Inland Norway University

Faculty of Education

**Øyvind Hennum**

# Master thesis

# The Meaning of the Term "Holistic" in the International Baccalaureate Middle Years Program

**Master of Education**

**2021**

# Contents

# Summary

This thesis researches what the term "holistic" means in the Middle Years Program (MYP) curriculum framework (IB 2014) from the International Baccalaureate Organization (IB). It compares the MYP curriculum with principles of holistic education defined by authors (J. P. Miller 2007, pp 6-15; Rudge 2008, pp 21-22) in the field. The purpose of this research is to gain knowledge and insight from different perspectives on holistic education. The methodology is based on philosophical hermeneutics (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009, p 91), with document analysis (Bryman 2016, p 581-583) as the method for data collection. Coding and subtraction of data are done in a deductive way (Braun and Clarke 2006, p 83-84) with a pre-existing coding frame based on principles of holistic education (J. P. Miller 2007, pp 6-15). This study only concerns statements in a document (curriculum framework), and does not analyze implementation and practice.

The findings show some similarities between the principles of holistic education (Miller 2007, pp 6-15; Rudge 2008, pp 21-22) and the MYP curriculum, but there are also differences. One main finding is a similar concern for the education of the whole child (IB 2014, p 9; Miller 2007, p 11), focusing not only on intellectual development and academic achievement but also on students' social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. Another main finding is similarities in focus on the relationship between the child and its community. The focus on developing international-mindedness to promote intercultural understanding, respect, and care for others is present in the MYP program (IB 2014, p 12). That is similar to the principle of interconnectedness (Rudge 2008, p 14-15) and the importance placed on the relationship between the individual and community (Miller 2007, pp. 13-14) in holistic education. One important principle of holistic education, the aspect of spirituality (Rudge 2008, p 25; Miller 2007, p 4), is less focused on in the MYP curriculum. Here the thesis's findings suggest that IB is not in line with holistic education principles. The thesis discusses the main findings and includes a smaller discussion around teaching human rights and democracy in the MYP curriculum. Social change and democracy, including human rights, are important aspects of holistic education (Rudge 2008, p 22; Miller 2007, p 67), but seems less directly outspoken in the MYP curriculum.

The thesis concludes that there in some areas are significant similarities between holistic education principles and the MYP curriculum, but significant differences in other areas. I interpret the meaning of the word "holistic" in the MYP curriculum to be a concern for the education of the whole child and for the child's relationship to its community.

# 1. Introduction

This thesis is concerned with a research field within the educational sciences called holistic education and the International Baccalaureate Organization's philosophy and curricula. The thesis aims to find out what the term "holistic" means in the curriculum framework for the International Baccalaureate Organization's (IB) Middle Years Program (MYP), a program used worldwide aimed at students ages 11-16 in International Schools.

The thesis will analyze parts of the underlying IB philosophy described in the curriculum framework for MYP. It compares how the use of the term "holistic" in the MYP program corresponds with the definitions and meaning of the term in the research field of holistic education. The thesis aims to find out what holistic education is by describing its philosophical roots and definitions, described by authors in the field (John Miller 2007, 2019; Ron Miller 1997; Forbes 2003; Rudge 2008; Schreiner 2009; Gidley 2009, 2016). The thesis also describes what the IB organization and its programs stand for (IB 2014; Hare 2006, 2011; Hayden & Thompson 2011; Parish 2018), and the IB view on Holistic Education.

## 1.1 Background

My interest in holistic education originally comes from questioning a comment made by a representative from an IB International School regarding the IB programs' curricula being holistic. My daily work is within teacher education, and I am in contact with international schools when organizing practice placements for our students. The comment stated, "IB is holistic in its approach to teaching."

That comment made me think, "What does that mean?" Without the opportunity to further pursue the question in the moment, I later started looking into available documents from the IB organization and holistic education research. From there sprung an interest in the research field of holistic education itself. I want to find out if and how a new, different, and expanded view on education can benefit children and, ultimately, in a holistic sense, the world.

