Supporting the Values of Holistic Education and Multiple Intelligences through Differentiated Instruction

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COLLABORATION OF HOLISTIC ED. AND MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

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Abstract
This study was conducted in order to see how teachers differentiate their instruction to support the values of holistic education and multiple intelligences. Through the study, it was shown that holistic teachers not only help students visualize themselves as unique individual learners, they also help students embrace learning as a part of their identity. In addition, holistic teachers foster the cultivation of each learner’s inner self and make connection to their surroundings. Therefore, the study showed the importance of teachers to approach their classrooms holistically in order to support differences in their students’ learning styles, preferences and abilities.

Key Words: Holistic Education, Multiple Intelligences, Differentiated Instruction, Learner differences, Identity
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction to the Research Study

Over the last century, the quality of life in many developed countries has rapidly increased. As the field of science and technology expands and develops, it allows all areas of human life to improve. The quality of life for many households has developed alongside the growing interest in these fields (Miller, 2007). Owing to this rapid growth, the education systems in many developed countries heavily emphasize logical-mathematical intelligence (Gardner, 1999). Therefore, schools tend to favour and nurture students who excel in this area over others. The students who cannot satisfy the criteria involving this certain intelligence are usually alienated from schools and are labeled as “unintelligent”, becoming the victims of such schooling systems (Gardner, 1999). Currently, our society is beginning to recognize the significance of a curriculum that embraces all types of students who encompass other types of intelligences and talents (Miller, 2007).

Another area that has also received a narrow focus is the student’s capacity to memorize information. For a long time, schools have prioritized excellence in tests and scores. Education geared heavily towards nurturing necessary knowledge and techniques needed in order to obtain high test scores (Gardner, 1999). However, test scores only reflect a small portion of one’s knowledge—one’s capability to memorize information. Miller argues that these memorization and gaining knowledge to satisfy standardized tests are quickly forgotten (2014). He states that learning mostly happens when students are able to connect their lives to the content taught in classrooms (Miller, 2014). This is one of the goals of holistic education (Miller, 1993).

Holistic education started to emerge as a theory in the mid-1980s. It focuses on the bodies, minds, and souls of students by integrating intellectual lessons with meditation and reflective activities (Miller, 2007). It is an attempt to make a connection between knowledge
learned and the students’ lives. The main goal of holistic education is to educate the wholeness of the child so that he or she can relate to the world in order to find purpose in his or her life (Miller, 2007). This idea comprises the assumption that: individuals willingly contribute to society and their surroundings, when they are able to make connections (Miller, 1993). Therefore, the emphasis on balancing the whole child—cultivating the body, mind, and soul—is essential in education because it may ultimately foster student contributions into society (Miller, 2007).

In order to establish the premise of holistic education mentioned above, I endeavoured to collaborate the theory with the theory of multiple intelligences. The theory of multiple intelligences tries to achieve a similar goal as holistic education by acknowledging the diverse ways individuals learn. The theory was created and developed by Howard Gardner in the 1980s. Gardner claims that intelligence is not a quantity that can be measured by a single assessment, but rather a collection and assembly of skills ranging from mathematics to personal attributes that should be measured in various ways (1993). According to Gardner, all individuals have basic skills in each of the intelligences categorized in Gardner’s list. Gardner explains that, although individuals have the basics in each of the intelligences, every individual is different because depending on the person, one may have a particular intelligence that they may excel in over the other intelligences (1993).

Holistic education relates to the theory of multiple intelligences in that both of these ideologies attempt to help students reach their full capacities and goals as unique learners. Holistic education guides students to find a purpose in their lives by helping them make connections to their surroundings and similarly, the theory of multiple intelligences accomplishes the same by acknowledging each students’ way of learning. Therefore, I used differentiated instruction as the theoretical framework for this research study since it allows teachers to embrace and support all types of learners in their unique ways of learning.
1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to study how teachers support the values of holistic education and multiple intelligences through differentiated instruction. By looking at the importance of nurturing and balancing all aspects of a student as well as catering to learner differences and preferences, I looked into how two junior/intermediate Ontario Certified Teachers educated their students. Through the study, I endeavored to emphasize the importance of differentiating content, process, product and environment according to students’ needs—not just for the sake of learning, but for the students’ lives as well as the bigger society.

Although holistic education has been developing for the last 30 years and has shown its importance, it is not implemented in schools as much as it should be. There is still a need for further research in order to make connections between the principles of holistic education and its practicality in classrooms. On the other hand, there are many research and pedagogies, ie. Differentiated instruction, currently developing in order to account for all students of different learning styles ever since the theory of multiple intelligences (Johnson, 2006). Therefore, in both fields of holistic education and multiple intelligence theory, further research is needed so that theories can be implemented in practice. Also, there has yet been a study on collaborating holistic education within the framework of multiple intelligences although they have many similarities. When the two are assembled together, they endeavor to reach the ultimate goal: fostering students to respect the uniqueness they have as learners and “form their own identities as learners” (Tomlinson, 2008). Therefore, this research is important in that it is an innovative approach to analyzing the current education system as well as consequently proposing areas of development in teachers’ pedagogies with a more holistic approach. By interviewing two Ontario junior high school teachers, this paper investigated how holistic education was integrated to support multiple intelligences within the parameters of differentiated instruction.
1.2 Research Topic/Questions

The main question that this paper addressed and answered was: how do two Ontario junior high school teachers integrate holistic education in their classroom of diverse learners? In order to establish an explicit answer to this given question within the framework of differentiated instruction, I had the following sub-questions to address the main question: 1) What kind of strategies do teachers use in order to approach all students of different intelligences, 2) What kind of obstacles do holistic teachers face when they try to create a holistic classroom, and 3) What are the benefits/risks when there is no holistic approach to education?

1.3 Limitations

The theory of multiple intelligences has been accepted by a large number of people despite its recentness. However, there has also been a lot of questions and objections against the theory (Gardner, 1999). Gardner came across the idea when he was examining patients with different brain damages to determine how injuries to the brain affected the nervous system (Gardner, 1999). Many of the findings were based on observations without specific quantitative analysis because the brain is a very complex part of the human body. Therefore, due to its lack of data and analysis, there is a lot of opposition to the theory. This brings an awareness to the fact that there is still a need for further research for the theory to become acceptable. There is also a possibility for more intelligences to appear on the list Gardner has developed for now, such as spiritual intelligence and existential intelligence (Gardner, 1999). The list of intelligences may not be completed and is likely to expand in the future. To add, the parameters to measure learning preferences and styles of students could also be subjective and may fluctuate over different circumstances and environments. Hence, the authenticity of these values is also a question.
These are some of the limitations in the theory of multiple intelligences, but Gardner addresses these oppositions by stating that his focus is mainly to expand the definition of intelligence and provide a means to reach out to all types of learners (1999). Therefore, this study also focused on acknowledging the fact that all types of learning preferences and styles are important. It takes a long time for a novice theory to be accepted by the general public but nevertheless, the theory of multiple intelligences surely has been accepted by many educators as a theory.

1.4 Background of the Researcher

I am a Korean-Canadian immigrant. I have been residing in Canada ever since I was eight years old. The reason why my parents decided to immigrate to Canada was because they believed that the education system here would be more beneficial for my sisters and me, compared to the intense and competitive education system of Korea that heavily focused on memorization and studying in classrooms and academies. We reside in Toronto, Ontario and I have personally learned later in my life that my parents had made a big sacrifice for us. Life in Canada allowed me to learn and try different kinds of things such as learning a new language, playing instruments, and joining sports teams. If I was in Korea, I would have only had time to go to endless academies to learn math and English. I realized that more free time meant more opportunities for me to endeavor different kinds of intelligences and skills. And I was able to find different skills in myself other than language and math as well as discover which ways made learning most personal to me. The more opportunities I had, the better I felt about myself regardless of how well I was at them. The experiences have endorsed confidence in me and I was able to contribute that much more to the society by playing instruments in seniors’ homes and attending and volunteering in competitions and conferences related to sports, music, and languages. The reason why I feel the importance of educating the whole child is because I was
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educated that way. I had many opportunities in my life to have balance and connections to learning and my surroundings, and that allowed me to make connections to society. I had and have learned to expand my knowledge and skills in many different fields and it helped me to learn more about myself, which in return brought joy and satisfaction.

As I studied for two years in Masters of Teaching at Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, I learned more about the various types of instructions and pedagogies to meet the needs of all types of learners. I understood and am still understanding that when teachers truly put their effort into supporting their students’ learning, they are able to reach out to all learners. Therefore, I wanted to study how teachers put the values of holistic education into their practices.

