

**THE HOLISTIC CURRICULUM:
Addressing the Fundamental Needs of the Whole Child in a
Diverse and Global Society**

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ABSTRACT

According to *The Education Trust* journal, “achievement gaps between groups of students can tell us a lot about which students are given the preparation they need to succeed in college and work, and which ones continue to be left out.” The mission of education in the 21st century **MUST** place special emphasis on integrating the learning process. Theodore Roosevelt said: “to educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society.”

Introduction

The holistic curriculum is a substantive public school campus educational plan and/or guide designed with a specific mission of fulfilling the theme, “**Begin with**

the End in Mind.” This theme (which is habit # 2) is taken from best-selling author Steven Covey’s book, *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*.

The holistic curriculum has a dual purpose: to produce meaningful left-brain cognitive learning that is achieved through the development of academic and technical skill sets; and meaningful right-brain affective relationships in a diverse and global society that is achieved through the development of social and value skill sets. Its goal is to allow for a painless transition from the 3Rs of Race, Religion (*not the Christian doctrine*) and Rhetoric to the 3Rs of Rigor, Relevance and Relationships in a diverse society and global world. Martin Luther King said: “I have a dream that one day my children will live in a society that judges them not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

According to Alfie Kohn, “teaching the whole child requires that we accept students for who they are rather than for what they do.” The traditional one-size-fits-all cognitive educational model was not designed to meet the needs of students—male and female—who have developed affective proficiencies due to environmental factors associated with historical oppression, suppression and repression. Please bear witness to the relationship dynamics that appear below:

Oppression

Ethnic Majority exercise:
- Power
- Control
- Domination
over Ethnic Minorities

Suppression

Men exercise:
- Power
- Control
- Domination
over Women

Repression

Rich People exercise:
- Power
- Control
- Domination
over Poor People

These affective proficiencies, which are linked to emotions that can become highly volatile if provoked or shamefully passive depending on the type of stimuli administered, more times than not desire and/or benefit from *spiritual networks* or meaningful relationships if exceptional results are expected. A comprehensive curriculum format has been designed to develop and implement four **SKILL SETS: Academic; Technical; Social; and Values** across the school curriculum. The goal of these skill sets is to substantively address the fundamental human **NEEDS** to be happy rather than unhappy; **healthy** rather than unhealthy; wealthy rather than broke; and warrior rather than coward.

Statement of the Problem

The problematic state of America exists in large part because of the six systemic and/or global issues that appear below:

1. Academic
2. Social
3. Psychological

4. Economic
5. Cultural Incompetence (Afro-centric values vs. Euro-centric values)
6. Health

By consensus, we believe that the aforementioned issues are the leading causes of attitudes, behaviors and outcomes that personify the antithesis to the fundamental human needs: unhappy; unhealthy; broke; and coward. We believe that these variables are the leading contributors to the destructive self-fulfilling prophecies that produce some of the biggest problems on America's Pre-K – 16 campuses. These problems reveal themselves through the nine troublesome components that appear below:

1. Bullies
2. Abusers (words and/or actions)
3. Low Academic Achievers
4. Gang Bangers
5. Sexually Active / Misconduct
6. Drug Dealers
7. Drug Users
8. Thieves
9. Obesity

It is believed that the destructive self-fulfilling prophecies that produce the aforementioned campus problems are linked to low self-esteem, which is linked to and/or rooted in **two types of fear**—both of which adversely affects the **soul** of humankind (*e.g. mind; will; and emotions*). **Type I Fear**, which adversely affects the human will, is referred to as F-E-A-R (false evidence appearing real), which is nothing more than a lie that has been conceived to victimize individuals who are historically linked to oppression, suppression and repression (*e.g. ethnic minorities; women; and the economically poor*). **Type II Fear** is a spirit that has as its purpose to produce the following deadly emotions:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------|
| - Frustration | - Anger |
| - Self-doubt | - Anxiety |
| - Guilt | - Shame |

We believe that Type I and II Fear are the reasons why *spiritual networks* or meaningful relationships are imperative if campus-wide student success is the goal. Two formulas are presented below to help practitioners conceptualize how significant relationships are in organizations that need quality human interactions to fulfill their mission, goals and objectives. These formulas are as follows:

Rules – Relationships = Rebellious Teams (*e.g. those producing conditional; unsafe; and unhealthy climates*)

Rules + Relationships = Championship Teams (*e.g. those producing unconditional; safe; and healthy climates*)

In both types of school climates you will find the 4Cs: Communication; Collaboration; Coordination; and Cooperation. The championship teams are born out of (4C) **effectiveness** and rebellious teams are born out of (4C) **ineffectiveness**.

