ARTICLE

Towards an understanding of holistic education in the middle years of education

JOHN HARE
Woking High School, Surrey, UK

Holistic education lacks a single definition but may be described through a number of recurrent themes that appear in the literature. These themes have been used to develop underlying values that reflect this educational approach and the behaviours associated with these values are described. A person profile is presented from these values and behaviours and describes the attributes, abilities and competencies of a student who has benefited from holistic education in the middle years of their education. The advantages of the person profile are discussed.

KEYWORDS   *behaviours, holistic education, person profile, values*

Il n'existe pas de définition unique de l'éducation globale; celle-ci peut cependant être décrite grâce à un certain nombre de thèmes qui apparaissent de façon récurrente dans la littérature. L'auteur utilise ces thèmes pour développer les valeurs sous-jacentes qui caractérisent cette approche éducative et décrire les comportements associés à ces valeurs. Il établit le profil d'une personne à partir de ces valeurs et comportements, profil qui décrit les qualités, les aptitudes et les compétences d'un élève ayant bénéficié d'une éducation globale au cours du premier cycle du secondaire. Enfin, il analyse les avantages du profil de cette personne.

No existe una definición única para 'educación holística'; no obstante, ésta se puede describir por medio de una serie de elementos recurrentes en la literatura especializada. El autor se basa en tales elementos para desarrollar los valores subyacentes a la educación holística y describe las conductas asociadas a dichos valores. Presenta también un perfil personal basado en estos valores y conductas, y describe los atributos, habilidades y competencias esperados en los alumnos que hayan participado de una educación holística durante los años de enseñanza media. Asimismo, analiza las ventajas del perfil personal.

Introduction

Education is moving beyond the confines of subject knowledge accumulation towards mastering the instruments of learning and the application of knowledge in a variety of contexts (UNESCO, 1996: 86). A focus is emerging of learning and understanding, developing personal competences, learning to live with others and the education of the whole person. For example:

301

> Education must contribute to the all-round development of each individual – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values. (UNESCO, 1996: 94)

Furthermore, in a constantly changing world, the concept of a single job for life is disappearing and the demand for new expertise and skills to meet a variety of demands is gathering pace. The needs of the world will be different in the years ahead and education is evolving into a lifelong, continual process of personal learning and enrichment in whatever context or situation the learner finds him/herself. It is apparent that:

> It is not enough to supply each child early in life with a store of knowledge to be drawn on from then on. Each individual must be equipped to seize learning opportunities throughout life, both to broaden her or his knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to adapt to a changing, complex and interdependent world. (UNESCO, 1996: 85)

The all-round development of each individual described above, necessitates the broadest approach to education at a number of levels and it is within this context that holistic education has been described by Singh (1996: 227):

> Holistic education must acknowledge the multiple dimensions of the human personality – physical, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and spiritual – thus moving towards the perennial dream of an integrated individual living on a harmonious planet.

> Similarly, Clark (1991c: 55) has articulated the theme of integration as follows:

> The ultimate purpose of holistic education is to transform the way that we look at ourselves and our relationship to the world from a fragmented perspective to an integrative perspective.

> Holistic education addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels. It aims for the fullest possible human development (Forbes, 2003: 3) enabling a person to become the very best or finest that they can be and develop fully 'those capacities that together make up a human being' (Forbes, 2003: 21). Within this holistic perspective, the student is positioned as an active, participatory and critical learner who perceives and understands him/herself in a changing world and in a variety of local and global scenarios.

A working definition of holistic education remains elusive, although there are common beliefs, feelings, principles and general ideas that appear to be basic and central to it (Forbes, 2003: 2). The absence of a common interpretation of holistic education introduces uncertainty in the educational practices that would deliver the key elements of this educational approach. The Middle Years Programme of the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB MYP, for further details see IBO [2006]) exemplifies this issue. The IB MYP emphasises a holistic view of learning (International Baccalaureate Organization [IBO], 2002a: 4) but details of what this represents are not fully described and, consequently, this holistic view has been interpreted inconsistently (Armstrong, 2000: 18). This lack of clarity is an obstacle for educators, parents and students and has the potential to obscure the advantages that this educational approach offers. Such clarity would allow students and educators alike to appreciate what is being aimed for within this age group.

In the absence of a clear definition, this paper seeks to bring clarity to the meaning of holistic education through the outputs that this educational approach promotes in students who are completing the middle years of their education. From the values that characterize holistic education have been developed personal behaviours and attributes that lead to a *person profile*. This *person profile* identifies the capabilities of the student and what they should be able to do and with what outcomes.