Likewise, coming from a completely different cultural background and ethnicity, I always questioned who I was, what my identity was, and where I belonged. I really enjoyed being in Canada and had made many friends but at the same time, because I possessed the norms of my native background as well as those of Canada, I did not know where I fit. I was not sure if I was considered more of a Korean than a Canadian, or vice versa. Analogous to the question of identity, there was also a question of my purpose in life, and this seems to be a typical question in adolescence regardless of one’s cultural context. Holistic education, in this perspective, is essential in helping students identify their ultimate goal. It also emphasizes that all parts of the child should be balanced and not one should be looked over (Miller, 2007). Knowing what I am good at and what I am not good at, but also balancing both the strengths and weaknesses of a child, I believe, is fundamental in helping the child find their place in the world.

A pattern I find in today’s society is that it searches for individuals who excel in all criteria, from mathematics to music and arts. If the push is to look for individuals who are talented in many different fields—and this is what many markets are looking for in the
individuals they hire nowadays—I strongly feel that we must first educate and facilitate students to encounter all types of learning as well as help them master a particular way of learning such that they can apply that to different fields. As a child, I had many opportunities to try out new things and therefore have developed the skills to do many things. And I find it difficult to try many things nowadays since I have less time and opportunities available to me. Therefore, I find it necessary and important for students in adolescence to try many different things and learn about different fields so that they can find what they truly want to do in the future. Also, I believe it is important for students at a young age to overcome their weaknesses in a particular field before they grow in age because they may develop unnecessary hatred and biases. They may think that they are not talented in the fields when in reality, they just needed a different approach.

I believe that for the problems stated above, the values of holistic education and multiple intelligences need to collaborate together since they outline the fact that the uniqueness each student brings to the table should be supported and catered to. But in order for teachers to do this, they need to use differentiated instruction—catering to all types of preferences and styles in learning—and this is the reason why I used differentiated instruction as my theoretical framework. Throughout this paper, I hope to make an innovative and valuable contribution to our education system and for our coming generation.

1.5 Preview of the Whole MTRP

In order to study how two Ontario junior high school teachers integrate holistic education and cater to different intelligences in their classrooms, each chapter of the study is dedicated to help the readers understand how and where the study is heading. Two teachers who are qualified to teach the junior/intermediate sections were selected as the participants of the study. Chapter 1 includes the introduction and purpose of the study, research questions, as
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well as how I came to be involved in this topic and study. Chapter 2 contains a review of the
literature on holistic education, multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction and how
the three are ensemble together in classrooms. Chapter 3 provides the methodology and
procedure used in this study including information about the sample participants and data
collection instruments. Chapter 4 identifies the participants in the study and describes the data
as it addresses the research question. Chapter 5 includes limitations of the study, conclusions,
recommendations for practice, and further reading and study. References and a list of
appendixes follow at the end.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter provides literatures around holistic education, multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction. The chapter first introduces the ideologies and philosophy that defines holistic education, which is followed by the creation and development of the theory of multiple intelligences. Then, literatures on the idea and importance of differentiated instruction within classrooms is provided. Towards the end of the chapter, I present the idea of collaborating the two theories, holistic education and multiple intelligences, within the framework of differentiated instruction. The chapter is mostly based on the literatures of Jack Miller, one of the leading advocates of holistic education, and Howard Gardner, the creator of the theory of multiple intelligences.

2.1 Holistic Education

Holistic education focuses on the development of the whole child by acknowledging his or her intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual characteristics (Miller, 2007). Hare differentiates holistic education by stating that “within holistic education there is an emphasis on relationships, interconnectedness, genuine caring, and community” (2006, p.306). According to Miller, holistic education has two important dimensions: 1. Growth of the whole person, and 2. Interconnectedness between experience and the surrounding environment (2013). Forbes, as cited by Hare in his article, defines holistic education as follows:

Holistic education addresses the broadest development of the whole person at the cognitive and affective levels. It aims for the fullest possible human development enabling a person to become the very best or finest that they can be and develop fully those capacities that together make up a human being (2006, p. 302).
Therefore, holistic education states that people are able to maximize their capacities to be a human being when they are able to gain insights about who they are, what they can do as individuals, how they can connect to other people and the world and what their purpose in life is. When we are able to answer these questions, we are able to take responsibilities and contribute to the future of the world because we have an understanding of what we can do and what parts we can play in.

Mahatma Ghandi, as mentioned in Miller’s book of *The Holistic Curriculum*, defines holistic education as follows:

> I hold that true education of the intellect can only come through a proper exercise and training of the bodily organs, e.g., hands, feet, eyes, ears, nose, etc... In other words an intelligent use of the bodily organs in a child provides the best and quickest way of developing his intellect. But 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 (p. 23).

According to Gandhi, a child is able to develop intellectually when he or she assembles all aspects of their self together—body, mind, and soul. When all parts of the child is balanced equally, this creates a sense of care in the child because he or she is able to build connections with the surroundings and integrate everyday learning as a part of their identity (Hare, 2006). To further explain the three components that are essential in creating a holistic child, we will examine balance, inclusion, and connection (Miller, 2007).

**2.1.1 Balance**

Miller illustrates balance with the symbol of yin and yang (2007). Everything needs balance in order to sustain themselves. Miller talks about the importance of having balance between: individual and group, content and process, knowledge and imagination, rationale and intuition, quantitative and qualitative assessment, technique and vision, assessment and
learning and technology and programmatic vision (2007). All of these things should be balanced in order to best foster the student to a unique individual. However, the biggest difficulty during the course of balancing these categories for a student is related to competition and assessment through standardized tests in today’s education system. For many years, schools have been educating students in a way that forced them to memorize information to meet up to the fixed-set of expectations (Miller, 2007). Students who do well in these assessments are highly praised, while the ones that do not do so well are unnoticed. This has fragmented communities that should be a unity into individuals by creating barriers between the “intelligent” and the “non-intelligent”. The system has been neglecting students who learn in a different way (Miller, 2007). Therefore, balance as described in holistic education is important because it suggests the need for a balanced pedagogy for all types of learners (Miller, 2007).

2.1.2 Inclusion

The second principle underlying holistic education is inclusion. To educate the whole child, a child needs to go through three different stages defining inclusion: transmission, transaction, and transformation (Miller, 2007). When a student is at the transmission state, he or she is beginning to understand the knowledge. The child imitates and repeats the steps in learning in order to become familiar with the information (Miller 2007). Then, he or she undergoes a transaction phase where they are now able to actively solve problems using the information they have gained in the transmission stage (Miller, 2007). Finally, students go through the transformation stage where they now make the learning a part of themselves (Miller, 2007). The teachings are embedded in the child and it will thus contribute to the development of the wholeness of the child.
2.1.3 Connection

The third principle which holistic education is founded upon is connection. As mentioned earlier, one of the biggest concerns in education today is the fragmentation of relationships (Miller, 2007). Fragmentation creates no need to care for one another in society which eventually leads to increase in distrust and violence. When individuals cannot feel a sense of belonging within their community and the world, they will find no reason to contribute to the society because there is no connection built. To address and resolve this issue, Miller states the importance of holistic education as it attempts to nurture different types of relationships:

Focus of holistic education is on relationships: relationship between linear thinking and intuition, relationship between mind and body, relationships among various domains of knowledge, the relationship between individual and community, the relationship to the earth, and our relationship to our souls (2007, p. 13).

In the end, holistic education hopes to nurture individuals such that they could make relationships with everything—from the environment to themselves—for the restoration of love and peace in the current generation.

Having understood the definition and principles behind holistic education, I now turn to its spiritual dimension. The spiritual element is what distinguishes the pedagogies of holistic education from other theories of education.

2.1.4 Perennial Philosophy

The philosophy underlying holistic education is known as the perennial philosophy. It is comprised of a belief that everything is connected in an independent world (Miller, 2007). According to Huxley, as cited by Dhir in her paper of “Perennial Philosophy,” it is defined as follows:
Perennial philosophy, then, is an attempt to explain and understand the connection with a higher being and thereby finding inner peace. According to Miller, there are five elements within perennial philosophy:

1. Interconnectedness of reality and a mysterious unity in the universe
2. Intimate connection between the individual’s inner self, or soul and this mysterious unity
3. Development of mysterious unity through various contemplative practices
4. Values derived from seeing and realizing the interconnectedness of reality
5. Realization leading to social activity designed to counter injustice and human suffering (2007, p.18).

