What Holistic Education Claims About Itself:
An Analysis of Holistic Schools' Literature

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Abstract

This study analyzes the literature of schools deemed to be at least partially holistic to see if there are "kinds" of holistic schools (beyond the obvious – e.g., Waldorf, Democratic, Buddhist, etc.) which can aid further study. Using a philosophical framework establishing the key elements of holistic education (Forbes, 2003) that makes use of notions of competence-based pedagogy (Bernstein, 1996), and using Atlas TI as a tool, a discourse analysis was conducted that established 9 groupings or "kinds" of holistic education initiatives.

Introduction

Purposes of the Research

There is no doubt that holistic education exists (at least in name) as a widespread institutionalized endeavor. Over the last several decades the number of education initiatives that describe themselves (or are described by others) as holistic has dramatically increased as parents, students, and educators feel that an alternative to mainstream education is needed. In addition to the thousands of such schools have been created world-wide, there are uncounted special programs (within non-holistic schools) claiming to be holistic which have been developed to engage students in ways of learning that most schools do not normally cover. Still more education initiatives describe themselves as holistic outside of schooling altogether (after-school programs, vacation programs, or as substitutes for schooling, e.g., homeschooling).

To describe and promote holistic education, several journals have emerged (e.g., The Holistic Education Review, Encounter, SKOLE, Paths of Learning, etc.) and University departments have been created (e.g., Holistic and Aesthetic Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at The University of Toronto, The Holistic Teaching/Learning Unit at The University of Tennessee at Knoxville). There are many books describing education programs or schools that claim to be holistic, others which trace the origins of holistic education, still others which describe a holistic curriculum, and many which describe the need for a more holistic approach to education.

Despite such growth, research on holistic education to date has more or less confined to case studies and philosophical treatises. It seems reasonable to assume that this is because holistic education initiatives are extremely diverse, which hampers broader research. It is analogous to having a category of living things we call "plants" – if we want to study them further we need to have further categories such as "trees," "grasses," "ferns," etc. in order study the different forms. The problem with holistic education is that it doesn't break down into such neatly defined and mutually exclusive categories. Nevertheless, without some view of different "kinds" of holistic education initiatives exist, further research is stymied.

The authors of this study know from first hand experience and from many anecdotal accounts that there are brilliant initiatives in many holistic schools, and that countless students and their parents recount benefits from holistic education which they were not experiencing from mainstream schooling. If these benefits are to be extended to other schools, and to be enhanced

by a larger understanding, much more research on holistic education needs to be done. The current study was undertaken as a fist step towards making such research possible.

Theoretical Framework

Holistic education does not exist as a set of studied historical texts, but as a tapestry of transformed and conflated notions each of which has historic origins. The intellectual precedents of holistic education reveals a mixture of disciplines involving philosophy, pedagogy, psychology, and theology.

It has been argued (Forbes, 1999, 2003) that holistic education has as a goal that students develop to the highest extent thought possible for a human (Ultimacy), and that to achieve this a kind of knowledge associated with wisdom (Sagacious Competence) needs to be learned. This seems to be the contention regardless of the approach to holistic education, its geographical location, or when the initiative existed over the last 250 years.

Ultimacy seems to appear in three distinct forms:
1) Religious (as in becoming "enlightened," "satori," etc.).
2) Psychological (as in Abraham Maslow's "self-actualization," – see Maslow, 1968 – or Carl Jung's "Unus Mundus," – see Jung, 1960 – or Carl Rogers's "fully functioning person" – see Rogers, Freiberg, 1994).
3) Undefined (as in the definition of Ultimacy given above – a person developed to the highest extent thought possible for a human).

All three forms of Ultimacy are evident in different holistic education initiatives.

The notion of Sagacious Competence is built upon the work of Basil Bernstein (Bernstein, 1996). Briefly, this kind of knowledge (or way of knowing) which seems generally valued by holistic education has six distinct (but not separate) aspects:
1) Freedom (as a complex concept of psychological freedom, independence, or as it is sometimes called "inner liberation").
2) Good judgment (closely related to self-governance and autonomy).
3) Meta-Learning (emphasis on students learning how they, as individuals, learn).
4) Social Ability (learning more than social skills, with attention to being "in society but not of it").
5) Refining Values (the students' development of character and qualities, not the schools' values or ethos).
6) Self Knowledge (again a complex concept that involves more than learning about oneself, but encompasses more subtle learning of the nature of oneself).

Our Sample

Geographic Locations

Sampling across the regional areas of the United States (along with two from Canada) seemed compelling to counter regional effects – holistic schools in California could be imagined to be different from those in Iowa simply because of the effects of regional cultures. Not all states were represented, but we were able to sample schools from 28 states, with roughly an even

distribution across 5 different geographic areas in the United States, along with two schools/programs from Canada (see Table 1. for a summary).

Table 1. Geographic Regions Represented in the Sample

Region & States Represented	# of Schools in Sample
New England (CT, DE, MA, MD, ME, VT)	11 schools
East-Central (NC, NJ, NY, PA, VA)	13 schools
Midwest (IA, IN, MI, MO, MN, OH)	11 schools
The South (AL, AR, FL, GA, TX)	8 schools
West (AZ, CA, CO, HI, OR, WA)	27 schools
Canada (Ontario)	2 schools
TOTAL	72

California, New York, and Colorado were the only three states with more than five schools represented. In fact, the only reason that the West seems to be over-represented in this sample is because California accounts for 13 of the schools in the sample, and Colorado accounts for 5.

We also tried to achieve a balance of rural, suburban, and urban locations, although this information was not always discernable. Some schools took pains to explain why their urban or rural locations were an important aspect of their education, using the resources of the cities, the wide open spaces, or wooded settings to their advantage.

Distribution of Grade Levels: PreK-13

Our sample had an even distribution of K-12 schools, understanding that many holistic schools traverse age levels in unique ways and provide different combinations of grades. There were a number of lower elementary programs that also had pre-kindergarten and infant care options, as well as several high schools that had "13th year" options. Table 2 below is a summary of the number of schools in various groupings based on the general grade levels, which were converted from age-equivalents for schools that did not have grades.