Before starting to research for this thesis, I was, to some extent, colored by the notion of holistic education being "new age," in my understanding meaning alternative and spiritual, and questioned how the IB organization could relate itself to this educational orientation. In my understanding, IB education was aimed at families that could afford private schools for their children and wanted them to enter Ivy League universities. So my perception of holistic education as "new age" and IB education as "elitist" was challenged. Another prior

understanding was that the meaning content of the term "holistic" would differ depending on who uses the term. I expected that the term might be used without being clearly defined by the IB and that it would be left up to the educators to give meaning to the term. These prior understandings will be clarified in the results and analyses chapter (Chapter 4) of the thesis.

By working with this topic, I move into unknown areas and have a high potential for learning. The term itself, "holistic education," might provoke some scholars and educators to relate it to "new age" and alternative thinking. Forbes and Martin (2004, p 25) describe that some holistic schools experience being criticized for being "new age," "airy-fairy" or part of "secular religion," and point to possible reasons for this being spiritual views that are not clearly defined. The use of the word spiritual in holistic education will be defined in the theory chapter (2) and discussed in chapter 5.

The field of holistic education aims to be an alternative to mainstream education, and holistic education theorist Ron Miller argues that holistic education is not a romantic «new age» fantasy, but a significant and coherent theoretical perspective (Miller, 1997, p 4). Forbes argues that holistic education has a carefully thought out philosophical foundation and is a genuine alternative to mainstream education (Forbes 2003, p 282). John Miller writes that initially, some people connected holistic education to the new age movement, but since holistic perspectives are adopted in various fields, holistic education has gained more credibility (Miller 2019, p 14). One of the aims of this thesis is to find out what holistic education is and what is meant by the terms spiritual/spirituality and holism/holistic. These are terms used extensively when holistic education is described. The terms are not easily defined, and they have a wide range of interpretations and uses. The definition of these terms is done in the holistic education theory chapter (2.1).

The thesis topic is interesting because it takes a closer look at international education, with a non-government organization, the IB, designing a curriculum for worldwide use. In a national context, government bodies and organizations would do curriculum design and creation. The thesis could lead to new knowledge for some readers, increase the number of writings on the IB's notion of holistic education, and debate how the term "holistic education" is used. Comparing the different views on holistic education from an IB perspective versus that of the research field of holistic education can possibly help clarify what one means by holistic education in the different settings.

Researching and discussing holistic education could provide some alternative viewpoints of how education can be designed to consider the whole child in larger contexts. In a time where, according to Biesta (2010, p 10), the focus of global education trends is on testing, measuring, and comparing results in specific subjects internationally, this is relevant. Gidley (2009, p 533) goes further and claims that today's mainstream education is dominated by an audit culture, with obsessive quantitative accountability practices.

The holistic approach to education is in direct opposition to the dominating worldview in education, focusing on standardized testing, fragmentation and compartmentalization of subjects, and promotion of competitiveness and ranking. Gidley (2009, p 535) describes the holistic approach to education as part of what she labels as post formal counter forces to the formal reductionist worldviews dominating education. Miller (1997, p 4) writes that he believes that our modern world is in a crisis and that the reductionist worldview is inadequate and obsolete. He believes modern schooling to be a form of social engineering that is spiritually devastating and hostile to democratic ideals and human values, especially what he calls the "crusade" of standardized testing and learning. Forbes (2003, p 279) states that holistic education holds that individuals' psychological and spiritual development renews society. According to him that is contrary to mainstream education, which holds that society is renewed by introducing the young into the social or cultural discourse. Holistic education seeks to challenge the status quo rather than maintaining it.