First, an individual questions and seeks for a unity beyond what can be seen in their physical world. When the individual accepts and appreciates the existence of such a being, they deepen the relationship through spiritual practices. This, then, also influences the individual’s behaviours in his or her communities and the world because all attributes of life seem clearer and purposeful to them than before. When one seeks for the interconnectedness between one’s soul, the divine, and the universe, they can be at their fullest stage of life as a human being (Miller, 2007).

2.1.5 Spiritual Development

I would like to take the moment in this section to define what spirituality means in the context of this study. Gandhi mentions that the spiritual aspect of a child is inseparable from their development (as cited by Miller, 2007). So, what is spirituality? Many people, including
myself, first think about religious beliefs and a divine being when the topic of spirituality comes up. As mentioned in the previous sections, spirituality can well connect to the search for a divine. However, I want to focus on developing one’s inner self when I am talking about spirituality in this research. For me, spirituality is understood as the process of searching for and understanding the inner self such that people can view themselves as meaningful, unique individuals in the world.

In Christianity, one undergoes inner transformations through contemplation and love (Miller, 2007). The individual is able to understand their inner self when they offer love and care to others. When this care creates a bond between one another, it eventually contributes to the whole community, and later on, to the world. According to Scholem, in Judaism individuals renew their inner selves daily by meditating and looking into the scripture (as cited by Miller, 2007).

In Buddhism, spirituality is nurtured through seeking for the origin of human beings (Miller, 2007). It is believed that human beings have a nature of goodness that needs to be restored and cultivated throughout human life (Miller, 2007). To enter into one’s goodness and thereby seek one’s originality, meditation is strongly recommended. In Hinduism, there are four types of yoga that focuses on uniting with the divine to gain a pure heart, a focus in life, and the love for others (Miller, 2007). Sufism, which is a “mystic form of the Islamic faith”, talks about experiencing god and finding the unconditioned self through light, knowledge and love (Miller, 2007). Their way to gain knowledge and wisdom for life is through storytelling. In Indigenous religion, people believe that everything in the world consists of a spirit—from a rock to a human being (Waldram et al., 2006). Therefore, everything is connected to one another and seen as a whole. They give great respect to nature because it is the source and nurturer of all life. To add, through meditation and reflection in nature, indigenous people connect to other spirits around them (Waldram et al., 2006).
2.2 Multiple Intelligences Theory

The theory of multiple intelligences was created by Howard Gardner, a developmental psychologist at Harvard University. He was studying patients with brain damage and discovered that depending on the area of the brain injured, patients had different disabilities (Gardner, 1999). Gardner was able to conclude that injury in one field of learning did not affect the other. For example, if a right-handed patient suffered damage to their left cortex, he noticed that the individual may have had trouble speaking, comprehending, reading, and writing, but their ability to do other things did not change (Gardner, 1999). Therefore, through his studies Gardner formulated a list of eight different intelligences. His belief behind these intelligences is that all individuals have a basic set of skills in each of the eight intelligences, but individuals may excel in one field intelligence over the other intelligences. Gardner’s eight intelligences are as follows: linguistic intelligence, logical-mathematical intelligence, spatial intelligence, musical intelligence, bodily-kinesthetic intelligence, interpersonal intelligence, intrapersonal intelligence and naturalist intelligence (Fleming, n.d.). A child may be more advantaged for one intelligence over the others because it may be in their nature or because certain intelligence may have been more cultivated than others, depending on the cultural settings or communities. Over the last few centuries, the intelligences that were highly praised by the Western cultures were logical-mathematical and linguistic intelligences (Gardner, 1999). It was soon obvious that the neglect towards other intelligences was creating problems, since it isolated a large number of outstanding students of other fields and some students developed repulsive attitudes toward education.

Another problem stated by Gardner in education was with assessment. In his book of Intelligence Reframed, Gardner argues that many intelligence tests “represent but the tip of the cognitive iceberg” (1999, p. 3). Ever since the first intelligence test was made by Alfred Binet, people have been eager to come up with ways to assess their intelligence (Gardner, 1999).
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However, most of them have been based on measuring verbal memory and reasoning, numerical reasoning, logical sequences and one’s ability to explain how they would solve daily problems (Gardner, 1999). One of the most famous intelligence tests that assesses the abilities mentioned above is the “intelligence quotient” by Wilhelm Stern. However, scholars have since recognized an assumption underlying these testing instruments: “performance on a set of unrelated items, mostly drawn from the world of schooling, can somehow be summed up to yield a single measure of intellect” (Gardner, 1999, p.19). As many scholars came to realize that intelligence was not an entity that can be measured nor defined by one set of data, Gardner felt it necessary to expand the definition of “intelligence” (1999).

According to Gardner, there are two fundamental claims in his theory of multiple intelligences:

1. The theory is an account of human cognition in its fullness
2. We each have a unique blend of intelligences
   (Gardner, 1999, p. 45)

He states that there are many aspects to a child such as ethnicity, culture and environment that influence his or her intelligence (1999). Gardner believes that although everyone has basic set of skills in each of his eight intelligences, there is no two people that have an exact combination of the intelligences (1999). Therefore, multiple intelligences exist to identify the strengths and uniqueness each student has.

According to Gardner, he biggest challenge and goal in education is to come up with a pedagogy that can nurture the “uniqueness conferred on us as the species exhibiting several intelligences” (1999, p.45). However, the solution to this problem is given through differentiated instruction, where teachers cater to all students by differentiating their instruction in terms of content, process, product and environment depending on the students’ needs. This will be further discussed in the third section of this chapter.
2.2.1 The Eight Intelligences

The following is the list of eight intelligences that shape Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences:

1. Musical Intelligence: this is the ability to detect and analyze particular notes and play instruments. Gardner was able to come up with this intelligence by observing autistic children who can play instruments but cannot speak.

2. Bodily-Kinesthetic Intelligence: this is the intelligence controlled by the motor cortex that coordinates the bodily movements of an individual. Gardner distinguished this intelligence from the others by observing patients that had apraxia but still had the ability to perform other skills, such as mathematical problem solving.

3. Logical-mathematical Intelligence: this field of intelligence is the most commonly tested field in assessments of intelligence, such as the IQ test. Although it is not specifically mentioned, Gardner states that there are certain areas of the brain that contribute more to mathematical processing.

4. Linguistic Intelligence: people who are talented in reading and writing grammatical sentences have an outstanding score in this intelligence. It is dominated by a part of the brain known as “Broca’s Area”.

5. Spatial Intelligence: this is the ability to navigate and process directions and a notational system of maps. It is mostly affected by damages to the right hemisphere of the brain.

6. Interpersonal Intelligence: this is one of the two personal intelligences created by Gardner which defines an individual’s ability to make relationships with others. He noticed that patients with damage to their frontal lobes had changed personalities, losing the ability to connect with people they were close to before.

7. Intrapersonal Intelligence: this is the second personal intelligence by Gardner where the frontal lobes of the brain are the most responsible for this intelligence. Individuals with
high scores in this intelligence have a good understanding of themselves

(Gardner, 1999).

8. Naturalistic Intelligence: this is the newest category of intelligence added to Gardner’s previous list of intelligences. Those with naturalistic intelligence make connections to their environment and other species

(Cherry, n.d.).

The purpose of understanding these different intelligences is to educate in accordance to the needs of all students (Gardner, 1993). Instead of pertaining to only one type of intelligence, teachers and educators should formulate various instructions in their classrooms to reach out to all types of learners. For example, if there is a certain part of the lesson that involves lectures (linguistic intelligence), other parts of the lesson should be directed towards activities focusing on other intelligences such as kinesthetic activities (bodily-kinesthetic intelligence) or group discussions (interpersonal intelligence). Classrooms should be organized and structured such that the lessons are dedicated to each intelligence (Rai et al., 2006). Overall, according to the theory of multiple intelligences, teachers need to increase student engagement by approaching them in different ways to meet the needs of all their students.