Table 2. Distribution of Grade Levels

Ages or Grade Levels	# of Schools in Sample
Infants to Grade 3	6
Elementary: Grades PreK – 5/6	14
Elementary + Middle: Grades K – 8/9	16
Middle + High Schools Grades 6 – 12	7
High Schools only: Grades 9/10 – 13	14
All Grades, K – 12	15
TOTAL	72

School Funding Sources

The sample included 47 privately funded schools (parent coops, teacher coops, and general non-profit independent schools), 19 publicly funded schools (public alternatives, magnet programs, and charter schools), and 6 school programs that had some aspect of their school that was privately funded and another aspect that was publicly funded.

Of the 53 schools that were private or private/public, most seemed to rely on tuition, a scholarship fund (or endowment), and often (but not always) combined with foundation grants or business support in the community. Only one of them was fully supported by a business, with no tuition to any of its students.

Of the 19 public schools, it was clear that a number of them had outside funding sources available as well, through partnerships with local businesses and foundations. While we would have included more public schools in the sample, it is not as easy to find public schools that are strongly dedicated to holistic approaches in education. Even of the 19 public schools, it was questionable to include six of them due to their "at-risk" characteristics – making them special schools which deserve their own study.

It is also worth noting that there are increasing numbers of charter schools that are Waldorf-based. However, we took care to include diverse approaches in this sample, so while there were at least three Steiner-influenced schools (and one Waldorf by name), this limited the inclusion of Waldorf charters.

Admissions and Tuition

There were at least 36 schools in this sample that gave information about their admission procedures or criteria, some quite detailed. Detailed descriptions prevailed with the private schools, although a few of the public "choice" schools also described their lottery systems, or the

criteria required of students who are "placed" into their special programs. While there were a few schools with rather complex admissions procedures, overall admissions seems rather straight forward: visit the school, see if the student and parents think it is appropriate, fill out an application, and interview with the principal or teaching staff at the school. Admission decisions are claimed to be generally based on the availability of space in the school (with waiting lists at some schools), presumably decisions are also based on the suitability of the student to the values espoused by each school (though this is underplayed in the promotional literature).

The exclusivity of private schools resulting from their tuition can be an important factor, therefore we noted tuition information when it was provided in the school's general literature. Of the private schools in this sample, 22 included information about their tuition for the 1999-2000 school year (with 26 listed in Table 3 as several schools listed gave different amounts for their elementary, middle, and high schools). The other schools sometimes sent separate materials about their costs, or they will presumably provide this information as an application proceeds, which (we understand from follow up conversations with some schools) is done to de-emphasize the cost.

The tuitions listed in Table 3 do not include tuitions for preschool options (which are almost always less), nor deposits and other fees (which can often be as much as several hundred dollars). Nonetheless, these numbers give an idea of how variant holistic schools are in their tuition based financing. As most schools give discounts for more than one child, the tuitions listed are for the first child. It is worth noting that all the schools that emphasized their scholarship program describe them as a means to promote diversity.

Table 3. Summary of Tuitions
From 22 Private (Day) Schools – 1999-2000 School Year

School Levels	Annual Tuition-Range	# of schools in that range	Additional Financial Aid offered?
K-12: No cost differences across all grades (4)	Sliding Scale ($600 - $3,300)	1	No (except for sibling discounts)
	$4,225 - $5,088	3	Yes
Elementary Schools (17)	Sliding scales ($300 - $4,500) ($2,972 - $6,981)	2	No (except for sibling discounts)
	$2,160 - $3,750	4	Yes
	$4,165 - $5,630	7	Yes
	$6,057 - $9,900	3	Yes
	$15,291	1	Yes
Middle Schools (3)	$4,875 - $6,500	2	Yes
	$10,800	1	Yes
High Schools (2)	$16,975 – $17,400	2	Yes

The diversity of histories of the schools is striking with several notable patterns. The oldest school in the sample was founded in 1837 (and it may well be the only holistic school that is still around from the nineteenth century); 3 schools were founded between 1905 and 1907 (in accordance with the start of the Progressive Education Association about the same time); 2 were started between 1925 and 1928; none in the 1930s (a time of the depression and the start of WWII); 3 in the late 1940s; none in the 1950s; 7 in the 1960s; 22 started between 1970 and 1975; 8 in the 1980s; 5 in the early 1990s; and two pilot schools in 1999-2000. See Table 4 for a summary.

Reflecting the peaks of alternative forms of education, from 1967 through 1975, there are schools that start every consecutive year with as many as 5 started in 1971. Then, there is a gap from 1976 to 1981 in which no schools are founded; after that it is sporadic through 1999. The dearth of schools originating in the 1990s may reflect both the political times for educational reform as well as the fact that the schools in this sample are those that were "known" to us. Not surprisingly, this pattern of educational history bares remarkable resemblance to the history about holistic education and free schools given by historian Ron Miller (1997; 2002). It is interesting to note the existence of these holistic schools that have been stable enough to be maintained through to the end of the 20th century.

Table 4. Founding Years
of the 53 Schools Which Reported Historic Information

Period Started	Number of Schools Founded
1830s - 1930s:	6
1940s – 1950s:	3
1960s – 1970s:	29
1980s – 1990s:	14
TOTAL	**53**

Limitations of Study

This is an exploratory study using philosophical notions to analyze what schools say about themselves to find out "what's out there?" and there are several limitations which have to be acknowledged. Firstly, we are examining only the literature which schools produce about themselves, and not examining any actual schools. Anyone who has examined more than a few schools will anticipate that there may well be some disparity between what schools say about themselves and what actually occurs. Nonetheless, school literature has significance by showing what schools value and what they at least intend or would like to do.

The second major limitation is that the philosophical notions which underpin the analysis may be inadequate. If this is so, it only means that the "kinds" of holistic education initiatives this study finds are also inadequate (as if our metaphor of categorizing of "plants" was "green ones," "brown ones," "big ones, and "little ones" – this isn't wrong, it's just inadequate). By

using an inadequate taxonomy, its faults become clear; so even if the philosophy underpinning the analysis is inadequate, all will not necessarily be lost.