The middle years of education represents only a single step in the life-long education of the student, but those middle years represent a period when the young adolescent is at a 'critical phase of personal and intellectual development' (IBO, 2002b: 3). Reference points for students at such a formative period in their holistic education are invaluable. The learning experiences of students and the influences upon them at any single point in their school career will differ. While they may be exposed to similar academic learning opportunities, they will experience different influences both in and outside the formal educational environment that will shape how they progress, and then respond to the situations to which they are exposed. They will absorb and reflect on these influences in different ways and compare them to pre-existing personal constructs. These are daunting tasks for the developing adolescent in any education system, and the response by students to these influences will vary as they mature within the programme.

Holistic education is a journey for both the educator and the student. For both, the nature of holistic education can change as they each progress through the programme, and draw different experiences from it. The process of holistic education must therefore be flexible and dynamic to

303

accommodate these personal differences and influences and, moreover, differences in the rate of personal progression.

Themes of holistic education

There is no core text telling us what holistic education represents, but a number of recurrent themes are associated with holistic education (Clarke, 1991a: 32, 1991b: 40, 1991c: 61; Forbes, 2003: 17; Martin, 1997; 13; Miller, 1991: 3, 2001: 3) and are presented below. Each of these themes is described briefly and provides some explanation of what it represents. It is evident that many features of these themes overlap, which is not unexpected since the themes are themselves interrelated.

Our interconnectedness with all that is around us

Holistic education emphasizes our interconnectedness with all that is around us and it demands of us a respect for all life. A close kinship with and responsibility for our fellow human beings follows and complements a sense of community that is further described below. Moreover, this interconnectedness brings with it personal responsibilities that must be exercised with due regard for the well-being of the wider community. Furthermore, there is a broader dimension within interconnectedness and this describes our 'ultimate "unity" to the universe from which meaning is derived' (Clarke, 1991c: 57).

Development of relationships

This is an essential element of holistic education. The individual develops his/her relationships with the world and with others, simultaneously gaining knowledge and personal awareness from what these relationships bring to them and others. Furthermore, the student appreciates that different individuals have different roles and bring different skills and attributes to these relationships. A further dimension describes the relationships between areas of knowledge and their interrelationships and the transferability of skills between these areas of knowledge and expertise. The value of relationships also includes an awareness of co-operative learning, team roles and group responsibilities that are features of future working practices in later life.

A sense of shared community

Through an awareness of shared community, the student becomes progressively aware of the importance of communities and the role these offer in

their personal development and building relationships. A sense of shared community leads to an appreciation and accommodation of the views, beliefs and values of others and a realization that these may differ from their own.

A genuine sense of caring

A sense of shared community should lead to collective social responsibility and a real sense of caring for those around us, and the world in which we live. This should translate into actions and activities that lead us to demonstrate our caring attitude not only towards others, but to our environment as well. In this context, care moves beyond concern and should reflect actions that exemplify genuine care.

Management of personal development and growth of the whole person

The individual develops at a number of levels that results in emotional, physical, aesthetic and moral growth as well as intellectual growth. The individual is identified as being a self-sufficient and critical learner who can effectively manage, retrieve, critique and evaluate information. Furthermore, he/she is acquiring and developing those life skills that promote their own continuous development, self-realization and self-actualization, which then may then lead towards a sense of personal peace and harmony with those around them. Moreover, the individual becomes aware continually of his/her strengths and appreciates how these can be utilised to the benefit of him/herself and others.

Developing personal goals

Holistic education is a journey towards self-realization and self-actualization through which the student aims to achieve a rare insight and awareness of who they are and their true purpose. The development and realisation of personal goals, as a feature of this journey, will help to maximize their personal potential.

The environment

The holistic perspective demands that the world around us must be treated with respect. Individuals are custodians of the environment and hold a position of stewardship and trust both for others and future generations. The student is required to focus continually on the impact of their own actions and the activities of others on the environment and to take responsible action to show their care.

It could be argued that the holistic perspective is an aim of all education systems and there are undoubtedly a number of schools that pursue this approach. Nevertheless, a knowledge-based approach to education remains common (Peterson, 2003: 39) and fails to manage, actively, the broader education and development of the student within all the themes identified above. Furthermore, within holistic education there is an emphasis on relationships, interconnectedness, genuine caring and community that is not articulated within other educational approaches to the same extent. That these should be features of good educational practice is not disputed and has indeed been proposed elsewhere (UNESCO, 1996: 94).

Rationale for a description of the values and behaviours?

