

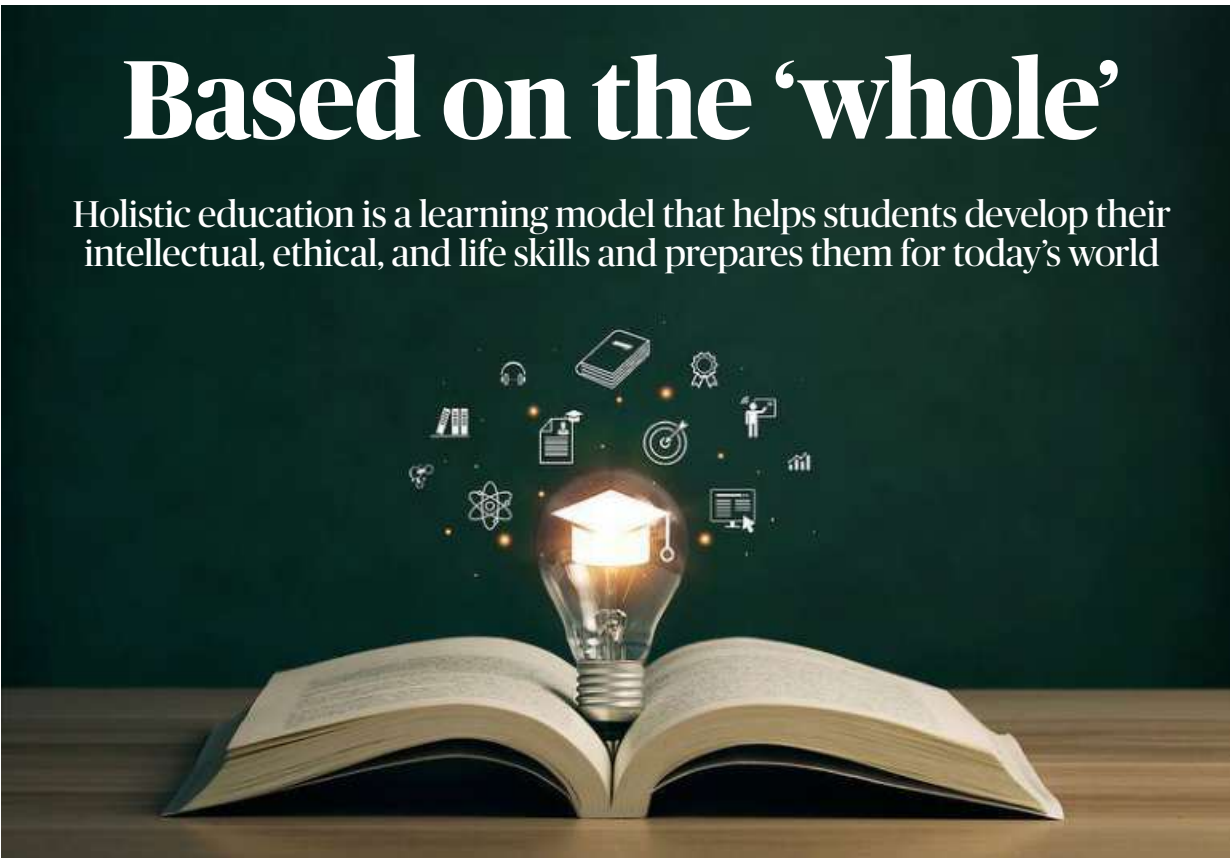
EDUCATIONPLUS

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A. Joseph Dorairaj

Human beings are complex and composite wholes. This complexity can be addressed only by holistic education. Unfortunately, the kind of education imparted in most higher educational institutions is piece-meal and fragmented, with a preponderant focus on rationality. The emotional, spiritual, political and ecological dimensions are glossed over. This is a fallout of the Cartesian paradigm with its excessive emphasis on reason (*Cogito, ergo sum*).