A third major limitation of this study is that all coding is subjective, and the coding and therefore the analysis is only as good as the coder. To maintain consistency and avoid between-coder-errors, one person (Robin) did the coding. To benefit from multiple minds, Robin consulted frequently with the other team members and got feedback on her coding. Of course, depth of understanding grows as coding proceeds, leaving the first documents not as well coded as later ones. To compensate for this, the material was coded several times. To help reduce the amount of error within codes, all the primary codes were reviewed for consistency across codes after coding about every 10 to 20 documents Still, with the best will in the world, coding is a very imperfect activity.

This research limits itself in looking at *the patterns* (of coded issues) across schools. The "raw numbers" for each code in the tables that follow must be taken judiciously, since the amount of literature and the focal points of the literature has such wide variance. However, it is logical to begin grouping schools together and looking for patterns based on both the frequency and the depth of different primary issues that are covered.

Summary of Exploratory Findings

Upon the initial explorations of this data set, this study uncovered a number of aspects about the practices of holistic education, as well as revealing many needs for future studies in this field. In summary, we found that:

- Many common phrases (such as freedom, "active/hands-on" experiential learning, love, and community) were being used in a variety of ways and contexts, often pointing toward somewhat different phenomena.
- Similar notions about the purpose of education, the nature of children and the state of childhood, and the nature of teaching and learning were expressed in a wide variety of ways while often pointing to similar understandings and perspectives.
- There seems to be a core set of values and perspectives which reveal family resemblances for the field of Holistic Education, that appears to deserve a distinction from other schools that might be better grouped as performance-based, progressive, self-directed, or back-to-basics.
- Rather than trying to claim that some schools in our sample were completely holistic while others were not, it seems more justified to claim the existence of a continuum of holistic qualities along which schools fall.

Research Method

It seemed reasonable to begin a large scale analysis of holistic education initiatives by simply examining what they say about themselves. The literature that these initiatives produce about themselves for public consumption was therefore the subject of the study.

Discourse analysis was used as the form of examination, with Atlas TI as the fundamental tool for coding and analyzing. From this we are able to distinguish what

Wittgenstein called "family resemblances" of schools – "a complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: sometimes overall similarities, sometimes similarities of detail" (Wittgenstein, 1953) that should aid further study.

Sampling Procedures

In 1999, the primary author of this study wrote to over 200 schools and asked for their materials for this study. Having worked in the field of holistic education for some time, Forbes (in consultation with others) identified some of these schools because they were simply well known. Networking efforts were used to identify others. Between 1999 and 2002, we carefully reviewed and organized the materials received, and followed up with groups of schools unrepresented by the sample.

Over 100 schools or programs replied to the initial or follow-up inquiries. Of these, 90 seemed most appropriate to the parameters of this study because they are ongoing schools or educational programs. While this seems like an obvious point, the field of holistic education is not always clear cut – there are many "schools without walls" and other learning programs that defy traditional boundaries. Our excluding such initiatives was not to disparage them, but simply to limit our scope to schools (or programs within schools) that would be recognizable to most people as schools. This meant that we did not consider some of the programs that focused more exclusively on self-directed learning, mentoring, outdoor education, or teacher development, all of which overlap with holistic education practices in K-12 schools. Nor did we include programs outside of the United States and Canada. In an effort to narrow the focus further, education initiatives were also omitted from the study that focused on higher education or learning outside of K-12 schools. We were left with 72 primary and secondary schools (or programs within schools).

Our first level analysis included the promotional literature, informational brochures, prospectuses, and other written materials available in English. For our second level of analysis, we focused on 58 of those schools that seemed to have the strongest articulation of elements of holistic education.

The schools sent us a wide variety of materials describing their programs – loose leafed sheets, folders, brochures, some with cover letters, others without. For consistency and ease of analysis we needed to focus on materials that could be scanned and analyzed most reliably. We scanned all of the "scanable" materials into a single text document for each school, and worked to ensure a consistency in the type of information included about every school.

Each school sent us between 1 and 5 brochures, flyers, parent guides, and/or information packets (not including the many dozens of loose-leafed attachments sent). Usually, between 1 and 3 of these were selected for scanning, based on which ones were most descriptive at a general level from an "outside" perspective. When too much information was available, we tended to leave out course catalogs and newsletters, though for other schools without very much information these were included as they seemed to be used by the schools as a way of describing themselves. After each set of documents was converted to a plain text file (with all photographs and graphics removed), there was an average of 12.6 single-spaced pages of plain text per school

or program, with the variation falling generally between 5 and 25 pages for each school analyzed. There were six schools that had so much good material that we scanned over 30 pages of their general informational literature, and there were a few schools for which we had only 3 pages or less because that was all that they sent. This is important to note because schools were not evenly represented in the amounts of their literature that was analyzed.

Coding Categories

Before looking at the material, we conceived of about 40 codes, knowing that the list would grow as we began coding. We quickly developed over 250 codes grouped into about a dozen areas (or "coding families") derived from a combination of the questions listed above and what the data itself seemed to emphasize. The "coding families" are:

- Notions of Sagacious Competence, Ultimacy, and related concepts (based on the earlier analysis of Forbes, 1999, 2003).
- Educational goals, and non-educational goals.
- Student outcomes, or effects that the schools claim to make of their students.
- Perspectives on the nature of learning.
- Ways in which the schools see themselves in opposition to mainstream education.
- Contextualizing issues: social/historical/community/ecological orientations.
- Ethos: general claims about the school culture, atmosphere, environment, etc.
- General school descriptions (class/school size, admissions, governance, etc.).
- Student characteristics and qualities.
- Staff/teacher characteristics and expectations of staff.
- Teaching praxis: techniques and methods.
- Curricular issues: general ways in which curriculum is described.
- Common words and concepts used across the literature.