Values are described as 'guidelines for individual behaviour' (Thompson, 1993) and guide the standards and behaviours of individuals. They shape and influence behaviours and actions and form the framework within which these activities take place. Holistic education must provide a framework within which students in their middle years of education can question and understand their own values and behaviours and those they observe around them. The development of personal values is an outcome of the interactions between the student, parent and the school, but it is acknowledged that the influence of the school will be formative since this is where students spend much of their middle years, among influential friends and role models. It is these values and behaviours that shape the outputs of holistic education and any *person profile* that identifies the characteristics of a student must accommodate these outputs.

There are several benefits from identifying the anticipated values and behaviours in students who have completed a programme of holistic education. Primary among these is that students are able to identify clear expectations of themselves and be familiar with the expectations that others have of them. The student is also encouraged to take ownership of their own development and be empowered to take decisions and responsibility for the goals that they choose to pursue. None of these benefits are unique to holistic education but represent good educational practice. Nevertheless, it is the nature and context of the activities that lead to these benefits that reflect the potential of holistic education.

Towards values and behaviours of holistically educated students

The values associated with holistic education have been developed from the themes shown above and are presented in Table 1.

Further clarity is brought to each of the values through a list of behaviours associated with it. These behaviours and actions exemplify what each of the values represents in terms of expected outputs. There is a degree of overlap between the behaviours associated with one value and the behaviours associated with another. For example, a personal drive for high expectations and their maintenance is seen within both the values of *integrity* and *high achiever*. This does not diminish the impact of the values, but serves to underline the interrelationships and interconnections between them and the collective contribution they make to the development of the whole student.

Table 1 **Values and behaviours associated with a holistic approach to education**

Value	*Behaviour associated with the value*
Relationships	Identifies and uses the relationships that exist between different subject domains. Values and develops the relationships between individuals and groups. Values relationships at all levels and is aware of their role in an interrelated view of our world.
Integrity	Can be trusted by peers and others to act with honesty and consistency. Maintains own standards in changing circumstances. Maintains high expectations of self and will not allow these to diminish. Maintains standards in application of own principles. Maintains respect for self and others around them. Offers opinions and guidance but listens actively to varying views.
Desire to understand and learn	Pushes the boundaries of own learning without prompting. Actively internalises experiences and constructs new meanings and their applications. Will examine own beliefs critically and has the capacity to reconsider and modify own views. Will take intellectual risks in extending understanding and learning.

307

Table 1 **continued**

Value	Behaviour associated with the value
	Is not threatened by new information leading to a considered change in personal beliefs and expectations. Constantly seeks opportunities to expand own knowledge and learnings. Open minded – is not threatened by new information leading to a modification of previous learning. Open minded – would draw understanding and learnings from relationships with others who have a variety differing views. Broad minded – will take a broad, global perspective on issues drawing benefit from cultures differing from own.
High achiever	Gains and applies knowledge in a range of circumstances. Applies knowledge and learnings from one area to others even where these applications are not immediately apparent. Sets high expectations for self in all areas of involvement. Is task-orientated and seeks to start and complete a job in a timely and effective manner. Constantly wants to achieve and realize more. Takes others with them in seeking to achieve common goals. Actions constantly exceed expectations.
Belief in own self-worth	Takes proactive ownership of own actions and development. Is empowered to take actions and not wait for permission. Takes responsibility for actions and is confident to take actions forward to achieve the best outcome. Acts with self-belief but not arrogance. Acts in the best interests of their own well-being and of those around them.
Compassion	Actively demonstrates a caring and considerate response to issues and circumstances around them. Demonstrates supportive actions as appropriate. Offers guidance and opinions tactfully and at an appropriate place and time. Understands and learns from cultural diversity in others. Respects and accommodates the beliefs and mind-sets of others. Adopts a flexible approach so they can gain from the differing opinions of others.
Loyalty	Through their actions, shows a caring attitude to those around them. Maintains contact and support for others in a variety of circumstances. Provides supports and not judgement.

308

As indicated previously, it may be argued that these values should under-pin any balanced educational programme and that there is nothing in Table 1 that is unique to a holistic approach. This would be a fair comment but for the predominance in the list of the value *relationships*; it is this value that is a critical feature of holistic education and the holistic approach (Miller, 2001: 8). As a key feature of holistic education, emphasis is given to it through integrated curriculum design with the intention of

Table 2 **Behavioural outputs that may be expected from a student who has recently completed a programme of holistic education within a middle years education programme**