## 1.2 The scope of this thesis
The scope of the thesis is to analyze one curriculum of the three different IB curricula. The reason for narrowing down the material for analysis is not to exceed the limitations of a thesis of 30 ECTS. The thesis will analyze the main document of the MYP program, the curriculum framework called "MYP: From Principles to Practice" (IB 2014). In this thesis, the curriculum framework is also referred to as the MYP document. The primary method is document analysis and hermeneutic interpretation of the text; this is described in detail in chapter 3 of the thesis (Methods chapter). The thesis only analyses a curriculum document and not its implementation and practice. The main objective is to analyze how the MYP document compares to principles of holistic education (J. P. Miller 2007, pp 6-15; Rudge 2008, pp 21-22). The thesis is mainly concerned with a Western perspective on holistic education, mainly relying on Anglo-American authors and discourse. The thesis does not cover Eastern perspectives on holistic education (Nakagawa 2019, pp 42-50) to a considerable extent. As the reader will understand from the introduction to holistic education in chapter 2.1, there is no

one definition of the term (Forbes 2003, p 273; Hare 2011, p 46). For the sake of clarity, the holistic education principles described by one author (Miller 2007, pp 6-15) is chosen for the document analysis, with another author's (Rudge 2008, pp 21-22) principles as a frame of reference. Other authors' (Ron Miller 1997; Forbes 2003; Schreiner 2009; Gidley 2009, 2016) definitions and views are included in the theory and discussion chapters. Earlier studies and publications on the IB and MYP as holistic includes Hare's (2006, 2011), and Ryder's (2014) writings. The reader will find significant emphasis placed on the aspect of spirituality amongst the authors referred to above. When introduced to IB theory (subchapter2.2) and the results and analysis (chapter 4), it will be apparent that there is less focus on spirituality in the MYP curriculum. The difference is significant and the reason why spirituality is given focus in the theory and discussion chapters.

### 1.3 Outline

In chapter 2 of the thesis, both the holistic education field and the IB organization's theoretical backgrounds are described. Further on in the same chapter, a description and clarification of the different definitions of Holistic Education are given. This chapter also contains a section on more general curriculum theory, referring to John Goodlad's curriculum inquiry. In chapter 3, the methodological foundations and approach used in the thesis will be described. The analytical framework used for the curriculum analyses of the MYP will be described and discussed in the same chapter. Further on, in chapter 4, the results of the data collection will be presented and analyzed. In chapter 5, themes and trends from the result and analysis chapter are discussed. Chapter 6 provides the conclusion of the thesis.

## 2. Theory

In this chapter, the theoretical foundation of the thesis is presented. The choice of authors will be argued for, and the possible limitations the choices result in will be illuminated. The chapter is split into two subchapters. Sub-chapter 2.1 is dedicated to describing Holistic education theory, and sub-chapter 2.2 is dedicated to IB theory.

As this thesis concerns the analysis of a curriculum, it is relevant to mention curriculum theory. John Goodlad's curriculum levels model serves as a reference point when understanding which levels this thesis analyze the MYP curriculum. Goodlad's work regards the study of curriculum practice, both how curricula are created, and how it is used, or implemented. This thesis does not look deeply into how the MYP curriculum framework is implemented or practiced. Within Goodlad's curriculum levels model, this thesis is mainly

concerned with the two first levels regarding the ideological curricula and the formal curricula. This because it analyses one specific aspect of the MYP document, holistic education, and the ideological foundations of this aspect.

As Goodlad explains the different levels, he states that the first level, the ideological curricula, is where the ideas and ideals behind the curriculum emerge from idealistic planning processes. The second level is the formal curricula, where ideological curricula gain approval from formal bodies, with or without modifications. The third level is the level of the perceived curricula. This level concerns how different groups or individuals perceive the ideological and formally approved curricula. The fourth level concerns the operational curricula, which is the curricula taught in the classroom. The fifth level, the experiential curricula, concerns how the students experience the curriculum taught.

Goodlad (1979, p 5-6) refers to Ralph Tyler's work as having a substantial influence on his work in the field of curriculum research.  He states that when slightly rephrasing the Tyler rationale's prescriptive questions into descriptive questions, the questions are useful for guiding curriculum research. Goodlad's (1979, p 19-20) own slight rephrasing of the questions in the Tyler Rationale is:

1. What educational purposes does the educational institution seek to attain?

2. What educational experiences are provided to attain these purposes?

3. How are these educational experiences organized?

4. How is the attainment of these purposes or the value of these experiences being evaluated?

In this thesis, the first question is very relevant as a backdrop when analyzing the statements of the MYP being a holistic program. The second question is also relevant when a description of educational activities and experiences is analyzed. The third and fourth question of the Tyler rationale is not to a large extent relevant for this study, as they are concerned with implementation and practice.