Many of the issues that we coded for could be further analyzed in other studies. They were used in this study to provide simply an initial framework that might help in moving toward a more encompassing way of understanding the different strengths and emphases of different "kinds" of schools within holistic education. In summary, the first level of analysis began as a descriptive summary looking at the commonalities and differences among this sample of 72 schools which have elements that are more or less holistic in nature. From this, we developed a two dimensional matrix based on the theory initially advanced by Forbes (2003) which allowed us to summarize the ways in which the schools appeared to cluster.

Initial Questions Explored In Level 1 Analysis

Despite the great volume of literature on holistic education over the last several decades, to our knowledge, there has never been a summary of what the schools themselves say about their practices. Therefore, for the first level of analysis we explored the general patterns found across the sample of 72 schools. There were a number of key exploratory questions considered as we coded the data, and these were later used as guidelines for setting up and revising codes as we proceeded:

- What are the most common phrases within this literature (e.g., freedom, experiential learning, whole child, spiritual, community, etc.), the different ways in which they are used, and the contexts in which they are used to describe the schools and programs? What are the different kinds of phenomena that these terms or phrases point toward?
- What are the similar notions within this literature about the purpose of education, the nature of children, the state of childhood, and the nature of teaching and learning?
- What gaps exist concerning what these particular schools do NOT say they are doing (or do not emphasize), yet which many others would consider to be part of education?
- What coding elements seem to go with others? Are there any interesting or surprising correlations?
- How do these schools distinguish themselves from others?
- What seems central to the image they wish to project of themselves? And what is the nature of that image?

Initial Questions Explored In Level 2 Analysis

At the second level of analysis, we began to look more closely for patterns within "natural groupings" or "kinds" of holistic schools. To move toward this, we asked ourselves questions throughout the first level of analysis, such as:

- What is the core set of values and perspectives which reveal family resemblances for the field of Holistic Education, and that distinguish these schools from other schools that might be better grouped as performance-based, progressive, self-directed, back-to-basics, etc.?
- Is there evidence to claim the existence of a continuum of holistic qualities along which schools fall? If so, what is that evidence?

After seeing that there were in fact strong groupings of codes which represented the six aspects of Sagacious Competence, we used the two dimensional matrix developed for the Level 1 Analysis to look for and analyze characteristics for particular groupings of schools. While there are certainly other dimensions of holistic schools that could and should be explored, we felt that there was reason to believe that these dimensions might be particularly illuminating as they related to BOTH the data set and to the theory from which we were working.

The primary dimension for the second level of analysis was each school's primary notion of Ultimacy as expressed in their literature. These notions were indicated within statements about educational goals, the nature of learning, and the future of what they expected their students to become, etc. Our coding gave rise to four general groupings of implicit and explicit statements concerned with Ultimacy:
   (1)   Psychological notions. These involved direct statements that Ultimacy is consequent to developments within the psyche of each individual.
   (2)   Religious notions. These involved direct statements that Ultimacy is consequent to relationship with something sacred beyond the individual.
   (3)   Vague notions of Ultimacy. These involved direct statement indicating that the school has a notion of Ultimacy, but they are vague in making statements about it. This vagueness may be consequent to the staff or board having mixed notions of

Ultimacy, or perhaps they do not want to be explicit (maybe out of fear of offending some segment of their constituency).

(4)   Notions of Ultimacy not Indicated. Schools in this category make no illusion to any notion of Ultimacy. Their literature indicates nothing "higher/spiritual" about the nature of students, about the implications of learning, about their educational goals (student development beyond academics or content knowledge), or anything that would give any clues about their notions of Ultimacy. This doesn't mean they don't have such notions, only that there is no indication in their literature.

After several careful readings of their material, each school was coded as being in one of these four categories. Then, we looked at the frequency and strength of quotations related to each school's expression of six aspects of Sagacious Competence.

Level 1 Analysis

After coding all the material from the schools, we needed to establish a broad-stroke differentiation of schools. To do this we created a 6 X 4 matrix using the 4 orientations to Ultimacy and the 6 aspects of Sagacious Competence (both described on page 4). This initial sorting was to explore whether there are different qualities emphasized by different approaches or understandings of Ultimacy. If there are such differences, then we have the beginning of an approach to finding different kinds of holistic schools.

The first line in each box of the matrix gives us the number of quotations (in relation to a particular Ultimacy orientation and Sagacious Competence) but that number is deceptive as the numbers of schools in each orientation is so different. To compensate for this we created an adjusted value which was derived from the number of quotations divided by the percentage of that orientation within the overall number of schools. With this we have a reasonable basis of comparison despite the fact that in one orientation we have only 9 schools and in another we have 35 schools. This allowed us to establish adjusted percentages so that we can compare orientations of schools. For instance, in the upper left-hand box of Table 1 (representing schools in which Ultimacy is not indicated, and the number of times Freedom is mentioned by those schools), the adjusted value of 64 represents the number of times Freedom would have been mentioned if the numbers of all the different kinds of schools were the same, in which case 12.5% is the percentage of such mentions (of Freedom) for those kinds of schools.

Table 1 is concerned with all of the quotations (weak and strong) which were coded in relation to Sagacious Competence including all the subcategories. Table 2 is concerned with *only* the *strong* quotations. This second table is meant to establish whether there is a meaningful difference between a use of all the quotations and a use of only those which are stressed or unequivocal. We hoped that by looking at both the frequency and the strength of expressions we would have a more complete picture.

Table 3 looks at the number of schools rather than the number of quotations. A difficulty of the first two tables is that the picture can be skewed by one school in an Ultimacy orientation mentioning an aspect of Sagacious Competence a great many times. For example, if one school in the Ultimacy Not Mentioned category wrote about "Freedom" 10 times but none of the other 17 schools in the category mentioned it at all, then that category of school still has an initial count of 10 in the first two tables. Table 3 resolves this by telling us the number of schools in each Ultimacy orientation which mention each aspect of Sagacious Competence, and what percentage of the schools in this orientation that number represents. Continuing the example above, we see that 8 out of the 18 schools in the Ultimacy Not Mentioned orientation mention "Freedom," which represents 44% of those schools.