2.3 Differentiated Instruction

All students are unique. They are unique in terms of their strengths and weaknesses, ability to learn and the styles they prefer to use to learn. Therefore, it is apparent that one size does not fit all. In order to support the uniqueness and cater to the different needs of all students, we need differentiated instruction. According to the ministry document Learning for All, differentiated instruction is described as follows: “Differentiated instruction (DI) is based on the idea that because students differ significantly in their strengths, interests, learning styles, and readiness to learn, it is necessary to adapt instruction to suit these differing characteristics”
Teachers strive to differentiate their instruction such that they meet the unique needs of all of the individuals they have in their classrooms. There is no assumption that a student learns exactly the same as another (Tomlinson, 1999). Tracey Hall describes differentiated instruction as the way for teachers to recognize and respond to the interests and needs of each student in the classroom such that the students define their own style of learning (2002). Hence, teachers who practice differentiated instruction create a dynamic in their classrooms in terms of the content, process, product and environment such that although all students are satisfying the same goals, the steps they take differ.

Through differentiated instruction, not only are teachers making learning meaningful and understandable for their students, but they are also helping students to find their own identities as learners (Tomlinson, 2008). Teachers do this by first helping the students get engaged in their own learning by making the lessons personal to their students (Tomlinson, 2008). The goal of differentiated instruction is to shift from the idea of having a student master a body of information to creating authentic learners (Tomlinson, 2008). Diversity of students’ cultural backgrounds, learning styles and capabilities are respected and when students experience this, a sense of trust builds between the teacher and the students (Garderen and Whittaker, 2006). This sense of trust further guides students to become independent and successful learners.

2.3.1 Differentiating content, process, product and environment

Teachers could differentiate in four areas: content, process, product and environment. Depending on the student body, teachers could readjust the content of the lessons. For example, depending on the various literacy needs of the students, a teacher divided up her students in groups depending on their literacy skills (Watts-Taffe et al., 2012). A group of students who struggled in understanding materials through reading were given easier books to
read whereas other groups of students had more difficult novels (Watts-Taffe et al., 2012). Teachers could also differentiate in terms of the process. This is the area where teachers could be most proactive in, in order to accommodate for his or her students. Teachers could use different tasks and activities such as group work, manipulatives and technology in order to help students understand the content delivered (Learning for All, 2013).

Product can also be differentiated. Not only should students be assessed with tests and quizzes, but students should also be given the chance to express their knowledge and understanding through various ways such formative assessments (assessments as/for learning) and creative projects such as using music (eg. raps/songs) (Hall, 2002). Finally, teachers could differentiate in terms of the environment of the classroom. Teachers could arrange their seating plans in order to accommodate for students that may need extra space. If there needs to be a dynamic so that students constantly move around in order to get engaged in their learning, teachers could arrange the classroom into stations so students can carousel around.

Therefore, when teachers take the time and effort to get to know their students and differentiate instruction with respect to the needs of their students, students can learn and demonstrate their understanding much more effectively.

2.4 Embracing the Values of Holistic Education and Multiple Intelligences through Differentiated Instruction

With the understanding of the values and beliefs behind holistic education, multiple intelligences and differentiated instruction, now I endeavor to introduce the way these theories can be integrated together. Holistic education states that finding the inner self and balancing all aspects of a child helps them to make learning a part of their identity and the theory of multiple intelligences value the uniqueness pertaining to each individual. It hopes to overcome the
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challenge of discovering a pedagogy that embraces the unique intelligences each student has. I endeavored through the study to see if differentiated instruction can connect and become a solution to these values, and thereby support learner differences and learning. By deciphering how teachers differentiated their content, process, product and environment, I observed and analyzed to see how teachers help develop students to become independent learners who respect their own identities.

In the next chapter, I now explain the methodology that was taken to discover how two Ontario Certified Teachers of junior/intermediate sections educated their students holistically. The goal of the study was to see how teachers could support the values of holistic education and multiple intelligences through differentiated instruction.
3.0 Introduction

In this chapter, I describe the research methodology. I begin by reviewing the general approach and procedures taken in the study, as well as the instruments used for data collection. These sections will be followed by in-depth description of participant sampling and recruitment. Furthermore, I explain the data analysis procedures and review the ethical considerations pertinent to my study. I also explicate a few possible methodological limitations to the study but display the strengths of the methodology used. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a summary of key methodological decisions and my rationale for these decisions given the research purpose and questions.

3.1 Research Approach and Procedures

This research study was conducted using qualitative research approach involving a literature review and semi-structured interviews with two Junior/Intermediate Ontario Certified Teachers. One of the reasons why qualitative research was suitable for this study was because of its nature of “open-endedness” (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Unlike the nature of quantitative research which allows the results to be represented in a concrete numerical data, qualitative research allows participants to answer from their own perspectives and boundaries (Bogdan and Biklen, 2007). Since qualitative data results from the contribution of the participants and the findings from the interpretation of the researcher, the individualism and unique characteristics of the individuals involved in the study provide a more in-depth review of the research questions.

In addition, with respect to the different perspectives and subjectivity qualitative research allows, there are many avenues and new interpretations that can be organized in order to contribute to the existing research field. The main question this research paper addressed...
and endeavoured to study was to see the connection between holistic education and multiple intelligences using the framework of differentiated instruction. Therefore, the question needed to be explored in order to see how teachers practiced the two theories in their everyday classrooms (Creswell, 2013). In this sense, qualitative analysis was essential since it permitted the communication of the teachers’ priorities and beliefs regarding holistic education and how these beliefs shaped their pedagogy. To add, there has not been any study on collaborating the two theories together. It is a new area of study. Therefore, detailed and experience-related responses were mandatory in order to see if there was a value in collaborating holistic education and multiple intelligences together.

3.2 Instruments of Data Collection

The primary instrument for data collection that was used in this study was the semi-structured interview protocol. Semi-structured interviews provided the meat to the combination of holistic education and multiple intelligences the study hoped to organize and create (Creswell, 2013). Semi-structured interviews are usually carried out in a designated time and location and the interview is processed with a “set of predetermined open-ended questions” (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). This interview protocol is most widely used as the primary data source in qualitative research analysis because it allows interviewers to deeply understand a complex issue through many individuals’ lenses (DiCicco-Bloom abd Crabtree, 2006). This variety of perspectives, as mentioned above, again allows for more sophistication and depth. To add, the nature of semi-structured interviews supported and guided this project’s research question for the project hoped to study holistic classrooms that embraces all types of students.

Another criteria of qualitative research approach that was essential for this particular study was its nature of the participants’ emotions and personalities to fit into the study
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(Creswell, 2013). Since the collection of data was done in a natural setting the participants were comfortable with, this allowed authentic emotions and responses to be disclosed which enabled the development and contribution to the validity of the study’s results (Creswell, 2013).

3.3 Participants

Here I review the sampling criteria I established for participant recruitment and I review the avenues taken for teacher recruitment. I have also included a section to introduce each of the participants of the study using pseudonyms.

3.3.1 Sampling Criteria

There were three criteria that I looked for when I was recruiting participants for my study. First, I searched for teachers with junior/intermediate qualifications. The reason for the criterion was because during the adolescent years, students experience many changes in their lives (physically, mentally, and spiritually) and the changes can me dramatic and challenging to them, which can then influence their learning and performance in schools. Therefore, I wanted to observe and see how teachers helped the students go through the transition.

Second, I looked for teachers that received the OCT diploma and taught for more than three years. The reason why I searched for teachers in Ontario was because there is a huge push for differentiated learning/instruction in many boards in Ontario currently and therefore many teachers are expected to practice differentiated instruction in their everyday classrooms. Also, I predicted that the more experience teachers had, the more they would be comfortable in communicating and explaining their pedagogies. Therefore, it became clear for me to look for more experienced teachers that had practiced many different strategies to approach their students.

Third, I chose teachers who believed in the value of holistic education (ie. balancing all aspects of the child) and acknowledged the different learning styles of students. This was
because the theory of multiple intelligences was created in order to recognize the support each student needs to have according to their way they learn the best and holistic education shows the importance of balance in each student in all aspects of their lives. Therefore, teachers that acknowledged this helped me understand and observe to see if there was a relation between multiple intelligences and holistic education and if they could be combined into one idea.

3.3.2 Sampling Procedures

Data collection process consisted of: 1) gaining permission from participants and study field, 2) developing a strategy to sample and record data, and 3) reviewing any ethical issues that may be associated with the study (Creswell, 2013). To recruit participants, I sent out more the hundred e-mails to the frontrunners of holistic education in OISE, former teachers who had taken the holistic education course from OISE as well as to teachers that taught in holistic schools in Toronto. The email consisted of an overview of my research study and the sampling criteria. I also posted up posters with the information regarding my research and sampling criteria around the OISE building with the hope of finding participants in the University of Toronto.

