the College of Fine and Applied Arts such as Art, Music, Theatre and Dance must be academically eligible as well as pass a talent review either conducted through an audition or portfolio review. The College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences will make note of experiences or activities that directly correlate with the specific field of study the applicant has chosen. Therefore, each of the nine academic communities reviews applications with the goal of admitting students who demonstrate that they will succeed and thrive within their chosen academic program. (UIUC, 2012, n.p.)

Regardless of the different paths to admission that universities offer, “Consistent achievement at the highest level is the best possible demonstration of strong academic performance”; thus, no matter what path to admissions is available, “Application readers will review the rigor of individual courses and the grades earned in those courses when evaluating the strength of a student’s academic record” (UIUC, 2012, n.p.).

What this means, in effect, is that even these applicants still have to be competitive. They must still continue to demonstrate their ability to effectively describe in the personal statement

95 See www.admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html
96 See www.admissions.illinois.edu/apply/requirements_freshman.html
how they were able to take advantage of the educational opportunities they had, how they were able to overcome any challenges or barriers that might have prevented them from taking advantage of educational opportunities, and how they will contribute to the vitality of the campus environment to which they are applying.

From an education policy standpoint, based on the evidence mentioned above, it only makes sense that every public school curriculum in grades K-12 should be designed to ensure that all students have access to each one of the areas of competitive eligibility. And from the standpoint of university admissions, it only makes sense that each one of these areas of competitive eligibility be reviewed equally by evaluators in the holistic review process to ensure a diverse student body.

**Holistic Educational Thought and Competitive Eligibility**

It is for the reasons listed above that I argue that holistic educational thought has to include competitive eligibility standards. I believe that all students should go to college. Even if all students do not want to go to college, I believe that all students in grades K-12 should receive an education that prepares them to go to college. No matter what path to college is offered, the chance of being admitted increases significantly if a student is a competitively eligible college applicant.

It is not the intention of holistic educational thought to force students to go to college, but rather to give them access to the most selective requirements along with the tools to go above and beyond those requirements. Competitively eligible college and university applicants have a wealth of choices when applying to college, and providing students with choices is important. To illustrate this, I will share a personal story that relates to education and the choices it provides.
Born to Shine

A woman at my job who was recently hired quit before her sixth month probationary period was over. During the first few months that she was at the office, I got the chance to know her fairly well, so when the announcement was made over email that she was leaving, I was a bit surprised. When I came into work one Friday morning, she was talking to the receptionist at the front desk. I had not yet read my emails so I had no idea that she was leaving. When I sat down and saw the email, I immediately went up to her and asked if I could speak to her.

“Sure,” she said, and came into my office after she was done talking to the receptionist. Without hesitating, I immediately said and asked at the same time, “You’re leaving!?” Nonchalantly, she said “YEAH” with a little bit of attitude that was not directed at me. I repeated my question, “You’re leaving?” “YEAH!” She then opened up and said “This just isn’t my cup of tea. I got out of city government because I wanted to work in higher ed., but this just isn’t for me.”

Let me provide some context. Two weeks before the announcement was made, there was a staff meeting at the office. Near the end of the staff meeting (for the sake of confidentiality, let’s say her name is Brenda), Brenda wanted to talk to the staff about some concerns she was having. Specifically, she observed that many of the staff members were not getting along with each other and that it was impeding our office’s ability to provide excellent services to our students.

She pleaded with the staff to “move forward” in the best interests of the students, but she did not realize what she had walked into. After only a week in her position, she told me she started to see how dysfunctional the office was. Still, her main interest was the students. She told
me that she wanted to work in an environment that had as its top priority providing excellent student services. She thought that getting the staff to see that objective (providing excellent student services) would be enough to transcend any internal problems that were taking place in the office. She was wrong.

At the staff meeting, she showed two You Tube video clips that were designed to persuade staff to see the bigger picture and to work together as a team. Unfortunately, she was ridiculed. Some of the egos in the room were just too big and the internal strife too deep to see past whatever problems were keeping us from – in Brenda’s eyes – being able to provide excellent student services. I sat there in that meeting quiet. What I found interesting was how much some of the people in the meeting actually wanted to justify their position to not “move forward.” One of the arguments made by the opposition to Brenda’s plan to “move forward” was that Brenda did not understand what it meant to “move forward” and that before “moving forward” it was necessary to come to some kind of consensus about what “moving forward” meant.

I thought that was a valid argument; however, Brenda, not having been accustomed to the office politics, saw the concept of “moving forward” from the point of view of providing excellent student services, and I thought that her argument was more compelling. In any case, she didn’t win any converts. Not that day. She left the meeting in low spirits and it was obvious. She seemed really sad.

Back to the conversation I was having with Brenda the morning she announced that she was leaving. She continued by telling me that she was “Born to shine” and that she was not going to let anyone “put out her light.” I will never forget the way I felt when she said those
words. She then said, “I have choices. That’s why I got an education. With an education you always have choices. You are never stuck.” She said it so effortlessly and nonchalantly yet with such authority and conviction. I was inspired. That morning, I really did not want to go into the office, but listening to her made me feel grateful that I decided to come.

I really needed to hear her say that. When I first heard that she was leaving, I was a little sad because I really liked her and she brought new life into the office, which was refreshing, but after hearing her say, “I was born to shine,” I was excited for her. She was right. With an education, you are never stuck. I had forgotten that. And after thinking about it for a while, I realized that it was that same sense of passion and confidence that I was trying to convey with holistic educational thought. I am convinced that, with regard to giving students choices, I am on the right track in using competitive eligibility as the academic model for holistic educational thought in K-12 education.

From the perspective of holistic educational thought, it is not just about giving students choices, but about giving them optimal choices. Competitive eligibility does that. It gives students the best choices when it comes to applying to college and more than that, by focusing on going above and beyond minimum requirements, it teaches students that they should never settle for being minimally eligible in any part of their lives. In other words, it teaches them that they are “Born to Shine!”

**General Discussion**

Aside from providing students with choices, the other reason I use selective campus admissions standards as the model for holistic educational thought in K-12 education has to do with something I touched upon earlier, which is that I want to hold university admissions offices
accountable to the process of comprehensive (UC) or holistic (UIUC) review. I cannot reiterate this point enough.

Most admissions offices at selective universities claim to be committed to admitting a freshman class that is diverse. As a way to increase diversity, university admissions offices adopted a holistic review process. Due to the variety of academic and non-academic factors that are used in holistic review to determine admissions, such factors should offer a richer picture of who the “well rounded” student is. Admissions offices were on the right track in adopting holistic review. It is sound policy. Not only does it allow universities to admit a diverse and well-rounded student body in terms of academics, talents, and life experiences, but it also provides a model that K-12 schools can use to strengthen the curriculum. From the perspective of holistic educational thought, this is perhaps the most compelling feature of holistic review.

It is important that universities stand by their commitments to review applicants holistically; not just so that universities can admit students who reflect those commitments, but so that universities can, at the same time, send the message to K-12 schools to end current tracking policies that keep some students from being able to meet the criteria of holistic review and thus from being able to go to college out of high school. At a minimum, the message that universities ought to be sending to K-12 schools is that all students need to go to college; but even that is not enough. They need to be a part of the process of transforming all students into competitively eligible college applicants.

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97 As discussed in Martusewicz, R. A., Edmundson, J., & Lupinacci, J. (2011), among the ways that a culture rooted in metaphors of domination helps maintain tracking is by normalizing the situation: The assumption is that some should be raised above others, which leads many to see tracking as normal and necessary, and blinds them to the clear reality that tracking is fundamentally unequal (p. 146). Also see Jones & Schneider (2010); Oakes (2005); and Oakes & Saunders (2008).
The best way that universities can help K-12 schools see the wisdom of holistic educational thought is to model the appropriate behavior by adhering to the commitments of holistic review. That way, when prospective applicants visit their campuses, they will encounter a student body that reflects the racial, socio-economic, academic, religious, cultural, and gender diversity that holistic review implies. Yet from the perspective of holistic educational thought, the real question that schools and universities have to address is how to inspire students. That is a question that competitive eligibility does not and perhaps cannot address.

Although K-12 schools can establish an environment that will give students the resources to become competitively eligible college applicants, they cannot force them to become competitively eligible college applicants. That desire has to come from the student, perhaps not entirely, but largely. The question of how to inspire students is just as important a question as the question of how to establish an environment that gives students the resources to become competitively eligible college applicants. In fact, the question of how to inspire students is more important. There is a saying that helps explain why: “You can bring a horse to the well, but you can’t make him drink; however, that is not your mandate. Your mandate is to create a thirst so that the horse will want to drink.”

That is the real question. What can policymakers do to give schools the tools to create a “thirst” in students? A student who is motivated or inspired to learn (e.g., who “wants to drink”) is a student who will add to the vitality of any school. He or she will come to college with all kinds of ideas that will inspire other students. That is because inspiration is contagious. Among

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98 I am not sure of the origin of this saying. The first time I heard it was by motivational speaker, Les Brown, at my sister’s graduation from college.
holistic education theorists, there is almost a sense of urgency to address this question because when schools learn how to motivate and inspire students, studies (Collins & Tamarkin, 1982, 1990) show that hopelessness and apathy – all of which lead to increased rates of violence – decrease.

In the documentary, *Crips and Bloods: Made in America*, producer, Stacy Peralta (2009) interviews a gentleman by the name of Kumasi. Kumasi is an ex-gang member. In one of the scenes, Kumasi describes the feelings of shame and self-hate that plague many of the people who live in his community and the utter loss of hope that he and many of them feel, and the types of behaviors and attitudes that such hopelessness leads to:

You think of the worst moment in your life. When you are the most frustrated; when you are the most deeply hurt and full of anguish and pain. This is how they feel all the time. And they have to find something to put a damper on it. For some it’s alcohol; for some it’s drugs; for some it’s murder; for some it’s just rebellion and outbursts; but all of them are constantly looking for something to relieve them of the anguish and the pain that is permanent, that they’ve never known anything but. And they’ve seen it in the generations before them; they see it in their generation; and when they look at the generation that they have to give birth to, they see it again. They see no end to it. They know no end to it. It’s a wonder they are not a lot worse than they really are. I don’t know how they constrain themselves. I don’t know how they hold themselves…like I tell dudes, I say man, if one day you pick up the newspaper and turn on the TV and see that I done got on a roof and just went crazy, and just went all the way berserk, don’t ask the question why, ask the question, what took him so long? (Peralta, 2009)
I would not have wanted to be in front of Kumasi during this exchange. What is haunting to me is that in all of the faces of the ex-gang members whom Peralta (2009) interviews, in Kumasi’s face there is no kinship, no understanding, no mercy; just the overwhelming indifference of circumstance. To me, Kumasi is already dead and his blank stare speaks only of a half bored interest in life.

The question policymakers have to ask is can America really ever be that “Shining city on a hill” that so many politicians imagine with policies that cause so many to feel so helpless and uninspired that the only thing they can think to do is grab a gun and kill? Many argue that it is not the domain of schools to address such issues. I understand that, for schools have a lot to address as it is; however, if schools have the ability to address hopelessness and despair, which I believe they do, why not address them? The outcome could be magical.

The ability to address these issues will have to begin with an inspirational approach to education – the kind of approach that was discussed by Ava Muhammad (2009), an instructor at the Muhammad University of Islam in Chicago. During a lecture entitled The New Educational Paradigm, she said,

The key to success and learning is motivation. The old paradigm achieves its goals by requirements. The new paradigm achieves its goals by inspiration. For example, if there’s a determination made by a board of education in any given city USA [that] we need more artists, or we need more math teachers, their response to that need would be, “well we’ll just require everyone to take math.” As a teacher, you have to have vision because if you have a first grader in your class, you are not teaching that first grader for this time or for
your time. You are preparing that first grader for a time, a quarter of a century ahead of now.

How can policies in education bring together the political leadership that’s courageous enough to establish policies that will eliminate poverty; the spiritual leadership that knows how to “speak to issues of death, dread, and despair,” as Cornel West (2005, C-span) stated so eloquently; the economic leadership that knows how to “inspire entrepreneurial creativity…” and the educational leadership that knows how to encourage students to think holistically?99

These are central questions that theorists continue to struggle with and that I attempt to address in subsequent chapters. However, before leaving this chapter, I want to conclude with another personal story. It is a story about a student I met when I worked at Dorsey High School in Los Angeles as an outreach coordinator for UCLA’s Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP). I share this story because it is a story of failure; not just on my part, but on the part of K-12 education policy in general.

**Concluding Remarks**

I never will forget the time I was sitting in the college counselor’s office at Dorsey High School. It was fall in Los Angeles. The sun was shining and the UC deadline was fast approaching, which meant that I was extremely busy helping students fill out their applications. One day, a young lady came up to me and told me she wanted to go to college. It was the twenty ninth of November and the deadline for UC Admissions was the thirtieth – of November.

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99 Many of these remarks were taken from Cornel West during a conference which aired on C-Span in 2005 called *State of the black union: Defining the agenda.*
She came up to me and said that she wanted to go to UC Berkeley. I looked over her transcripts and noticed that she did not have all of the required courses that she needed to get into UC Berkeley. I also noticed that her grades were low and that she did not have enough extra-curricular activities. She also had not taken the required entrance exams. I told her that she would not be eligible for admission to Berkeley as an incoming freshman, but that she could go to a community college for two years, take the required courses, build up her extra-curricular activities, and apply as a transfer student. I hated telling her that, but anything else would have been a lie.

She started crying. There was nothing I could do to console her. She left the office, and when she did, I asked the college counselor why she didn’t have all the necessary years of math, science, foreign language, and so forth that all of the other students with whom I had met that morning had. The counselor told me that she was on a different track from the other students. In other words, no one had ever told her until she met with me as a senior in high school (one day before the UC Berkeley deadline) what the competitive eligibility requirements were.

How could she be allowed to spend four years in high school and never learn what it took to get into UC Berkeley? How could that happen? Who let that happen? What kind of education policies had policymakers designed to let that happen and how come policies weren’t designed to ensure that all students in K-12 schools had access to competitive eligibility requirements?

She didn’t want to go to just any college, but to UC Berkeley – the best of the best – and she wasn’t even minimally eligible, but ineligible; and all I could do was tell her to wait a couple of years and try again. That is when I said to myself “We have got to do better.” Although I did not know how to articulate what “doing better” meant at the time, I knew that I wanted to do
something that would help all students prepare for college. That is what I am doing with holistic educational thought.
CHAPTER 5

ECOLOGICAL LITERACY

The previous chapter focused on the principle of competitive eligibility. This chapter focuses on the principle of ecological literacy. The core of what I say in this chapter is that an academic curriculum must be complemented by vocational education projects that are designed to promote ecologically literate students. This, research shows, inspires students to perform well in and even master their academic courses.

For example, students at Troy Howard Middle School (THMS) in Belfast, Maine, grow 8,000 pounds of produce a year, winning prizes for heirloom vegetables at the country’s largest organic fair. They also enjoy freshly harvested foods in the cafeteria year–round and learn about sustainability in garden–based courses that meet state standards in a half–dozen areas from math to social sciences (Stone, 2009, p. 32). Stone comments, “That’s not bad for a public school whose one acre garden site had been a bed of gravel slated to become a bus garage” (p. 32).

That’s also not bad for a public school located in one of the coldest climates. In 2001, teachers at THMS were led by history, economics, and agriculture teacher, Steve Tanguay, who proposed building a school garden. All the teachers agreed that they wanted to immerse students in outdoor learning to ensure that every student ate fresh food throughout the year (Stone, 2009, p. 32). That is when The Garden Project was born. The purpose of The Garden Project at THMS is to grow “academically empowered, successful young people who integrate sustainability into their lives by producing and learning to satisfy their needs locally” (p. 36).
The Garden centered curriculum at THMS mixes traditional low tech practices with the use of sophisticated tools such as automated probes that track temperatures inside and outside the greenhouse twenty–four hours a day. Students also use digital microscopes and laptop computers to photograph eggs, larvae, and adult pests found on their plants, and then determine the most effective control method for each intruder (Stone 2009, p. 37). Running such a program while attending to state standards requires flexibility on teachers’ parts. For instance, math teacher Katie Coleman remarks, “Jon may call me in the morning and say that they’re laying out garden beds, and I’ll build a lesson about X and Y coordinates” (p. 37).

Education for sustainability at THMS also includes devising tools and techniques for making local communities more self–sufficient. For example, in 2006, students researched designs, costs, locally available supplies, and constructed scale models of “hoop houses,” simple 12–by–20 foot portable greenhouses that were invented by their neighbor, master farmer, Eliot Coleman. They built the school’s first hoop house using local hardware and materials. In addition, math, science, language arts, industrial arts, and economics teachers all designed lessons that related to the project (Stone, 2009, p. 34).

A vision of education that fails to give students the theoretical and practical tools necessary to survive in a competitive economy is a vision that captures the frustration of many of today’s students. In a recent New York Times article, Judith Scott-Clayton, an Assistant Professor of economics and education at Teachers College at Columbia University, reported that she had talked to a number of recent college graduates who told her that since high school, they had done everything that they were supposed to do, but still were struggling financially (The New York Times, 2011, August 25, n.p.).
In that same article, Barbara Hoffer, a Professor of psychology at Middlebury College in Vermont, said that high school degrees today offer far less in the way of preparation for work and create a growing skills gap in our economy. She suggested that we look to countries such as Germany, Finland, or Denmark for models of how high schools can offer better training “as well as the development of a work ethic and the intellectual skills needed for continued learning and development” (*The New York Times*, 2011, August 25, n.p.).

Professors Judith Scott-Clayton and Barbara Hoffer have a point. Yet traditional conceptions of vocational education will not suffice today. Today’s economy has to be different. In the past, vocational education was seen as an alternative to an academic curriculum. Today, it must be seen as a complement to an academic curriculum. Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, President Emeritus of George Washington University, in talking about vocational education, said, “It is also imperative to restore the stature that once was afforded to artisans, people who use their minds and hands in important and creative tasks” (*The New York Times*, 2011, August 25, n.p.).

I agree. I also agree with the philosophical sentiments of John Henry Newman (1907), that Catholic intellect of the nineteenth century, who in his eloquent defense of liberal education, said,

The man who has learned to think and to reason and to compare and to discriminate and to analyze, who has refined his taste, and formed his judgement, and sharpened his mental vision, will not indeed at once be a lawyer, or a pleader, or an orator, or a statesman, or a physician, or a good landlord, or a man of business or a soldier, or an engineer, or a chemist, or a geologist, or an antiquarian, but he will be placed in that state of intellect in which he can take up any one of the sciences or callings I have referred to,
or any other for which he has a taste or special talent, with an ease, a grace, a versatility, and a success, to which another is a stranger. (p. 166)

Somehow, I do not think that Newman (1907) would be opposed to a form of liberal education that integrates academic and vocational knowledge. After all, it was Newman who said that knowledge is its own end, meaning that knowledge cannot be broken up into fragments. Vocational education is knowledge and I do not see it as an alternative to liberal education, but rather as a component and a complement.