Together these first three tables give us the Level 1 analysis by showing how many times, how strongly, and by what numbers of schools do the different Ultimacy orientations of schools mention the different aspects of Sagacious Competence.

Schools Analysis, Level 1: Basic Framework & Patterns (Charts & Interpretations)

Table 5

Numbers & Percentages of Sagacious Competency Codings Represented by Ultimacy/Sagacious Competence Cross-Sections
(including all quotations from sub-categories directly related to each Sagacious Competence)

ULTIMACY Orientations of schools	Aspects of Sagacious Competence & Sub-categories that were Coded Reading across: Numbers of quotations Reading down: Percents, based on Adjusted Values [1]						
	Freedom	Good Judgment	Meta Learning	Social Ability (general)	Refining Values	Self Knowledge	TOTALS
1. Not indic-ated (25% of schools)	16 quotes (64 adj. value) 12.5% adjusted	20 quotes (80 adj.) 11.7% adj.	25 quotes (100 adj.) 12.3% adj.	36 quotes (144 adj.) 14.2% adj.	15 quotes (60 adj.) 7.1% adj.	18 quotes (72 adj.) 10.5% adj.	130 quotes (520 adj. of all Sag codes)
2. Ult. Psych. (14% of schools)	22 quotes (157 adj. value) 30.7% adjusted	35 quotes (250 adj.) 36.7% adj.	35 quotes (250 adj.) 30.8% adj.	38 quotes (271.4 adj.) 26.7% adj.	50 quotes (357 adj.) 42 % adj.	42 quotes (300 adj.) 43.8% adj.	222 quotes (1585 adj. of all Sag codes)
3. Ult. Relig. (12% of schools)	9 quotes (75 adj. value) 14.6% adjusted	20 quotes (166.7 adj.) 24.5%	20 quotes (166.7 adj.) 20.6% adj.	32 quotes (266.7 adj.) 26.3% adj.	28 quotes (233.3 adj.) 27.4% adj.	14 quotes (116.7 adj.) 17% adj.	123 quotes (1025 adj. of all Sag codes)
4. Ult. Vague (49% of schools)	106 quotes (216 adj. value) 42.2% adjusted	93 quotes (189.8 adj.) 27.8% adj.	144 quotes (293.9 adj.) 36.3% adj.	163 quotes (332.7 adj.) 32.8% adj.	98 quotes (200 adj.) 23.5% adj.	96 quotes (195.9 adj.) 28.6% adj.	700 quotes (1427 adj. of all Sag codes)
TOTALS 72 schools	154 quotes 512 adjusted (13.1% of all Sag codes)	168 quotes 681.5 adj. (14.3% of all Sag codes)	223 quotes 810.6 adj. (18.9% of all Sag codes)	269 quotes 1014.8 adj. (22.9% of all Sag codes)	191 quotes 850.3 adj. (16.3% of all Sag codes)	170 quotes 684.6 adj. (14.5% of all Sag codes)	1175 quotes

(1) To adjust for the different numbers of schools in each Ultimacy orientation, we used the following adjustments:
   Adjusted value for each cell = (Number of quotations/percent of schools for that Ultimacy orientation)
   Adjusted Percentages for each cell (so that they are comparable) = Adjusted value/total adjusted values for each column
Yellow cells represent the two most highly ranked Sagacious Competence aspects for each Ultimacy orientation.

First Thoughts and Observations from Table 5

1. In the first category of schools (# 1 – Not Indicated), 18 schools have not indicated Ultimacy in any form. Interestingly, they also have far fewer references to any elements of Sagacious Competence than any other Ultimacy orientation categories of schools. Their adjusted value for all mentions of sagacious competence (520) is approximately one third of the adjusted scores of two other categories of schools. The initial thought was that this indicates that these schools are not very holistic and could be removed from the analysis, but we resisted this impulse as we wanted to see what we could learn from them that might simply not be immediately evident. Of the references to Sagacious Competence that are made by this first category of schools, they tend to be weak (as seen in Table 2) and appear largely in the areas of meta learning and social ability. Without connection to a more complex understanding of Ultimacy, meta learning and social ability can, of course, be purely pragmatic capacities valued for their contributions to "success."

2. The 10 schools that express notions of Ultimacy that are predominantly psychological (#2 – Ult. Psych.) have the highest adjusted score for mention of Sagacious Competence of all the groups. There is a good distribution across all six aspects of Sagacious Competence with a slightly larger number of references to refining values and self-knowledge. Social ability appears to be the least significant aspect of Sagacious Competence among this group of schools. More will be said about this group and its possible link with group #4 in the discussion which follows.

3. The 9 schools that indicate notions of Ultimacy that are predominantly religious (#3 – Ult. Relig.) are predominantly Christian. As a group their adjusted score for mentions of sagacious competence was a third less than groups #2 or #4. They seemed most concerned with social ability and refining values and are somewhat weak in their references to freedom (only a third of their adjusted value for the other two aspects).

4. The 35 schools which expressed vague notions of Ultimacy seemed to be strongly represented across all the aspects of Sagacious Competence (in proportion to the other schools). It needs to be reiterated that the notions the schools or staff have are not necessarily vague, only that they are neither strongly expressed in psychological or religious terms. social ability and meta-learning are their strongest area.

5. Overall, social ability, refining values, and meta-learning are the most widely represented aspect of Sagacious Competence (in that order). Freedom is the least represented. It should be noted that that the code for "Freedom as an aspect of Sagacious Competence" was not used simply when the word "freedom" was used as this word frequently refers to things (e.g., freedom of choice, freedom in politics, etc.) which are not necessarily connected to the Sagacious Competence.