Holistic Curriculum Format: An Outline and Proposal

- I. Definition/Purpose
- II. Statement of Philosophy/Aims
- III. Goals of the Curriculum
- IV. Objectives of the Curriculum
- V. Design of the Plan
- VI. Implementation
- VII. Evaluation

Definition:

A substantive guide/plan that reflects and/or addresses experiences associated with a student's past and current circumstances – home, school, neighborhood, with the eventual goal to create a better/brighter future.

Aim:

The aim is to design a curriculum that addresses the whole child: academically; socially; economically; health/wellness; and cultural competence. Prepare students to deal with real world experiences and to become life-long learners.

Note: Please reference systemic issues and campus' biggest problems.

Curriculum Goals:

Students will improve and eventually master:

- 1) Behavior – (self-discipline and self image)
- 2) Academics – (excelling in course work)
- 3) Relationships – (informal and formal interactions within and between groups)
- 4) Health and Wellness – (includes physical, mental, spiritual/emotional, social, and financial fitness and how to sustain each)

- 5) Cultural Competence – (the ability to know, understand and acknowledge the history of different cultures and the norms and values that produce uniqueness in each culture)

Curriculum Objectives: Expectations

- 1) Behavior
 - a. Prerequisite: Listening; Obeying; and Following Instructions
 - b. Teach students self discipline (emphasizing importance of values)
 - c. Modeling positive image of self
- 2) Academic
 - a. Prerequisite: Listening; Obeying; and Following Instructions
 - b. Set high expectations with the understanding of setting grades no lower than a “B”
 - c. On-going assessments/Time management
- 3) Relationships
 - a. Prerequisite: Listening; Obeying; and Following Instructions
 - b. Teach how to build and maintain appropriate relationships with associates, friends and family through use of the three types of love-physical, brotherly, and divine
 - c. Teach and model social skills (e.g. coping, conflict resolution, etiquette, etc.)
- 4) Health and Wellness
 - a. Prerequisite: Listening; Obeying; and Following Instructions
 - b. Teach self-discipline (emphasizing diet and time management)
 - c. Personal and public safety strategies
 - d. Teach money management and how to nurture their body, mind, heart and soul
- 5) Cultural Competence
 - a. Prerequisite: Listening; Obeying; and Following Instructions
 - b. Distinguish between affective and cognitive frame of reference
 - c. Multiple intelligences and learning styles

Design of the Plan:

- A. Involvement and Engagement of teachers, students and parents
- B. Draft and articulate proposal to stakeholders
- C. Empower through assigning roles and responsibilities

Implementation:

- A. Staff development (overview and cost projection)
- B. Aligned to state/federal guidelines

- C. Pilot, through use of a representative sample (one semester)
- D. Use a pre-assessment instrument
- E. Analyze and Revise (if necessary)

Evaluation:

- A. Pre-assessment Methods (pretest)
- B. Three week evaluation for performance and behavior (progress report)
- C. End of six weeks report (formative)
- D. Self assessment test and confidence scale (post test)
- E. Post-test (summative)

Instruments:

- Self Assessment Test / Cognitive and Affective Skills
- Multiple Intelligences / Learning Styles Inventory
- Confidence Scale / Assessing Level of Self-Esteem

Key Components

The following (4) **key components** are given for the purpose of ensuring that curriculum leaders are able to effectively articulate to all stakeholders (internal and external) in a manner that allows and enables them to conceptualize **why** the holistic curriculum is needed, and **how** it will be implemented to address what is needed and desired.

KEY COMPONENT #1

[Transforming School Communities into Championship Teams]

Rigor

Definition – any thing or process that is both demanding and challenging.

Purpose – to create learning environments that produces academic and social growth and development and expected outcomes.

Goal – challenge students to challenge themselves.

Example:

Knowledge (*effectively*) Applied x Love (*effectively*) Expressed = CHAMPION

Relevance

Definition – having to do with significance and substance; why something is important and how it will impact life both short-term and long-term.

Purpose – to create a vision for success that is connected to will and work ethic (working hard and smart).

Goal – transform cowards and wimps into warriors, and winners into champions.

Example: Academic Skills x Technical Skills = Wealthy People

Relationships

Definition – two or more elements, variables, components, or people connected in a circle that depicts/conveys common thoughts, values, views, and/or purposes.

Purpose – to develop or create a paradigm (model) that grows, develops, and sustains the domains of faith, hope, love, and truth – as applied to self and others.

Goal – achieve expected outcomes through the understanding of individual and/or group roles, and how they work together to produce unity.

Example: Social Skills x Value Skills = Happy People

KEY COMPONENT #2

[THE THREE (3) SECRETS TO SUCCESS IN THE LEARNING PROCESS]

1. **Listen** – the most fundamental and important skill.
 - *Ears* – to make a conscious effort to hear; to insure clarity of stated words.
 - *Eyes* – to make a conscious effort to see; observation of actions of others.
 - *Mind* – to make a conscious effort to think; maintain focus for extended periods of time.
 - *Heart* – to make a conscious effort to feel; have compassion for the plight of others.