Consider the study of agriculture. As a subject of study, agriculture has been relegated to land–grant institutions where it has been rendered into a series of technical disciplines and research mostly in service to agribusiness. Yet, in the words of David Orr (2008), “what subject or discipline could be more central to the liberal arts curriculum than one having to do with food, health, land, landscapes, ecology, animals, water, the politics of land distribution, and rural communities” (p. 114)?

This is an important question; for Orr (2008) argues that agricultural education ought to be part of a broader conversation that includes all of the liberal arts and that deals with our relation to land (pp. 51–52). Aldo Leopold (1968) also argued that there was as yet no ethic dealing with humanity’s relation to land and to the animals and plants which grow upon it. The “land–relation,” he said, was “still strictly economic, entailing privileges but not obligations” (p. 201).

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100 Newman (1907) most certainly would not have agreed with vocational education in the strict sense; that is, as an alternative to liberal education.
Leopold (1968) argued that institutions of higher education deliberately seemed to avoid ecological concepts. He noticed that an understanding of ecology did not necessarily originate in courses bearing ecological labels, but was likely to be acquired in courses such as geography, botany, agronomy, history, economics, or engineering. Although Leopold’s argument was concerned with institutions of higher education, his argument can be applied to K-12 education as well. K-12 schools can also benefit from an ecological model of education that can make it possible for students to address the environmental needs of local communities while enabling them to utilize academic and theoretical concepts in the process.

Regardless of grade level, what is needed is what American eco-feminist philosopher and historian of science, Carolyn Merchant (1990) argued, which is a fresh and critical interpretation of the rise of modern science in this crucial period when newer and larger domains of interest require sober interpretations that are sharply critical of the costs of competition, aggression, and domination arising from the global institutional market economy (pp.143, 144).

What this means is that the whole approach to vocational education has to change. In the past, vocational education was designed to usher in the kinds of job skills that were necessary to survive in an industrial economy.\textsuperscript{101} Yet the industrial economy, as numerous scholars have pointed out (Carson, 1962; Daniels & Daniels, 1999; Diamond, 2011; Goleman, 2009; Goleman, Bennett, & Barlow, 2012; Gore, 2006, 2013; Jones, 2008; Martusewicz, Edmundson, &

\textsuperscript{101} One could argue that traditional conceptions of vocational education and even liberal education for that matter have not done a particularly good job of ushering in skills necessary to help students survive. Many thanks to James D. Anderson for pointing this out.

Today’s vocational education has to be different. It has to be designed to prepare students to usher in and thrive in a different kind of economy; namely, a “Green Collar Economy” (Jones, 2008). A green collar economy is an economy that is inherently ecological, based on a platform of sustainable development that is designed to enhance human relationships with the natural environment.

In order to work in K-12 education, schools will have to embrace a curriculum that is appropriate for a green collar economy. This kind of curriculum was explained by former White House Green Jobs Czar, Van Jones (2008). On the homepage of Roots of Success, an environmental organization located in northern California, Jones said that a green collar curriculum is “an accessible curriculum that helps people break the cycle of poverty by providing needed job and academic skills while empowering them to improve environmental and public health conditions in their communities” (2012, n.p.).

102 All of these authors seem to be saying the same thing: the economy is powered almost exclusively by fossil fuels, a nonrenewable resource, which means that the supplies are limited; there is only so much oil, natural gas, and coal in the world, and the more we use, the less we have, and the more it will cost us over time in terms of environmental health and natural resources; the laws of supply and demand tend to make dwindling resources more and more expensive over time; and the solution is simple: “deliberately cut demand for energy and intelligently increase its supply” (Jones, 2008, p. 2).

103 According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), global warming refers to the recent and ongoing rise in global average temperature near the Earth’s surface. It is caused mostly by increasing concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. Global warming is causing climate patterns to change. However, global warming itself represents only one aspect of climate change. See http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/

104 According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), climate change refers to any significant change in the measures of climate lasting for an extended period of time. It includes major changes in temperature, precipitation, or wind patterns, among other effects, that occur over several decades or longer. See http://www.epa.gov/climatechange/basics/

105 See http://rootsofsuccess.org/about-us/
It is this kind of approach to K-12 education that would foster what author, David Sobel (2005), called “Place-Based Education”: The process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science, and other subjects across the curriculum through hands-on, experiential learning practices. In that sense, K-12 education, while conducted by the school to meet certain state and federal standards, would also have a broader purpose, which would be to demonstrate and communicate the schools’ purpose to the local community and broader public. Author, Helen Simons (1998), explained what such an approach would require:

The first is clearly that the notion of self is not individual. The concept of self is extended to mean that the whole school as a community is engaged in the process of evaluating the school’s policies and practices (though not all of course at the same time). To this end teams of teachers (which could be extended to parents and pupils) evaluate different aspects of school policy practice on behalf of the whole school. (p. 366)

These are some of the ideas that I explore in this chapter: how K-12 schools can use the concept of “ecological literacy” to complement the academic curriculum to achieve what Simons (1998) asked school teachers, principals, and administrators to do over a decade ago, which was to expand the notion of self to the community. The influence that ecological literacy [also referred to here as “Schooling for sustainability” (Stone, 2009)] is having on student motivation, academic performance, and active citizenship is not only promising in terms of how to think about education policy in general, but also in terms of how to think about connecting academic education to vocational education in K-12 schools.
I begin by explaining Jones’ (2008) concept of a “Green Collar Economy.” I then present examples of K-12 schools that are using the curriculum in creative ways to usher in a green collar economy. I then discuss the relationship between holistic educational thought and a green collar economy, and conclude with some thoughts on how sustaining that relationship might lead to the ultimate objective of holistic educational thought, which is to encourage lifelong optimal learning.

The Green Collar Economy

The “Green Collar Economy” is a term that was coined by Van Jones (2008). Jones is the former leader of the White House Council on Environmental Quality under the Obama Administration. In 2009, Jones spoke before a bi–partisan committee at the Clean Energy Summit at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV) about the “Green Collar Economy”:

This is the common ground agenda. It should be the common ground agenda. We should be able to come together as a country on this one – finally. If we have the opportunity to fight both poverty and pollution by putting people to work in these new industries, we would be wise as a country to do that. That is common ground. We’re asking questions that progressives like, but we’re giving answers that conservatives like. We’re not talking about expanding welfare. We’re talking about expanding work. We’re not talking about expanding entitlements. We’re talking about expanding enterprise and investments. We’re not talking about redistributing existing wealth. We’re talking about reinventing an existing sector, and creating new wealth by unleashing innovation and entrepreneurship. This should be common ground. (2009, August 12)
In his book, *The Green-Collar Economy: How One Solution Can Fix Our Two Biggest Problems*, Jones (2008) argued that the aftermath of Katrina’s devastating rampage on the city of New Orleans demonstrated that issues of poverty, climate destabilization, petrochemical poisons, and the vulnerabilities of an oil–based economy were life and death issues that affect us all (p. 22). To Jones, Katrina and its aftermath illustrated two crises that we presently face in the United States: radical socioeconomic inequality and rampant environmental destruction (p. 24). With his emphasis on a “Green Collar Economy,” Jones sought a social uplift strategy based on three elements: “Green jobs, not jails; a politics anchored in a Green Growth Alliance for this century; and a moral framework based on reverence for each other and the planet” (p. 104).

**Green Jobs**

Jones (2008) argues that green jobs such as “Eco–retrofitting,” for example, will not only make buildings healthier, but also will provide jobs and learning opportunities that cannot be outsourced, and that will simultaneously reduce our emissions and our reliance on foreign oil (p. 119). He defines “Green-collar jobs” in the following way:

Blue-collar employment that has been upgraded to better respect the environment; family-supporting, career-track, vocational, or trade-level employment in environmentally-friendly fields; electricians who install solar panels; plumbers who install solar water heaters; farmers engaged in organic agriculture and some bio-fuel production; and construction workers who build energy-efficient green building, wind power farms, solar farms, and wave energy farms. (n.p.)
In addition to Jones’ (2008) advocacy of green-collar jobs, two environmentalists, Daniels & Daniels (1999), argued that in order to bring about sustainable development, green-collar jobs must embrace the following sustainable development principles:

The creation and maintenance of healthy environments, featuring clean air and water; the conservation of energy, soils, and water supplies; the reduction, reuse, and recycling of waste; the requirement for polluters to pay for cleaning up the pollution they create; the clean-up of brownfield [public toxic] sites; an emphasis on the reuse of existing buildings and infill development rather than building on open greenfields [open space in which there is no development] in the outer suburbs; the promotion of mass transit and compact, transit-oriented development; the construction of mixed-use commercial and residential development that includes public parks and emphasizes walking and biking; the practice of environmental justice in the siting of controversial land uses; the designation of compact growth areas that have services available to support development; the separation of developing areas from sensitive natural areas to avoid natural hazards and to protect wilderness areas and wildlife habitats; the creation of greenways – linear paths and corridors – to connect cities and towns to the countryside and to each other; and the protection of productive farming and forestry regions. (p. 4)

Research (Landry, 2008) suggests that cities that do not address these kinds of sustainability issues will find it increasingly difficult to remain stable and competitive in the future. According to Charles Landry, author of The Creative City: A Toolkit for Urban Innovators, the populations of contemporary cities are demanding greater responsibility for the health of the world, and the mobile talented workforce that cities need do not want to be
associated with places that pollute the planet (p. xix). Consequently, the cities and communities of the future need to be re-imagined. A city that encourages people to work with their imagination goes well beyond the urban engineering paradigm in city–making.

In Landry’s (2008) view, re-imagining requires, instead, a combination of both hard and soft infrastructures. Soft infrastructure includes paying attention to how people meet, exchange ideas, and network. Hard infrastructure includes the design of roads, housing developments, office buildings, and schools. Sustainable cities of the future will have to promote what Landry refers to as “third spaces,” which are neither home nor work spaces. Third spaces might be a café or a school and are likely to be a combination of quiet places and more stimulating ones within a setting that is scenic and where great attention is paid to aesthetics. They may also be technologically advanced spaces with public wireless zones where people can work and communicate as they move about (pp. xxii – xxiii).

Those responsible for planning these kinds of spaces within cities will also have to think about how to create healthy atmospheres. They will have to be aware of the negative psychological effects of what Landry (2008) called ugly or “soulless” buildings and how this might reduce people’s capacity to work well. They will have to acknowledge how important it is to show sensitivity to cultural differences and they will have to be able to balance being what Landry calls “globally oriented and locally authentic” (p. xxiii).

All of these tasks will encourage the artistic and intellectual imaginations of people to think about how cities are to be put together and organized. In Landry’s (2008) words, “Creativity is not only about having ideas, but also about making them happen” (p. xxiii). This means that a large formal and informal intellectual infrastructure will have to be developed. The
question from the perspective of education policy is what role should schools play in the
cultivation of that artistic and intellectual infrastructure?

**Green Growth Alliance**

With Jones’ (2008) proposal of an electoral New Deal coalition – the Green Growth Alliance – he imagined a broad, coalitional effort created among the different sectors of civil society and the business community whose aim would be to win government policy that promotes the interests of green capital and green technology (p. 84). He explains,

A Green Growth Alliance would be a broad, coalitional effort-fusing wise, compassionate force in civil society with the enlightened self-interest of the rising green business community. Its aim would be to put the government on the side of the people and the planet. The goal would be straightforward: to win government policy that promotes the interests of green capital and green technology over the interests of gray capital (extractive industries, fossil-fuel companies) in a way that spreads the benefits as widely as possible. The idea would be to resolve the economic, ecological, and social crises on terms that maximally favor both green capital and ordinary people. (p. 84)

In essence, Jones (2008) argues that the federal government could be a better partner to civic leaders, to community groups, and to schools in the following ways: by helping to finance cost–saving weatherization and solarization projects for homes in low–income communities; by reinvesting in science and math programs in public schools; by supporting vocational and
technical training in the green trades; and by shifting money from the incarceration industry to the green economy.\textsuperscript{106}

**Green Moral Framework**

Since its inception, the United States environmental movement has been segregated by race with mainstream environmentalists on one side and the environmental justice activists on the other. In discussing a moral framework based on reverence for each other and the planet, Jones (2008) begins by outlining three waves of environmentalism.

The first wave Jones (2008) identified was the conservation wave. This wave was represented by early Native American communities and spanned into the late 1800s and early 1900s. It was narrated by American writers such as Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, George Perkins Marsh, and John Muir.\textsuperscript{107}

The second wave was the regulation wave. This wave was launched by Rachel Carson’s (1962) book, *Silent Spring*. The outcry that followed its publication in 1962 forced the banning of the insecticide – dichlorodiphenyltrichloroethane (DDT) – and spurred revolutionary changes in U.S. laws affecting air, land, and water quality.\textsuperscript{108}

\textsuperscript{106} Some of the precedents for government support of paradigm shifts and massive world–changing projects include the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) under FDR; the Apollo Project under JFK; and Detroit during World War II. Additionally, the Clean Energy Corps (CEC) was designed to train and employ citizens, and the Civic Justice Corps (CJC) was formed to provide the vast numbers of people returning from prison with a path to living–wage green jobs and careers (model developed by San Francisco State University professor, Raquel Pinderhughes) (Jones, 2008, pp. 148-153).

\textsuperscript{107} Two wings of the conservation movement in the 20th Century emerged: pragmatic conservation symbolized by Gifford Pinchot, a close adviser to President Theodore Roosevelt, and the preservationists represented by Sierra Club founder, John Muir (Jones, 2008).

\textsuperscript{108} Legislation passed during this era included the Clean Air Act (1963); the Air Quality Act (1967); Federal Water Pollution Control Amendments (1972); Environmental Impact Statements required by the National Environmental Policy Act (1970); and the Endangered Species Act (1973). In 1970, President Nixon formed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) (Jones, 2008, p. 46).
The third wave of environmentalism is the green wave. This wave is grounded in the dynamics and logic of creativity and ecology. It is this wave, Jones (2008) argues, which must be grounded on a moral framework based on reverence for each other and the planet:

The traditional environmental movement has wisely impressed upon the public at large the value of nonhuman life and the natural world . . . Those of us who labor to build the green-collar economy should affirm that insight and echo that conviction. And we should take it one step farther . . . In the United States, especially, we have strayed far from these truths. The following facts are worth repeating. We represent only 4 percent of the world’s population, but we are responsible for 25 percent of the world’s greenhouse gases. And we now jail more than 25 percent of the world’s prisoners. In other words, one out of every four carbon molecules superheating the atmosphere has our name on it, and one out of every four people locked up anywhere in the world is locked up in a U.S. jail or prison. Some say that number is closer to 50 percent. This is a disturbing testament to a profound moral failing; we are functioning as if we have a disposable planet – and disposable people. (p. 74)

In Jones’ (2008) view, the transition to a green collar economy that is inclusive must be supported by a political movement that aims to do three things: create a “Green New Deal” in the United States and other industrialized nations; forge a “Green Growth Alliance” to unite the best business practices, labor policies, social justice advocates, youth leaders, people of faith, and environmentalists (while paying special attention to the challenges of working across divisions of race, gender, and class); and advance a positive, solutions-oriented, and moral “politics of hope” (p. 79).
“Yet principles alone do not generate successful movements,” exclaims Jones (2008); “movements for political and social change,” he continues, “also need a strategy – with long-term goals, enduring coalitions, and an effective mode of operating” (p. 79). Jones is right. Movements for political and social change do need a strategy to endure yet he under theorizes the role that schools can play to help usher in a strategy. While he does include students as one of the five main partners who should make up the Green Growth Alliance, he does not detail the role that schools should play in teaching students how to think critically about the green collar economy.

What Jones (2008) does say about student involvement, however, does allude to the endless potential students possess to initiate environmental change. His statement is worth repeating because it reveals the unlimited energy just waiting to be tapped into and unleashed by schools:

Student’s energy and enthusiasm have already turned up the heat in the movement to prevent catastrophic climate change. Just a year ago, it was considered outlandish for anyone to call for an aggressive target like an 80 percent reduction in carbon emissions by the year 2050. But student-centered efforts like Step It Up, Focus the Nation, and the Energy Action Coalition have already made “80 by 50” a mainstream demand – accepted by presidential candidates and even energy-company CEOs. As more racially diverse groups like the League of Young Voters, the Hip Hop Caucus, the Environmental Justice and Climate Change Initiative, and Young People For (YP4) join the movement, the sky is the limit for the next generation’s leadership role. (p. 88)
Next, I look at specific ways that schools are helping to usher in a green collar economy. How fitting is it that one of the best models in K-12 education leading the way to a green collar economy emanates from the nation’s capital of activism? In Berkeley, California, one vegetable garden at Martin Luther King Jr. Middle School has given rise to the idea of having a garden on every schoolyard in Berkeley. According to educator, Dave Sobel (2005), this idea evolved into the dream of having a garden on every schoolyard in California (p. 3).

Alice Waters (2008), owner of Chez Panisse Restaurant in Berkeley, is also the founder of the Edible Schoolyard project, an organization that works with K-12 schools to support academic learning by creating gardens on elementary, middle school, and high school campuses. Waters worked directly with the faculty and administration at Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School in Berkeley to transform their vacant asphalt lot into an edible schoolyard. This is what she had to say about school gardens:

Imagine taking over school lunch and teaching it as if it were an academic subject . . .

When they grow it, and when they cook it, they all eat it. We’re engaging them in the process of cooking and serving food. And that’s what gives them the investment, and that’s what begins to change their eating habits. They love setting the table, they love washing the dishes. They like being part of this kind of feeling of family. (Kalafa, 2007)

Waters (2008) restaurant is located near Martin Luther King, Jr. Middle School. With her menu that serves tasty seasonal and local dishes and her work with students in the gardens at the middle school, Waters is a living example of what educational theorist Etienne Wenger (1998) calls “educational imagination.” Educational imagination, says Wenger, is not about accepting things the way they are, but about experimenting and exploring possibilities, reinventing the self,
and in the process reinventing the world. “It is daring to try on something really different, to open new trajectories, to seek different experiences, and to conceive of different futures” (p. 273).

In Wenger’s (1998) view, educational imagination is about identity as creation. It is about entering the realm of magic and allowing oneself to dream. It is about transforming mundane school lunchrooms into quaint cafés oozing with the refreshing smell of blackberry and ginger teas; it is about transforming dilapidated school buildings into ecologically designed cottages that hover over courtyards smothered with gardens, olive groves, and apple orchards. Poetically, it is about seeing what cannot be seen and doing what cannot be done and doing it well.

**How Schools are helping to usher in a Green Collar Economy**

Before going into specific examples of how schools today are helping to usher in a green collar economy, I want to briefly discuss the concept of “Schooling for sustainability” in two ways: first, I want to look at the philosophy of schooling for sustainability and then the practice of schooling for sustainability.

**The Philosophy of Schooling for Sustainability**

The concept of “ecological literacy” (Orr, 1002) that I have been using throughout the text to describe the vocational component of holistic educational thought is guided by a philosophy known as “Schooling for Sustainability” (Stone, 2009). Schooling for sustainability is based on the ideal of sustainable development.\(^{109}\) Sustainability entered the national

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\(^{109}\) The term “sustainable development” has become popular in recent years because it implies that the production and consumption of goods and services and the building of houses, offices, factories, and stores can be done without harming the natural environment (Daniels & Daniels, 1999, p. 3).