## 2.1 Holistic Education theory

Holistic education is both a research field in the educational sciences and a practice within schools based on holistic principles as educational alternatives to mainstream education. The field has strong foundations in the humanistic and progressive education movements but does not have one single definition or approach. Rudge (2008, p 21) writes that many educational initiatives claim themselves holistic and holistic education is a term that is widely used but not

always clearly defined. Forbes (2003, p 273) states, "*holistic education has no core text spelling out what it is and what it isn't*".

One renowned contemporary theorist in the field of holistic education is John P. Miller. His book, "The Holistic Curriculum" (2007) defines the principles and components of a holistic curriculum. These principles are the basis of the categories used in the document analysis. As second source and reference in the analysis, Lucila Rudge's principles are used. Her doctoral thesis (Rudge 2008) summarizes and synthesizes a range of theorists' views on holistic education into principles that identify holistic educational approaches.

Two other renowned authors are often cited to ensure a solid foundation and multiple sources when describing holistic education. That is Ron Miller, especially his book "What are schools for: Holistic education in American culture" (1997) and Scott H. Forbes, with his book "Holistic education; an analysis of its ideas and nature" (2003). Both books build on PhD. research projects and are extensive works defining holistic education and ensuring its place within educational sciences. Other authors in holistic education frequently cite John P. Miller, Ron Miller and Scott H. Forbes works. This ensures the legitimacy of choosing them as authorities in this thesis. The reason for arguing for the choice of authors the lack of one supreme authority or core text defining holistic education.

J.P. Miller (2007, pp 67-86) does to some extent describe the philosophical foundations of the holistic education field and important contributors to the field's development. However, his main focus is on describing a holistic curriculum and how holistic education can be implemented in schools and education systems. He is one of Equinox Holistic Alternative School's founding partners in Toronto, Canada, a school that uses the principles for holistic education outlined by him (Equinox 2019). Other authors go deeper into the foundations and history of holistic education and J. P. Miller (2007, p 85) refers to Ron Miller as having written: "the definite work on the history of holistic education" in his book *"What are schools for? Holistic Education in American Culture"* (Miller 1997). Ron Miller has been a longtime advocate for holistic education and is recognized by others as one of the movement's initiators, together with J. P. Miller, emerging in North-America in the 1980's (Novak, 2019, p 1-2).

Taggart (2001, p 326) writes that J. P. Millers "The Holistic Curriculum" was the first book published on the holistic curriculum, and according to Rudge (2008, p 6), Miller's book is the first coherent and systematic account of holistic education describing how a holistic

curriculum could look. Ron Miller refers to "The Holistic curriculum" as a groundbreaking book (Miller 1997, p 78) and as a work attempting to define holistic education (p 204). This serves as the main reason J.P. Miller's (2007, p 6-15) principles are chosen as the basis for document analysis categories. John P. Miller explains holistic education like this.

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

When Ron Miller describes holistic education, he writes that he looks for holistic qualities in a wide range of educational approaches and "*does not claim that there are any one true example of holistic education*" (Miller 1997, p 75). Many of the educators he refers to does not even use the term holistic. He refers to a "holistic worldview" that embraces diverse expressions of understanding; spiritual, humanistic, and ecological.

Eaude (2019, p 61) defines holistic education in simpler terms, stating that it addresses every aspect of individual development and growth, seen in relation to the world around, including societies, cultures, and people. Hare (2011, p 46) states that "*holistic education does not exist as a single entity or form*". Schreiner (2009, p 755, 761) describes holistic education in similar ways as not being a single approach or monolithic term, but an umbrella term that covers many different perspectives and approaches.