Another important aspect that was anticipated during the process of data collection was the ethical issues (Creswell, 2013). It is known that a qualitative researcher must be aware of and eliminate any ethical issues that may arise during the study (Creswell, 2013). In order to avoid any potential ethical issues, I provided my background information and explicitly provided the purpose of my study before asking for further information of the possible interviewees’ names and contact information. This allowed the participants to feel more comfort and less repulsion towards the study. The participants were reminded that they were not obliged to contribute to the research study but should feel more voluntary towards it.

3.3.3 Participant Bios

The first participant I had for the study was Sally (pseudonym). Sally was a teacher
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qualified to teach from kindergarten to grade 12, but she preferred to teach young adults because she could connect to them more. Her teachables were English and drama and she is an occasional teacher in the Toronto District School Board and the Toronto Catholic District School Board. She took a course on holistic education at OISE during the summer and that was how she encountered the term holistic education, but she always thought of herself as a holistic educator.

My second participant, Tina (pseudonym), was also a teacher who formerly took the holistic education course in OISE last year. She has had experience teaching in classrooms from kindergarten to grade 8. Since she was in the primary/junior division, she did not have any teachables but her area of specialty was creative writing. Although she did not teach in a school board, she had five years of teaching at a private school.

3.4 Data Analysis

In order to conduct a good research, analysis of data is a very critical portion of the research process since it transforms and interprets data (as cited by Seers, 2012). After interviewing the participants, the interviews were transcribed and coded using the research question as the tool. The data was reviewed several times prior to analyzing, in order to familiarize myself with the interviews and further find the relevance of each interview to the research question (Casterlé, Gastmans, Bryon, and Denier, 2012). The data was then looked at more in depth in order to point out key phrases and filter out the most useful data (Casterlé et al, 2012). In other words, patterns and themes started to form within the data (Seers, 2012). From key phrases, themes were created and commonality between the two interviews conducted were gathered together in order to create categories that best pertained to answering the research question. The themes and categories I used to code and organize the interviews also helped me during the process of referring back to the data and crediting more sources to
support my findings (Seers, 2012).

After the collected data was sorted out and organized according to its meaningful groups, I explained and put the concepts collected into my own definitions and interpretations (Casterlé et al, 2012). They were organized and analyzed in a way that helped me answer the research questions explicitly (Casterlé et al, 2012). At the end of the analysis, I discussed and provided a reflection of how I viewed myself as a researcher in order to consider and acknowledge any biases that may have influenced the process and outcome of the analysis (Seers, 2012).

### 3.5 Ethical Review Procedures

There could have been many ethical and data collection process challenges during the study which I needed to anticipate on, prior to the start of the study. This anticipation was because I did not know what to expect from my participants they may have perceived ethics differently than I did (as cited by Houghton, Casey, Shaw, and Murphy, 2010). Therefore, in order to keep the information of the participants as confidential and neutral as possible, words used in the study were carefully selected. To respect and ensure the safety of each participant, I used pseudonyms to describe the participants. Any specific characteristics that could have revealed my participants such as the school they attended to, were not included in my study (Houghton et al., 2010). Also, in order to provide as much comfort and reliability of the participants to the research as possible, they were notified in the beginning of study of their right to withdraw from the participation at any stage of the study. The information to all this were given on the informed process content (as cited by Houghton et al., 2010). In addition, I provided an overview of the study, ethical implications and expectations and asked for my participants’ permission for audio-recording the interviews.

There were no known risks to the participants of the study, since the research focused
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on the teachers’ subjective views toward holistic education and multiple intelligences and how they catered to all types of learners. Unless the participants’ emotional experiences were related to their pedagogy somehow, there were no questions that were asked that may have triggered or negatively impacted the participants. Finally, all audio-recordings, ie. Data for the study, were and is currently stored in my computer, protected by an 8-digit-long password as well as on my hard drive at home, in case the data gets lost. They will be destroyed after five years.

3.6 Methodological Limitations and Strengths

Like many other studies, there were some methodological limitations that this study faced. Since the study was done in a two year program with requirements from other courses that needed to be accomplished, I was restricted to regions and therefore not able to visit teachers that were too far away from Toronto. Also, because of the time constraint and the time and effort it took to transcribe and analyze the data, I was able to interview only two teachers. Therefore, the study may not have been as in-depth as I could have wished for. The study could have been in more depth and rich if numerous teachers were able to contribute their perspectives regarding the topic covered by the study. To add, since the study only interviewed two participants, the study could have revealed only a small portion of the general teachers’ strategies and ideas regarding holistic education. Therefore, the readers may not be able to generalize that the teachers interviewed for this study resembled the bigger body.

On the other hand, although there was a limited number of teacher participants, this enabled the study to focus more on the individual teachers. It allowed the study to look more into social and personal matters of the participants (DiCicco-Bloom and Crabtree, 2006). Also, the in-depth stories provided in the study told rich and personal stories which could have been more supporting than multiple of short stories from different individuals. To add, the nature of the study was not to focus on figuring out the strategy teachers thought best for holistic
education and multiple intelligences, but how they personally believed and were influenced by the theories and concepts in their teaching practices. Therefore, the limitations of the study did not affect the purpose and the question the study hoped to answer greatly.

3.7 Conclusion

I outlined and provided the strategy this study followed in order to conduct research and findings. As explained above, the primary data collection tool was the semi-structured interviews of two junior/intermediate teachers that had more than three years of teaching experience. They were also knowledgeable and believed in the value of holistic education. Any ethical issues or data collection process difficulties were avoided by providing informed process content and transcript of the interviews to the participants. Limitations to data collection has been mentioned above but they did not greatly affect the purpose of this study as the study hoped to research the way teachers embraced holistic education in their practices. Next, in chapter 4, I report the research findings.
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CHAPTER 4 – FINDINGS

4.0 Introductory Review

In this chapter, I provide the analysis of the semi-structured interviews I conducted with two junior/intermediate Ontario school teachers on their understandings of, and experiences with holistic education and multiple intelligences. The interview questions were designed to see how these teachers hoped to or currently practice holistic education in their everyday lessons to nurture different learners in their classrooms. The purpose of the sub-questions during the interviews was to better understand how participants support the values of holistic education and multiple intelligences through differentiated instruction. The names of the participants mentioned in this chapter are used in pseudonyms, as mentioned in chapter three.

I have identified three main themes according to my findings from the two semi-structured interviews. Both my interviewees talked about these three themes and I found these themes emerging the collaboration of holistic education and multiple intelligences. The three themes emerging from the data are: 1) connection with students; 2) supporting learner differences; and 3) challenges and consequences for holistic teachers.

4.1 Theme 1: Connection with Students

Both of my interviewees were firm believers in holistic education and therefore, they described making connections with their students as the most important role of a teacher. However, the concept of “connection” (important value in holistic education) seemed to be a natural characteristic for both teachers. Tina stated, “When I learned about holistic education, you know all the concepts and everything, it became clear to me that, actually, I was practicing some of those things already.” Tina was not familiar with the theory at the beginning of her career, but being a holistic teacher was simply in her nature—just the terminologies were not familiar to her. I perceived Sally, although she could not define holistic education in her own
definite terms, as a holistic teacher because she cared about her students beyond the life they
had in her classrooms. The two teachers were genuinely caring teachers who thought about
the lives of their students beyond the classroom and curricular expectations. On the other
hand, this did not mean that they only cared about making connections with their students
personally. They also did not neglect the importance of curricular expectations.

Teachers saw the value in making connections with their students because these
connections allowed them to shape their pedagogies that could be a bit more personal for each
student. Sally mentioned that we, as Ontario teachers, had “the beauty working with our
curriculum and tailoring it to some extent”. By bringing in the interests of the students in the
lessons and allowing students to express themselves through various products, at the end these
teachers believed that students could relate more to the content. They believed that this would
further enhance student learning and help their students to become independent learners. This
was also described by Tomlinson in her article *The Goals of Differentiation*, where she stated
that when teachers build trust and practice differentiation for their classrooms, students could
connect the learning to what they care about and thereby “give whatever it takes to succeed”
(2008, p.28).

The following subsections are organized to demonstrate how these teachers were able
to make connections with their students and thereby enhance student learning.

4.1.1 Holistic teacher practices

As a holistic teacher, Sally talked about the importance of the connection she needed
to build with her students, as well as the connection her students needed to have with the world.
For her, the role of a holistic teacher was to look at the whole child and see what was missing,
whether it had to do with the students’ emotional, physical, and/or intellectual parts. However,
in order to see the parts that were missing in a student, she talked about the need for teachers
to bring in real-life examples from the current world since all students could relate to them
easily. This way, not only would the teachers be bringing in the life students have outside the classroom, but they would also be bringing the lesson into the students’ lives outside the classroom, as well.