The U.N. report offers the following definition of sustainable development: “Sustainable development is development that meets the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (as cited in Stone, 2009, p. 6). The report also states that sustainable development contains two key concepts: the concept of needs, in particular the essential needs of the world’s poor, and the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment’s ability to meet present and future needs (as cited in Stone, p. 6).

The 1992 U.N. Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro added another consideration to sustainable development. It asserted that each nation or cultural group must develop its own vision of sustainable living. This is a premise that guides much of today’s education work known as “Schooling for Sustainability” (Stone, 2009, p. 7). Schooling for sustainability is an approach to education that connects students with the natural world and human communities through project based learning. According to Stone, through project based learning, students “discover that they can make a difference, which lays a foundation for responsible, active citizenship” (p. 13).

**Active citizenship.** For a number of educators, the essence of schooling for sustainability is to promote active civic engagement. While many schools require student involvement in service learning or volunteer projects beyond the campus, active civic engagement goes beyond
typical service learning projects in that its attention is not only directed to community-wide needs, but also to citizen involvement in addressing public concerns (Stone, 2009, p. 112).

Active citizenship was also discussed by Daniels & Daniels (1999). In their opinion, an educated public must be active citizens who plan efforts to elect and/or lobby politicians to make needed changes. They argue that education programs must focus on increasing public awareness about the value of the environment, the pros and cons of development, and public actions that can improve environmental quality (p. 4).

Stone (2009) shows that “Schooling for sustainability” takes place in schools that use the woods outside their classrooms as their playgrounds and laboratories; on campuses set on inner city asphalt lots; and in schools dropped into the middle of suburban housing tracts. It takes place in schools with innovative lunch programs served in aging buildings and in schools with brand new facilities and no lunch service programs at all. Schooling for sustainability projects have been initiated by superintendents and heads of school; by individual faculty members; by students; and by handfuls of parents (Stone, p. 5). Schooling for sustainability draws on years of natural research and development to make teaching and learning more meaningful, and to create a more hopeful and beautiful future for local communities (p. 2).

Below, I showcase teachers and principals in schools, administrators in school districts, and individuals in local communities who are using imagination, intellect, and creativity to achieve beautiful and sustainable communities. Examples include year-round gardens (in even the coldest climates), Farm–to–school programs, and literacy for environmental justice projects, all of which are leading to active civic engagement among students (Stone, 2009, p. 21).
The Practice of Schooling for Sustainability

Leadership in the Oakland unified school district (OUSD). The Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) serves 38,000 students at 101 schools. Seventy percent of the students are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch (Henry, 2012, June 15). Although it was reported (Barlow & Stone, 2011) that Oakland was California’s most improved large urban school district as measured by recent test scores, many challenges still remain. For example, disparities along lines of race and family income are pronounced; however, one promising sign is from OUSD superintendent, Tony Smith, who assumed his position in 2009, and believes that improving school food is one key way to confront these disparities:

School food reform is not separate from school reform; it’s part of the basic work we have to do in order to correct systemic injustice, pursue equity, and give our children the best future possible . . . We are committed to building a school district that provides quality education and equitable outcomes for all children—and to make this goal a reality, we have to create conditions that allow children to grow and to learn at high levels. This starts with taking care of our students’ most basic needs, such as nutrition, so they can develop and reach their full potential. (cited in Barlow & Stone, 2011, p. 14)

The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL), a web based think tank based in northern California, helps schools implement schooling for sustainability practices. The CEL recently released a detailed feasibility study that if implemented, would amount to a massive makeover for the OUSD school food program. The feasibility study includes recommendations for a newly outfitted “green” central commissary with a 1.5-acre edible farm in West Oakland; refurbished
kitchens; and the development of 14 school-based community kitchens placed throughout the school district. (Henry, 2012, June 15).

It was reported by *Berkeleyside* reporter, Sarah Henry (2012, June 15), that a key factor contributing to the success that the OUSD has had so far is a result of superintendent Tony Smith’s commitment to innovation and equity: “Other school districts say that they cannot afford to concentrate on school meals because their attention and resources are focused on closing their achievement gap. Yet in Oakland, they have recognized that the quality of school meals is an integral dimension of closing that gap.”

**A garden at Cleveland elementary school.** When Mary Schriner was asked by the Principal at Cleveland Elementary School during an interview, “Why do you want to work here?” Schriner, who was applying for a position as a special education teacher, responded by saying, “Because your school looks like a prison yard, and I’d like to change that” (Barlow & Stone, 2011, p. 14).

Today, Cleveland has six gardens that serve as “Living Libraries”; an ecoliteracy program in which all students participate; community support and recognition; and student research projects that contribute to the district’s food program (Barlow & Stone, 2011, p. 14). The garden program at Cleveland Elementary School is a result of observations made by Shriner that led to a gradual effort on her part to get the school to “think differently.” As Barlow & Stone noted,

Schriner began at Cleveland by just sitting and observing the land, the dead zones on campus, children’s faces, the way people moved across the grounds and interacted. She noted a neglected weed-ridden hillside and a class of special education students with a
reputation for expressing misguided anger over not having a permanent teacher. I felt a strong urge [said Shriner] to connect these two seemingly unpromising places and draw out the life I knew was hidden beneath the surface. (p. 15)

The purpose of the garden at Cleveland was not so much about the cultivation of plants as it was about the cultivation of relationships. When Sarah Stephens, a Parent Teacher Association (PTA) leader and children’s book author learned that the district was planning a “modernization” project that would have obliterated much of the garden, she helped organize the PTA’s response. Because parents loved the garden, they were immediately able to rally behind Stephens’ response. “I was trying to help people realize that it was a community garden,” said Stephens. “It was the moment that we saved it from the construction that it just became a community,” added Schriner (cited in Barlow & Stone, 2011, p. 17).

Schriner garnered support from local businesses and organizations for the garden and was able to get vegetables from a local company, Kassenhoff Growers, soil from Hammond Construction, tools and advice from the Temescal Tool Lending Library, and gardening lessons from the University of California (UC) Cooperative Extension (Barlow & Stone, 2011, p. 17). In 2009, after attending a Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL) seminar, Stephens and Schriner proposed a Cleveland Ecoliteracy Program. They envisioned an “ecoliteracy under our feet” project, which would allow students to experience ecological concepts while at play (pp. 17-18).

They wanted to bring every class at Cleveland to the garden for a session every other week with Stephens. With the support of the Cleveland principal, they presented their proposal to the Cleveland faculty, who supported it overwhelmingly (Barlow & Stone, 2011, pp. 17-18). Today, the program covers 50 percent of students’ science instruction and uses the school
gardens as “Living Libraries” to teach students ecological principles, processes and patterns such as how to analyze and evaluate human impacts on the web of life, and environmentally sound ways to support sustainable living practices (p. 20).

**Greening the Lawrenceville School.** From 2004 to 2005, the Lawrenceville School in Colorado sponsored a series of conversations about natural resource stewardship. Out of that conversation emerged the *Green Campus Initiative*, a campus-wide initiative to promote ecological literacy, sustainability education, and attention to campus energy, materials, land, and water use. The Lawrenceville *Green Campus Initiative* seeks to “take a holistic approach to campus sustainability” (Lawrenceville School, 2013, n.p.). In 2005, Lawrenceville hosted a forum called “Greening Lawrence Township” for the entire Lawrence Township community. Out of that meeting emerged a Mayor’s Task Force on sustainability, *Sustainable Lawrence*, which was a collaboration of citizens, municipal officials, businesses, nonprofits, and faith groups striving to create an “eco – municipality” (Stone, 2009, p. 143).

Stone (2009) described the relationship between the Lawrenceville School and the surrounding community as symbiotic. The school contributes knowledge, resources, and facilities; faculty and board members serve on the *Sustainable Lawrence* board while local residents set the program’s goals. As a result, students learn firsthand how sustainability ideals translate into a “community of practice” (Wenger, 1998).

**River crossing environmental charter school.** In 2001, Victoria Rydberg applied for a teaching job at River Crossing Environmental Charter School. The idea for River Crossing, a new school in Portage, Wisconsin, about 40 miles north of Madison, came from an administrator

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who hoped that using the environment as a learning context would help middle school students become more interested in learning and more successful at taking standardized tests (Stone, 2009, p. 160).

Eighteen students enrolled in the program, which was housed in a two room trailer erected behind a public school. Victoria Rydberg, who was the only teacher, had a mandate to teach everything through an environmental framework. Students were taught through a curriculum that helped with prairie restoration, brush removal, forestry preservation, and mapping projects in their local communities (Stone, 2009, p. 162). In 1998, the State Education and Environment Roundtable (SEER), a cooperative endeavor of sixteen state departments of education, issued a report that concluded, “Students learn more effectively within an environment-based context than within a traditional educational framework” (cited in Stone, pp. 162–163).

The report also found that using an environmental context to teach students significantly improved student performance in reading, writing, math, science, and social studies, and enriched the overall school experience (Stone, 2009, p. 163). These findings were reaffirmed in a 2005 SEER report, which stated, “These engaging programs appear to better connect students to their learning by allowing them to take a more active role in their studies” (cited in Stone, p. 163).

**Gadsden county school district.** When Gadsden County School District four Director, J’Amy Peterson, decided to introduce fresh produce into school meals and to support local

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111 “It’s important to teach kids two plus two and history and social studies,” writes Stone (2009), “but if we don’t teach them how that applies to living on the planet and the alignment with the systems that support us, we’re not doing our job” (p. 77).
farmers in Tallahassee, Florida, the New North Florida Cooperative (NNFC) provided her with a solution to both of her goals. Initiated by a group of black farmers, the New North Florida Cooperative (NNFC) provides income to farmers and delivers fresh produce to over a million students in more than 70 districts in Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, and Arkansas (Stone, 2009, p. 38).

As a result of the relationship between the NNFC and the local school district, it was reported by Stone (2009) that student nutrition improved, health and nutrition education programs were established, and local farmers were supported. Most important, students learned to appreciate nutritious food and the “rich web of interdependence connecting them to farmers” (p. 41).

**Davis school district.** When members of the Davis school district approached the Alameda County Waste Disposal Authority about implementing a school recycling program, the relationship that was established led to a grant that launched RISE, a local school recycling organization (Stone, 2009, p. 137). RISE stands for Recycling Is Simply Elementary. The program provides materials and workshops to help teachers make curricular connections to recycling. One unique feature of the program is that it requires collaboration with school custodians (p. 137).

After four years, the Davis school district began to see the value of these collaborations and began to pay for custodians’ time in order to convene meetings between the school district and the custodians. According to Stone (2009), this was the first time that the district actually met with all of its custodians (p. 137). RISE saved the district money by cutting elementary school waste in half. As a result, the district agreed to fund the program by remitting half of the
money it saved. The program now pays for itself while generating additional income for the district’s general fund.

Another sign of its success was seen when elementary school students who participated in RISE graduated to a middle school with no recycling program. When told that the school had no program, the students started one. Voters were so impressed with RISE and other efforts to connect local schools to sustainable development that in 2007, they voted overwhelmingly to tax themselves to provide more fresh fruits and vegetables for school meals. According to Stone (2009), it was the first district in the country known to have taken that step. “This victory,” he remarked, “the result of eight years of efforts by parent activists, illustrates the value of building community support for change in schools” (p. 134).

**Shelburne farms.** In 2000, Shelburne Farms helped to organize forums around the state of Vermont to discuss the gaps in state educational standards to prepare students for the twenty-first century. These forums resulted in Vermont becoming the first state to incorporate sustainability and the understanding of “place-based knowledge” into its standards (Stone, 2009, p. 122).

Located seven miles south of Burlington on the shores of Lake Champlain, Shelburne Farms is a 1,400 acre working farm, a National Historic Landmark, and a national leader in schooling for sustainability. Income from farm operations, catalog sales, and an inn and restaurant in historic buildings on the site are all recycled back into education programs (Stone, 2009, p. 124). The education programs are rooted in the practice of grazing cows, crafting cheese, tapping maples, sawing lumber, and planting seeds. The rationale for linking education
to these practices is that students need to know their own place before they can make the leap to thinking globally (p. 124).

**Colleen Cowell.** Colleen Cowell, a fourth and fifth grade teacher at Champlain Elementary School, a school that is located on a suburban fringe of Burlington, Vermont, attended one of Shelburne’s workshops on teaching sustainability. She was so inspired by the emphasis on community based knowledge that she decided to take it a step farther (Stone, 2009, p. 125). With strong support from Principal, Nancy Zahnhiser, Cowell launched a sustainable farm to school project in collaboration with Shelburne Farms. Three years later, the project migrated to inner-city Lawrence Barnes Elementary School.

After Lawrence Barnes Elementary School joined the Sustainable Schools Project, reading scores among its students rose 2 percent and math scores rose 18 percent (Stone, 2009, p. 127). According to Cowell, the rise in test scores was the result of two things: parents became more involved and residents began to take pride in the neighborhood and began to see the school as a resource within the community. In 2008, Lawrence Barnes Elementary School, a school that parents once shunned, was chosen as an Academy for Sustainability for the whole district (p. 127).

**Literacy for environmental justice.** Often, schools with the most severe health problems are located in the poorest neighborhoods, making schooling for sustainability a matter of environmental justice. In the United States alone, millions of children under the age of eighteen have been diagnosed with asthma and children between the ages of five and seventeen miss countless days of school a year as a result of asthma related problems (Stone, 2009, p. 66).
**Dana Lanza.** When Dana Lanza (2005), a graduate student in 1997, moved into low-income housing adjacent to the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard, a federal Superfund site\textsuperscript{112} located in San Francisco, CA, she was not aware of the potential hazards. “I was given no disclaimer and signed no waiver,” said Lanza; “there were no warning signs posted around the site” (p. 214). After talking to her neighbors, she found that they had a “hyperawareness” of environmental concerns because they were forced to confront the consequences of poor environmental management on a daily basis (p. 226). As she explained,

\[\ldots\] Bayview Hunters Point is one of the Bay Area’s most polluted places, with heavy industry, 325 toxic sites, two Superfund sites, and two aging power plants. One of the city’s most diverse communities, it is also one of the poorest. Ninety percent of area residents are people of color. More than 50 percent of area households are considered low or very low-income. Many of the thirty thousand Bayview residents, a third of whom are children, suffer from high rates of cancer and asthma – a possible consequence of the noxious air. (p. 216)

A systemic look at Bayview Hunters Point reveals what Lanza (2005) described as the “clear interrelationship between health, environmental degradation, racism, and economics” (p. 217) Home to 5 percent of San Francisco’s population, Bayview Hunters Point contains 30 percent of the city’s hazardous waste sites (p. 217). “The juxtaposition of odious industry and the homes of people of color,” writes Lanza, “was not the intention of a single polluting corporation,

\textsuperscript{112} “A highly toxic hazardous waste site identified by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act as being in need of clean-up” (Daniels & Daniels, 1999, p. 463).
but required the combined participation of city planners, financiers, developers, and even the federal government through its public housing programs (p. 217).

As Lanza (2005) learned more about environmental justice issues and became more sensitized to the concerns of Bayview Hunters Point residents, she began to see “a disconnect” between mainstream environmentalism and the environmental justice movement. As she explained,

When I sought an environmental group to speak to neighborhood kids about the Superfund site, or the other 325 toxic sites in our district, I found no one. Environmental justice advocates were focused on policy change or resistance; the mainstream environmental groups were promoting planting trees and getting kids into contact with the natural world. No one was ready or willing to explain to ten-year olds the dangers on the other side of our fence. (p. 215)

Frustrated, Lanza (2005) began volunteering with the summer latchkey program at the local recreation center and began exploring the neighborhood with a small group of four to nine year olds. As she said, “I came to see young people – often the last to be included in community initiatives, but the first to be blamed for neighborhood problems – as an untapped community resource brimming with energy and indigenous knowledge” (p. 215).

As a result of her time spent with children from the local neighborhood, Lanza (2005) began to develop a vision for the program that later became Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ). She took photographs of the neighborhood, took slide shows into some of the local schools to show people the problems in their neighborhood – and they listened. In 1998, Lanza received seed money and office space from a neighborhood organization, the Southeast Alliance
for Environmental Justice (SAEJ), and Literacy for Environmental Justice (LEJ) was born. LEJ became the first explicitly environmental justice – environmental education program in San Francisco’s schools, and one of the nation’s few environmental justice groups that focused primarily on developing youth leadership (p. 217).

“Our mission,” writes Lanza (2005) “is to foster the principles of urban sustainability and environmental justice in order to promote the long-term health of the communities of southeast San Francisco” (p. 218). By engaging local students in local environmental issues that affect their lives and by designing empowering, locally-based educational programs, LEJ helps promote civic activism (p. 218). LEJ provides nature-based programming for children in kindergarten through sixth grade, while adding environmental health, history, and justice for grades seven and up. These programs utilize a project based learning model that incorporates lessons designed with the participation of teachers and students.

LEJ staff members also help teachers connect state-mandated curriculum goals to local environmental health and justice issues. Several of the projects have had immediate impacts. A program for Phoenix Academy, a dropout prevention program within the San Francisco school district, is one example. When one of the teachers at Phoenix Academy wanted to engage students in writing exercises that focused on environmental health concerns in the Bayview Hunters Point Shipyard, students began to brainstorm about what they knew about the shipyard. As a result, the students decided to write the Navy officer in charge of the shipyard clean-up.

The teacher at Phoenix Academy told Lanza (2005), “None of us thought that he would come” (p. 221). To their surprise, he did come. To prepare for the meeting, students practiced their oral statements. They wanted to convince the Navy to place hazardous warning signs in
multiple languages on the shipyard fencing, which had been a long standing community request. When the naval officer came, he met with the students for two hours. He responded to their questions and heard their demands, and within a month following the meeting, the warning signs requested by the students were posted (Lanza, 2005, p. 221).