Output	Values(s)
In solving problems, they introduce and effectively use approaches and techniques from unrelated areas and show creativity in arriving at a preferred solution.	Desire to understand High achiever Relationships
They are empowered to act before they have been asked, use their initiative and take responsibility for their actions.	Belief in own self-worth Desire to understand High achiever
They grasp opportunities to excel in what they undertake and are aware of the requirements of a task and the quality of the outputs required, which they often exceed.	Belief in own self-worth Desire to understand Integrity High achiever
They plan work effectively, meet deadlines and build quality into the work they undertake.	Belief in own self-worth Desire to understand Integrity High achiever Relationships
They take a broad and balanced view of global issues and concerns and can argue cogently about a range of global topics using information from a variety of sources.	Compassion Desire to understand Relationships
They exhibit active listening skills and contribute collaboratively and supportively at meetings so that outcomes and actions are identified effectively.	Compassion Loyalty Relationships
They have the confidence to take intellectual risks in areas that are unfamiliar to them and make decisions based on the careful evaluation of the information they have at their disposal.	Belief in own self-worth Desire to understand Relationships

309

Table 2 **continued**

Output	Values(s)
They show mutual respect for the values of others. They appreciate the views of others and can accommodate these when approaching common issues and in their decision-making.	Integrity Compassion Loyalty Desire to understand Relationships
They act according to their own values and, within these, act with integrity. They challenge the values of others in a caring and considerate manner avoiding judgement.	Compassion Integrity Desire to understand Relationships
They exhibit the qualities of trust and loyalty in supporting colleagues and friends. Colleagues will seek out their opinions in circumstances where the opinion of another is valued.	Integrity Loyalty Relationships
They are compassionate and caring in the actions they take and are mutually supportive.	Integrity Compassion Desire to understand Relationships
They value the opinions and cultures of their colleagues and actively move towards them to understand the motivations and value systems of these colleagues.	Integrity Compassion Desire to understand Belief in own self-worth Relationships
They communicate honestly and openly with others and are prepared to give an opinion in a thoughtful, supportive and sensitive manner.	Integrity Compassion Desire to understand Belief in own self-worth Loyalty Relationships
They are aware of the relevance of their own learning and are able to put this learning into the wider context of their subject and those subjects related to it.	High achiever Integrity Compassion Desire to understand Belief in own self-worth Relationships
They question critically the information they have received to establish its value and integrity and where it fits into the general framework of their studies.	Desire to understand High achiever Integrity Relationships

310

developing the student in a planned manner through the medium of relationships at all levels. There is insufficient evidence to indicate that this is a similar, common feature of other education programmes.

The values and behaviours in Table 1 have served as the source document for identifying the action-based outputs that could be expected from a student at the age of 16, after having completed and benefited from a holistic education within the middle years of their education. These outputs are presented in Table 2.

Each of these 15 outputs has been referenced to one or more of the values identified in Table 1 and two features emerge from this referencing exercise:

- No single value is associated with a single output.

Each of the outputs identified in Table 2 is associated with between two and six values; indeed, it is not unusual to find that four or more values are identified with any single output.

- The most frequently occurring values within Table 2 are *relationships* and *desire to understand*.

This is not unexpected as 'relationships' and 'interconnectedness' represent two core features of holistic education, as detailed previously.

These two features raise interesting points. A student's values will be influenced by their experiences. Introducing the student to situations in which the behavioural outputs (Table 2) will be an outcome and then reviewed can lead to personal reflection by the student upon the values that drive those behaviours. Table 2 indicates that only a limited number of outputs need to be enabled at any one time for a broad number of the values to be addressed. There is no need to attempt to address all the outputs simultaneously; instead, focus can be given to address the values through a few well-selected exercises from which the outputs can be seen. This has the advantage of offering curriculum designers the opportunity to introduce a variety of pastoral and academic approaches that address the values, rather than depend on the repetition of a single approach.

The outputs in Table 2 can also be adapted for student assessment. Personal and interpersonal skills are difficult to assess with any degree of certainty compared to the knowledge- or skills-based aspects of an individual's development. Evidence for the personal and interpersonal skills has to be drawn from a variety of situations that can generate indirect evidence of an attribute being present or not, to what extent it is present and

whether it is used consistently in the same way. It is through the outputs identified in Table 2 that the opportunity is offered to determine to what extent a value is present.

In summary, by taking carefully selected exercises that focus on developing the desired behavioural outputs, the values associated with holistic education can be established and reinforced. Furthermore, the outputs in Table 2 provide a basis of assessing personal and interpersonal skills objectively within a programme of holistic education, and move away from subjective assessment.

Person profile of a student in the middle years of education pursuing a programme of holistic education

It is from the behaviour outputs shown in Table 2 that an image emerges of the developing student within a programme of holistic education in the middle years of education. The values and behaviours (Tables 1 and 2) have been used to identify what the student would look like – a *person profile* – in terms of capabilities, competencies and skills. This brings clarity to what holistic education may be expected to deliver at this point in the development of a student and indicate what the programme has the potential to deliver to the student (Table 3).