Forbes (2003, p 2, 11) writes that holistic education is a broad range of educational initiatives sharing' family resemblances' in ideas, beliefs, feelings, and principles. Forbes (2003, p 17) further writes that one common factor for educational approaches calling themselves holistic is that most of them have the goal of what he calls «ultimacy.» The term is not clearly defined, as it means something different according to what educational approach he refers to. However, Forbes explains it as meaning something like developing a person's potential to an "ultimate" or highest achievable state, having peak experiences, a moment in life one experiences as the greatest, or the greatest concern or engagement a person can aspire to in giving or sharing for a higher purpose. Forbes claims "ultimacy" can spring from both spiritual or religious educational approaches as well as more humanistic approaches.

Rudge maintains that holistic education is a fairly new moment starting in the mid 1980's in North America and that it emerged as a response to mainstream education and its dominant "mechanistic" worldview (Rudge 2008, p 5). Ron Miller writes that in a culture that denies,

suppresses, or limits wholeness, holism is a search for wholeness, and that holistic education is a countercultural movement seeking radical changes (Miller 1997, p 7). He identifies five themes in American society where what he calls "consensus consciousness" creates more subtle epistemological and spiritual problems that inflict or limit education (Miller 1997, p 8). Ron Miller exemplifies this with schooling, not prioritizing or even actively suppressing more personal dimensions like aesthetic, expressive, and spiritual dimensions. It is to this the dissident educators he calls holistic has protested. The themes he identifies as problematic is puritan theology, scientific reductionism, restrained democratic ideology, capitalism, and nationalism. Ron Miller argues that these themes enforce social discipline in American society and limits individual freedom, creative expression, and spontaneity, enforcing rational discipline on deeper aspects of human nature like intuitive, mystical, and emotional aspects (Miller 1997, p 20).

John P. Miller (2007, pp 69-71), Ron Miller (1997, pp 92-101), and Scott H. Forbes (2003, p 5) all refer to Rousseau's, Pestalozzi's, and Froebel's influence on holistic education; on other sources of influence, there are some differences between the authors. J.P Miller writes that the roots of holistic education can be traced back to the ancient Greeks (Miller 2007, p 68). Miller writes that the Greek philosophers viewed philosophy as holistic and contemplative, not only intellectual. J.P. Miller (2007, p. 69-72) also refers to Leo Tolstoy, Bronson Alcott, and A.S. Neil as having a significant influence on holistic education. When referring to Steiner and Montessori as influencers, J. P. Miller argues these are not historical influencers, but a contemporary influence on how education is performed in our current time. He also refers to Dewey as a proponent of education to influence social reform (Miller 2007, p 48). He sees Dewey as arguing for "wholism", with more focus on physical and social interconnections rather than "holism" implying spirituality, which he sees Steiner as arguing for (Miller 2007, p 5).

Forbes (2003, p 5) states that Jung, Maslow, and Rogers have greatly influenced holistic education. Forbes argues why he does not include Montessori, Steiner, and Dewey as philosophical influences of holistic education. According to him, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel influenced Montessori and Dewey's works, so he does not see them as original. Steiner was original but having little influence on other forms of holistic education systems than his own (Forbes 2003, p 6). As examples of holistic school systems, Forbes (2003, p 10) writes that three of the oldest and continually existing are founded by Maria Montessori

(Montessori schools), Rudolf Steiner (Waldorf schools), and Jiddu Krishnamurti (Krishnamurti schools).

In addition to Rousseau, Pestalozzi, and Froebel, Ron Miller writes that American transcendentalists have influenced the emergence of holistic education. He refers to the transcendentalists as a movement beginning in the 1830s of radical social criticism and a romantic response against industrialization. The movement focused on individuality and personal spiritual development (Miller 1997, p 101). Ron Miller also recognizes John Dewey's work as an important contribution to holistic theory, and that he was a major liberal philosopher and critic of traditional education (Miller 1997, pp 125-128). He states that Dewey was oriented towards the development of society, rather than the spiritual development of individuals and that he diminished spirituality as an element of human experience (Miller 1997, pp 131-132). Ron Miller also credits Montessori and Steiner's influence on holistic education (Miller 1997 pp. 158-176) and the human potential movement with Maslow and Rogers, amongst others, as influences (Miller 1997 pp. 196-197).