This is just one example of many that shows the success that LEJ has achieved in the local community. LEJ counselors put their interns through a fairly rigorous selection and training process. They ask that interns extend themselves to the community through public speaking, writing, and workshop facilitation. They look to foster other talents as well, such as art and graphic design. Since many of the projects that LEJ interns engage in are technical in nature, Lanza (2005) notes,

... interns must be prepared to focus on “what can feel to young minds like minutiae, yet for the most part we find that they become extremely dedicated to the environmental justice cause, demonstrating heartfelt advocacy and a precocious sensitivity to threats to the environment or their community. (p. 223)

**LEJ’s youth envision program (YEP).** The Youth Envision Program (YEP) is a component of LEJ that annually trains and employs seven to ten young people as community food security advocates. Given the prevalence of toxic waste sites in Bayview Hunters Point, environmental health, particularly nutrition, is a top neighborhood concern (Lanza, 2005, p. 224). According to LEJ student intern, Jessica Marshall, “It takes an average of an hour to get to a grocery store that has fresh meat or fresh produce. And it takes an average of three buses to get to any grocery store, period” (cited in Lanza, p. 224).
LEJ believes that if people living in a toxic environment like Bayview Hunters Point have access to a nutritious diet, their bodies might be able to fight against debilitating illnesses. Studies conducted by LEJ Youth Envision Program interns have documented that less than 5 percent of the products sold in the community are fresh produce or meat items. Twenty-six percent are alcohol and cigarette products. LEJ student intern, Jasmine Marshall, explained the significance of these findings:

When you walk into one of the corner stores on Third Street, you’ll see plenty of tobacco and alcohol advertisements everywhere, in front of the door, inside the store, behind the counter, in your face, on back of some chips, you never know. There’s no produce, nothing healthy. A tear would drop from your eye if you’ve ever seen a real store in a nice community. But when they were thinking about stores in Bayview Hunters Point, I guess they just said, Give them all tobacco. That’s all they need. Some smokes and some drink . . . and some crackers and some chips, maybe. But we need healthy food. We need fruits and vegetables just like anybody else. (pp. 224-225)

One woman, a seventy-six year old local resident told Lanza (2005), “My dream is to see all the houses in Hunters Point remodeled to have a little steeple on the roof with a windmill inside it. That way we can have green energy in this community, close the awful power plant, and end the asthma problems” (p. 226).

**General Discussion**

According to education philosopher, Michael Peters (2008), the ways in which the green collar economy can transform industrial processes from damaging processes into life enhancing sustainable practices that utilize renewable energy forms is the long term future of the market
economy and a reasonable model for education policy, and for the rest of the world (personal communication). Given this picture, the best way that education can contribute to sustainable development is to implement policies that incorporate sustainable development. As an aspect of holistic educational thought, sustainable development attempts to understand the whole child in all of his or her dimensions, including his or her whole environment (Peters, personal communication).

The relationship between holistic educational thought and schooling for sustainability is fairly obvious. It is not just about the physical projects that schools implement to promote ecological literacy (sustainable development), but about a mindset that students need in order to sustain these projects. As complements to an academic curriculum, physical projects help to manage the complexity of sustainable development. It is as David Orr (2008) reminds us when he says, “It is difficult to say how we might best deal with global climate change, for example, but not nearly so difficult to improve energy efficiency in a single building or dormitory”:

For example, there is not much sense in trying to eliminate cancer – causing or endocrine – disrupting chemicals from building materials while teaching students the kind of promiscuous chemistry that created ozone holes and toxic waste dumps, and put some several hundred organo – chlorine chemicals in their bodies. There is little logic in offering classes on the geophysics of climatic change, or ethics for that matter, in inefficient buildings that contribute to those problems. It makes no sense to talk about paying the full costs of what we do while the economics department is mired deep in the bowels of a paradigm that celebrates growth, greed, and consumption on a finite planet. (pp. 162, 212)
Orr (2008) is right. Schools have an obligation to adhere to the theoretical principles of sustainable development that they teach, and to supplement those principles with policies that equip students to power local communities by sunlight; to reduce the amount of hazardous materials, water use, and land use per capita; to grow healthy food and fiber sustainably; to disinvest the concept of waste; to preserve biological diversity; to restore ecologies ruined in the past century; to rethink the political basis of modern society; to develop economies that can be sustained within the limits of nature; and to distribute wealth fairly within and between generations (Orr, 1999, p. 235).

Well before students get to college, sustainable development practices can be introduced in K-12 schools, and sustained by principles that have to do with the restoration of creativity, art, and beauty. What the architects of the ancient Pyramids in Egypt and the Gothic cathedrals in Europe understood was that by joining engineering techniques to something beyond the intellect – to the notion that humans might create spaces of light and majesty – the actual presence of beauty could be invited in to remain forever (Orr, 1999, p. 236).

It is that kind of perception about space and time that is important for students to experience. It is not about restoring a watershed or planting a garden for the sake of dealing with isolated problems such as poor water quality or poor nutrition alone that is the purpose of sustainable development, but about learning that beauty and health are inextricably linked. From the perspectives of holistic educational thought and sustainable development, that is primary to why nature is worth preserving for future generations.
Concluding Remarks

In the introduction to a series of essays entitled Toward the Recovery of Wholeness: Knowledge, Education, and Human Values, Douglas Sloan (1984) asked, “How important to the development of insight is the existence for children of an aesthetic, warm, and calm architectural and natural learning environment?” (p. 5). This question is of great importance to education yet it is a question that has been neglected in recent times.

The place of “the image in education,” according to Abbs (1984), is something that educators must work to restore. The power of the “living image” and our ability to confer on it a high epistemological status is one of the key ways in which we symbolize and thus come to know the world (p. 103). In order to do this, Abbs focused on what he called the “metaphoric exuberance of architecture” (p. 104). As he explained,

When we look at the metaphoric exuberance of an Indian temple or a Gothic cathedral and we consider our own bleak award–winning architecture, with its glass, steel, and concrete blocks, we cannot but be aware of the nature of our loss, for without a rich plurality of images and icons we cannot easily locate those inward states of being that the symbols are outer representations of. (p. 104)

Abbs (1984) argued that an environment functional in architectural design tended to make humanity functional in nature. As a result, our inward life, being unrepresented, becomes difficult to grasp (p. 104). In a sterile environment we become less than who we are. “If a house is only ‘a machine for living in’ (Corbusier),” wrote Abbs, “the danger is that the inhabitants of that house become automatons” (p. 104).
Although Abbs (1984) did not make many references to schools, he did mention, “The implications of my argument for teaching and learning are many and of the utmost consequence” (p. 103). Abbs’ point was made clear by architect, Paul Goldberger (2009) in Why Architecture Matters when he wrote that architecture begins to matter when it goes beyond protecting us from the elements and reaches “at least a little bit beyond the practical” (n.p.).

In the introductory chapter of this study, I said that one of the issues that I continue to struggle with is how to articulate a vision of education that incorporates an aesthetic sense of beauty as a well as a thoughtful and creative sense of practicality. I said that I do not want to neglect practicality, nor do I want to sacrifice beauty in an effort to articulate a condition of practicality. Rather, I am looking for synthesis between both conditions. In working through this struggle, I realize that the physical design of a building can give rise to the spontaneous imagery of the unconscious mind – imagery that is unmediated by intellect yet inspired by it. “If it is seen purely as a practical pursuit,” wrote Goldberger (2009), “it will never really be grasped” (p. xv).

And yet what must be grasped has such profound implications for education that it cannot be neglected. And that is that every building begins to teach before a visitor ever walks into it. In Michael Stone’s (2009) words, a school is perhaps “the most visible symbol of the schools relationship with the natural environment” (p. 61). That is why it is important that policies in education focus on the physical design of school buildings and how it contributes to the internal and external lives of students, teachers, and the local community.

In order to discuss the relationship between holistic educational thought and sustainable development with integrity, I think it is entirely appropriate to see the school building as a site for practice; as a “Living Curriculum”; for again, as Orr (2008) reminds,
Buildings influence our moods and psychology, our conversations and silences, our sense of place and history. They isolate or join and connect or disconnect us to time and history, seasons and nature. They celebrate the natural world of sunlight, wood, stone, and water, or they desecrate. By their ongoing requirements for energy and materials, they can create wider circles of damage. With better design and more care, could they lead to regeneration? Whether we choose to design with nature or not will come down to a profoundly simple matter of whether we love deeply enough, artfully enough, carefully enough to preserve life and the web on which all life depends. (pp. 6-7, p. 39)

Schooling for sustainability is simply “an informed love applied to the dialogue between humankind and natural systems” (Orr, 2008, p. 39). Holistic educational thought is designed to complement that dialogue. The intent is to help students see what artists see. As he walked through the Egyptian Room of the University Museum at the University of Pennsylvania, Jazz musician, Sun Ra, saw more than just stone. “The stones are speaking though vibrations of beauty,” he said; “vibrations of discipline, vibrations of precision. Yes the stones speak to the people of planet Earth” (Mugge, 1980).
CHAPTER 6
LIFELONG OPTIMAL LEARNING

In this chapter, I discuss the principle of lifelong optimal learning. While the previous two chapters, starting with competitive eligibility and then ecological literacy, dealt with the principles of holistic educational thought that correspond to the head and the hands, this chapter deals with the principle that corresponds to the heart. The heart is where meaning is given to the intellectual and ecological tasks performed by the head and the hands.

Examples of the importance of the heart are found in two movies – *The Celestine Prophecy* and *Dead Poets Society*. In *The Celestine Prophecy*, John Woodson, a recently fired middle school teacher, goes to Peru and meets a spiritual guide who challenges him to imagine that heaven and earth are the same place: “I’m talking about seeing the world, John. The way it really is!” (Bain, 2006). Initially, Woodson couldn’t see the world the “way it really is.” He was unable to see the beauty that was around him. He was unable to see the beauty that was in him. He was unable to see the beauty that was him. The heart is where he found the eyes to see.

Similarly, in the film, *Dead Poets Society*, English teacher, John Keating, while teaching a lesson on poetry, argues that poetry is what gives expression to emotions of the heart that will enable one to transform and perhaps even transcend the mundane realities of life. He tells his students,

We don’t read and write poetry because it’s cute. We read and write poetry because we are members of the human race and the human race is filled with passion. Now medicine,
law, business, engineering – these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life – but
tpoetry, beauty, romance, love – these are what we stay alive for. (Haft, 1989)

This passage captures the essence of lifelong optimal learning. Lifelong optimal learning
is concerned with “what we stay alive for” (Haft, 1989). Lifelong optimal learning is what
enables one to move through life with a prophetic voice knowing that while death is inevitable,
suffering is not. In a sense, lifelong optimal learning is the ultimate goal of holistic educational
thought, the ultimate objective. It is the ability to see what cannot be seen and to build what
cannot be built.

Holistic educational thought holds lifelong optimal learning accountable to the whole.
For example, while lifelong optimal learning aims to transform hope into reality, holistic
educational thought aims to transform reality into something more sublime that is beneficial for
the whole. As a principle of holistic educational thought, lifelong optimal learning becomes the
synthesis of theoretical and practical knowledge applied to the problems of today so that the
problems of today do not become the problems of tomorrow. Together, lifelong optimal learning
and holistic educational thought aim to create the kind of “perfect life” that DuBois (1909/1965)
described in an essay entitled, “On the Passing of the First-Born”:

A perfect life was his, all joy and love, with tears to make it brighter, -- sweet as a
summer’s day beside the Housatonic. The world loved him; the women kissed his curls,
the men looked gravely into his wonderful eyes, and the children hovered and fluttered
about him. I can see him now, changing like the sky from sparkling laughter to darkening
frowns, and then to wondering thoughtfulness as he watched the world. He knew no
color-line, poor dear, -- and the Veil, though it shadowed him, had not yet darkened half
his sun. He loved the white matron, he loved his black nurse; and in his little world
walked souls alone, uncolored and unclothed. I – yea, all men – are larger and purer by
the infinite breadth of that one little life. (p. 352)

It is my belief that lifelong optimal learning can contribute to the kind of “perfect life”
that DuBois (1909/1965) described. I begin by first discussing the predecessor to lifelong optimal
learning – lifelong learning. I then look at lifelong optimal learning and how it was implemented
in Los Angeles following the passage of Proposition 209 in California. Then, in assessing its
implementation, I offer some suggestions that I argue can make it more useful as a strategy in K-
12 schools. I conclude by revisiting the relationship between lifelong optimal learning and
holistic educational thought.

**Lifelong Learning**

In an article entitled “Neoliberal Governmentality in the European Union: Education,
Training, and Technologies of Citizenship,” Katharyne Mitchell (2006) argues that the original
personal and social development emphasis of lifelong learning as found in the earlier ideology of
the 1970s and of eras past had been relegated to a “minor rhetorical key” (p. 398).

“Community funds for lifelong learning,” she said, “go primarily into workplace retraining
programs rather than into curricula emphasizing social or civic education such as the study of
culture, comparative democracy, or systems of government” (p. 398).

Mitchell (2006) also pointed out that the transformation of lifelong learning over the past
several years in Europe introduced a form of social cohesion that was advanced primarily

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113 Thank you to, Sujung Kim, for pointing this article out to me.
through the formation of a flexible and mobile cross-border labor force rather than through the notion of personal development and the constitution of democratic participants in society (p. 398). Mitchell noted that this transformation was similar in many ways to the evolution of lifelong learning in the United States where an early emphasis on creating a “well-socialized, ‘cosmopolitan’ child invested in national narratives of collective belonging” became the “strategic global cosmopolitan interested first and foremost in entrepreneurial success” (p. 398).

In the article, Mitchell (2006) tries to encourage a dialogue between educators and policymakers about the original intent of lifelong learning. What seems to trouble Mitchell most about the new lifelong learning theory is that it forgets that life is social. To illustrate this point, she quotes curriculum theorist, Thomas Popkewitz (cited in Mitchell), who said,

> Whereas the cosmopolitanism of the child of the turn of the twentieth century was to live as a socialized individual who embodied the national exceptionalism, today there is little talk of socialization. The cosmopolitan child lives in networks of communicative norms that order the classroom and family through a problem-solving, active, flexible, and self-managed lifelong learner. (Popkewitz, cited in Mitchell, p. 398)

Here, Popkewitz (cited in Mitchell, 2006) sounds a little like Mr. Keating in *Dead Poets Society*. Like Keating, Popkewitz feels threatened by the coming onslaught of an age defined by cheerless conformity, and like Keating – the hopeless romantic – Popkewitz not only seems to want to break the mold, but to reinvent it altogether. In Popkewitz’s view, the danger with this new lifelong learner is that he or she will lose sight of what is really important in life – attributes that Keating mentioned in class such as poetry, beauty, romance, love, art, friendship, health, and the ability to speak prophetically.
Both Mitchell (2006) and Popkewitz (cited in Mitchell) seem to be interested in recuperating a Romantic idea of education that cultivates human relationships – an idea that seems to be unpopular today. In fact, the kinds of educational ideas that usually find support in today’s climate of testing were discussed in a *New York Times* op-ed column by Thomas Friedman (2012, August 7).

In the article, Friedman (2012, August 7) is more concerned with studies that show how far American K-12 schools continue to lag behind schools in other industrialized countries on international tests such as the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) than with studies that show how K-12 schools are helping students cultivate relationships with each other and the natural environment. He writes, “There is no good job today that does not require more and better education to get it, hold it or advance in it” (n.p.). Who can argue with that? Friedman is right, but when the primary aim of education is about getting a job, there is reason to be skeptical.

What troubles me about Friedman’s (2012, August 7) argument is that it offers the educational systems of Finland and China as models for American educational systems without necessarily asking what qualifies China or Finland to be held up as paragons of educational excellence? Test scores seem to suffice for Friedman, but what about other factors such as human rights records, environmental records, or historical records? Should not Friedman consider these as well? It is my belief that models for educational excellence have to be measured and defined in a more holistic way,¹¹⁴ yet according to Torres & van Heertum (2009),

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Within education, neoliberal reforms have profoundly challenged holistic notions of education, replacing them with instrumental, corporate models based primarily on sorting and training. The question becomes how governments and industry will address these contradictory trends, working to balance the interests of the market and security with those of personal freedom and the common good. (p. 221)

How will government and industry address these contradictory trends? If they aim to do it through education, what kind of education? Fortunately, a theoretical model was articulated that might serve as an appropriate indicator for educational excellence. It is called lifelong optimal learning. With lifelong optimal learning, even if government and industry fail to address these contradictory neoliberal trends as Torres & van Heertum (2009, p. 221) suggest, schools most certainly will be able to.

Lifelong Optimal Learning

I was first introduced to the theory of lifelong optimal learning in 1998. At the time, I was working for the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) at UCLA as an outreach coordinator.\(^{115}\) This was during a time when a lot of changes in the structure of UC outreach programs were taking place. Two years earlier, in 1996, voters in California passed Proposition 209.\(^{116}\) At UCLA, consequently, a new outreach program was created, the Career Based Outreach Program (CBOP).

The function of the Career Based Outreach Program (CBOP) was to train UCLA students in a new method of learning called the personalized academic learning systems (PALS), which

\(^{115}\) EAOP is the outreach component of the Undergraduate Admissions Office at UCLA.

\(^{116}\) Proposition 209 was the anti-affirmative action legislation, which passed in 1996.
was a learning system designed to increase the academic achievement of high school students to competitive eligibility levels. The basic function of the Early Academic Outreach Program (EAOP) was to remain the same. Since its founding in 1979, EAOP’s mission was to advise students about undergraduate admissions requirements. The only difference in the post Proposition 209 era was that EAOP staff members were told to focus on competitive eligibility requirements.

The prevailing thought among UC regents following the passage of Proposition 209 was that EAOP and CBOP staff members would work together to prevent what UC admissions officers and UC Office of the President (UCOP) administrators feared would be a drastic drop in the number of minority students admitted to UC campuses. It was during this time that EAOP and CBOP staff members were asked to attend numerous professional development workshops on the UCLA campus. The themes of these workshops were always the same: how to increase diversity in the aftermath of proposition 209 and how to transform high school students into competitively eligible college applicants.

Many of these workshops were conducted by professors in UCLA’s Graduate School of Education. A few of the sessions were conducted by, Jeannie Oakes, whom I was unfamiliar with at the time, but later learned, once in graduate school, how influential her studies were on high school tracking (Oakes, 2005; Oakes & Saunders, 2010). There was one session in particular, however, that I will never forget. It was taught by Professor Edward “Chip” Anderson. It was on lifelong optimal learning and it was my kind of session: A Dead Poets Society session. Professor Anderson was our very own Mr. Keating. I didn’t realize at the time how influential that session would be to me.
Edward “Chip” Anderson

The first thing that Professor Anderson told us during that meeting was that he liked to be called “Chip.” The next thing he told us was that he was a recovering alcoholic. He did not start with a bunch of statistics or with a bunch of theories about how to solve society’s problems. He started by sharing something personal. I appreciated that. We all did. Anderson was a Professor of education at Azusa Pacific University, which is located in Azusa, California. When I met him he was teaching an undergraduate course at UCLA called “Community Service Education.” Below is the course description:

Based on experiential education learning theory, this course will encourage undergraduates to become optimal learners and involve them in promoting the academic achievement of high school, middle school, elementary school and preschool students from low-income and/or educationally disadvantaged communities. Enrollees will develop curriculum and instructional strategies to train high school students to be tutors for middle school students and pre-K students. The tutorial methods will be drawn from cognitive learning and motivation theories such as Generative, Deep Processing, Attribution, and Self Efficacy Theories. Service learning and tutorial assistance will also be addressed within the context of forming mentor, peer counseling, and personal support relationships. (Anderson, 2001a, p.1)

The experiential activities included in the course were based on Anderson’s (2001a) research on community service education in disadvantaged communities and on the work he had done with vice chancellor of student affairs at UCLA, Winston Doby. Doby worked with Anderson to design the personalized academic learning system (PALS). Below are some of the
community service options that undergraduate students who enrolled in the course could choose from:

- Learning IN Community Service (LINCS), which was designed to train UCLA students to mentor high school students and/or train them to tutor students in neighborhood schools;
- Career Based Outreach Program (CBOP), which was designed to train UCLA students to increase the academic achievement of high school students to competitive eligibility levels;
- America Reads/Jumpstart, which was designed to train UCLA students in tutoring and instruction strategies for helping elementary and preschool students learn to build literacy and social skills; and
- Community Service, which was designed to train UCLA students to work in tutoring and academic support projects sponsored by UCLA student organizations and University departments. (Anderson, 2001a, n.p.)