Furthermore, it gives the educator the opportunity to develop strategies that will generate the outcomes and behaviours described in Table 3. The person profile has ten key indicators (Table 3) and these represent the major attributes that the student should be in a position to demonstrate at the end of the middle years of their education. These are analogous to the essential and desirable personal attributes that would be contained in any job description against which an individual may be interviewed in later life. Clarity is brought to these key indicators through the descriptors. These provide examples of what the student should be in a position to deliver and against which the progress of the student can be referenced.

The key indicators are not prescriptive outcomes and it is not intended that the programme should deliver an 'ideal', holistically educated student. Furthermore it is not intended to suggest that a student who demonstrates more of the key indicators than another colleague is necessarily more holistically educated than their colleague. Education is a dynamic process that elicits strengths and identifies changing development areas in students as they progress through the MYP. No weighting or rank order is given to any of the key indicators and this is by design. The character of a student and the contribution that they bring to their community is a blend of strengths and development areas that they possess and are in the process

312

Table 3 **Person profile of a student emerging from a programme of holistic education in the middle years of their education**

Key indicators	Descriptor
Acts with social and academic maturity and integrity	The student would display social and academic maturity that would put them at ease within a group of people with which they were previously unfamiliar. They would also be confident in their approach to people that they had not previously encountered and exhibit respect for the culture, opinions and values of these individuals or group.
	They are ready to challenge accepted wisdom in a mature manner in order to clarify their own understanding and gain experience.
	When an error is made, the student has the maturity to learn from the error and how it occurred. Takes responsibility and maintains integrity through not misrepresenting themselves for personal gain.
	The student presents work that reflects their own efforts, acknowledges inputs from others and avoids plagiarism.
Takes ownership of their own development and learning and through planning, prioritization and their own determination, delivers tasks in a timely manner	The student would take ownership of their own development and progress and take responsibility for the outcomes. To support this they would set themselves clear guidelines and targets and a realistic timetable for the achievement of these regardless of whether these are long or short term assignments. Can plan and prioritize task effectively so that tasks receive the appropriate time and effort to achieve the required outcome. In the face of adversity, they would persist with the task to achieve a quality outcome.
Demonstrates flexibility and a creative approach to problem solving	The student is able to think creatively and flexibly in addressing issues and problems that require approaches that are not readily apparent and result in drawing on approaches from a range of disciplines and experiences. In coming to conclusions and taking action, the student is confident and feels empowered to take risks.

313

Table 3 **continued**

Key indicators	Descriptor
Through interpersonal skills develops and maintains relationships	In interactions with others from a range of different backgrounds and cultures, the student will act with care, empathy, compassion and consideration especially in circumstances in which the views of others are at variance with their own. Through active listening and maintaining an open mind, the student actively reflects on their behaviours and values and modifies these accordingly.
Demonstrates a reflective approach and an attitude of continuous improvement	The student can review and evaluate the quality of their work objectively and identify areas of success and development. From these is able to modify their approach and behaviour and continuously learn from and improve the work that they complete.
Demonstrates effective written and oral communication skills	The student can demonstrate effective written and oral communication skills that facilitate the successful delivery of information in a variety of contexts and situations. This will be demonstrated through essay writing, oral presentations, analytical and creative writing and the effective use of IT skills.
Demonstrates good meeting management and involvement behaviours	The student would actively and collaboratively contribute willingly and well to group discussions and meetings. The student would actively listen to the opinions and values of others and support the team. The student would challenge others with respect and consideration to move matters forward to achieve a decision and instigate constructive changes. In circumstances in which their decisions have been listened to, the student would show maturity in accepting the group decision and actively support the majority view.
Seeks to bring clarity to decision making	The student has consistently sought to bring clarity and simplicity to what is done to achieve a target or an outcome so that their efforts are directed effectively and in a timely way. In these efforts the student would consistently seek to exceed standards and raise their own expectations.

314

Through an understanding of their subject areas, their interdependencies and interrelationships can take a global view of issues and appreciate and debate global issues and the impact of human activity on the environment	The student shows a knowledge and understanding of the subjects studied and can identify the features that draw the subjects and information together as a coherent whole.
	From their interaction with others, their experiences and learning, the student takes a considered global perspective on international concerns and brings a firm appreciation of the issues relevant to these concerns.
Uses effectively information resources made available to them that assist in the acquisition of knowledge and its application	The student can use effectively data and information management methods, including electronic data and library resources.

of developing throughout their education. It is what marks them out as individuals and makes their individual contributions unique and valued.