Gidley (2016, p 87) draws links between holistic education and the German "bildung" tradition, which she refers to as a holistic educational approach. The bildung tradition is described as seeing philosophy and education as synonymous terms, designating maturation personally and culturally. Gidley refers to the first public education system with mass schooling founded in 18th century Prussia as an idealist-romantic educational project concerned with the whole person and evolution of consciousness. German idealist philosophers influenced the minister of education, implementing the educational system, Wilhelm von Humboldt.

We can see above; there is no one clear definition of what holistic education is or how it is implemented and the choice in this thesis is to lean on J. P. Miller's definition.

### 2.1.1 J.P. Miller's principles of a holistic curriculum

Below is a short description of J.P. Miller's three basic principles and their sub principles of a holistic curriculum. These principles serve as the basis for the categories of the document analysis in this thesis. After that, Rudge's principles are briefly described, as they serve as the reference point in the document analysis.

J. P. Miller (2007, p 6-15) describes three basic principles, which holistic education is founded on. Balance, Inclusion, and Connection.

Balance is the principle of a balance between individual and group learning, content and process, a balance between knowledge and imagination, rational and intuitive thinking. A balance between quantitative and qualitative assessment, balance between learning techniques and the vision of the whole child, balance between assessment and learning, and balance between the focus on technology and the program/curriculum itself.

Inclusion means the inclusion of different educational orientations towards learning. Miller writes on three different positions in learning orientation, which needs to be included. The position of transmission of knowledge, the position of the transaction of knowledge (interactive, process-oriented), and the position of transformational learning in which the child and the curriculum are seen as connected.

Transmission: In this educational orientation, knowledge is seen as fixed and not process-oriented. The student acquires and accumulates skills and knowledge by transmission from the teacher to the student or reading a text. This orientation focuses on learning via repetition and imitation and breaks knowledge down into smaller units the student can handle.

Transaction: This educational orientation focuses on more interaction between student and teacher, and the students often use some form of inquiry to gain knowledge or try to solve a problem to gain knowledge. In this position, knowledge is not seen as something fixed that needs to be acquired or accumulated but rather process-oriented.

Transformation: This educational orientation considers the wholeness of the child and seeks to develop the whole person. The child and the curriculum are viewed as connected and not separated from each other. Students are encouraged to make connections between various learning methods and activities, and it helps construct meaningful knowledge. The transformation position includes the other educational orientations and is seen as a holistic educational orientation.

The model below shows the three different positions being placed as circles outside of each other, with the Transformation position encompassing the two other positions.

Transmission

Transaction

Transformation
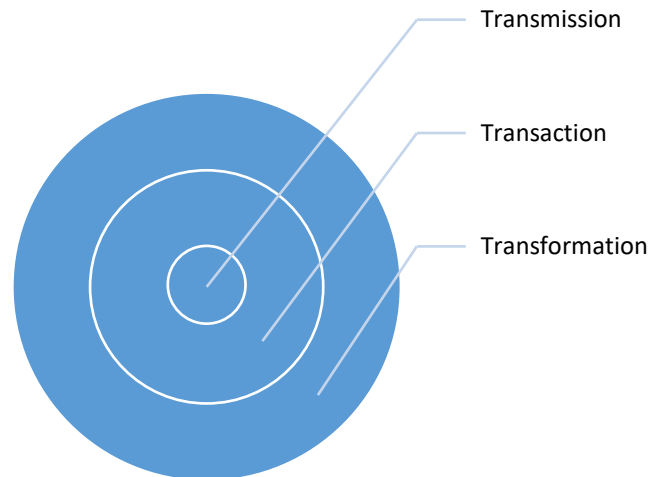
Connection (Millers basic principle 3) is the principle where holistic education focuses on relationships and connections within the child's life. As holistic education seeks to move away from fragmented views on knowledge and towards connectedness, Miller (2007, p 13-14) emphasizes the importance of focusing on and understanding the relationships between linear thinking and intuition, body and mind, self and community, humans and earth, between different domains of knowledge, and the relationship between ego and soul.

