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## Talk About Holistic Education and Life Education

Holistic Education is the educational philosophy of many schools in Macao. It emphasizes the educational directions of holistic development and its aim is to cultivate students with healthy body and spiritual mind. This educational belief is very correct and worthy of praise. Many innovative educators remain fuzzy on its correlation between its meaning and life education. Therefore, we must first understand what is meant by holistic education? What is the connection between holistic education and life education? What is the importance of life education to students? A brief description on these three questions will bring awareness to people who are concerned about school developments; set a target for them to promoting educational philosophy and work together to seek well-being for children.

Holistic Education caught on in the mid-1980s, after the Industrial Revolution. At that time the universal values of society in pursuit of technology and material beyond the utilitarianism result in confusion and distortion of human values. Education industry was used as tool for obtaining benefit and schools were no more places for cultivation of wisdom and moral. Generally everyone was full of such negative characters as fear, isolation, discord, selfishness, etc. This kind of slaughtered and shattered society atmosphere made the scholars full of worry. Then they advocated the holistic education which was oriented in three core frameworks: "Balance", "inclusion" and "connection", forming a kind of "Holistic" educational mode.

Holistic education emphasizes that every student should first find the connection between self and the real self in order to understand the inner true self so as to behave oneself harmoniously and then work closely with others and the community group. Then he/she expands outward to link closely himself/herself with the earth and universe. At last with the connection to beautiful things and respect for life, he/she finds comfort, peace and well-being to the body and mind.

The connotation of life education emphasizes that individual understand the meaning of life, respect and cherish the value of life, love and also develop individual unique life to build a good and harmonious communion relationship with heaven, earth and people. Therefore life education aims to build a harmonious life while looking for the power of life. On the whole, the educational contents are of four dimensions: explore the relationship between man and oneself, man and others, people and natural environment and social environment, and between people and life value. Therefore, in essence, holistic education and life education have high degree of connection for making use of each other.

All correlation and connection should be revealed from curriculum and teachings and are created and developed from the whole organizational atmosphere encompassing the teach-by-example and school environment. The design and arrangement of curriculum must be associated with the

learners' life. For example, "associated with community" should establish a self-start relationship with the classes and then with the living community environment, and then allow itself to form a close a relationship with community groups through cooperation, caring and service learning methods. "Associate with earth" should start from caring about environmental pollution and exploring global warming issues, allowing students to understand and deeply appreciate that people's over-exploitation will make the earth overloaded and bring harms to it. So, they can have reverence and care for the earth, nature and universe and understand their connection with the Mother Earth. "Associate with spiritual" allows student to cherish and value their self-life and find comfort and well-being in body and mind and recognize "moment-to-moment awareness". Contemplation and mediation allow the rhythm of their bodies and sensitive sensory to correlate with each other, inspire their emotion and mind so that they can enjoy the spiritual release and healthy happiness in life.

Holistic education and life education are indeed a spiritual education of two sides in one coin. The pursuit of a high and wonderful life allows children to understand the true love, respect and concern, and supplemented with humility and the power of eager, to learn to link closely with the endless heaven; to live harmoniously with the surrounding environment is the meaning of life and aesthetics and is the purpose and goal of promoting this education.

### Postscript

This article was written after a talk among several parents who are concerned about education and innovative educators, and was written with guidance and encouragement from them. This is a brief description of the meanings of holistic education and life education so as to allow the public to have a simple understanding on it.

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