Student development towards the person profile – the areas of personal growth

The delivery of the key indicators is envisaged as taking place through four domains that are represented collectively as the *areas of personal growth*. Each of these areas is dependent on the others and they provide the framework to realizing the person profile.

These areas of personal growth are:

- Interpersonal awareness
- Self-awareness
- Disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding
- Cultural and intercultural awareness

The four *areas of personal growth* are presented diagrammatically in Figure 1. Each of the areas of personal growth is described in detail below and the outputs that define each of the areas are presented.

It is proposed that the collective contribution of the *areas of personal growth* is a dynamic process. It is not suggested that the student should make parallel progress in every one of the areas, and it would be unrealistic to expect a student to demonstrate progress against all the outputs shown below. The student actively develops ideas, thoughts and knowledge
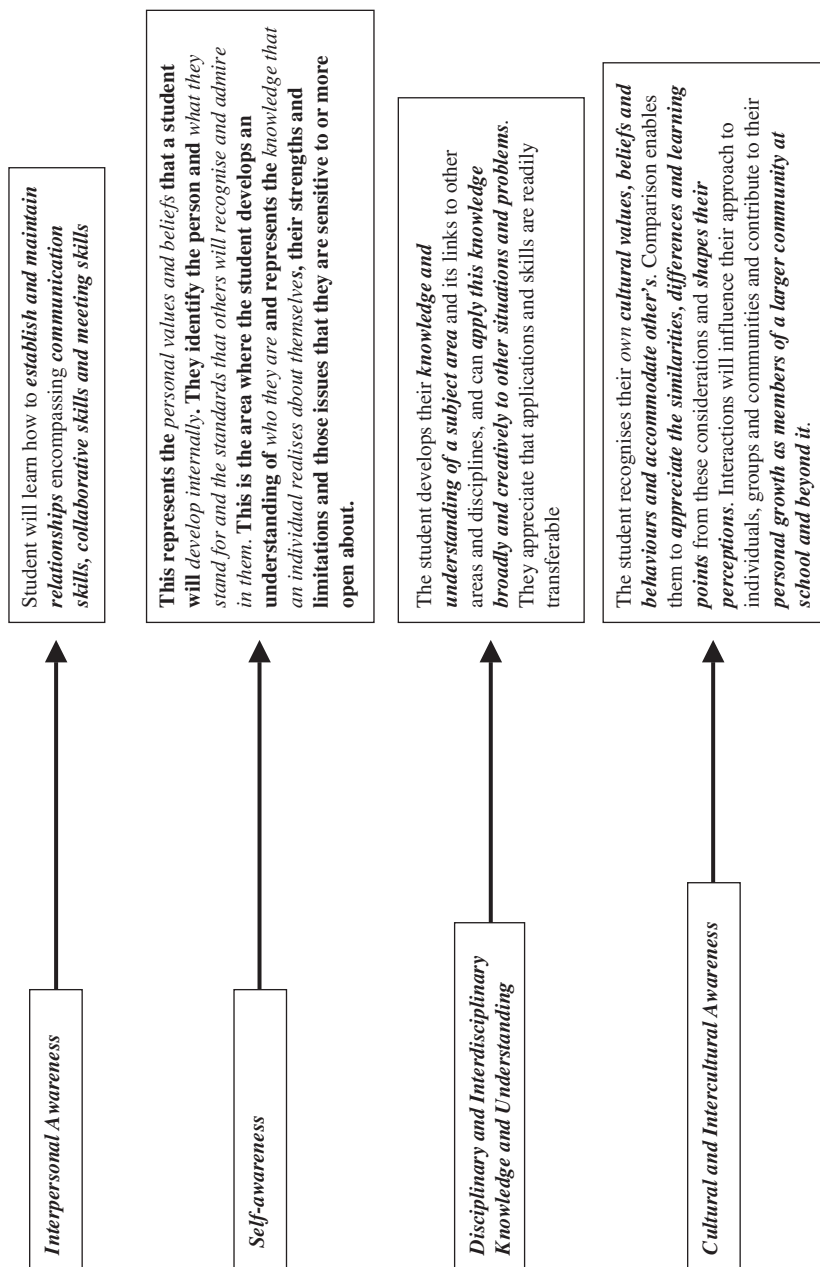
315

Figure 1 **Areas of personal growth: a brief description of each of the areas**

Student will learn how to *establish and maintain relationships* encompassing *communication skills, collaborative skills and meeting skills*

This represents the *personal values and beliefs* **that a student will** *develop internally*. **They identify the person and** *what they stand for and the standards that others will recognise and admire in them.* **This is the area where the student develops an understanding of** *who they are* **and represents the** *knowledge that an individual realises about themselves,* **their strengths and limitations and those issues that they are sensitive to or more open about.**