### 2.1.2 Rudge's principles of holistic education

In addition to Miller's three basic principles, I also use Rudge's (2008) analytical framework for recognizing holistic education. In her doctoral thesis, she argues why she does not use one author's definitions but merges several authors' definitions. Rudge argues that many principles overlap, but many that do not. For this reason, Rudge claims it would not be sufficient or covering to use only one author's definitions of Holistic Education.

Rudge draws out eight principles defining Holistic Education that is recognizable and do overlap in the works of the authors' Miller, Forbes, Nakagawa, Clark, Nava, and other theorists in Holistic Education (Rudge 2008, p 21-22).

These principles are:

1. Spirituality. 2. Reverence for life/nature.

3. Interconnectedness. 4. Human wholeness.

5. Individual uniqueness. 6. Caring relations.

7. Freedom/autonomy. 7. Democracy

Rudge (2008, p 22) states that the first four principles belong to the line of holistic education concerned with personal growth and "holism" including spirituality. The last four principles belong to the line of holistic educators concerned with social change and humanistic ideas, which she refers to as "wholism". The terms "holism/holistic" and "spiritual/spirituality" are widely used and emphasized in the field of holistic education. A closer look at what is meant by them is needed and will be done in the next two sections.

### 2.1.3 Definition of holism/holistic
There are different views on the origins of the term holism/holistic and its meaning. In this paper, John P. Miller's definition of "holistic" is the one used. J. P. Miller (2007, p 6) writes that the word holistic comes from the Greek word "holon". Holon is a description of a universe made up of wholes, which cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts. Further, Miller distinguishes how he uses the words "holistic" and "wholistic" and does not use these terms interchangeably. He suggests that a *"'holistic' perspective implies spirituality and a sense of the sacred and that a 'wholistic' perspective is more material and biological emphasizing physical and social interconnections."* (Miller 2007, p 6). According to J. P. Miller, these are two different strands of holistic education, "wholism" being the strand concerned with social change, and the other, "holism", being concerned with personal growth including a spiritual dimension of the child (Miller 2007, p 67).

Bai et.al. (2019, p 108) write that holism has to do with being whole, and the word "whole" is derived from the Old English word "hal" meaning whole as being intact, healthy, safe, and uninjured. Ron Miller (1997, p 75) uses the term "holistic" generically and includes different expressions of humanistic, ecological, and spiritual understanding. According to Miller, there is no one complete philosophy of holism. He calls holistic thinking organic, ecological, and spiritual and states, *"a holistic perspective is rooted in an epistemology of wholeness, context, and interconnectedness"* (Miller 1997, p 81). Eude (2019, p 61) explains holism like this: *"Holism implies that a whole organism or system is seen as more than the sum of the component elements or parts."* He further states that philosophically, holism is a difficult concept, as it is hard to describe systems or organisms otherwise than describing their parts.

### 2.1.4 Definition of spiritual/spirituality
The use and meaning of the term spiritual/spirituality also have different interpretations and definitions. Forbes (2003, p 24) claims that many holistic educators avoid clarifying or defining what they mean by spirituality because they mean that definitions will narrow

spirituality into an "idea", and that narrowing has corrupted most religions. Forbes uses another term, "religiousness," when he explains spirituality in holistic education. He refers to the sources of inspiration of holistic education, Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Jung, Maslow and Rogers (Forbes 2003, p 25) as distinguishing "religiousness" from religion and spoke of the "divine" in nature, or "the divine within". He admits their definition of "divine" is also very vague. Forbes (2003, p 25) states that holistic education often promotes something he calls "secular-religiousness", "secular" meaning no specific religion is followed, and "religiousness" meaning that one gives great importance to what is "spiritual", "divine" or "sacred".

J. P. Miller (2007, p 4) offers a different perspective on spirituality. He writes that in what he describes as our current worldview of scientific materialism, some people feel something is missing after having their material needs met. Miller states:

*"for the lack of a better word, we call this something "spirituality". Here we define spirituality as a sense of the awe and reverence for life that arises from our relatedness to something both wonderful and mysterious"* (Miller 2007, p 4).