Table 6

Number of **Strong** Sagacious Competency Quotations Represented by Ult/Sag Cross-Sections
(including ONLY quotations from strongest examples of Sagacious Competence)

ULTIMACY Orientations of schools	Aspects of Sagacious Competence that appeared <u>strongly in school literature</u> Reading across: Numbers of quotations Reading down: Percents, based on Adjusted Values [1]						
	Freedom	**Good Judgment**	**Meta Learning**	**Social Ability (general)**	**Refining Values**	**Self Knowledge**	TOTALS
1. Not indi-cated (25% of schools)	0	0	2 quotes (8 adj.) 7.9%	3 quotes (12 adj.) 9.3%	2 quotes (8 adj.) 6.7%	2 quotes (8 adj.) 3.5%	9 quotes (36 adj. of all Sag codes)
2. Ult. Psych. (14% of schools)	2 quotes (14.3 adj. value) 31.8%	3 quotes (21.4 adj.) 25.1%	5 quotes (35.7 adj.) 35.3%	9 quotes (64.3 adj.) 49.7%	11 quotes (78.6 adj.) 65.7%	12 quotes (85.7 adj.) 37.3%	42 quotes (300 adj. of all Sag codes)
3. Ult. Relig. (12% of schools)	1 quote (8.3 adj.) 18.4%	4 quotes (33.3 adj.) 39.0%	1 (8.3 adj.) 8.2%	1 (8.3 adj.) 6.4%	2 (16.7 adj.) 14.0%	9 (75 adj.) 32.6%	18 quotes (149 adj. of all Sag codes)
4. Ult. Vague (49% of schools)	11 quotes (22.4 adj.) 49.8%	15 quotes (30.6 adj.) 35.9%	24 (49.0 adj.) 48.5%	22 (44.9 adj.) 34.7%	8 (16.3 adj.) 13.6%	30 (61.2 adj.) 26.6%	110 quotes (224 adj. of all Sag codes)
TOTALS 72 schools 100%	14 quotes 45 adj. value (strongly representing "Freedom" as a competence)	22 quotes 85.3 adj. (strongly representing "Good Judgment"	32 quotes 101 adj. (strongly representing "Meta-learning)	35 quotes 129.5 adj. (strongly representing "Social Ability")	23 quotes 119.6 adj. (strongly representing "Refining Values")	53 quotes 229.9 adj. (strongly representing "Self-Knowledge")	179 quotes

(1) To adjust for the different numbers of schools in each Ultimacy orientation, we used the same formulas as for Table 1.
Yellow Cells represent most highly ranked STRONGEST Sagacious Competence quotations for that particular Ultimacy category.

First Thoughts and Observations from Table 6

1. For the schools in groups #1 (Not indicated) and #2 (Ult. Psych.) the patterns seen in Table 1 are fairly closely reiterated. The slight difference for group #1 between the two tables could just be consequent to the dearth of any strong references to aspects of sagacious competence.

2. For the 9 schools in group #3 (Ult. Relig.) the pattern of Table 2 does not replicate Table 1. When looking at all the quotations coded, the three most widely referenced aspects of Sagacious Competences were social ability, refining values, and meta-learning (in that order); whereas when looking at only strong references we see self-knowledge, good judgment, and refining values (in that order). This over-lap of only one out of three may be an indication of coding error, although if that were the case we would expect to see it in other groups. This is considered more in the discussion that follows.

3. For the 35 schools in group #4 (Ult. Vague) the different patterns seen between Table 1 and Table 2 overlap more closely than for group #3, but they don't overlap completely. Looking at all references to aspects of Sagacious Competence in Table 1, there is an emphasis on social ability, meta-learning, and freedom (in that order); whereas looking at only strong references the emphasis is on self-knowledge, meta-learning, and social ability (in that order). It is interesting that for this group Freedom is mentioned frequently but not strongly; while self-knowledge is mentioned strongly but not frequently.

Table 7

Numbers and Percentages of Schools Represented by Sagacious Competence & Ultimacy
Categories
(including ALL sub-categories for aspects of Sagacious Competence)

ULTIMACY CATEGORY	Freedom	Good Judgment	Meta Learning	Social Ability (general)	Refining Values	Self Knowledge	TOTAL SCHOOLS
Ult. Not Mentioned (18 schools)	8 schools 44% of 18 schools	10 schools 55%	10 55%	14 78%	10 55%	9 50%	18 25% of sample
Ult. Psych. (10 schools)	8 schools 80% of 10 schools	10 schools 100%	10 100%	9 90%	10 100%	10 100%	10 14% of sample
Ult. Relig. (9 schools)	5 schools 55% of 9 schools	6 schools 67%	6 67%	6 67%	8 89%	7 78%	9 12% of sample
Ult. Vague (35 schools)	32 schools 91% of 35 schools	33 schools 94%	33 94%	34 97%	30 86%	29 83%	35 49% of sample
TOTALS	53 schools 73.6%	59 schools 81.9%	59 schools 81.9%	63 schools 87.5%	58 schools 80.5%	55 schools 76.4%	72

Yellow cells indicate when that Sagacious Competence is mentioned by 80% or more of that collection of schools with a particular Ultimacy orientation.

First Thoughts and Observations from Table 7

1. This table takes out the effect of a small number of schools in a group mentioning a Sagacious Competence frequently which would give the impression that the whole group values that Sagacious Competence.
2. Looking only at groups of schools in which 80% or more of them mention an aspect of Sagacious Competence, the difference between groups is stunning. For groups #2 and #4 all the aspects of Sagacious Competence are mentioned by at least 80% of the schools. For group #1 none are mentioned by that many schools, and for group #3 only refining values are mentioned by 80% of schools.
3. Looking across all of the groups, freedom and self-knowledge are mentioned by the least number of schools.

Level 2 Analysis (and almost beyond)

The second level of analysis was to further refine our attempt to find "kinds" of holistic schools by identifying individual schools within our original matrix and looking for differences between those schools. To accomplish this we gave each school an identifying number (to protect their anonymity) and we indicated for each school whether its mention of a Sagacious Competence was strong and frequent, only frequent, or only strong. The results of this are seen in Table 8.