Tina saw the importance of nurturing the heart of a child to help them become a better human being. She gave an example of the time when she was teaching a student named Gordon (pseudonym) that did not want to do anything in her classroom. Instead of thinking that Gordon had behavioral problems (which she was upset with), Tina decided to look at Gordon’s family history and how she could try to help him through the difficulties he was facing in his life. Tina shared her insight when she approached Gordon holistically, saying, “Sometimes as a teacher, I learned that you cannot just look for those good experiences because, sometimes, the children won’t display that for you. You need to choreograph it for them, for him, sometimes”.

According to Tina a holistic teacher sometimes needs to “choreograph” the goodness in a student so that the teacher could complement the student, which could start off a good connection with his or her students. For her, the complements were not created to get rid of the misbehaviours in her classrooms, but it was out of the compassion and empathy she had for anything that affected her student to behave in such a way. Tina believed that when positive connections were made between the teacher and the student, students learned and behaved much better in the classroom. Thankfully, this was what had happened with her student, Gordon.

Tina also talked about how she made connections with her students to figure out the kinds of things her students found meaningful. For example, when she was able to make a connection with her student Gordon, she was able to see that Gordon was lacking the attention from his divorced parents and that was where his current interest was at—seeking for attention. He needed to find a value and build self-esteem so that he could view himself as someone who was important. When Tina supported Gordon by complementing him with the smallest things and told him how glad she was to have him in her classroom, he started to change. Eventually,
at the end of the school year, he was even able to find a previously unknown talent for public speaking. This allowed me to observe that when students feel supported by their teachers and the classroom is connected to their lives, the innate skills students have naturally comes out because they are able to learn in a personal environment. This sense of trust and connection, again, helps students to find their individual identities as learners (Tomlinson, 2008). Therefore, the teachers who are approaching their students holistically fulfill their roles as teachers by creating an environment where all students could succeed in, and the students also benefit since they are able to build a sense of connection between their learning and inner self.

**4.1.2 Blend between holistic education and multiple intelligences**

As described above, learning naturally occurs when teachers are able to approach their students holistically by making connections to their students’ lives; both inside and outside the classroom. When teachers make extra effort to make this connection with their students, they are able to find out what hinders and/or motivates their students to learn. Then, they are able to consider and be aware of these obstacles and differentiate their instructions in terms of the content, process, product and environment to cater to the needs of each student. Therefore, in order to build the most effective differentiated classroom, teachers first need to make authentic relationships with their students in order to understand what each learner is bringing into the classroom.

**Theme 2: Supporting Learner Differences**

The two interviewees showed that there is an importance in making a connection with their students. Once they have learned about the individual needs and differences, they then thought about what they needed to do as teachers in order to support the uniqueness.

**4.2.1 Balance**

Sally and Tina both used the word “balance” numerous times during their interviews
and this was not surprising since one of the core values of holistic education is balance. The teachers talked about the importance of their students having a balance in their set of skills as well as a balance in their own pedagogies, as well.

Sally stated, “It’s important to balance them [strengths and weaknesses] in a sense that you have to still meet certain criteria and standards to expectations”. For Sally, not only was it important to differentiate in order to engage her students by making learning personal to them, but it was as important as to make sure that the students were also meeting up to the curricular expectations. Therefore, when Sally talked about balance, she focused on how teachers needed to prepare the students for the real world by making sure that no one “fell through the cracks”. However, she believed that this balance and real learning could take place only when the students were given a curriculum that was personalized to them.

Tina saw the significance of balance between the content knowledge as well as the uniqueness of each individual in her class. She talked about the importance of teachers reaching out to all types of learners by providing different strategies and examples in each lesson. For her, it was important that she always had a balance in her lessons. For example, if she was focusing on group discussions one day (which she defined as interpersonal intelligence), the other day, her lesson would be more organized in an individualistic fashion so that she could provide time for those who learned better alone (intrapersonal intelligence). If there was such balance created in the classroom, then teachers would both be supporting learner differences and delivering personalized curriculum to all types of learners. Through differentiated instruction, students would be able to clearly figure out what their strengths and weaknesses are. For example, if a student learned better through visuals but less through reading, the student would know that pictures make more sense to him or her and would try to learn more through creating diagrams. But since reading is also essential in learning, the student would be able to search up pictures that would make the reading a bit easier to understand. Hence, the student
would be able to strengthen what he or she is already good at while developing areas of weakness.

4.2.2. Benefit to supporting uniqueness

Although these two holistic teachers did not pursue a balance in their pedagogies to gain something in return, it was clearly shown through their experiences that there were benefits to their holistic approaches. According to Sally, “[students’] learning would be more pleasurable, less stressful and there [would be] more possibilities and options available for them” when teachers approached their students holistically. When she was able to support the uniqueness of each learner, learning made more sense to her individual students. She also recognized the students could gain more self-esteem and build a positive character in themselves, which was another reason why she was supportive of holistic education. To add, Sally talked about the importance of giving students the opportunity to prove their learning through different types of assessments. Sally stated, “…there should be eight different ways to approach that assignment…there’s so many creative ways of doing that project to show that you understand the content”. This way, students could not only demonstrate their learning but they could do it in a way that is meaningful to them. This would allow more connection between the students and the curriculum and Sally thought that this should be the purpose of education. Miller, in his article of Making Connections Through Holistic Learning, also states that it is important to have a balance in learning and assessment could create a “deeper sense of self, the source of wisdom and compassion” (1999, p.48).

In Tina’s experience with her student Gordon, she was able to see that the positive character she tried to build in Gordon reflected back on her. When she gave Gordon a shiny rock and complemented him saying that he shines like the rock because he had done many things to help others, a few days later, he came back from a field trip and he also gave her a shiny rock. He thought Tina also shined and he gave the rock to her as a present since he wanted
her to know that she was a person who shined. According to Tina:

Those moments…You know, some people would say that, ‘do you need to put in that effort? Do you need to put in, you know, have these moments of children?’ I think, absolutely, yes. Because, throughout the year after that, with him, yes, he was still difficult, we had our moments but he started to hand in all his work, he started to really try to control his own impulses when he wanted to be mean to his friends.

Through these experiences, holistic teachers could see that there is more to what they teach in terms of the curriculum. These teachers are building students to become individuals who transform the way they see themselves and practice the positivity they learned to others.

4.2.3 Blend between holistic education and multiple intelligences

When students are able to see that their learning style and preferences are respected and supported, their learning enhances and they are able to see the importance of education in their lives. They start to make sense of learning and carry out the learning into the other parts of their lives outside the classroom. Holistic teachers help transform the way students see schooling by providing differentiated instruction. They differentiate in terms of their students’ needs, learning styles and preferences in order to help students become unique individuals. They discover their own identity as learners through differentiated instruction (Tomlinson, 2008). In return, these individuals may also create a community where everyone is accepted as who they are, since they have been accepted as unique learners in their classrooms, too.

Theme 3: Challenges and Consequences

I now explain the challenges to creating a holistic classroom to meet the needs of diverse learners and the consequences that may arise when teachers do not approach their students holistically.
4.3.1 Marks are everything

Marks were the very first topic that both Sally and Tina discussed when they were asked to explain any obstacles they faced as holistic teachers. Sally talked about standardized testing such as EQAO given to students in Ontario. Sally mentioned, “…there’s no way around the EQAO. It has to be done. …It [is] certainly not the way I would want things to be, but, you know, you’re constricted by the polices that are placed”. Her opinion was that these kinds of standardized testing only allowed particular intelligences to come out and it could neglect the other skills and knowledge the students may have. She did not agree with standardized testing because it did not provide options for students to show their understanding. A student who is more talented in writing and reading would be able to prove their understanding much more than a student who may be more talented in visuals to show their understanding. Therefore, Sally did not find this type of testing as fair. She confirmed that, “There are as many ways of teaching as there are many ways of expressing your knowledge”.

Another obstacle Sally faced was with the parents. Sally noticed that many parents were centered toward their children’s achievements in grades. The parents were very concerned and would even start to pressure the teachers if their children were not doing well in school, since it directly related to getting into a well-known university. Teachers were pressured to go through the curriculum and because there was a limited amount of time, Sally thought with parental conflict, holistic approach to reach all types of learners could be very impractical.