From the beginning, Anderson (2001a) showed that his main concern was not about quantity but about quality. To him, lifelong optimal learning was not about transforming students into competitively eligible college applicants, but about transforming students into lifelong optimal learners. Lifelong optimal learning was a life transforming project that he had devoted his entire life to. This became clear by the way he responded to a question that was asked by one of my colleagues during a training workshop.

My colleague wanted to know how lifelong optimal learning fit into UCLA’s new admissions standards, as well as statistics that showed target goals for the number of competitively eligible students that each of the outreach coordinators was expected to reach at
the high schools. Visibly irritated, Anderson responded by saying, “I find it hard to listen to you.” Known for being brutally honest, it wasn’t that Anderson didn’t care about the question. He knew the objective and he knew that we were all hired to increase the academic achievement of high school students to competitive eligibility levels. It was just that he did not see his job in terms of fulfilling that objective. He had a mission, and he sought to achieve his mission, not by focusing on statistics, but by educating – by educating us about lifelong optimal learning principles; by educating us about lifelong optimal learning transformational goals; and by educating us to see “The Beauty of Persons…” (Anderson, 2000a, p. 6).

Lifelong Optimal Learning Principles

As mentioned above, it was Anderson and former vice chancellor of student affairs, Winston C. Doby, who were the architects of UCLA’s post 209 outreach response. Together, they designed a worksheet called “Optimal Learning Principles” (Anderson & Doby, n.d.). The worksheet contains fifteen principles, each of which are listed below:

1. Mastery and optimal performance result from painstaking preparation and hard work.

2. Active engagement in learning makes the process more interesting, more relevant, and more effective.

3. Each person is responsible for his/her own learning.

4. Each person is his own best teacher.

117 Outreach Coordinators each served an average of six or seven high schools in the Los Angeles area and in the San Fernando Valley.
5. Formulating questions facilitates thinking and improves learning.

6. Making mistakes is an effective way to learn and improve.

7. Self-confidence comes from our ability to persist in the face of adversity and is a fundamental ingredient to optimal learning.

8. An optimal learner prepares by reading; and by trying to solve problems and actively thinking about subjects before teachers teach about a subject.

9. Ability is a variable, not a constant. The harder a person tries, the more able he or she becomes.

10. Certain behaviors, if practiced on a consistent basis, will ensure optimal learning.

11. Grades and test scores indicate progress at one point in time.

12. My academic performance is a result of my learning methods, my attitude, and my effort.

13. All behavior is caused. All causation is mental. We become what we think about most of the time.

14. The purpose of school is to assist students in learning how to learn.

15a. An effective way of demonstrating mastery of a concept is to teach it!

15b. Optimal learning results when a person learns with the goal of teaching in mind!

(Anderson & Doby, n.d.)
Additional questions designed to get students to relate each principle to their own lives and to get them to think about themselves and their approaches to learning were also included on the worksheet. In Anderson’s & Doby’s (n.d.) view, this was necessary in order for students to begin the process of transformation – from learners to optimal learners.

**Lifelong Optimal Learning Transformational Goals**

Anderson (2000b) designed another worksheet to show what lifelong optimal learning required from both students and teachers. What he wanted teachers and students to realize was that lifelong optimal learning involves a process of transformation – in language, in thought, and in action. Each section of his “Transformational goals” is covered below beginning with students.

**Students**

**Students transformed into learners.** By definition, a “student,” Anderson (2000b) explained, is someone who must be “taught” while a “learner” is someone who, by virtue of his or her own interests and curiosities, initiates the learning process and assumes primary responsibility for his or her own learning (p. 1).

**Learners transformed into optimal learners.** Optimal learners invest maximum effort and learn systematic approaches to acquiring information, generating insights and demonstrating “learnings,” which produce the maximum level of performance that a person is capable of achieving at a specific point in time (Anderson, 2000b, p. 1).

**Optimal learners transformed into lifelong optimal learners.** Lifelong optimal learners have the following characteristics: They are intellectually alive; they possess an active
curiosity, vibrant interests, and a questioning mind; they have a learner and a thinker identity; they are convinced that their interests and curiosities are worth pursuing; and they challenge the unknown and what does not makes sense (Anderson, 2000b, p. 1).

Lifelong optimal learners also possess a love for learning and investigation in multiple areas; a desire to actively learn from all involvements; a purposeful effort to experiment with their own behavior and attitudes to learn more effectively and efficiently; and the ability to reflect on life experiences through the lenses of multiple concepts and principles to produce new insights and understandings (Anderson, 2000b, p. 1). Lifelong optimal learners also generate connections between experience and “learnings” to produce insights and understandings that can be transferred to other settings, problems and dilemmas (p. 1).

**Passive individuals transformed into inspired, vibrantly alive, resilient persons.**
Lifelong optimal learners learn to maintain optimism and a “bouncing back” attitude in the face of institutions, organizations, families, and other social systems that tend to “crush” the human spirit (Anderson, 2000b, p. 1).

**Schooled individuals transformed into persons educated for the future.** Lifelong optimal learners learn how to learn in multiple disciplines for a lifetime; they learn how to change and cope with rapid change in a knowledge economy; they learn how to relate with “diverse individuals” when “community” rarely exists and while the population is growing at a rate of “one billion every fifteen years”; and they learn how to be resilient when adversity, complexity, and crisis are constants (Anderson, 2000b, p. 2).
Teachers

Teachers transformed into educators. To Anderson (2000b), there was a substantial epistemological difference between teachers and educators. A teacher is someone who perceives that his or her role is to transmit knowledge while an educator is someone who perceives that his or her role is to draw forth knowledge:

Teaching is the process of articulating, telling and transmitting what is to be known! In this process, the “teacher” tends to be active and the “student” is passive! Under this system learning and retention tend to be minimal. Educating is the process of “drawing forth,” “bringing out,” “leading out.” As such, the educator is striving to bring things out of the student/learner. As opposed to the teacher who tells, the educator is a leader who works with learners in the same way great leaders work with people to cast a vision and serve those they lead based on quality relationships and joining forces to accomplish an important task. (Anderson, 2000b, p. 2)

Educators transformed into optimal educators. In Anderson’s (2000b) view, the critical question driving the optimal learning approach to education was “Is the learner learning and performing at the highest/maximum level that the learner is capable of at this point in time?” (p. 2).

Professionals in all fields transformed into lifelong optimal learner-educators. Professionals, Anderson (2000b) explained, are, by definition, different from others in the work force in that they are trained and have a specialization, which allows them to work with little or no immediate supervision. Ideally, professionals know the limits of their expertise and only work within the limits of their training and experience (Anderson, 2000b, p. 2).
Professionals are also expected to be in a continuous state of learning and are expected to strive to become better trained in their fields; thus, in Anderson’s (2000b) view, they must be lifelong learners and should be lifelong optimal learners. But since they are also responsible for the training of new professionals and helping other professionals gain additional expertise, they need to be educators as well as learners. “In fact, professionals in the twenty-first century need to be both “Life-long Optimal Learners” and “Life-long Optimal Educators”” (Anderson, 2000b, p. 2).

**Self-centered individuals transformed into compassionate, truly loving persons.** To Anderson (2000b), the greatest challenge with lifelong optimal learning was getting the ego to move beyond self-interests and moving the self into a state of actively trying to be the “best self possible” (p. 3). This was to be achieved by bringing out the “best self” in someone else. This is something he spoke passionately about:

Being compassionate and loving someone else and then actively showing love and concern is desperately needed – but it doesn’t seem to come naturally. What often moves us to being compassionate and truly loving persons is either having your heart broken by the pain we see in others and/or identifying one of our own pains in the lives of others. There is hardly a single human problem that is not a result or manifestation of the lack of being truly loved or truly loving. Becoming motivated by love and compassion requires transformation. Most who are transformed into truly loving people have been deeply loved by somebody. (Anderson, 2000b, p. 3)

While Anderson (2000b) ends by saying that “most who are transformed into truly loving people have been deeply loved by somebody” (p. 3), it is also important to recognize that the
potential to transform into a truly loving person can also come from someone who has suffered and been deeply hurt by somebody. Anderson may have alluded to this earlier when he said, “What often moves us to being compassionate and truly loving persons is either having your heart broken by the pain we see in others and/or identifying one of our own pains in the lives of others” (p. 3). What I am saying, however, is different.

It is not only by having one’s heart broken by the pain one sees in others, or by identifying with the pain that one sees in the lives of others that may enable one to become compassionate and thus a “truly loving person,” but also by the pain one experiences in one’s own life which one may not identify with others. That pain may be so profound that one’s whole life becomes shaped by the desire to prevent anyone from ever having to experience or suffer through the kind of pain that he or she may have had to endure.

**Experiencing the ultimate transformation: living an inspired, fully alive life.** The “ultimate transformation,” in Anderson’s (2000b) view, is a lifestyle characterized by “inspired, vibrant, fully alive living”:

Whereas most people are living lives of “quiet desperation,” in a state of deadness or mere existence, a transformed person regularly experiences a sense of aliveness – the joyous, exhilarating yet peaceful experience of being full of life and fully alive. Learning and aliveness go together. Learning is characterized by growing, developing, moving and changing. The same is true of being alive. The most basic evidence that something is alive is that it moves and is growing, developing and changing. Conversely, when growing, developing and changing stop, death and decay begin! (Anderson, 2000b, p. 3)
Transformed from successful to significant: becoming agents of transformation.

Like the distinction made between teachers and educators, Anderson (2000b) also made a distinction between a successful person and a significant person. With lifelong optimal learning, this distinction is clear:

A successful person achieves highly but a significant person makes a substantial positive difference in the lives of others! The ultimate form of significance would be to produce the ultimate positive difference and thus becoming an agent of transformation. Agents of transformation are truly significant because they help others come alive – helping them grow, develop, change and move towards their optimal level of development and performance. Agents of transformation are characterized by their passion, compassion, caring, love and concern. They exemplify being motivated by love. (Anderson, 2000, p. 3)

The process of transferring Anderson’s (2000) “Transformational goals” onto paper in support of my arguments about holistic educational thought has caused me to look at his words and thoughts carefully. Upon closer reflection, I see that the entire basis of Anderson’s lifelong optimal learning theory is motivated by love. Even if it was taboo to bring up love in the context of education policy, Anderson did, and I am thankful for that because his views can be used to justify and support future discussions of love in the context of education policy.\textsuperscript{118}

\textsuperscript{118} Thank you to my classmate, Sheri Lewis, for helping me to think through some of the complex issues about love and education.
The Beauty of Persons

I knew that something was different about Anderson (2000a) the first time I heard him speak about education. He seemed extremely connected to his subject. Not just in a personal sense but in a religious and spiritual sense. When he passed out a handout entitled, “The Nature of Strengths and the Beauty of Persons,” my thoughts were confirmed (2000a, p. 1).

The beauty of persons from a strengths perspective. One of the subtitles on the handout was titled “The Beauty of Persons from a Strengths Perspective” (Anderson, 2000a, p. 6). Anderson spent quite a bit of time on this section. He read to us the following excerpt:

   Since becoming exposed to the strengths based approach to working with people, I’ve come to see others and myself in a very different and more positive manner. I find that I see more beauty in people as I’ve developed a “strengths perspective.” (Anderson, 2000a, p. 6)

Focusing on who people are, rather than on who they aren’t. The strengths perspective begins with, in Anderson’s (2000a) words, “a simple but profound step” (p. 7). That step is to start seeing people in terms of who they are, what they are, and how they are rather than in terms of who they aren’t, what they aren’t, and how they aren’t (p. 7). As he explained,

   I can’t believe how utterly stupid I’ve been most of my life. I’ve thought about people more in terms of who they weren’t, as opposed to who they were! I’ve focused on what they couldn’t do, rather than what they could do! I’ve focused on what they didn’t do, rather than what they did do! I’ve focused on their defects and deficits, rather than on their gifts and talents. I’ve focused on their weaknesses, rather than their strengths. (p. 7)
In one of our professional development workshops, Anderson (2000a) told CBOP and EAOP staff that when he focused on who people weren’t instead of who they were, it was as if he was in the presence of one person while looking for someone else. He included a paragraph where he talked about the effect that interacting with people in this way had on his relationships:

As I think about it now, my old mind-set seems absolutely insane! But, it gets even worse! When I used to focus on what people weren’t, I’d often get angry with them because of who they weren’t! Do you see how crazy this was? It’s utterly crazy to become angry with someone for not being who they aren’t! What I used to do is as crazy as getting angry at a mountain because it isn’t the ocean! (Anderson, 2000a, p. 7)

By adopting a perspective of focusing on who people are rather than on who they aren’t, Anderson (2000a) discovered that who people are is a reflection of their strengths, gifts, talents and “all those special capabilities that enable them to do certain things very, very well” (p. 7).

The beautiful mosaic of an individual’s strengths. From the strengths perspective, Anderson (2000a) found that people differed in at least five dimensions: (a) individual strengths; (b) the intensity of individual strengths; (c) the organization of individual strengths; (d) the extent to which individual strengths have been developed; and (e) the extent to which individual strengths are being applied (pp. 7-8).

“The beauty of persons,” he wrote, “is found in each of these dimensions (Anderson, 200a, p. 8). There is, in other words, beauty to be discovered and seen in the various types and intensities of individual strengths. There is beauty in how individual strengths are organized and there is beauty in how each individual is developing and using his or her strengths (p. 8). The
challenge for educators, Anderson said, is to help students see how they can both develop and utilize their own strengths as assets in the process of learning:

The final outcome is to help people see how they can build their whole life around their strengths and make their weaknesses irrelevant! From my experience, fully developing and using one’s strengths is key to career success and fulfillment. Applying one’s strength to addressing the needs and problems is a most viable means of serving others. Finally, bringing one’s strengths and talents of another person may be one of the most loving things we can do for another person. (Anderson, 2000a, p. 8)

Anderson (2000a) passed away on July 5, 2005, following a battle with cancer. I am certain that he believed that sharing his thoughts about lifelong optimal learning was one of the most loving things that he could do in life. Although he left numerous papers and worksheets behind with detailed notes about lifelong optimal learning, they all seem to be saying one thing: Find your voice and once you find yours, help someone else find theirs. Yet in order to find the voice that would enable one to contribute something beautiful, Anderson understood something fundamental, and that was that one had to first find love and then find the courage to practice love through one’s thoughts, words, and deeds. That was the main point he seemed to be trying to convey.

Fortunately, Anderson (2000a) did find his voice and, luckily, I met him when he did. He told us on more than one occasion how he had struggled with alcoholism so I know that the journey to find his voice was a struggle. But once he found it, he was finally able to contribute a verse to what Walt Whitman (1872/1997) called “The powerful play.” In the poem, O Me! O Life! Whitman wrote,
O ME! O life!...of the questions of these recurring;
Of the endless trains of the faithless—of cities fill’d with the foolish;
Of myself forever reproaching myself, (for who more foolish than I, and who more faithless?)
Of eyes that vainly crave the light—of the objects mean—of the struggle ever renew’d;
Of the poor results of all—of the plodding and sordid crowds I see around me;
Of the empty and useless years of the rest—with the rest me intertwined;
The question, O me! so sad, recurring—What good amid these, O me, O life?

Answer:
That you are here—that life exists, and identity;
That the powerful play goes on, and you will contribute a verse. (Whitman, 1872/1997)

In the film, Dead Poets Society, there is a scene where, after quoting from the same poem, Keating asks the class, “What will your verse be?” (Haft, 1989). Anderson (2001b) would have probably answered Keating by saying you have to begin by aligning who you are at your core with who you are in the process of becoming because, “The alignment of who we are at the core, the talents and abilities we have . . . transforms careers and professions into a “field of dreams” where we get to fulfill the dreams of our lives” (p. 2).

An Assessment of Lifelong Optimal Learning

Anderson’s (2000a, b; 2001a, b) views on lifelong optimal learning were not accepted by everyone. Much of the criticism came from teachers and principals in the high schools in the communities we served. They wanted to know two things: how we planned to implement lifelong optimal learning principles and how these principles were going to show immediate results in the academic performance of students.
These are questions that deal with the relationship between theory and practice - questions that education theorists have struggled to answer effectively since time immemorial. Teachers didn’t just want to know the relationship between theory and practice in a general sense, but in a specific sense. They wanted to know how effectively lifelong optimal learning theory was going to be able to address the practical problems that were unique to their schools.

During one meeting in particular that was held on the UCLA campus among CBOP staff, EAOP staff, and public high school teachers and principals, it became obvious what the teacher’s and principal’s views were on the relationship between theory and practice. They didn’t care. The only thing they cared about was how to improve students’ grades – immediately. Toward the end of the meeting, after Anderson spoke to the audience about the transformational goals of lifelong optimal learning, one teacher raised her hand and asked a simple and straightforward question. An English teacher from Washington Preparatory High School in Los Angeles, she said that many of her students were not writing at the necessary levels that they needed in order to succeed in college, and she wanted to know how lifelong optimal learning would help make them better writers.

She said that while she agreed with the principles of lifelong optimal learning in theory, she was not convinced that it would help with the practical and immediate needs of her students. She was skeptical and did not know if it made sense for her to spend energy implementing lifelong optimal learning principles and transformational goals in her classes. You could hear a pin drop in the whole auditorium. No one had an answer. Not Professor Anderson; not vice chancellor Winston Doby; not the director of EAOP; not any of the staff present; no one.
I still don’t know the answer to her question, but what I observed that day might have helped her feel more comfortable with what we were trying to accomplish with lifelong optimal learning; namely, the truth. When I think about it now, what I observed seems like such a simple thing, but what made it seem so difficult at the time was our arrogance which fed our inability to tell the truth. She prefaced her question by telling us that there was nothing that we had said about lifelong optimal learning that she disagreed with – in theory. So it wasn’t like she was against our mission. The only issue she had was that she could not see how lifelong optimal learning was going to turn her students into better writers in a semester.

We didn’t know either. Unfortunately, we did not tell her that and we should have. Instead, we rambled on endlessly about this and that and never answered her question. She left disappointed, as did so many others, including staff. When evaluations were turned in at the end of the day, the overwhelming message left by those who attended the meeting was that they were confused.

**Interventions to Lifelong Optimal Learning**

**Dialogue.** The first thing that we could have done differently as an outreach unit was tell the truth. The second thing we could have done differently was approach the relationship between UCLA outreach staff and the teachers and principals as a dialogue. We did not do that. Instead, we approached the relationship didactically. I am convinced that that approach, along with our arrogance, is what kept us from being able to tell the truth. We were UCLA. We couldn’t be wrong.

