A THEORY AND FRAMEWORK FOR AN INTERNATIONAL CURRICULUM BASED ON

THE WHOLISTIC EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (WES)

A Synopsis of Paper by Wm. Keith Bookwalter, Ph.D.,

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This paper will present the historical roots of and an overview of the Wholistic Educational System (WES), a developmental, systemic, process approach to education which can be characterized as being religious in its inspiration[[1]](#footnote-1), organismic in its philosophic orientation and scientific in its foundation and method. Drawing upon these three bodies of knowledge and human experience--religion, philosophy, and science--a theory of development and learning was derived which posits the interdependence of the actualization of human potentiality and the acquisition of knowledge. From this theory three others were derived: a theory of curriculum, a theory of teaching, and a theory of administration and institution-community relations. From these three theories practical applications were generated. A fifth theory--the theory of evaluation completes the educational system and assures that inductive knowledge gained from praxis and research will continually renew all of the constituent components of the System.

This paper will examine in particular how WES’s theory of curriculum and its curricular framework were derived from its religious, philosophic, and scientific foundations and from its theory of development and learning. "Curriculum" is defined as “the set of educational goals or objectives to be attained by the learner and the corresponding activities which will be carried out, usually under the guidance of a teacher.” The theory is organized around a hierarchical classification of entities into five aspects of the environment: physical, social, psychological, spiritual, and the self as a composite of the former aspects. These five aspects of reality and human nature are then “multiplied” by six, hierarchically-organized curriculum strands: process (ordered expressions of potentialities), content (the hierarchical organization of knowledge: facts, information, concepts, paradigms, etc.), symbol systems (math, language, the arts, etc.), virtues/ values/ ideals, higher-order competencies, and the curriculum of the self.

The paper concludes with a brief description of six learning scenarios drawn from the author’s experience, one hypothetical learning experience, and several formal programs which the author considers to be in harmony with the tenets of WES.

1. By simply disregarding the components of WES which refer to religion and spirituality, users who are atheistic or who are working in a country which separates church and state, thereby making it difficult to discuss the spiritual aspect of reality, will still find that this system to be a very powerful and useful humanistic system. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)