

THE CHICAGO STATEMENT ON EDUCATION

As we approach the twenty-first century, many of our institutions and professions are entering a period of profound change. We in education are beginning to recognize that the structure, purposes, and methods of our profession were designed for an historical period which is now coming to a close. The time has come to transform education so as to address the human and environmental challenges which confront us.

We believe that education for this new era must be holistic. The holistic perspective is the recognition that all life on this planet is interconnected in countless profound and subtle ways. The view of Earth suspended alone in the black void of space underscores the importance of a global perspective in dealing with social and educational realities. Education must nurture respect for the global community of humankind.

Holism emphasizes the challenge of creating a sustainable, just, and peaceful society in harmony with the Earth and its life. It involves an ecological sensitivity - a deep respect for both indigenous and modern cultures as well as the diversity of life forms on the planet. Holism seeks to expand the way we look at ourselves and our relationship to the world by celebrating our innate human potentials - the intuitive, emotional, physical, imaginative, and creative, as well as the rational, logical, and verbal.

Holistic education recognizes that human beings seek meaning, not just fact or skills, as an intrinsic aspect of their full and healthy development. We believe that only healthy, fulfilled human beings create a healthy society. Holistic education nurtures the highest aspirations of the human spirit.

Holistic education is not one particular curriculum or methodology; it is a set of working assumptions that include the following:

- ❖ Education is a dynamic, open human relationship.
- ❖ Education cultivates a critical awareness of the many contexts of learners' lives - moral, cultural, ecological, economic, technological, political.
- ❖ All persons hold vast multi-faceted potentials, which we are only beginning to understand. Human intelligence is expressed through diverse styles and capacities, all of which we need to respect.
- ❖ Holistic thinking involves contextual, intuitive, creative, and physical ways of knowing.

- ❖ Learning is a lifelong process. All life situations may facilitate learning.
- ❖ Learning is both an inner process of self-discovery and a cooperative activity.
- ❖ Learning is active, self-motivated, supportive, and encouraging of the human spirit.
- ❖ A holistic curriculum is interdisciplinary, integrating both community and global perspectives.

Adopted by 80 Holistic Educators at a
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Steering Committee included: Phil Gang, Ron Miller, Ed
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