Today it seems so simple what the answer to her question should have been: “I am sorry, but we do not have the answer to your question; however, if you would help us form a committee
to deal with these kinds of issues, I am sure that we can work through this together.” She still may not have agreed, but at least we would have told the truth. I guess hindsight is twenty-twenty, but the point is that the process of implementation always requires the ability to tell the truth and open dialogue.

**Ecological literacy.** Another element that was missing from Anderson’s (2000a, b; 2001a, b) theory of lifelong optimal learning was a connection to the kinds of “Schooling for Sustainability” (Stone, 2009) projects mentioned in the previous chapter. Most of the high schools that CBOP and EAOP staff service are located in the heart of South Central Los Angeles, a part of the city known as a food desert.\(^\text{119}\)

It is a part of the city that is replete with gang activity, obesity, and diabetes. It is also a part of the city that is replete with potential. Ron Finley, a resident of South Central Los Angeles, recently spoke about the unhealthy food culture in South Central L.A. A self-proclaimed “Gangsta Gardner,” Finley said, “We gotta flip the script on what a gangster is. If you ain’t a gardener, you ain’t gangsta! Get gangsta with your shovel and let that be your weapon of choice!” Finley uses a shovel – his “weapon of choice” – to plant vegetable gardens in abandoned lots, traffic medians, and along city curbs. He explains why below:

For fun, for defiance, for beauty and to offer some alternative to fast food in a community where the drive-thrughs are killing more people than the drive-bys. People are dying from curable diseases in South Central Los Angeles. For instance the obesity rate in my neighborhood is like five times higher than say Beverly Hills, which is like probably just

\(^{119}\)“A food desert is a district with little or no access to large grocery stores that offer fresh and affordable foods needed to maintain a healthy diet. Instead of such stores, these districts often contain many fast food restaurants and convenience stores” ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_desert](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Food_desert)).
eight or ten miles away. . . You’d be surprised what the soil could do if you let it be your canvas. You just couldn’t imagine how amazing a sunflower is and how it affects people. . . . I have witnessed my garden become a tool for the education, a tool for the transformation of my neighborhood. . . . You’d be surprised how kids are affected by this.

. . . If kids grow kale, kids eat kale! If they grow tomatoes, they eat tomatoes! But when none of this is presented to them. . . . if they’re not shown how food affects the mind and the body, they blindly eat whatever the hell you put in front of them. I see young people and they wanna work, but they’re in this thing where they’re caught up. I see kids of color and they’re just on this track that’s designed for them that leads them to nowhere. So with gardening, I see an opportunity where we can train these kids to take over their communities; to have a sustainable life. And when we do this, who knows, we might produce the next George Washington Carver. . . . (Finley, 2013)  

By connecting lifelong optimal learning to ecological projects that address the needs of local communities, students would learn what being a lifelong optimal learner is in a practical way. They would learn that a lifelong optimal learner means being able to make their own communities healthier and safer and beautiful. Once students start to see the aesthetic changes in their local communities from their own efforts, that is what, in my view, will help to cultivate what Anderson (2000b) called “Inspired, Vibrantly Alive, Resilient Persons” (Anderson, 2000b, p. 1).

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120 Thank you to my colleague, Tarnjeet Kang, for pointing this out to me.
General Discussion

The relationship between holistic educational thought and lifelong optimal learning is both simple and complex. Holistic educational thought holds lifelong optimal learning accountable to the whole. It operationalizes lifelong optimal learning. In other words, lifelong optimal learners are optimal learners only in the sense that they are able to think, speak, and act on behalf of the whole.

As a way to discuss this relationship in more detail, I want to respond to a remark made a few years ago by the editor in chief of Vogue magazine, Anna Wintour. On the one hand, Wintour’s remark makes it possible to understand how power, beauty, and race still shape the framework of popular culture. And on the other hand, her remark clarifies why the ability to think, speak, and act on behalf of the whole is important. One of the greatest threats to lifelong optimal learning is thought that continues to express itself in fragmented notions of beauty that apply only to some. Holistic educational thought provides a theoretical basis in which to transform such thought into holistic notions of beauty that are universal in application.

Transformation of the Aesthetic

During her early years as the editor in chief of Vogue, Anna Wintour was deemed controversial for putting a black woman on the cover of the September issue of Vogue magazine. “September is the January in fashion,” said Candy Pratts Price, Vogue’s executive fashion director. “This is when I change. This is when I say I’m gonna try to get back on those high heels cuz that’s the look” (Cutler, 2009). In the world of high fashion, it is widely known that the September issue of Vogue is the most important issue. It is the issue that shows all the new looks, the new styles, and the new trends. So when Wintour decided to put a black woman on the cover
of the September issue – the “most important” issue – the act was viewed as a huge aesthetic risk amongst *Vogue* executives.

In a documentary about her life, *The September Issue: Anna Wintour & The Making of Vogue*, Wintour speaks briefly about this to her daughter. In talking about the decision to put a “black girl” on the cover of the September issue of *Vogue*, what caught my attention was that Wintour never mentioned the woman’s name. She simply referred to her as the “black girl” (Cutler, 2009). In fact, throughout the entire documentary, her name is never revealed. The only thing one learns is that it was a controversial decision to put her on the cover of the September Issue.

After a bit of research, I discovered her name. Her name is Donyale Luna and 1966 was the year when the first black woman appeared on the cover of *British Vogue*. The first time I saw the documentary was with my sister. Neither she nor I mentioned anything about this particular scene. What caused me to think about it more was the result of an incident that involved the creative designer, John Galliano, and his highly publicized run in with a female patron at a swanky bar in Paris, France, called *La Perle*. Apparently, Galliano, who was reported to be drunk at the time, made some incendiary and racist remarks to a Jewish woman about her race and her “poor sense of fashion.” It was reported in *The New York Times* that Galliano told her,

> Dirty Jewish face, you should be dead. Your boots are of the lowest quality; your thighs are of the lowest quality; you are so ugly I don’t want to see you. I am John Galliano . . .

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love Hitler and people like you would be dead, and your mothers, your forefathers would all be gassed. (Garelick, 2011, March 6; Times Topics, 2011, September 8)

When the story broke, the world of high fashion came to a screeching halt. At the time, Galliano was working for one of the most famous fashion houses in the world – Christian Dior – and was promptly dismissed after video footage surfaced showing him taunting a woman on YouTube and on the web site of the British tabloid, The Sun. At the time of the incident, I was taking a philosophy course. We were reading Immanuel Kant’s (1793/2000) third critique, Critique of the Power of Judgment. We spent a lot of time going over sections that discussed Kant’s notions of beauty and aesthetic judgments of taste. For my final paper, I decided to examine John Galliano’s actions through Kant’s notion of beauty and aesthetics.

It was while writing this paper that I began to look at Wintour’s statement and the world of high-fashion (haute couture) in an entirely different way. I began to look at the world of haute couture as an exclusive world where those who do not fit a certain image of beauty are not welcome. Wintour, in the documentary, referred to the world of high fashion as “Our World,” as if to confirm that indeed it is an exclusive world.

Wintour’s “world,” the world of haute couture, is a world where a particular notion of beauty resides. It is this notion of beauty that is promulgated to the world in magazines such as Vogue, Cosmopolitan, and Vanity Fair as a universal vision. For those who neither accept nor adhere, nor fit into this vision of beauty, they are, in a sense, not considered beautiful, and are either implicitly, or in the case of the woman at the bar, explicitly rejected, ridiculed, and condemned.
After Galliano’s remarks, *New York Times* columnist, Rhonda Garelick (2011, March 6) reported that the episode reignited “consideration of the curious relationship between French fashion and fascism.” According to Garelick, the Nazis were so enamored with fashion’s place in French culture that in their plans for postwar Europe, they stipulated that, unlike other industries, the fashion sector would remain in France:

Many in fashion were eager to play along. Lucien Lelong, a designer who supported Vichy and whose house stayed open during the war, saw couture as a political force:

“Our role is to give France the face of serenity. The more elegant Frenchwomen are, the more our country will show the world that we are not afraid.”

Although certain contemporary designers insist on the racial diversity of fashion’s current standards of beauty, Garelick (2011, March 6) argued that the fascists’ body ideal has persisted and expanded far beyond Europe. “The hallmarks of the Nazi aesthetic,” she writes, “— blue eyes, blond hair, athletic fitness and sharp-angled features — are the very elements that define what we call the all-American look.”

With Galliano, Garelick (2011, March 6) saw something far more nostalgic in his rant at the Paris bar. “Like a fascist demagogue of yore,” she wrote, “he was declaring that she did not belong to the gilded group who wear the right boots, and from this Mr. Galliano slid effortlessly to a condemnation of her very flesh, and a wish for her death.” Reading Kant (1793/2000) made me wonder whether high fashion could be considered high art or whether Galliano, as a result of his public actions, could be considered a creative genius; however, it wasn’t until I began to examine Galliano’s actions through the lens of some of Anderson’s (2000a) statements about
“The Beauty of Persons” that I began to ask more thoughtful questions about beauty and intelligence.

From the perspective of lifelong optimal learning, I found myself wondering whether someone who makes racist remarks could even be considered intelligent and whether intelligence had to include the ability to not be racist. Galliano’s world – the world of high fashion – is full of people who consider themselves highly intelligent. But if the premise of that world is based on a particular conception of beauty that hurts others simply because they do not fit into that conception of beauty, is that an intelligent world? And if so, is that the kind of intelligence worth striving for?

I found myself asking how holistic educational thought might attend to and be able to address aesthetic notions of beauty that claim to be universal but are really particular, and not just particular, but particular in ways that are insensitive, hurtful, and even racist to others who do not fit into such particular standards of beauty. What I really wanted to know is can holistic educational thought transform aesthetic notions of beauty into an aesthetic that is truly universal, and if so, how so?

This is a difficult question because even holism – the theory of the preservation of the whole – has not always applied to all people. For example, Jan Christiaan Smuts (1926), in his book, Holism and Evolution, argued that every organism, from the lowest micro-organism to the most highly developed and complex human personality, is a whole with a certain internal organization and a measure of self-direction that is specific to its own character.

Yet while Smuts (1926) argued that this was true for every organism, he found no contradiction in presiding over one of the most violent and racist regimes in the world during his
tenure as Prime Minister of South Africa from 1919 until 1924 and from 1939 until 1948 – a regime which was based on a complete negation of the premise of his theory of holism. The reason why Smuts found no contradiction in this act is because in his view, Black South Africans were not human, were not whole, and thus were exceptions to his theory of holism.

From my perspective of holistic educational thought, action must accompany words. It is not enough to write an eloquent and sophisticated theory as Smuts (1926) did devoid of action that works to animate one’s words. Action must accompany words. So then where does one look for examples of beauty that are truly universal? How about theology? Can the study of scripture transform aesthetic notions of beauty into an aesthetic that is universal? If so, how does one reconcile theology and ideology? This was discussed by education philosopher James Palermo (2002):

However, the most hellish aspects of apartheid are legitimated, as theology is made to turn tricks, and scripture serves as the handmaiden of politics. The contradictions are internal as theological discourse is grafted to the politics of separation and control. (p. 112)

One of the greatest ironies of theology, as Palermo (2002) states, is that it can be used to justify just about any position – from slavery to freedom – and it has. What I hope that holistic educational thought enables one to contend with is ultimately the question of why to include theological perspectives. From my perspective, holistic educational thought is a critical
approach, which ought to enable one to address some of the contradictions between theology and ideology with integrity.\textsuperscript{122}

**Concluding Remarks**

It was the American philosopher, John Dewey (1954), who, in contemplating what it would take to make the transition from the “Great Society” to the “Great Community,” argued that society first had to deal with something that was neither educational nor philosophical nor even political, but rather theological and implicitly spiritual:

> The old Adam, the unregenerate element in human nature, persists. It shows itself wherever the method obtains of attaining results by use of force instead of by the method of communication and enlightenment. It manifests itself more subtly, pervasively and effectually when knowledge and the instrumentalities of skill which are the product of communal life are employed in the service of wants and impulses which have not themselves been modified by reference to a shared interest. (pp. 154-155)

Dewey (1954) may have been on to something. To grasp what he was saying, it is necessary to invoke scripture. In the Bible, the “old Adam” is the Adam of the book of Genesis,\textsuperscript{123} the one who disobeys God and dies to the spiritual nature of self. According to scripture, God initially birthed Adam into the world of spirit, but when Adam disobeyed God, Adam’s spirit became buried in a world of disobedience: lust, desires, greed, and so forth.

\textsuperscript{122} One of the ways that holistic education theorists have attempted to deal with this question is by looking at the core wisdom underlying various spiritual and theological traditions and teachings. John Miller (2006) refers to this core wisdom as the “perennial philosophy.” According to Miller, “It is possible to identify the perennial philosophy or at least aspects of the philosophy, within the mystical thread of most religions and spiritual psychologies” (p. 15).

\textsuperscript{123} In Genesis, it talks about Adam as being both male and female: “This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created” (Genesis 5: 1-2).
Through disobedience, Adam – the one whom the Bible says was to have “. . . dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth,” fell victim to temptation and forfeited access to the world of spirit that God had originally given him at birth (Genesis 1: 26).

It is meaningful to use scripture to elaborate Dewey’s (1954) reference to the “old Adam” because the Bible also mentions a “new Adam” (1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22). This “new Adam” is the spirit of Jesus Christ manifested in men and women: “The first man Adam was made a living soul; this last Adam was made a quickening spirit . . . The first man is of the earth, earthly; the second man is the Lord from heaven” (1 Corinthians 15: 45, 47). As a way to clarify, a death and resurrection motif is used in the Bible to discuss both Adams: “As in Adam all die, even as in Christ,” the “new Adam,” “shall all be made alive. . . . For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead” (1 Corinthians 15: 21, 22).

In discussing the resurrection of the dead, the Bible refers to “being sown” as characteristic of the “old Adam” while “being raised” as characteristic of the “new Adam.” It also draws an interesting distinction between the “natural body” of the old Adam and the “spiritual body” of the new Adam:

So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption; it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body; There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body. (1 Corinthians 15: 42-44).

One way to read Dewey’s (1954) statement about what it would take to transition from “The Great Society” to “The Great Community” is to interpret it through scripture. In scriptural language, it means that we, as children of the first Adam (the “old Adam”) – the one who died to
the spiritual nature of self, have also died to that nature of ourselves – yet can be resurrected in the ways of the “new Adam,” who is Jesus Christ manifested in ourselves. The present world, the world that Dewey referred to as “The Great Society,” is a world that adheres to the Kantian (cited in Arendt, 1992) claim that a “bad man [can] be a good citizen in a good state” (p. 17).

Think of John Galliano. After the incident, Franca Sozzani, who is the editor in chief of *Italian Vogue*, was asked by a reporter to give her personal reaction to the news about Galliano. This is what she said:

My reaction is that I am so against anyone who could say something anti-Semitic, or anti…against any kind of religion. I understand he was drunk. I can understand, for sure, because he’s not a bad guy, he’s not, but I do not accept that anyone can touch the religion of somebody else. . . . (You Tube, 2011, March 11)

Sozzani is not wrong to forgive Galliano; however from the perspective of holistic educational thought, the idea of practicing morality\(^{124}\) means that there has to be continuity between public and private behavior. In other words, a good citizen is not only a good citizen in public, but in private as well. Would Galliano ever have felt bad for his actions if the video footage of him never surfaced? What was the state’s reaction to his behavior? Today, he is slowly and carefully being reintroduced into the world of high fashion. Ultimately, from the perspective of holistic educational thought, morality and citizenship go hand in hand. This means

\(^{124}\) Arendt (1992), in discussing Kant’s (1898) moral philosophy, noted that Kant was concerned with how to force man to be a good citizen even if he is not a morally good person and that a good constitution is not to be expected from morality, but, conversely, a good moral condition of a people is to be expected under a good constitution (p. 17). What I am saying is that from the perspective of holistic educational thought, a condition of continuity is required, which means that a good citizen must also be a good man/woman, and thus a good state can only be classified as a state made up of good men and women. In other words, holistic educational thought does not separate morality from good citizenship.
being fit to be seen, not by men and women alone, but by a “new Adam,” or by what Hannah Arendt called a “new god”:

. . . Now if our future should depend on what you say now – namely, that we will get an ultimate which from above will decide for us (and then the question is, of course, who is going to recognize this ultimate and which will be the rules for recognizing this ultimate – you have really an infinite regress here, but anyhow) I would be utterly pessimistic. If that is the case, then we are lost. Because this actually demands that a new god will appear. . . . (p. 115)

According to scripture, a “new god” will appear. The “old Adam” that Dewey (1954) mentioned and that the Bible talks about is the “god” of the present material world – the god who rejected the spiritual nature of self. That god, according to scripture, was given a limited period of time to rule. The “new Adam” is the “god” of an entirely new world that is to come. And that world, the world that is to come, is to be a world without end. In scripture, we are only given a glimpse as to what that world will look like, but if I had to guess, I would imagine it would be a perfect world like the one Dubois (1909/1965) described when he wrote about the passing of his child – that which Muslims refer to as the “Hereafter” and that which Christians refer to as “The Kingdom of Heaven.”

It is the attempt to usher in that kind of world that ultimately dictates holistic educational thought and lifelong optimal learning. Before his death, Joseph Campbell (1998) argued that modern culture had gone into an economic and political phase where the spiritual principles are completely disregarded. “The religious life is ethical,” he said. “It is not mystical. That is gone and society is disintegrating consequently. It is” (Campbell, 1998). “The question,” Campbell
asked, “is will there ever be a recovery of the mythological, mystical realization of the miracle of life, which our society is a manifestation, and all of us, brothers and sisters in the spirit of this all informing mythos?” I believe there will be a recovery, but I do not believe that it will come by chance, but by men, women, and children, who are taught to think, speak, and act on behalf of the whole.
CHAPTER 7

IMPLEMENTING HOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL THOUGHT

In this study, I have attempted to describe holistic educational thought as the embodiment of three principles: competitive eligibility, ecological literacy, and lifelong optimal learning. In my opinion, the value of holistic educational thought is that learning is perceived not as residing in any one individual principle alone, but in the aggregate of their connections. From the perspective of holistic educational thought, it is not academic intelligence alone that defines the educated person, but rather one’s ability to use intelligence to improve conditions in local communities, and to see beauty in self and in others.

With holistic educational thought, the vision of education is not a race to the top, but a journey to beauty and enlightenment. What this means for education policy in K-12 schools is that education will no longer be seen as a tool to survive, but rather to thrive. Since the major reform efforts of the twentieth century, American education policy has been defined by its intent to help students survive, but to thrive requires a completely different approach – mentally, physically, and spiritually. Today, the fact is that too many students are not even surviving. This was a point made by Constance Rice, an attorney who, on a panel during a recent political forum, said, “Until our children thrive and until a covenant and an action agenda address the fact that they aren’t even surviving when they ought to be thriving it will be meaningless” (C-span, 2005).