Tina seemed to be on the same train of thought as Sally. She was upset that the education system nowadays was all about marks. Since it was all about marks, Tina found it very difficult to make a holistic classroom since administration, parents, and even students themselves were conditioned to think only about marks. For example, Tina felt that the parents wanted more time dedicated to the teacher just teaching the old, traditional way and make tests easy so that their children could get the best marks as possible. Also, since parents
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thought about schooling this way, Tina found that this was the same for the students, as well. Tina indicated, “The students themselves may not be agreeing with you. Not because they don’t agree with the holistic approach, they don’t even know about it. But, they have been conditioned to think marks are everything”. Because marks were the only things that were important, students did not look at or understand how the holistic teacher could help them become unique learners. Similarly, their feelings were greatly affected by the marks the teachers gave them. Tina mentioned that some students were conditioned to think like this: “My teacher is good when my teacher gives me an A. But if my teacher doesn’t give me an A, then I don’t like her”.

Therefore, nurturing the human being does not seem to be universally accepted as a part of education, especially in high school. On the other hand, the teaching profession is clearly articulated in the Ontario College of Teacher’s guidelines to be a profession that is dedicated to student well-being and character. In the booklet *The Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession*, it clearly states that teachers have the duty to care for their students’ well-being and learning (Ontario College of Teachers, 2012). When both the parents and the students could understand that there is more to education than just marks, these types of obstacles to holistic approach could be solved and more learning could happen within the classrooms.

**4.3.2 What may happen if there is no Holistic Approach**

There is no doubt that there are differences between students. Therefore, there is a need for a holistic teacher to approach their students in different ways. When this does not happen, Tina mentioned that teachers are very prone to labelling their students. As it was with her student Gordon, other teachers in the school were quick to judge and label Gordon than to look at the events he was facing in his family life. Although it was his family life that was making Gordon misbehave in his classes, the teachers did not care or were ignorant in the cause of his
behaviours.

When teachers become ignorant to their students, their students start to think that they are low achievers that is not able to meet the expectations of the teachers. That is what Tina witnessed with Gordon. When she called on Gordon to compliment him, he thought the reason why Tina called him was because he was in trouble. This was something he was facing with his other teachers, and because it was a routine to him, he asked “Am I in trouble?” Not only are non-holistic teachers alienating their students from the classroom, as teachers, they are creating a barrier for their students to learn.

Sally also talked about the importance of building self-esteem in her students through a holistic classroom. When students’ strengths were recognized and nurtured, they were able to gain more self-esteem to pursue other fields and/or extend the strength they had in Tina’s cases. Therefore, if students are not given the opportunity to find the strengths they have – and this may be because they were taught to approach learning in a way that did not make sense to them – there would be no opportunity for these students to build positive characters. Since this opportunity is not given, the students who are not able to benefit from the teacher’s one-way approach would not be able to learn to their best ability. Therefore, if teachers do not approach their classrooms holistically, these kinds of consequences could occur.

4.3.3 Blend between Holistic Education and Multiple Intelligences

When there are no holistic teachers who pursue holistic and differentiated instruction and classroom, there are no opportunities for students to figure out the strengths and weaknesses they possess. If students only experience one way to learning, the students who may not be able to make connections with the approach are more isolated and there would be no learning taking place. However, when students are able to approach learning in different ways, they are able to find a way that makes the most sense to them individually. Also, when there are different forms of assessments—not just assessments as/of learning—students are able to connect to the learned
content and create a product that is meaningful and demonstrative of their learning. Then, they would be able to see that school is not just all about marks. Not only are these students getting a proper education that makes sense to them, but holistic teachers are able to develop these students into individuals who are able to contribute to society. When Gordon was able to see that the teacher cared more about him than the life he had in school, he was able to bring that positivity back to the teacher. As with Gordon’s case, when there is a sense of belonging and connection between the student and the teacher, and the student and the society, students are able to contribute positively to the society with the strengths they have discovered and developed through holistic classrooms.

4.4 Conclusion

Holistic teachers pursue connection and balance not only in their personal lives, but also in the lives of their students. When there is a connection created between the teachers and students, teachers are able to see the uniqueness of each student. Holistic teachers respect the uniqueness in the style and approach to learning found in each student and they foster to create a balance in their classrooms so that they could reach out to all types of learners through differentiated instruction. If there are no holistic teachers and therefore no holistic approach to learning for students with different intelligences, more students would be isolated from the education system and education will only be defined with marks and grades. Instead of creating a better future by developing the students who will create the future, more students will have a harder time making a connection with the world because they would not know the strengths they have as unique individuals. However, when there is a holistic approach to support multiple intelligences, students are able to see that each of them is unique individually and thereby bring out purposeful contributions to the society.

Through the interviews conducted with the two participants for the study, the marriage
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I see in holistic education and multiple intelligences is that first, teachers need to be holistic. This means that teachers need to make connections with their students beyond the classroom. When teachers take their time and effort to learn and understand what their students are going through outside the classroom and what their interests are, teachers are able to see how each student learns and what motivates them to learn, which is related to multiple intelligences. Therefore, when holistic teachers are able to see how their students learn by making connections and create strategies to approach different learners through differentiated instructions, they are able to foster their students to learn at their best.

In the following chapter, I state the significance of my research in the teaching practice for all teachers who hope to have a holistic class of their own. Then, I state the limitations of my research and the necessity of a further study to answer some questions I have not been able to answer through this research paper.
5.0 Introduction to the chapter/overview

In this chapter, I provide a summary of the key findings of my study and their significance to the existing research field. Then, I describe the implications and significance of this study to the broad and narrow educational research community as well as put forth how my own personal identity and practice as a professional educator was influenced through the findings. I close the chapter by presenting recommendations for teachers currently teaching in classrooms and areas for further research.

5.1 Overview of Key Findings and their Significance

The three themes that I have identified through this study were: 1) connection with students; 2) supporting learner differences through a balance in the classroom; and 3) challenges and consequences for holistic teachers. Teachers cannot create a pedagogy personal to each of their students if they do not make connections with their students first. Differentiated instruction is effective only when teachers know and understand the strengths and weaknesses of each student in their classroom. However, this could happen only when teachers take the time and effort to learn about each individual. Without the connection, teachers can broadly speculate about the needs of their students but they may never be able to provide the specific tools their students need in order to learn to their best ability. Therefore, it is important for teachers to first make a connection with their students, individually.

When teachers start to make connections with their students, they will notice the gaps and hindrances to their students’ learning—whether it be lack of previous knowledge, difficulties in the students’ personal lives, disinterest and lack of motivation to learn the material, or a combination of any of the three. However, when holistic teachers start to make genuine connections between themselves and the students, the students may be guided to see
a connection between the classroom and their lives such that school and learning are not a segregated part of their lives. They may be able to see that teachers care more about their grades and/or life in school and since these teachers make learning more personal to the students’ lives, students may better recognize the importance of learning.

When teachers make a connection with their students and thereby better understand the interests, strengths and weaknesses of each student, they are able to support learning differences. The teacher is better able to realize the classrooms’ needs, and thereby modify their lessons to best suit their students. Also, holistic teachers may ensure a balance within their classrooms by approaching the class in different ways. They are able to reshape their lessons according to the interests of the students as well as focus on different intelligences from day to day so that they may reach out to all types of learners at the end. This way, students who learn visually, for example, may benefit from a lesson dedicated to visuals and diagrams, whereas students with interpersonal intelligences may benefit from a lesson that is geared towards group work. The balance in the teacher’s pedagogy may create a balance in the classroom by supporting different learning styles and intelligences. When the students see teachers supporting and respecting their unique style of learning, they may further approach learning in a way that makes most sense to them and become independent learners.

On the other hand, although holistic teachers hope to create a holistic classroom by making connections and supporting the uniqueness of their students, there are many challenges that they could face during the process. The education system in Ontario is structured in a way that makes students and parents feel that marks are everything. This thought may hinder students’ recognition of the importance of making connections between their lives inside and outside the classroom and discovering their inner selves. Since some students may only care about marks, they do not necessarily care about the process of making connections to learn more or develop a balance of a variety of skills. When there is no holistic
approach to learning, students will not be able to discover their strengths and weaknesses as well as the uniqueness they have as individual learners. They also may not be able to make a connection with their surroundings. Therefore, it is important for more teachers to approach their classrooms holistically and provide differentiated instruction in order to cater to all students.

5.2 Implications

In this section, I talk about how this study influences the existing educational research community as well as my own practice as a professional educator.