By seeing that there were many schools that shared both their Ultimacy orientation and emphasis on one of more different elements of Sagacious Competences, we are able to see something of what we were looking for – "kinds" of holistic education schools. These 9 "kinds" or groups of schools are most easily discernable in Table 9. We have labeled the different collections of schools as "groups" rather than "kinds" because at this juncture we do not have mutually exclusive categories – and it's possible that trying to find mutually exclusive "kinds" is not realistic or advisable. Some schools are in more than one group, hence the total of 86 schools listed in the different groups (from Table 9) even though there are only 58 schools in our sample by the time we get to this level of analysis. However, the schools that are in two groups are within two groups that have a common Ultimacy orientation. So, for example, a school may be in both Group PV and PV2, or in Group V and V2, etc., but not in Group PV2 and Group R2.

The final analysis we considered (which we were thinking of as "Level 3 Analysis") was to see what if any other coding categories (see page 11 for a description of these) appeared with unique predominance in any Group. What we began to see was intriguing. For instance:

- Group P predominantly mentioned psychological goals and academic/practical goals independently of one another.
- Group PV had psychological/social goals, made more claims about its uniqueness, and stressed the importance of developing responsibility and independence.
- Group PV2 wrote most about their program requirements, activities and stressed the importance of "community."
- Group V stressed multi-culturalism, core academics, and the arts.
- Group V2 stressed the students learn how to learn and taking responsibility for their learning, as well as the active hands-on nature of learning at their schools.
- Group R stressed the ethos in their schools and values that were communicated to students (rather than refined by the students themselves).
- Group R2 stressed psychological goals with the effects the schools have on the images the students have of themselves, as well as the student's enhanced communicativeness and expressiveness.
- Group R3 ranked highest in the importance of understanding students as well as the behavior expectations.
- Group N promoted citizenship (partly through learning that takes place in social activities and in the community) and the success of their graduates in further education.

Even though we see these general patterns, we have shied away from pushing this analysis to its conclusion. It seems to us that to do so would be assuming that more can be said about a school than is reasonable from looking at their literature alone. It is tempting to consider that the Level 3

Analysis findings are ones that can be furthered or developed by more research, but it seems to us to be no more than a taster of what could be done on the basis of much more extensive data from these schools. Any conclusions now would only prejudice much more and better work that could be done with more and better data.

Table 8

Identifying particular schools and their mention of aspects of Sagacious Competence across different Ultimacy orientations.

	ID #s for each school						
	Green bold ID indicate strength and frequency. Black Bold ID indicate frequency (more than 4 references). Red plain text ID indicate strength only. Plain text ID indicate some mention but neither strong nor frequent.						
ULTIMACY CATEGORY	**Freedom**	**Good Judgment**	**Meta Learning**	**Social Ability (general)**	**Refining Values**	**Self Knowledge**	TOTAL SCHOOLS w/ some aspect emphasized
Ult. Not Mentioned (18 schools)	5, 17, 22, **25**, 36	5, 17, 25, **36**	5, 11, 17, 20, 22, **25**, 36	**5**, 20, 22, **24, 25, 36**, 37, **48**, 60	20, 22, 24, 25, 48	17, 20, 24, 28, **36**, 37, 60	11
Ult. Psych. (10 schools)	4, **8**, 21, **34, 41**, 42	**4, 21, 34, 41**, 44, **69**	**4**, 6, 8, **21, 34, 41, 42**, 69	**4**, 6, 21, **34, 41, 42**, 44, **69**	**4**, 6, **21, 34, 41, 42, 44**, 66, **69**	**4, 6, 21, 34, 41**, 44, 66, **69**	9
Ult. Relig. (9 schools)	7, 12, 26	12, **26, 38, 46**, 47, 59	**7, 12, 26**, 59	7, 12, **26, 46, 47**	7, **26, 38, 46**, 47, 52, 59	7, **12, 38, 46**, 47	8
Ult. Vague (35 schools)	**1, 2, 3**, 16, 31, **39, 40, 45, 49, 54, 58, 63, 70**	**1, 2, 3, 10, 13, 15, 16, 19**, 23, 29, 30, **39**, 40, 43, 45, 53, **54, 58**, 61, **63, 64**, 65, 67, 68, **70**, 71, **72**	**1, 2, 3, 10, 13, 15, 16, 19, 23, 29**, 31, **32, 39, 40, 43**, 45, 49, 53, **54, 55, 56, 58**, 63, 64, 65, 67, **68, 70**, 72	**1, 2, 3**, 9, **10, 13, 15, 16, 19**, 23, 27, **29**, 32, **39, 40, 43, 45, 49, 51**, 53, **54, 55, 61**, 67, **70**, 71, **72**	1, 2, **10**, 13, **15, 16, 19, 23**, 32, **39**, 45, **49, 54, 58**, 61, **63, 70, 72**	**1, 2, 10, 13, 16**, 19, **23, 29, 39**, 43, **45**, 49, 54, **58**, 63, 64, **70, 71**	30
TOTALS (72 schools)							58

Table 9

"Kinds" (or Groups) of Schools Analyzed

Notions of Ultimacy	Elements of Sagacious Competence (# of schools analyzed as the *strongest* in each group)					
	Freedom	*Good Judgment*	*Meta Learning*	*Social Ability*	*Refining Values*	*Self Knowledge*
1. None Mentioned (25% of schools)			**Group N** – emphasis on <u>at least</u> these two elements (5 schools)			
2. Psych. (14% of schools)				**Group P** – emphasis on at least these three elements (8 schools)		
(2 & 4) Psychological & Vague Notions	**Group PV** - ALL elements of Sagacious Competence referenced strongly or frequently within members of this group (14 schools)					
		Group PV2 – Emphasis to all elements, <u>except</u> Freedom. (20 schools)				
3. Religious Notions (12% of schools)		**Group R** (4 schools)				Group R
				Group R2 – emphasis on these two elements (4 schools)		
	Group R3 - emphasis on <u>any two</u> elements of sagacious competence. (7 schools) (Group created because there was a 50% overlap between R1 & R2.)					
4. Vague (49% of schools)		**Group V** – Emphasis to all elements, <u>except</u> Freedom <u>and</u> Self Knowledge (9 schools)				
		Group V2 – Emphasis on these three elements (15 schools)				

Summary and Conclusions

Holistic Education exists in so many forms and is based on so many different understandings that research on this approach to pedagogy has been restricted to case studies and philosophical treatises. At the same time, the authors of this paper and the literature of the field recount successes from Holistic Education that should be of interest to the larger field of education. However, these successes are usually dismissed by the larger field as anecdotal, or the result of something temporal or idiosyncratic (e.g., a charismatic teacher or school leader) rather than as a consequence of the over-all approach to education. Such dismissal is understandable even if it is unfortunate. The picture is further confused when we see very different beneficial results from very different schools, and this research begins to demonstrate why this may be so.