Holism, which incorporates the idea of the ‘whole’, is at the roots of holistic education. The UNESCO document *Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development* emphasises that “Education must contribute to the all-round development of each individual – mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic sense, personal responsibility and spiritual values”. Holistic education emerged in the 1980s in North America as a reaction against the mechanistic paradigm that resulted in a fragmented, reductionist model of education that left out the meta-rational dimensions of life, among other issues. John P. Miller’s book *The Holistic Curriculum* (1988) and Ron Miller’s journal *Holistic Education Review*, launched in 1988, formally inaugurated the campaign



Based on the ‘whole’

Holistic education is a learning model that helps students develop their intellectual, ethical, and life skills and prepares them for today’s world

for a holistic education in the West. In *What Are Schools for? Holistic Education in American Culture*, Miller cautions, “Holistic education is *not* to be defined as a particular method or technique; it must be seen as a *paradigm*, a set of basic assumptions and principles that can be applied in diverse ways”. In other words, it is not just another concept or theory, but a way of thinking and living.

Design and implementation
Teachers have a crucial role to play in both the design and implementation

of a holistic curriculum. They should ensure that it is multi-disciplinary with a fine balance of core papers and electives, especially those from across disciplines. Care should be taken to include art subjects for a science programme and conversely a couple of basic science subjects in an arts programme.

In addition to languages, a foundational course in Philosophy should be introduced so that students are trained to think critically. Second, teachers should promote experiential learning. There is no point in filling students’ minds with information bytes

that have no direct relevance to life. On the contrary, learning by doing not only stimulates the students but also makes learning fun-filled, inferential, and lasting.

Third, teachers should be both indoors and outdoors people. Traditional classrooms required teachers to operate within four walls. But a holistic curriculum will liberate them from these narrow confines by inviting them to accompany their students on field trips. In fact, they should occasionally shed their professorial garb and spend time with their students in the cafeteria dou-

bling up as friends and mentors discussing literally everything under the sun. In other words, they should be connected to their students and be a beacon as the latter navigate life’s narrow lanes and alleys.

Finally, a holistic curriculum demands re-defining of evaluation procedures, which should be designed to test students’ thinking skills. In addition to subject knowledge, life skills should also be tested. Teachers should move away from the traditional roles ascribed to them and re-invent themselves as mentors and catalysts.

Benefits
Imparting a holistic education has many benefits. The primary ones are: helping students develop into well-rounded individuals, interconnectedness, and a global citizenship with a multicultural outlook.

Today, in a world torn asunder by religious, cultural, linguistic, caste and geographic sectarianism, a holistic education can serve as a balm.

Quite a few students are being reduced to intellectual monsters with poor emotional quotient. Many lack a strong ethical base as well. Holistic education can, to some extent, heal fragmentation and divisiveness by taking into account the head, the heart, and the soul, and the synergy that fuses the different elements into a composite whole.

Gandhi’s views on holistic education are profound. He declared: “unless the development of the mind and body goes hand in hand with a corresponding awakening of the soul, the former alone would prove to be a poor lopsided affair” and added that “a proper and all-round development of the mind, therefore, can take place only when it proceeds *pari passu* with the education of the physical and spiritual faculties of the child” (*All Men Are Brothers*).

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SCHOLARSHIPS

NSP Scholarships for Top Class Education for Students with Disabilities

An opportunity offered by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPWD). **Eligibility:** Open to Indian nationals with a disability of 40% or more (as defined in the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016) and are pursuing a UG, PG or diploma course in a recognised institution. Annual family income must not exceed ₹8 lakhs. **Rewards:** ₹3,000 (maintenance allowance), ₹2,000 (special allowance), plus benefits. **Application:** Online **Deadline:** October 31 www.b4s.in/edge/STCEI

Sitaram Jindal Foundation Scholarship Scheme

An initiative by the Sitaram Jindal Foundation. **Eligibility:** Open to students in Class 11 ad 12 or

in an ITI, diploma, UG, or PG programme and have met the minimum percentage requirement in their previous qualifying exam.

Rewards: Up to ₹3,200 a month **Application:** By post to: The Trustee, Sitaram Jindal Foundation, Jindal Nagar, Tumkur Road, Bengaluru - 560073 **Deadline:** Round the year www.b4s.in/edge/SJS2

Deakin India 20% Postgraduate Bursary

An opportunity provided by Deakin University, Australia. **Eligibility:** Open to graduate students who are Indian citizens, hold a valid Indian passport, live in India at the time of application and have an overall score of between 55 % and 74.99% in their UG degree. **Rewards:** 20% reduction in tuition fees **Application:** Online **Deadline:** January 31, 2025 www.b4s.in/edge/DIPB4

Courtesy: buddy4study.com

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Off the Edge
Do you feel uncertain about your career options? Want to understand how to choose your subjects for higher studies? Are you low on self-confidence and doubting yourself? Send your questions to Nandini Raman, practising counsellor and trainer. Write to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with Off The Edge in the subject line.