5.2.1 Broad: The Educational Research Community

As many educators realize differentiated instruction as a fundamental aspect of teaching, my research further speaks to the necessity of this process since it emphasizes how teachers could better their differentiation. To have the most effective teaching strategies and responsive teaching in the classroom, we need to have holistic teachers who care about students’ lives beyond the classroom. This is because there are many more factors than the factors that are apparent inside the classroom that can affect students’ learning. This research suggests a need for more teachers to take a holistic approach to support different types of learners. When teachers do this, teachers could guide students to contribute to their society, as well. Students who are supported for their uniqueness and individuality may bring the positive aspects they gain from learning into society to create a better place for future generations because they have a firm understanding of who they are. Teachers who want to make a difference in their students’ lives need to become holistic teachers who care, put in the time and effort to make connections and create a balance.

My research also contributed to the field of educational research by attempting to find the relationship between holistic education and multiple intelligences, which is an
understudied connection. The two theories have shown to be correlated to one another in terms of valuing connection and balance in the classroom to foster all types of intelligences. However, no research has been done yet to collaborate the two theories together. Researchers and teachers in the field could now be able to see how differentiated instruction combines the two theories together, and may see the theories’ values unfolding into practice through differentiated instruction. Therefore, overall, my research has further emphasized the importance of differentiated instruction to the existing research and blended the theories and values of holistic education and multiple intelligences – a largely under researched area.

5.2.2 Narrow: Your Professional Identity and Practice

As a new teacher, I honestly felt very overwhelmed by the idea of differentiated instruction and coming up with pedagogies to cater to all students in my teacher education courses and practices. However, the reason why it is so heavily emphasized is because it is very important for teachers to practice this in their classrooms. Not only does it help students learn to their best ability, but they are respected as unique individuals who matter. They are also able to better relate themselves to the content being taught because holistic teachers who use differentiated instruction make learning personal to their students. But, to have differentiated instruction in my classroom is not to try to cater to all students at the same time. That would be impossible, but to have the professional inclination to reach out to all types of learners in the long run, is what may make differentiated instruction feasible as a career educator. Therefore, as mentioned in my chapter four, I will try my best to use different strategies to scaffold the content, process, product and environment to my students every day, so that I may, eventually, foster all intelligences.

5.3 Recommendations

As teachers, we are asked to do many things, and many times we can feel very
overwhelmed meeting the curricular expectations as well as making lesson plans to meet all students’ needs. Therefore, it is essential for teachers to always take care of themselves for their well-being. We cannot be holistic teachers unless we are first able to understand our own strengths and weaknesses, and make connections within our lives. When we gain inner peace and become aware of ourselves, we can then better support our students and teach them what it means to understand ourselves and our surroundings. Therefore, to become a holistic teacher, you first need to have connections, practice and balance in your personal life. Make sure to take care of yourself first, because it is the most important thing teachers need to do prior to teaching, and it may support the necessary elements of successful teaching.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

The study was done with the purpose of determining how teachers create a balance in classrooms that are comprised of different intelligences and learners. Overall, the study has shown that holistic teachers create a connection with their students first and thereby create a balance in their classrooms through differentiated instruction. The barriers to creating such classrooms were also observed and studied as well as the consequences that may arise when there is no holistic approach to learning. However, there are still few areas that need to be investigated further in order to fully understand how differentiated instruction can support the values of both holistic education and multiple intelligences.

Firstly, the context in which the collaboration of the two theories could take place needs to be studied further. Although I was originally seeking senior high school teachers who have been practicing holistic education as my participants, I could not find such individuals and thereby had to extend my participant criteria to middle school teachers. I am wondering if the practice of holistic education is more suitable and easily done in an elementary/middle school context, rather than in high schools. Even though it was briefly
mentioned in my chapter four, there still needs to be further research on how holistic education could be played in subject-specific courses in high school settings.

Secondly, as mentioned in the recommendations section, it is important for teachers to take care of themselves. Although it is important to take care of the students, teachers need to know when to draw the line between themselves and their students, so that they may avoid burning out and as well prevent students from becoming overly dependent on the teacher. There needs to be further research on how holistic teachers avoid burnouts and how and where they know to draw the line.

5.5 Concluding Comments

All teachers (or hopefully, many) start their careers with the intent of helping their students as best as they can. However, as the years pass by, many teachers lose the mindset they had as beginning teachers for many reasons, such as lack of time, support, burnout, etc. Nonetheless, I hope that all teachers will encourage and support one another to always develop as professionals and thereby support their students to learn as best as they can. In the end, when there are many holistic teachers who care for their students, these students will return the positivity to our society. After all, what future is there without teachers?
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Date: October 6\textsuperscript{th}, 2015

Dear Participant,

My Name is Jihyun Bang and I am a student in the Master of Teaching program at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto (OISE/UT). A component of this degree program involves conducting a small-scale qualitative research study. My research will focus on how teachers integrate holistic education in their classrooms and educate their students holistically within the framework of multiple intelligences. I am interested in interviewing junior high/high school teachers with experience in classrooms that hope to use the theory of holistic education and concepts of multiple intelligences in their classrooms. I think that your knowledge and experience will provide insights into this topic.

Your participation in this research will involve one 45-60 minute interview, which will be transcribed and audio-recorded. I would be grateful if you would allow me to interview you at a place and time convenient for you, outside of school time. The contents of this interview will be used for my research project, which will include a final paper, as well as informal presentations to my classmates and/or potentially at a research conference or publication. You will be assigned a pseudonym to maintain your anonymity and I will not use your name or any other content that might identify you in my written work, oral presentations, or publications. This information will remain confidential. This data will be stored on my password-protected computer and the only people who will have access to the research data will be my course instructor Arlo Kempf. You are free to change your mind about your participation at any time, and to withdraw even after you have consented to participate. You may also choose to decline to answer any specific question. I will destroy the audio recording after the paper has been presented and/or published, which may take up to a maximum of five years after the data has been collected. There are no known risks or benefits to participation, and I will share with you a copy of the transcript to ensure accuracy.

Please sign this consent form, if you agree to be interviewed. The second copy is for your records. I am very grateful for your participation.

Sincerely,

Jihyun Bang

Course Instructor's Name: Arlo Kempf
Contact Info: arlo.kempf@utoronto.ca
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Consent Form

I acknowledge that the topic of this interview has been explained to me and that any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can withdraw from this research study at any time without penalty.

I have read the letter provided to me by ____________ and agree to participate in an interview for the purposes described. I agree to have the interview audio-recorded.

Signature: ________________________________________________

Name: (printed) _______________________________________________

Date: ____________________________
APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Thank you for participating in this interview. The aim of this research is to learn how teachers use the theory of holistic education and concepts of multiple intelligences in their classroom to teach the whole child – balancing their strengths and weaknesses. The interview will ask you a series of 15 questions focused on your holistic pedagogy. I want to remind you of your right to choose not to answer any questions that may be uncomfortable for you to answer or anything you feel that is inappropriate to be asked. The interview will be approximately 45 minutes to 60 minutes long. Do you have any questions before we begin?

Interview Questions:

1. What are the grades you will teach? What are your teachables (if applicable)?
2. Which school board do you hope to teach in? Why?
3. How did you come across holistic education?
4. What does holistic education mean to you? Why do you think it is important?
5. What does nurturing all aspects of a student mean to you? Which aspect of the student do you think is the most important or is there any?
6. How do you hope to nurture the whole student in your classroom? What kind of strategies or activities can you think of in order to nurture the whole student?
7. What do you believe students can gain from holistic education in your future classroom?
8. What kind of obstacles or challenges do you think you will face when you are trying to nurture your students holistically in the future?
9. How do you think the Ontario’s school curriculum/school communities are structured such that it nurtures/obstructs the holistic approach to education?
10. Do you believe that nurturing strengths and developing areas of weakness in a student is important or do you think there needs to be more focus in one more than the other?
11. What do you think about multiple intelligences and how do you think it relates to holistic education?

12. Do you think teachers should focus only on the intelligence their students are most comfortable in using to approach a student’s learning or do you think teachers should try to balance out all intelligences in a student?

13. How do you hope educate a classroom holistically, that is comprised of many different types of learners?

14. Do you see the value of collaborating holistic education and multiple intelligences? If yes, what kind of relationship do you see between the two? If not, why not?

Thank you for your time and participation in this study. It will truly be a meaningful contribution to the study. I have had a wonderful time talking to you about holistic education and have really learned a great deal from your experiences and stories. Thank you.