That is how I see holistic educational thought. Not as a contract, but as a covenant that attempts to address the fact that too many children “aren’t even surviving when they ought to be thriving” (C-Span, 2005). To view holistic educational thought in that way introduces a moral context which is something that is not pronounced in current education policy. Below, I offer a
series of policy recommendations. The intent of the recommendations is to initiate a dialogue about how to implement holistic educational thought in K-12 schools. In this effort, it is important to heed the words of education researcher, Steve Cantrell (2009), who said, “Systems can learn a tremendous amount by using constrained resources to justify a phased implementation or pilot test of an initiative” (p. 532).

**Policy Recommendations**

**Philosophical Recommendations**

By philosophical recommendations, I mean to convey a mindset that is appropriate for holistic educational thought. For example, the way policymakers think about and use concepts such as assessment, measurement, and standards in relation to holistic educational thought cannot be theorized and used in the same way as they are currently used. Even the relationship between charter and public schools has to be interpreted differently. In her review of the film, *Waiting for “Superman,”* Diane Ravitch (2010, November 11), discussed the original intent of charter schools:

The film never acknowledges that charter schools were created mainly at the instigation of Albert Shanker, the president of the American Federation of Teachers from 1974 to 1997. Shanker had the idea in 1988 that a group of public school teachers would ask their colleagues for permission to create a small school that would focus on the neediest students, those who had dropped out and those who were disengaged from school and likely to drop out. He sold the idea as a way to open schools that would collaborate with public schools and help motivate disengaged students. In 1993, Shanker turned against
the charter school idea when he realized that for-profit organizations saw it as a business opportunity and were advancing an agenda of school privatization.

I think it would be a wise strategy for policymakers to revisit Shanker’s intent and to craft policies that foster collaborative relationships between charter and public schools. Many of the schooling for sustainability examples used in the chapter, “Ecological Literacy,” were from charter schools. Instead of closing public schools down, which the Chicago Public School Board just did, might it not have been a better decision to have collaborated with charter school Board members to discuss ways to keep the schools open?

As a result of the high-stakes testing regime created by No Child Left Behind (NCLB), even some charter schools, according to Ravitch (2010, November 11), “counsel out” or expel students just before state testing day. This is because charter schools currently compete to get higher test scores than regular public schools and thus have an incentive to avoid students who might pull down their scores. All of this is a result of today’s culture of assessment and testing, which would be interpreted differently if practiced within a culture of holistic educational thought.

**Testing and Measurement**

**The whole measure of things.** In his study, *Wholeness and the implicate order*, David Bohm (2002) discusses the differences between western and eastern forms of wholeness. He starts with the difference between western and eastern notions of the word to measure. In the west, he notes that the notion of measurement played a key role in determining the general self–world view and the way of life implicit in such a view. “Among the Ancient Greeks,” he exclaimed, “from whom we derive a large part of our fundamental notions (by way of the
Romans), to keep everything in its right measure was regarded as one of the essentials of a good life (e.g., Greek tragedies generally portrayed man’s suffering as a consequence of his going beyond the proper measure of things)” (p. 25).

In theory, the proper measure was seen as an outward display or appearance of something deeper – an inner measure, which played an essential role in everything, and was determined by the existence of a healthy and harmonious life. When something went beyond its proper measure, it was inwardly out of harmony (Bohm, 2002, pp. 25 – 26). As Bohm explained,

The Latin ‘mederi’ meaning ‘to cure’ (the root of the modern ‘medicine’) is based on a root meaning ‘to measure’. This reflects the view that physical health is to be regarded as the outcome of a state of right inward measure in all parts and processes of the body. (p. 26)

In its modern sense, measure is viewed primarily as a comparison of an object with an external standard or unit. Bohm (2002) showed that the words moderation and meditation, which describe two of the prime ancient notions of virtue, were based on the same root as measure. “So physically, socially and mentally,” he stated, “awareness of the inner measure of things was seen as the essential key to a healthy, happy, harmonious life” (p. 26). While I understand Bohm’s point that to imitate or to try to conform to these teachings would be of little value today due to the fact that modern societies require “creative work even more difficult than that needed to make fundamental new discoveries in science, or great and original works of art,” such wisdom is useful in its ability to establish a certain frame of mind (pp. 30 – 31).

In my view, what has to be done, as Bohm (2002) suggests, is to assimilate and go on to new and original perceptions that are relevant to our present conditions of life. I think what
Bohm intends for us to understand is that the illusion that the self and the world are broken into fragments leads to thinking in purely fragmented (e.g., quantitative) ways. To end this illusion, Bohm argued that what was required was a different form of thought more accountable to the whole (p. 32). To apply this to education policy means that the approach to measurement has to, in addition to quantitative standards, include qualitative standards as well.

**Democratizing assessment.** In her study, *Un–Standardizing Curriculum: Multicultural Teaching in the Standards–based Classroom*, Christine Sleeter (2005) makes a distinction between standards and standardization and describes why she supports standards but is opposed to standardization. Standards, she argues, which describe quality, can be used by teachers to help students attain high levels of academic achievement. Standardization, however, has adverse effects on students, teachers, and schools because it leads to bureaucratization and to a focus on low–level knowledge and skills that can easily be measured by norm–referenced tests (p. x).

Standardization is a consequence of standard setting when attempts to improve student learning become bureaucratized and curriculum is defined in terms of what is measurable and is established at state or national levels (Sleeter, 2005, p. 4). The real problem, however, is not that the curriculum is defined in terms of what is measurable, but how the word “measure” is defined, and how “measurable” results are utilized. Measurement is part of a larger set of questions relating to curriculum that asks how well students learned the curriculum. These are questions that need to be asked (p. 64).

Today, what many educators are concerned with is the fact that the “reform by testing” context is narrowing curriculum to what is on state tests. The logic behind “standards–based reform–by–testing” is simple: if states set clear, high standards, align curriculum to them, teach
to them, test student mastery of them, and attach consequences to test results, then teaching and learning will improve (Sleeter, 2005, p. 64). Sleeter shows that the process of teaching and learning is never that linear. In some districts, testing serves as a substitute for investing resources to reduce class sizes, develop good school libraries, and to help teachers plan and teach rich and engaging curricula (p. 70).

**Performance measurement.** From the perspective of holistic educational thought, the process of measurement can be a useful part of curriculum planning and instruction if used as a guide to improve student learning such as is done in performance measurement. Performance measurement is the process of assessing student learning through a variety of means and follows logic that is different from standardized testing.

With performance measurement, educators identify what high–quality work looks like. They articulate criteria and standards that can be used to judge it; they use that criteria to guide student learning; they give ongoing feedback on student work; and they evaluate students’ finished work based on how close it comes to high–quality work in the discipline (Sleeter, 2005, p. 71). With performance measurement, it is the whole approach to measurement that is different. Sometimes referred to as “Bottom–up planning,” it is an approach in which teachers and even students can participate in the process of constructing assessment systems. In Sleeter’s words, performance measurement is what it means to “democratize assessment” (p. 71).

**Discussion**

While Bohm (2002) provides insight into how the concept of measurement was perceived in antiquity among the ancient Greeks and how it reflected the view that physical health was to be regarded as the outcome of a state of right inward measure in all parts and processes of the
body, Sleeter (2005) argues that the concept of measurement should be used as a way to guide student learning and not as a way to punish teachers. Those in charge of constructing policy in education need to think about approaching the process of measurement from both perspectives. Essentially, what Bohm and Sleeter are saying is that the process of measurement has to include non-cognitive as well as cognitive factors.

**Practical Recommendations**

By practical recommendations, I mean tangible recommendations that can be implemented in practice. For example, earlier in the study, I talked about the Precautionary Principle. To reiterate, the Precautionary Principle is the approach of avoiding harm in policy even when there is no absolute scientific certainty. It is an approach that can be used to justify the design of school buildings to be more energy efficient, or to have more natural light – what is called green school design – even in the absence of evidence that shows a causal link between school building design and improvements in student health and learning.

Still, the American Lung Association recently found that American school children miss more than 14 million school days a year because of asthma exacerbated by poor indoor air quality. Furthermore, it costs nearly three times more to provide health care for a child with asthma than a child without asthma. In 2006 dollars this amount equaled $1,650 per child — costs borne not by the schools but by the students and their families. Also, a recent Carnegie Mellon review of five separate studies found an average reduction of 38.5 percent in asthma in buildings with improved air quality (Kats, 2012, n.p.).

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The Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) was the first school district in the nation to invoke the Precautionary Principle as a guiding framework for its strategic action plan. Their policy reads in part,

The “Precautionary Principle” is the long–term objective of the District. The principle recognizes that: a) no pesticide product is free from risk or threat to human health, and b) industrial producers should be required to prove that their pesticide products demonstrate an absence of risks…rather than requiring that the government or the public prove that human health is being harmed…(Karliner, 2005, p. 13)

LAUSD’s adoption of the Precautionary Principle is the result of persistent agitation by one woman, Robina Suwol, a mother of two, who helped convince the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the second largest district in the nation, to adopt an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) policy in March 1999—one year to the day after her son was poisoned. Undeterred by the size of the district—a million students and 70,000 teachers in 800 schools—she was determined to fix a problem that not only affected her children, but children from all over Los Angeles (Karliner, 2005, p. 13).

Even though LAUSD recognized that “full implementation of the Precautionary Principle is not possible at this time and may not be for decades,” (cited in Karliner, 2005, p. 13) the LAUSD school board took a pragmatic yet visionary step. It at once addressed an acute problem in the school district—childhood exposure to potentially hazardous chemicals—while also opening the door in Los Angeles and elsewhere for the Precautionary Principle to be applied more broadly in a school context (p. 13). “It isn’t perfect. And it’s a huge school district,” said
Martha Arguello of Physicians for Social Responsibility, “yet it has managed to become a model for the nation” (p. 13).

**Testing and Measurement Tools**

*Non-cognitive assessment tools.* Whereas Bohm (2002) and Sleeter (2005) looked at how the concept of measurement was perceived in the past and how it should be perceived today, William Sedlacek (2004) provides actual instruments that can be used to measure student performance in a more holistic way. Sedlacek’s study is designed for university and college administrators, faculty members, assessment professionals, outreach programs, and just about any program designed to support students from a range of populations. One of the most useful things that Sedlacek does in his study is to identify, define, and deconstruct the notion of the “Big Test”:

As every student who has ever taken a Big Test (as well as every administrator or educator who has ever reviewed the results) knows, Big Tests are generally divided into two sections: verbal and quantitative. These two dimensions form the basis for what is often called “cognitive” intelligence, the only measure of ability that Big Tests assess. (p. xi)

After showing the absurdity in defining intelligence on the basis of two sections of a standardized test, Sedlacek (2004) offers a series of systematic approaches to measure student performance that not only take into account, but also value “multiple forms of intelligence” (Gardner, 1993) and skill. Instead of asking, “How can we make the SAT and other such tests better?” Sedlacek suggests that we ask a different question: “What kinds of measures will meet our needs now and in the future?” (p. 6). Like Sleeter (2005), Sedlacek argues that we do not
need to ignore current tests, but that we need to “add some new measures that expand the potential we can derive from assessment” (p. 6). The obvious question is, “Where can we find alternatives or supplements to the Big Test?” (p. 7). Sedlacek offered the following response:

Thirty years of development, testing, and legal challenges demonstrate that the use of noncognitive variables can provide what is missing from the Big Test approach. *Noncognitive* is used here to refer to variables relating to adjustment, motivation, and student perceptions, rather than relying solely on the traditional verbal and quantitative (often called cognitive) areas typically measured by standardized tests. (p. 7)

Sedlacek (2004) spends the rest of the book explaining and outlining the process that educators, students, parents, and administrators can use to go beyond the “Big Test” (p. 7). Again, “noncognitive variables” are not a substitute for the cognitive focus employed in traditional assessments. They add to the range of attributes that are considered when making assessments (p. 7). Listed below are the eight noncognitive variables (NCV’s) identified by Sedlacek:

1. Positive self-concept;

2. Realistic self-appraisal;

3. Successfully handling the system;

4. Preference for long-term goals;

5. Availability of strong support person;

6. Leadership experience;
7. Community involvement; and

8. Knowledge acquired in a field. (p. 7)

My recommendation is that administrators of intervention programs, college and university admissions directors, middle school and high school principals, counselors and teachers, and education policymakers implement Sedlacek’s (2004) non-cognitive assessment tools. Doing so would begin a more democratic process of utilizing assessments that are appropriate for the needs of students who exhibit “multiple levels of intelligence” (Gardner, 1993).

Spaces to Study Holistic Educational Thought

Holistic education departments, divisions, or subdivisions. Wouldn’t it be easier and more useful to discuss Sedlacek’s (2004) study within a community of scholars? What if universities created holistic educational thought departments or divisions in their Colleges and/or Schools of Education? To explain how this would work, I will use the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) as an example.

At the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), the Department of Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership (EPOL) in the College of Education currently has five divisions: Education Leadership and Policy; Global Studies in Education; Higher Education; Human Resource Development; and Social and Philosophical Foundations. Each of these five divisions also has subdivisions. For example, the division of Social and Philosophical Foundations has five subdivisions: History of Education; Philosophy of Education; and Social and...
Social and Cultural Studies of Education; Diversity and Equity Issues in Education (Online); and New Learning and New Literacies (Online).\textsuperscript{127}

At UIUC, holistic educational thought in K-12 education could either be a subdivision of the Division of Social and Philosophical Foundations, the Division of Education Leadership and Policy, or the Division of Global Studies in Education. Or, it could serve as its own Division, or even as its own Department. While the details of whether to have a department or a division of holistic educational thought would have to be worked out among Faculty, Deans, and Professors at each College or School of Education, the benefits would be limitless.

The biggest benefit, in my view, is that such a department or division would be interdisciplinary and would bring together Professors across the university from different departments such as Architecture, Agricultural Education, Applied Health Sciences, Art Education, Community Health, Engineering, Environmental Sustainability –the list is endless.\textsuperscript{128}

**Study abroad programs.** Another benefit of a holistic educational thought department or division, especially if implemented as part of Global Studies in Education is that it could work with university study abroad offices to help implement study abroad programs in local middle schools and high schools. This could also have positive implications in terms of helping high school students become competitively eligible college applicants.

At the University of California (UC), Foreign Language courses taken in the seventh and eighth grades may be used to fulfill part or all of the undergraduate admissions Foreign

\textsuperscript{127} See \url{http://education.illinois.edu/epol/divisions}
\textsuperscript{128} Departments are UIUC Departments. See \url{https://my.illinois.edu/uPortal/render.userLayoutRootNode.target.u419981n6.uP;jsessionid=85460F662740A8272B9D0373CE12B62C?pltc_target=210253.u419981n6&pltc_type=RENDER&plip_action=subjectsView#u419981n6}
Language (Language other than English) requirement – if the high school accepts them as equivalent to its own courses.\textsuperscript{129} Since one of the aims of holistic educational thought in K-12 education is to increase academic achievement to competitive eligibility levels, working with university study abroad program offices would not only help increase student aptitude and proficiency in a foreign language, but would also be a novel and creative way to enhance the relationship between university study abroad offices and middle schools and high schools – a relationship which is now virtually nonexistent.

By establishing partnerships between university study abroad programs and middle schools and high schools, holistic educational thought departments or divisions could help transform high school students into competitively eligible college applicants in a specific and clear way. For example, when students apply to college and show that they have participated in a study abroad program every summer since the seventh grade, their applications will show practical and sustained\textsuperscript{130} levels of cultural and global awareness, both of which are highly valued by admissions officers.

University graduate and undergraduate students who have studied abroad can even serve as chaperones, mentors, and advisors to middle school and high school students, provided that the university finds a way to incentivize the service, perhaps through research assistantships (R.A.); teacher assistantships (T.A.); graduate assistantships (G.A.); or some form of work study. Through study abroad programs, the relationship between local middle schools, high schools, and university Colleges of Education and Schools of Education would become more productive.

\textsuperscript{129} See http://admission.universityofcalifornia.edu/freshman/requirements/a-g-requirements/index.html#math

\textsuperscript{130} Ideally, this would be part of the middle school and high school curriculum: a supplement to foreign language courses.
Also, university study abroad programs offer a number of short term study abroad programs such as winter abroad and summer abroad programs.\textsuperscript{131}

These programs would be ideal for middle school and high school students since their schedules would not enable them to study abroad for a full academic year. Thus, the university study abroad program office would be able to help design study abroad programs uniquely suited to middle school and high school students. This recommendation is based largely on the experience that I had when I studied abroad. My experience influenced my academic trajectory tremendously and impacted the way that I perceived education. When I went to Spain, I saw that education could bring the world to me – literally. Before Spain, education was just a routine: class, homework, lectures – boring. I was always searching for an education that would delight the senses and appeal to the imagination. Spain did that by showing that I could learn Spanish outside of the classroom. I wasn’t just sitting in a classroom learning Spanish. I was in Spain learning Spanish. If given the chance to go abroad, maybe other students will have similar positive reactions.

**Multicultural literature in K-12 schools.** Another area that a department or division of holistic educational thought could be helpful with is in working with local districts, middle school and high school administrators, teachers and principals, to implement a multicultural curriculum in K-12 schools. From the perspective of holistic educational thought, multicultural literature must deal with racism, or, in the words of James Palermo (2002), “become a sham” (p. 119). “The idea that racism is someone else’s problem” says Palermo “must be attacked. This can be done by psychologizing racism, showing its lived everyday reality” (p. 120).

\textsuperscript{131} At UIUC, see \url{http://www.studyabroad.illinois.edu/}
Not only could multicultural literature help mitigate the negative media portrayals of certain students by teaching how to become critical of such portrayals, but it would also serve as a testament to the legions of education researchers (Ball, 2006; Ladson–Billings, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Stovall, 2009) who have been calling for “culturally relevant pedagogy” for decades, that research matters. Efforts to include multicultural literature in schools have been tried before, as Ravitch (2010) pointed out, and failed miserably, most notably when “The efforts to establish voluntary national standards fell apart in the fall of 1994, when Lynne V. Cheney attacked the not-yet-released history standards for their political bias” (p. 17). According to Ravitch, Cheney’s “scathing critique in the Wall Street Journal opened up a bitter national argument about what history, or rather, whose history should be taught:

Cheney lambasted the standards as the epitome of left-wing political correctness, because they emphasized the nation’s failings and paid scant attention to its great men. The standards document, she said, mentioned Joseph McCarthy and McCarthyism nineteen times, the Ku Klux Klan seventeen times, and Harriet Tubman six times, while mentioning Ulysses S. Grant just once and Robert E. Lee not at all. Nor was there any reference to Paul Revere, Alexander Graham Bell, Thomas Edison, Jonas Silk, or the Wright brothers. Cheney told an interviewer that the document was a “warped and distorted version of the American past in which it becomes a story of oppression and failure. (p. 17)

The “controversy,” in Ravitch’s (2010) view, soon engulfed mainstream media outlets across the country and quickly became a “debate about the role of minority groups and women in American history, which was placed in opposition to the role of great white men” (p. 17). The
historians who supervised the writing of the history standards did not anticipate that their “commitment to teaching social history through the lens of race, class, and gender” would encounter such resistance (p. 17). I am not proposing national history standards. My recommendation is on a much smaller scale. I propose that holistic educational thought departments or divisions work with teachers on local levels to include multicultural literature in K-12 schools.