Aligned to your goals

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help



OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

I have a UG degree in Biochemistry and want to do an M.Sc. Medical Biochemistry in the U.S., the U.K. or Canada. But I don’t want to take an English language test. Is there some other solution? If not, how can I prepare for the IELTS? Bavadharini

Dear Bavadharini,
Avoiding an English Language Test is rarely possible. Some universities may waive the requirement if you can submit a letter from your college confirming that English was the medium of instruction for your UG degree. Others offer pathway programmes or pre-sessional English courses that may exempt you from taking standardised English tests. A few offer conditional admission where you first enroll in an English language course and then proceed to your degree programme upon successful completion.

The IELTS has four sections: Listening, Reading, Writing, and Speaking. Familiarise yourself with the format and types of questions in each.

Enrol in a coaching class that provides structured guidance and feedback. Listen to English podcasts, news, and lectures regularly; read a variety of English newspapers, journals and books and practice with IELTS listening and reading practice tests. Familiarise yourself with the IELTS writing tasks and .practice regularly. Speak in English with people and record yourself to evaluate and improve your pronunciation and fluency. Take practice tests to assess your progress and get used to the test timing.

I finished Mechanical Engineering in 2021. I have been taking the UPSC and other state service exams but have not cleared any. What are my options? Arjun

Dear Arjun,
Get a career profile done to identify your interest and passion and then work on enhancing your skills and certifications. Focus on specific development across technical areas relevant to your field (e.g., CAD/CAM software certification, Six Sigma certification), management and soft skills, as these will make you more job ready. Check out core Mechanical Engineering openings in the private sector across technical, sales, marketing, and operations and identify the prerequisites.

Explore research programmes that align with your career goals and opportunities for scholarships or financial aid.

Consider pursuing a Master’s degree (M.Tech or MBA) to specialise in a specific area or to change career tracks once you are clear about the current market need/gap you want to fill.

Network and connect with professionals in your industries through LinkedIn, industry events, and alumni networks to gain insights and potential job leads.

My daughter finished the six-year Pharm. D. course in Bengaluru and worked in a start-up for 13 months. But she feels the job is that of a regular pharmacist (which requires only a diploma). What are the career prospects for Pharm.D? Satyanarayan

Dear Satyanarayana,
She could be a clinical pharmacist in a hospital, clinic, or healthcare institution; a consultant pharmacist in nursing homes, assisted living facilities, or home healthcare agencies; a pharmacovigilance specialist in a pharmaceutical company, a regulatory agency; a clinical research associate in a contract research organisations (CROs), pharmaceutical companies, academic research centres; a medical science liaison (MSL), who acts a bridge between pharmaceutical companies and healthcare providers, providing scientific and clinical expertise; or an academican or researcher in

colleges, universities, and research institutions.

I have a B.E. in Computer Science. I have not cleared the UPSC exam in three attempts. I am out of touch with programming skills. I am interested in social service. How can I get jobs in NGOs or in schools? Deepanshu

Dear Deepanshu,
Given your background, you can consider jobs in NGOs under Technology and IT Support and provide technical support, manage IT infrastructure, and implement technology solutions for NGOs or as a Data Management Analyst where you might need to collect, analyse, and report data to support NGO programmes and initiatives. Social media and digital marketing are sought-after today to manage social media platforms, create digital content, and run online campaigns for fundraising and awareness. You could also be a project coordinator and manager or programme development officer.

Jobs at schools depend on their need but you could look at being an IT support specialist, educational technology coordinator, and so on.

You will need to upgrade some of your current skill sets, brush up your concepts in areas relevant to the roles that you are interested in (e.g., IT skills, data analysis, project management) and get some new certifications if possible to be current and relevant. Start by offering your skills as a volunteer in NGOs or schools to gain practical experience and demonstrate your commitment. Check job portals specific to NGOs (e.g., DevNetJobs, Idealist) or school websites for job openings. Create a professional LinkedIn profile highlighting your skills and interests in social service and connect with professionals in NGOs and schools.

Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

Shylaja Menon

According to a 2023 National Library of Medicine study, the excessive screen time that youngsters are being exposed to today during critical phases of their development will lead to mild cognitive impairments as they enter early to middle adulthood. Even worse, the study predicts that this will cause an increase in the rates of early-onset dementia at a later stage. While health authorities currently estimate a two-fold increase, this study expects a potential four-to-six-fold spike in dementia rates.

But this projection is more than just statistics on a page. It is embodied in the digital behaviour of today’s teenagers who are tethered to a smartphone or digital device for an average of six hours a day. The effects of this are already being felt. Educators and student advocates have sounded the alarm over how an over-reliance on screens can undermine the foundations of learning.

Another study by the National Library of Medicine revealed that, for secondary students, pivotal learning experiences – concentration, engagement, ability to grasp concepts, and even self-worth as learners – suffered significantly when classes were held online rather than in physical classrooms. Countless students grapple with distracting devices, struggling to disengage from

Help them disconnect

As students navigate an increasingly digital world, it is up to educators to help them reconnect with the real world



the constant pull of entertainment, social media, and even educational apps.

Steps to take

In this digital muddle, educational institutions are uniquely positioned to guide students in striking a healthy balance by seizing this opportunity to facilitate true disconnection and meaningful reconnection with the physical world.

Among many remedies, the most powerful is to pro-

mote sports and physical activities within academic curricula. Not only does this provide a much-needed respite from screens, but also offers a multitude of benefits for overall well-being. This can be done by mandating daily physical education or activity periods for all classes; fostering a culture of sports through inter-class competitions; integrating mindfulness practices into the daily timetable; and overhauling outdated play-

grounds into fitness hubs that advocate and inspire an active lifestyle.

Apart from this, student achievements outside academics should be recognised and celebrated. Inviting role models and ambassadors of healthy lifestyles to motivate students is another step. Outdoor initiatives such as hiking, camping, environmental stewardship and more can be developed through programmes and partnerships with local organisations.

All this will help youngsters cultivate invaluable life skills such as teamwork, discipline, and social interaction and help them develop into well-rounded individuals. Crucially, physical exertion allows release of pent-up energies and alleviates stress levels. Numerous studies have shown that regular exercise increases focus and concentration, and improves cognitive function.

As students continue to navigate an increasingly virtual world, educational institutions need to take a proactive approach. Students must be educated on the benefits of moderation while being given opportunities to disengage from devices and reconnect with the physical world.

Educators can thus help create a generation of balanced grounded individuals who can thrive academically while leading physically and mentally vibrant lives.

The writer is Principal, The Shri Ram Universal School, Bengaluru

SAVE THE DATE

Education fair

Education in Ireland is holding an Education Fair in Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru as part of its #StudyEmeraldIsle campaign to offer information on courses, post-study work opportunities and study visa application process.

When and Where: September 28 at The Lalit, Delhi; October 5 at Taj Connemara, Chennai; October 6, Taj Vivanta, Bengaluru

<https://t.ly/P3b4R>

Admissions and Scholarships

The University of Essex, the U.K., invites applications for its Master’s programmes in Public Policy, Business Analytics, Applied Science, Data Science, AI, International Law and Psychology.

Last date: November 11
For eligibility criteria and other details, visit www.essex.ac.uk/

invites applications for its India High Achievers Scholarship for the 2025 intake. Available to Indian students enrolling in undergraduate degrees, PGDip or Masters programme. For details, visit <https://t.ly/RPShi>

Symbiosis Centre for Management and Human Resource Development (SCMHRD) invites applications for its MBA programme. **Eligibility:** Bachelor’s degree from a recognised institution

with at least 50%; Valid score in Symbiosis National Aptitude Test (SNAP) 2024
For details visit www.snaptest.org/

The Indian School of Business (ISB) has launched a Post Graduate Programme for Young Leaders (PGP YL). **Eligibility:** Bachelor’s degree or equivalent in any discipline. Valid GMAT or GRE (centre-based test only) or CAT scores. Details at <https://t.ly/9tz5S>

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