The student develops their *knowledge and understanding of a subject area* and its links to other areas and disciplines, and can *apply this knowledge broadly and creatively to other situations and problems.* They appreciate that applications and skills are readily transferable

The student recognises their *own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours and accommodate other's.* Comparison enables them to *appreciate the similarities, differences and learning points* from these considerations and *shapes their perceptions.* Interactions will influence their approach to individuals, groups and communities and contribute to their *personal growth as members of a larger community at school and beyond it.*

Interpersonal Awareness

Self-awareness

Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Understanding

Cultural and Intercultural Awareness

delivered through the *areas of personal growth* which they then test and evaluate against their own pre-existing mind-sets. Based on their experiences, the student chooses to accept, reject or modify their own personal information.

Interpersonal awareness

This is the area of personal growth in which the student:

> will learn how to establish and maintain relationships encompassing communication skills, collaborative skills and meeting skills.

For students developing within this domain, the typical outputs would be as follows.

Building relationships

- Actively moves forward in understanding the views and cultures of others
- Initiates and develops interests of others
- Shows a sincere interest in the activities and efforts of others
- Develops give and take in relationships
- Develops an awareness of what contributes to the value of a relationship
- Develops a mature consideration to what matters in the maintenance of a relationship
- Recognizes and accommodates the views of others

Communication skills

- Appreciates what needs to be communicated how and to whom
- Selects the most appropriate and effective communication route from a variety of options
- Has sufficient confidence and judgement to know when to change the selected communication approach
- Uses active listening skills to reflect interest in questions and the views of the questioner
- Uses summarizing techniques to demonstrate an understanding of the views of others
- Uses effective verbal and written communication skills to present message and meaning unambiguously

Collaborative skills

- Actively listens to others
- Addresses the task and not the person
- Matches up actions and words
- Is open and honest about their position and agrees common direction forward after the views are debated
- Facilitates and welcomes debate about issues and activities
- Meets deadlines and team expectations as an effective team member
- Supports and encourages of the activities and involvement of others

Meeting skills

- Supports the team in their actions both within and outside of the meeting
- Is open to debate on issues and is not territorial about ideas
- Shows an active interest to contribute to the team and move the activities forward to a successful conclusion
- Builds on ideas of team members and actively recognises the contribution of others
- Celebrates success and the success of others

Self awareness   This represents the personal values and beliefs that a student will develop internally. It identifies the person and the standards that others will recognize and admire in them. This is the area in which:

> the student develops an understanding of who they are, their strengths and limitations and those issues that they are sensitive to or more open about.

This area of personal growth is represented in the following:

- They have an open mind and an ability to change their views when their view is genuinely inappropriate
- They do not have a change of opinion to suit a situation or when faced with adversity
- Through the cultures and attitudes of others, they reflect on their own views and values
- Actively evaluates own personal worth and value system
- Has the courage and integrity to challenge own beliefs and modify them

318

- Has the courage and integrity to admit necessity to change beliefs
- Sets high personal standards and expectations
- Looks for continuous improvement from learnings in own activities
- Takes responsibility for errors and learns from them
- Maintains personal integrity when faced with adversity
- Personal integrity and beliefs are matched by actions taken

Disciplinary and interdisciplinary knowledge and understanding

Within this area of personal growth:

a student develops their knowledge and understanding of a subject area and its links to other areas and disciplines and can apply this knowledge broadly and creatively to a range of situations and problems.

This area is identified through the following:

- Can demonstrate the transferability of knowledge and skills
- Can manage information and data that they have at their disposal and to draw conclusions
- Derives constructs from information given and tests these against new information
- Can assimilate disciplinary information and understand its application and value
- Transfers skills and techniques to other situations and circumstances utilizing a flexible approach
- Clarifies and questions information presented and seeks to place it within own personal constructs
- Effectively manages and evaluates data and information at their disposal
- Draws rational conclusions from information presented to them or acquired by them
- Shows physical and mental self-discipline in the use of knowledge and understanding
- Demonstrates precision and accuracy in those circumstances where it is required
- Plans work effectively, sets realistic deadlines and work standards and delivers work of a consistently high quality
- Reviews work completed or under completion and looks for continuous improvement

319

- Outputs are a reflection of their own or collaborative work and not those derived from others without due recognition
- Will recognise and develop their knowledge of and considered response to global concerns. Will recognise the impact of their knowledge and experiences on their personal approaches to these concerns

Cultural and intercultural awareness

This area of personal growth describes the ability of the student:

> to recognise their own cultural values, beliefs and behaviours and accommodate those of others so that the student can appreciate the similarities, differences and learning points from these considerations.