The difference between what I propose and what happened in 1994 is that the historians who supervised the writing of the history standards worked in isolation from the schools that were to be affected. They were not part of a holistic educational thought department or division that would have worked directly with local schools because there were no such departments or divisions. The benefit of establishing formal relationships among local middle schools, high schools, and universities is that universities have access to a variety of multicultural studies departments. Thus, middle school and high school students would have access to Professors and graduate students from departments as diverse as . . .


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132 At UIUC, see https://my.illinois.edu/uPortal/render.userLayoutRootNode.target.u419981n6.uP;jsessionid=85460F662740A8272B9D0373CE12B62C?pltc_target=210253.u419981n6&pltc_type=RENDER&pltp_action=subjectsView#u419981n6

133 See https://my.illinois.edu/uPortal/render.userLayoutRootNode.target.u419981n6.uP;jsessionid=85460F662740A8272B9D0373CE12B62C?pltc_target=210253.u419981n6&pltc_type=RENDER&pltp_action=subjectsView#u419981n6
Not only would middle school and high school students get a chance to work with Professors and graduate students, but also undergraduate students who are closer in age, and who could help with curriculum materials and planning. An added benefit is that working with undergraduate students who are closer in age and who may even share similar backgrounds might help inspire middle school and high school students who suffer from low academic achievement and motivation.

**Model wellness policy guide (MWPG).** Another area that holistic educational thought departments or divisions might be helpful in is with implementing wellness policies in local school districts. In the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, the U.S. Congress established a new requirement that all school districts with a federally funded school meal program form a Wellness Committee to draft a Wellness Policy by the start of the 2006-2007 school year (MWPG, 2004). Federal law requires that these policies must, at a minimum, include goals for nutrition education, physical activity, and other school-based activities that promote student wellness. Some of the goals are listed below:

1. Establish nutrition guidelines for all foods available on campus during the school day with the objectives of promoting student health and reducing childhood obesity.

2. Provide assurance that guidelines for reimbursable school meals shall not be less restrictive than regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of Agriculture.

3. Establish a plan for measuring the impact and implementation of the local wellness policy.
4. Involve parents, students, and representatives of the school authority, school board, school administrators, and the public in development of the local wellness policy. (MWPG, 2004)

The Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL), in collaboration with Slow Food USA and the Chez Panisse Foundation, prepared a sample Model Wellness Policy Guide (MWPG) (2004). The Guide provides language and instructions for drafting a wellness policy that places health at the forefront of the academic curriculum. The MWPG was inspired by the work of the Child Nutrition Advisory Council of the Berkeley Unified School District. That working group, a forerunner of the wellness committee, drafted and supported – to adoption – the first school district wellness policy of its kind in the nation in August of 1999.

The policy has been emulated by school districts across the nation, has influenced the current Wellness Policy process, and serves as the foundation for Grab Five, the national school meal policy of the United Kingdom. The MWPG also led to the formulation of the first public school district food policy of its kind in the nation. Below is an overall mission statement of the MWPG:

Given the rapid rise in childhood obesity and diabetes, we now have no choice but to change school food policy on a national level. Join us in this extraordinary opportunity to influence the development of school district policies that promote human and environmental health, high academic achievement, and a sustainable future. (MWPG, 2004)

My recommendation is to use the MWPG as the main research project for students in a holistic educational thought department or division. To provide an example of how this might
work, the Katonah-Lewisboro school district in New York provides a useful model. There, a survey went out to the entire Katonah community of parents, community members, students, and faculty. Colleges and universities have access to survey research services as well as online research tools. In addition to providing access to research tools, holistic educational thought departments or divisions may be able to bring together other researchers from different departments to the process, thereby ensuring greater sophistication and diversity in the use of research techniques and methods.

Holistic educational thought departments or divisions may also be instrumental in helping students think through issues of school organization. In the words of Michele Simon (2006), author of *Appetite for Profit: How the Food Industry Undermines our Health and how to Fight Back*, “Organizing in your local school, while that can be extremely challenging, is kind of your best hope for making change happen” (cited in Kalafa, 2007). Additionally, with a department or division of holistic educational thought designed to implement the MWPG, students would be in a better position to ensure that an understanding of wellness would include learning opportunities that adhere to the following ecological standards:

1. The integration of core curriculum projects with learning experiences in instructional gardens, kitchen classrooms, cafeterias, and local farms.

2. Academic skills linked to meal preparation.

3. An emphasis on fresh, local, seasonal, whole, and sustainably grown foods from local sources.

4. The implementation of recycling, reduction, and waste compost projects.
5. The development of positive social interactions and the enjoyment of meals through positive dining experiences.

6. A basic understanding of the principles of sustainability.

7. Enhanced respect for cultural and agricultural values.

8. And ways to include families and the community as a resource in the learning process.

(MWPG, 2004)

Holistic educational thought departments or divisions, because they would be part of the university structure, would be helpful in securing researchers from different departments such as Applied Health Sciences (AHS); Community Health (CHLH); Curriculum and Instruction (CI); Food Science and Human Nutrition (FSHN); Human and Community Development (HCD); and Environmental Sustainability (ENSU). This would ensure that the research conducted to implement the MWPG would be conducted at the highest level of quality.\(^{134}\)

Implementing the MWPG would also require the ability to navigate through the often difficult and unfamiliar terrain of school contracts. Through a department or division of holistic educational thought, students would have access to law Professors and to law students to help navigate the language of food contracts in local school districts. In the words of Kate Adamick, an attorney for Food Systems Solutions who was hired by the Katonah, NY, wellness policy committee to audit the food in each school’s cafeteria,

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\(^{134}\) Departments mentioned are UIUC departments. See [http://education.illinois.edu/epol/divisions](http://education.illinois.edu/epol/divisions)
I firmly believe that the way to change the school food system is to change the contracts. If the contract says we want no products in our school system that contain high fructose corn syrup and no products that contain transfats, and we want everything cooked from scratch, we don’t want any processed foods whatsoever in our system, then that’s what the contractor has to provide. (cited in Kalafa, 2007)

Each one of the requirements mentioned by Adamick, along with a demand for fresh locally sourced fruits and vegetables, were written into the wellness policy proposed by the Katonah wellness committee. In a surprise victory for the wellness committee, each one of their wellness policy requirements was adopted by the Katonah School District (KSD) in July of 2006 (Kalafa, 2007).

General Discussion

The benefits of establishing holistic educational thought departments or divisions as part of university Colleges or Schools of Education are endless. The benefits of using the model wellness policy guide (MWPG) such as that used by the Katonah-Lewisboro school district in New York, or that offered by the Center for Ecoliteracy (CEL), is that they can be used as tools to enhance the research component of a holistic educational thought department or division.

Students would not only learn valuable research skills such as how to conduct surveys and how to interpret findings, but they would also learn how to do them in a way that would have practical results for local school districts. To me, one of the most beneficial aspects of a holistic educational thought department or division would be its ability to help local teachers, principals, and school district administrators think about ways to promote professional development. Two
areas where it could be extremely helpful are in (a) helping schools maintain competitive eligibility standards and (b) helping schools promote ecological literacy.

**Professional Development**

The University of California (UC) counselor conference. The UC counselor conference is a one-day conference that offers the latest information about UC admissions and financial aid. Anyone who advises students about higher education, from community college transfer counselors to high school guidance counselors, principals and teachers, is welcome to attend (UC, 2013). The conference covers every aspect of the freshman and transfer admissions process. One of the most useful workshops is “Presenting Yourself on the UC Freshman Application & Personal Statement” (UC, 2013). It is during this workshop that counselors learn the ins and outs of the personal statement from the perspective of senior admissions evaluators.

It is also at these conferences where articulation agreements between Community Colleges and UC campuses are discussed so that transfer (community college) counselors and high school counselors know what community college courses UC campuses will accept from high school students who take courses at local community colleges. Even though the UC counselor conference is designed for California high school counselors, it might be a good idea for out of state counselors to attend the conference as well, as most academic (competitive eligibility) requirements will pertain to all students regardless of the state that they are in.

If counselors in other states decide that it does not make sense for them to attend the UC Counselor Conference, I still see the UC Counselor Conference as a useful model for universities in other states to emulate. To help facilitate this process, it would be helpful if State Boards of Education incentivized high schools to send teachers and counselors to conferences like the UC
Counselor Conference as part of ongoing professional development training, and to work with university outreach offices such as that of the Office of Minority Student Affairs (OMSA) at UIUC, which have programs designed to prepare students for college.\textsuperscript{135}

It is important that a dialogue take place between State Boards of Education and high schools to figure out how to incentivize attendance at these conferences and how to incentivize stronger relationships between university outreach programs and high school counselors. One way would be to connect state licensure procedures for public school teachers and counselors to mandatory attendance at these conferences (Darling-Hammond, Wei, & Johnson, 2009; Trent, 2012, personal communication). That would be a good way to promote what education researchers, Jennifer Stephan & James Rosenbaum (2009), refer to as a “broader conception of counseling”:

A broader conception of counseling is also needed. As noted, counselors’ reliance on commonsense knowledge preserves old biases, ignores the needs of new students, and prevents students from seeing new options. Instead of merely being trained in counseling psychology, high-school guidance counselors must also be trained in “counseling sociology.” They must understand the new institutional and program options, various ways of attending and funding college, and how these choices affect degree completion. Permeability presents new opportunities, but improved counseling is needed to improve transparency about these opportunities. (p. 939)

\textsuperscript{135} In states that do not have high school counselor conferences similar to the one offered by the University of California (UC), many local research universities have outreach programs that work either directly or indirectly with the campus undergraduate admissions office. Thus, relationships can still be set up to ensure that students have access to competitive eligibility requirements.
Professional development of child nutrition services staff. The Model Wellness Policy Guide (MWPG, 2004) recognizes that using local food systems as a context for learning, and embedding nutrition education in a larger ecological curriculum generates new content for students to learn. In order to be effective in schools, teachers would have to learn new content and new strategies for teaching. Also, for food service personnel, new menus require new ways of purchasing, preparing, and presenting foods. Thus, the transition to an educational model that makes food a central part of the academic curriculum requires professional development.

To help with this transition, the MWPG (2004) contains language that ensures that Child Nutrition Services will be provided with USDA-approved computer software, training, and support to implement nutrient-based menu planning when such flexibility is desirable; and also, that Child Nutrition Services Staff and district teachers will receive professional development jointly “at least once a year, to facilitate a more coordinated approach to integrating classroom lessons with experiences in gardens, kitchen classrooms, and the cafeteria” (pp. 9-10).

One way to help integrate classroom lessons with gardens is for schools to encourage students to create ecology clubs. Research (Sobel, 2005; Martusewicz, Edmundson, & Lupinacci, 2011) shows that in many districts around the country, ecology clubs are leading to economic developments and social entrepreneurial opportunities that are beneficial to local communities. The creation of these clubs could be part of a school district’s wellness policy as well.

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136 A valuable resource to help with this can be found at [http://www.eco-schools.org/Menu/About/Eco-Schools](http://www.eco-schools.org/Menu/About/Eco-Schools)

Another way to help schools coordinate integrated approaches to classroom learning would be for schools to work with organizations such as *Roots of Success* (2012) or even local community colleges to help implement vocational education projects in “green technologies” in K-12 schools. According to a United Nations report issued in 2008, alternative energy alone was slated to create more than 20 million jobs worldwide over the next twenty years (UNCTAD, 2008). These are jobs in environmental engineering, “eco-car” design, solar and wind turbine technology, and other sustainable development projects designed to create innovative ways to prevent global warming and ozone depletion. If policies in K-12 education reflected a broader level of thought, this could be taking place in K-12 schools today.

**Final Remarks**

At the beginning of this study, I said that I wanted to raise the possibility that what American public education policy needed in order to address present and future challenges is a new “guiding narrative, a new myth,” (Jones, 2008, p. 104). This new “guiding narrative,” the one that I have presented, was inspired by a vision of education that was articulated by Booker T. Washington (1901/1999). Washington’s view of education was criticized by numerous scholars (Anderson, 1988; DuBois, 1909/1965), and by others such as Ida B. Wells (in Duster, 1928/1970) for acquiescing to the demands of the southern landowning classes who sought to maintain within the South a “social consensus that did not challenge traditional inequalities of wealth and power” (Anderson, p. 33).

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139 The Adam Joseph Lewis Center (AJLC) at Oberlin College in Ohio is a good example of how schools can transform the school building and its landscape into a “green building” – a “living curriculum” – and in the process, teach students vocational principles of education based on ecological design to transform local communities into thriving centers of beauty, health and learning (Orr, 2008).
Yet from the perspective of holistic educational thought, Washington’s (1907/2009) philosophy of education is valuable in the sense that it is practical and theoretical. It is designed to use theoretical concepts learned in class – chemistry – for example, to promote economic prosperity through the process of agricultural cultivation. In Washington’s autobiography (1901/1999) and in some of his other works (1901, 1903/2008, 1904, 1911/2010), he referred to this as an education of the hands, the head, and the heart.

I remember first learning about Booker T. Washington (1901/1999) and W.E.B. DuBois (1909/1965) in a sociology class in college. Although I appreciated DuBois’ philosophy, I sided with Washington. There were a few with me who sided with Washington as well, but most of the class sided with DuBois. What inspired me about Washington’s philosophy was that I could see the results. Tuskegee students built their own buildings. Washington encouraged that. Washington wanted students to be self-reliant. That was part of what he called “My larger education” (1911/2010).

I didn’t see that kind of practical thought in DuBois’ (1909/1965) philosophy. To me, DuBois espoused the same kind of theoretical education that I received in college. I will share a personal story that explains the kind of struggle that I went through in an effort to find my own “larger education” (Washington, 1911/2010). After graduating from college and working for nearly a decade in academic outreach, I quit. Something was missing. I didn’t have any practical skills and I felt that academic outreach would be far more effective if it could provide students with practical skills to supplement the academic advising component. So I applied for a position with a local neighborhood property management company.
When I was called in for the interview, the owner of the company, after reading over my resume, looked at me curiously and asked me why someone like me with my educational background wanted a job fixing and cleaning houses. I told him it was because I didn’t know how to work with my hands and that I wanted to learn. He looked at me curiously again, but said okay and gave me the job. That was a tough time in my life because I was ridiculed by family and friends for taking what they perceived to be a blue collar job. What they didn’t know was that, like Washington (1911/2010), it was part of my larger education.

With Booker T. Washington’s (1901/1999) education philosophy, I found what I perceived to be the closest form of an optimal education; namely, an education designed to transform students from consumers into producers. I still think that to this day. When Washington said that he was determined to have the students at Tuskegee learn not only the value of agricultural and domestic work, but also to have them erect their own buildings, and in the process teach them to see not only the utility of labor, but beauty and dignity as well, I became one of his students (p. 98).

“Finally,” I thought, “Somebody is making sense.” What inspired me even more is when Washington (1901/1999) said that in teaching students to erect their own buildings, he didn’t care about them making mistakes because he knew that making mistakes was part of the process of learning: “Mistakes I knew would be made,” he said, “but these mistakes would teach us valuable lessons for the future” (p. 99). Today, many of those buildings still stand. Washington (1907/2009) was well aware that his philosophy of education would be criticized and he knew that opposition to it would be largely based on the argument that it was favorable to the Southern
landowning classes and therefore against the interests of the ex-slaves (p. 171). Anderson’s (1988) statement captures this sentiment quite well:

It is perhaps one of the great ironies of Afro-American history that the ideological and programmatic challenge to the ex-slaves’ conceptions of universal schooling and social progress was conceived and nurtured by a Yankee, Samuel Chapman Armstrong, and a former slave, Booker T. Washington. (p. 33)

Washington (1907/2009) knew that he would be opposed. He knew that ex-slaves would fear that industrial education would mean the abandonment of all political privileges; the abandonment of the desire to learn higher or classical education; and that it would brand the black race for all time as a “special hand-working class” (p. 171). He was well aware of those fears, but he also knew that a student skilled in agriculture who was successful in farming, while he or she may not be able to pass a purely literary college curriculum, would be laying the foundation for his or her children and grandchildren to do so if desirable:

Industrial education in this generation is contributing in the highest degree to make what is called higher education a success. It is now realized that in so far as the race has intelligent and skillful producers, the greater will be the success of the minister, lawyer, doctor, and teacher. (p. 172)

Today I stand as the great grandchild of those whom Booker T. Washington (1907/2009) saw laying the foundation to ensure that I would be a successful “minister, lawyer, doctor, and teacher” (p. 172). Even though the world that I live in is different from the one that Washington inherited, the problem of this century – the 21st century – is still the problem of what DuBois (1909/1965) called the color line. As I see it, the duty of education policy today is to integrate the
vocational aspects of Washington’s education philosophy with the academic aspects of DuBois’ education philosophy. Perhaps then, education might be able to deal with some of the issues that Associate Professor at Teachers College, Marc Lamont Hill, expressed recently:

There is no better example of racism in the twenty-first century than the relationship of black people and access to healthy foods. You know, people think about racism as an individual act of prejudice or discrimination from one person to another. That’s not what it’s about. It’s about systems, it’s about structures, it’s about institutions; and the fact that black people live in neighborhoods where they can’t get access to healthy food choices and white people can get healthy food choices – that is classic textbook racism. When you want to wipe out an entire generation of people, when you want to engage in the kind of twenty first century genocide, all you have to do is continue to do what we’re doing, which is deprive people of access to healthy food. (Hurt, 2012)

I do not see Washington’s (1901/1999) philosophy of education as being able to end racism, but I do see it as being able to provide healthy food for students and their families who live in communities where access to healthy and fresh food is difficult to obtain. In addition to that, I see Washington’s philosophy as being able to transform communities that are poverty-stricken and unhealthy into ones that are beautiful and healthy. Yet it also takes strong mathematical and academic skills to run businesses, which is why DuBois’ (1909/1965) focus on academic skills is absolutely necessary as a complement to vocational education. During one of his lectures at Tuskegee, Washington gave students a way to deal with the social, political, and economic issues of their day:
Try to get into a frame of mind where you will be constantly seeing and calling attention to the strong and beautiful things which you observe in the life and work of your teachers. Grow into the habit of talking about the bright side of life. When you meet a fellow student, a teacher, or anybody, or when you write letters home, get into the habit of calling attention to the bright things of life that you have seen; the things that are beautiful, the things that are charming. Just in proportion as you do this, you will find that you will not only influence yourself in the right direction, but that you will also influence others that way. (1903/2008, p. 7)

By focusing on what he called the “beautiful things” in life it was almost as if Washington (1903/1908) was trying to give student’s access to another world. Perhaps it was that “fair world beyond” that DuBois (1909/1965) mentioned in the “Sorrow Songs.” Perhaps that is what Washington wanted his students to glimpse. That is the kind of world that I see in holistic educational thought – a beautiful world – a world where academic and vocational education is integrated; a world where students are taught to thrive; a world where gardens not only help to reduce obesity and diabetes, but also help to delight the senses and appeal to the imagination. How delightful would it be to live in that world?
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Science Publishers.