If, as this research demonstrates, there is a group of schools (let's call them Group A) that emphasizes the importance of general social abilities (and which often engage in a great deal of co-operative learning, group decision making, etc.), then it would seem reasonable that research would show that their students graduate with a heightened social sense or refined social abilities. Similarly, if there is a group of schools (let's call them Group B) that emphasizes the importance of self-knowledge (and promote meditation, journaling, self-monitoring, etc.) then it would seem reasonable that research would show that their students graduate with a greater sense of self-knowledge, heightened locus of control, and a more developed self-concept. The problem comes when we lump Group A and Group B together (because we have no way to separate them) and we ask, "Does holistic education help students develop greater social abilities?" or "Does holistic education help students develop greater self-knowledge?" because we inevitably get the answer, "Sometimes yes, and sometimes no." This leaves research in the field completely stymied.

The authors of this paper feel they have seen instances in which this confusion also weakens the position and the reputation of many holistic education schools. A person (parent, student, or teacher) hears of a holistic school (let's say from Group A) and they become enthusiastic for the outcomes they believe have resulted from that school. They then decide to commit themselves to the holistic school in their area (which happens to be of Group B) and they become disenchanted when none of the things they thought would be in "holistic education" are in their school. It isn't just as simple as "comparing apples with oranges," it is more like expecting to get "appleness" from oranges. And it isn't sufficient to say, "Well, still you're getting fruitiness" – or in this case "education" – any more that it would be to tell a child who wants a more contemplative education but finds him/herself in a Democratic School, "Well, still you're getting a holistic education." This then may be a side benefit of this study: a taxonomy of holistic schools could help families and students find the right match for what they want, and might help schools attract the most appropriate students.

With the start of a taxonomy of holistic schools we should also be able to do more empirical research across schools. We might, for instance, begin to go beyond the individual school and examine how schools from Group A help students achieve a heightened social sense and more refined social abilities. From this we may begin thinking of ways in which this can be replicated in other, very different, schools. In fact, this would allow the insights from 240 years of holistic education to be more available to mainstream education which often (because of size or bureaucratic constraints) can't have some of the features found in holistic schools. A taxonomy

should also allow schools that don't see themselves as similar realize that they are approaching the similar goals, but in different ways (assuming they are part of the same group) and to begin to learn from each other. This might help remove some of the isolation of which many holistic educators have complained.

What we can conclude from this research is that a case can be made for 9 groups of schools when we have nothing to go on but their school literature. More research on actual schools rather than just their literature would no doubt produce a refinement and elaboration of these groups, but might not erase these groups (e.g., making the distinction between apples and oranges does not erase the category "fruit"). Nevertheless, there is one area of our emerging taxonomy which deserves looking at anew.

The schools that were initially identified as having an orientation towards Ultimacy that is predominantly psychological in nature, and those that have a definite orientation towards Ultimacy but whose nature is indeterminate (called "Vague" in this study) may not be very different or might need much more work to establish their difference. Notions of Ultimacy which are inspired by Carl Jung (and his "Unus Mundus") or Abraham Maslow (and his "self-actualization") or Carl Rogers (and his "becoming a fully-functioning human") are clearly psychological. They do, however, also have a religious aspect, even though they don't belong to any religion. There is also a strong current in modern Western thought which has the psyche as the seat of consciousness, and consciousness as the primary bridge to the "sacred," but which again is not part of any particular religion. These views are sometimes called "spiritual." These views are usually cogent and often very well thought out, but they are not easily expressed, and those running schools based on these views have claimed that it is easier to be vague about these matters than to be very definitive. These schools also report some instances of being denigrated as "new-age," "airy-fairy," part of a "secular religion," etc. At the same time, few people would argue against the value of the commonly held understanding of "self-actualization" or the prospect of "becoming a fully-functioning human" (without looking at the more esoteric aspects of those notions as propounded by Maslow and Rogers), so that schools interested in those more esoteric notions might only mention the psychological terms when writing their brochures. What we probably have, therefore, in our two kinds of Ultimacy orientations is a conflation. However, this may be somewhat resolved in the second level of analysis as these two orientations produce 5 groups, none of which are identical. In other words, we might have an initial conflation in the Ultimacy orientations between those that we labeled "Ult. Vague" and those we labeled "Ult. Psych." but we were at least able to distinguish 5 different groups of emphasis on elements of Sagacious Competence within those two groups – and finding groups of holistic schools was our intent. Further research that looks carefully at the actualities of these schools (beyond their literature) should clarify this matter.

The schools which have been coded as having a religious orientation to Ultimacy seem also to need elaboration as they may currently be skewed by Christian schools, even though the group currently contains schools that promote Eastern religious views. It would be good in future studies to include Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, Sikh, and Hindu schools so that each religious orientation could be seen separately. At the moment, finding such schools in the United States which are also holistic is not easy, and including such schools from other cultures introduces cross-cultural effects which this study is currently not structured for.

This research should allow us to begin looking at collections of holistic schools on the basis of the kinds of things the schools claim they are most interested in, with the expectation that their achievements are within the same field. From this we should be able to research their very different achievements and begin to see whether these achievements can be replicated in different settings, including public schools. If, as has often been claimed by holistic schools, their achievements are the result of their pedagogy and not something idiosyncratic, it is important that the larger field of education learns of it. Perhaps this research is a step in making that possible.

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