These values and those of others will shape their own perceptions in the future. These interactions will influence their approach to individuals, groups and communities and contribute to their personal growth as members of a larger community at school and beyond it.

Through the breadth of exposure to other cultures and values the student:

- Will develop a global perspective, sensitivity to others and a tolerance of differences
- Will listen and give time to the views and opinions of others of differing cultures
- Will show empathy and tolerance through their actions
- Will actively consider the values of others and reflect on the merits that these can bring to their thinking and beliefs
- Avoid a judgemental approach and give opinions based on fact and not prejudice
- Consider the issues and not the person
- Will actively defend the right of others to state their opinions without fear of prejudice or ridicule

Conclusion

This article has presented the values associated with holistic education and the behaviours that would be manifested through these values. These values and behaviours have led to the development of a person profile that identifies the activities, attributes and competencies that would be expected of a student who has benefited from a programme of holistic education in the middle years of education. A person profile offers clear outputs from

320

holistic education and clarifies, for students, parents and educators alike, the targets that are being aimed for through this educational intervention.

Confusion has arisen elsewhere in interpreting what holistic education represents in the context of a middle years education programme (Armstrong, 2000). It is believed that by identifying the outputs of holistic education, it becomes clearer for individuals to identify the intentions and direction of this educational approach. Furthermore, the person profile can be used to identify the benefits and advantages of holistic education when compared to other approaches.

The areas of personal growth indicate how the holistic programme could be delivered through the activities described in each of these areas. These are actions and attributes that will demand much of the student and the educator, since they require sophisticated judgement and maturity. They are achievable nevertheless, and are part of a dynamic programme in which students and educators can continually identify areas for focus and refinement collaboratively to build up a wide range of skills and attributes that will serve them well in the future. This does not imply that once an attribute is demonstrated it no longer requires review. These same skills and behaviours will be required in other situations where judgements must be made on how the skills can be applied appropriately.

The person profile represents a starting point for considering how holistic education can be realised within middle years educational programmes. Further contributions to the debate can only be beneficial and, undoubtedly, refinements and changes will be introduced as the debate on the nature of holistic education in the IB MYP develops. In this way, holistic education for students, parents and educators can be fully realized, leading to continuous refinement and further clarity of purpose.

References

ARMSTRONG, R. (2000) 'The holistic nature of the IB MYP: A return to fundamentals'. *International Schools Journal* 20: 18–23.

CLARK, E.T. (1991a) 'The search for a new educational paradigm: The implications of new assumptions about thinking and learning', in R. Miller (ed.) *New Directions in Education*, pp.16–37. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press.

CLARK, E.T. (1991b) 'Environmental education as an integrative study', in R. Miller, (ed.) *New Directions in Education*, pp. 38–52. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press.

CLARK, E.T. (1991c) 'Holistic education: A search for wholeness', in R. Miller (ed.) *New Directions in Education*, pp. 53–62. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press.

FORBES, S.H. (2003) *Holistic Education: An Analysis of its Ideas and Nature*. Brandon, VT: Foundation for Educational Renewal.

INTERNATIONAL BACCALAUREATE ORGANIZATION (IBO) (2002a) *The Schools Guide to the Middle Years Programme*. Geneva: IBO.

IBO (2002b) *The Middle Years Programme A Basis for Practice*. Geneva: IBO.

IBO (2006) The Middle Years Programme curriculum. Available at: http://www. IBO.org (accessed 1 June 2006).

MARTIN, C. (1997) *The Holistic Educators: Education for the 21st Century*. Nottingham: The Educational Heretics Press.

MILLER, J.P. (2001) *The Holistic Curriculum*, 2nd edn. Ontario: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education Press

MILLER, R. (1991) 'Introduction', in R. Miller (ed.) *New Directions in Education: Selections from Holistic Education Review*, pp. 1–3. Brandon, VT: Holistic Education Press

PETERSON, A.D.C. (2001) *Schools Across Frontiers*, 2nd edn. Chicago: Open Court.

SINGH, K. (1996) 'Education for the Global Society', in *Learning: The Treasure Within, The Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century*, pp. 225–22, Paris: UNESCO.

THOMPSON, J.J. (1993) 'Education in an international context module'. University of Bath Summer School, Bath, July.

UNESCO (1996) 'The four pillars of education', in *Learning: The Treasure Within: Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century*, pp. 85–97. Paris: UNESCO.

Biographical note

JOHN HARE, PhD, teaches science at Woking High School, Surrey. [email: john.hare7@btinternet.com]