Note: The *conscience* is the voice of the soul. **Giving Best Effort** is the first of the five-part *obligation*. The others are giving time; talent; expertise; and money.

2. **Obey** – the most significant responsibility of a student.
 - *Study Lessons*
 - *Read Chapters*
 - *Take Notes*
 - *Do Homework*

Note: Obedience, which is the first responsibility of a child, must be taught through home rules that are established and consistently enforced by parents.

3. **Follow Instructions** – an edict or orders that teach persons how to become good followers.

- *What to Read*
- *How to Study*
- *How to Apply Critical / Holistic Thinking*
- *How to do Homework*

Note: Great leaders and champions were first good followers.

KEY COMPONENT #3

[ACHIEVING TRANSFORMATION IN OUR SCHOOLS]

LEFT-BRAIN [Cognitive] ----- + -----RIGHT-BRAIN [Affective]

Holistic Curriculum Skills

[Achieving Balance through Customizing to Fit the Needs of ALL Students]

Cognitive [Mind] Skills

1. Listening (*learning*)
2. Reading
3. Writing
4. Critical Thinking
5. Mathematical
6. Science
7. Language Arts
8. History
9. Social Studies
10. Government
11. Business Management / Marketing
12. Economics and Finance
13. Computer
14. Presentation / Professionalism

Purpose: Overcome Ignorance
Money Side of Brain

Affective [Heart] Skills

1. Listening (*loving*)
2. Interaction / Interpersonal
3. Coping
4. Holistic Thinking
5. Faith Domain
6. Hope Domain
7. Love Domain
8. Truth Domain
9. Tolerance / Anger Management
10. Etiquette
11. Ethics
12. Discipleship
13. Conflict Resolution
14. Time Management

Purpose: Overcome Fear
Happy Side of Brain

KEY COMPONENT # 4

THE SOUL OF A MAN

[Three (3) Integrated Components That Produce Human Life]

1. MIND

- Mental State
- Governs the Outward Man [*body and flesh (human nature)*]
- Left-Brain (*mind / mentality / cognitive intelligence*)
- **Cognitive Frame of Reference** (*values; views; viewpoints*)
- Performance Oriented (*needs of economy*)
- Money and Social Status (*Class*) are Top Priority
- Ignorance is the opponent that we must overcome.
- Money is the highest level of pursuit.
- The **gap** that must be closed is the one that exists between ignorance and money.

2. WILL

- 2Ds of Mind – Power in Left-Brain
 - Discipline 20%
 - Drive 20%
- 3Ds of Heart (Spirit) – Power in Right-Brain
 - Determination 20%
 - Dedication 20%
 - Desire 20%

3. EMOTIONS

- Emotional State
- Governs the Inward Man [*soul and spirit (divine nature)*]
- Right-Brain (*heart / spirit / emotional intelligence*)
- **Affective Frame of Reference** (*values; views; viewpoints*)
- Relationship Oriented (*needs of people*)
- Spiritual Networks (*Meaningful Relationships*) are Top Priority
- Fear is the opponent that we must overcome.
- Happiness is the highest level of pursuit.
- The **gap** that must be closed is the one that exists between fear and happiness.

Key Statement: The greatest war of all (*between FAITH and FEAR*) takes place in the *Spirit* for control of an individual's **emotions**. Whoever (you or another person) or whatever (some type of chemical or spiritual agent) takes control of your **emotions**, takes control of your life.

Concluding Remarks

America as a nation has moved into the 21st century, but “we the people (*all the people*) of the United States of America” continue to wait for its promise of liberty, justice and equality for all of its citizens to be fulfilled. As Janice E. Hale stated, “a discussion of closing the achievement gap should not focus on equalizing outcomes, but rather on equalizing learning opportunities.” She continues by stating, “it is hypocritical to talk about ‘equal opportunity’ when the system ensures never-ending advantages for upper-income white students.”

Many years ago, America integrated its school system, but we overtly or covertly omitted the most significant and substantive integration—which is integrating the learning process whereby equal justice is given to all three learning domains: cognitive; affective; and psycho-motor and the respective taxonomies that support them. According to philosopher David Hartman, “a monolithic (*single, massive*) framework does not create a critical mind. Where there is only one self-evident truth, nothing ever gets challenged and no sparks of creativity ever get generated. The strength of America has always been its ability to **challenge its own truths** by presenting alternative possibilities. That forces you to justify your own ideas, and that competition of ideas is what creates **excellence**.”

Educational reforms continue to be falsely promoted as *agents* for change, when in fact reform by definition means *improve*. The *one-size-fits-all* educational model cannot be improved to meet the *needs* of all children in a diverse society and global economy. We the people MUST commit to *righteousness*—that is, doing the right thing the right way. This commitment will happen at the expense of *self-righteousness*—that is, looking out for me, my few, and no more.

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