When de Souza (2009, p 526) argues for recognizing spirituality as an "innate element of being" and inclusion of spirituality in educational programs, she describes that spirituality relates to the relational dimension of being and is understood broadly. It means recognizing spirituality as more than religion and that someone can be spiritual but not religious. The relational dimension is understood as the connectedness the individual feels to its inner self and to others, ultimately a transcendent other.

Schreiner (2009, p 758) explains spirituality as an "*inner core of each human being which lies beyond the physical, social and other sources of personality*" and further names this inner core "soul" in religious terms or "the higher self" in psychological terms. He further explains that the concept of spirituality in holistic education also refers to spiritual wisdom from religious and wisdom traditions, in a non-dogmatic sense. Schreiner (2009, p 756) writes that the complexity and different uses of the term spirituality make it challenging to have a common definition, and non-religious groups, new-religious groups, and traditional religions all use the term. Ron Miller (1997, p 20) offers a more simple definition of spirituality, meaning being receptive to one's interior and subtle aspects of existence, searching for the deeper meaning of existence not limited by intellect or social convention. In this paper, Ron Miller's definition of "spirituality" is the one used.

As we have seen in this subchapter, there is no single definition of holistic education or complete consensus on its sources of inspiration. Despite this, there are some common themes agreed on by a majority of theorists. In the next section, we will look at the IB theory, including its history and philosophy.

## 2.2 IB theory

In this section of the thesis, I will briefly outline the history of the IB programs and the IB philosophy. The outline creates a common ground of understanding and gives a brief overview of the IB and MYP before the analysis and discussion chapters. I will describe the main contents of the MYP program and how it is organized to a smaller extent. The IB philosophy and the MYP program statements of being holistic will be analyzed in chapter 4 and discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis.

The IB programs exist as a continuum of programs ranging from years 3-19. There is a program for early years and primary education called Primary Years Program (PYP) for ages 3-11. Second, there is the Middle Years Program (MYP) for ages 11-16, and thirdly there is the IB Diploma Program (DP) for ages 16-19. The IB organization is a nonprofit foundation with its head office in Switzerland.

The MYP document "From Principles to Practice" is a curriculum framework outlining how the program should be structured and implemented, but it does not detail exactly how each element should be implemented. According to Hayden & Thompson (2011, p 16), it acts as a framework for a school designed curriculum. In my understanding, it provides principles and structure, rather than specific content. It is the main document for the MYP program but there are also subject specific curriculum guides which are not part of this study.

The history of the IB dates back to the early 1960's and is sprung out of a need for recognition of international education so students from international schools could get admitted to universities (Parish 2018, p 9-11, Hayden & Thompson 2011, p 13). According to the IB organization, the IB Diploma Program was established in 1968 (IB 2014, p 3). The education was founded on the ideas of promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation and creating a world without conflict. There was a strong need for the IB education to be recognized for university admission and cater to families that were moving from one country to another, so their children could get the same type of education (Parish 2018, p 9-11). The MYP program was developed out of a need for a middle school program preparing students for the Diploma Program. This need was expressed by a number of international schools and

led to the development of the MYP program that was implemented in schools from 1994 (Hayden & Thompson 2011, p 13).

The IB philosophy is recognized in the IB mission statement and in the core elements of IB education. According to the MYP document, teaching and learning are student-centered in the IB philosophy, meaning that students' individual learning styles, strengths, and limitations are considered important. Further, the IB document states that IB promotes open communication based on understanding and respect, and encourages students to become active, compassionate learners (IB 2014, p 9). The IB mission statement says:

*"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."* (IB 2014, p vi)

The aspects of the IB philosophy mentioned in the mission statement are core elements of IB education. They will all be described below, but the first core element where the IB philosophy is shown is in the IB learner profile. The IB learner profile is a set of attributes, characteristics, and virtues the curriculum and teaching aims to help the student develop, and is described as being IB's mission in action and at the center of all the IB programs (IB 2014, p 9). The learner profile attributes the IB education requires students to strive for achieving and becoming are: Inquirers, Knowledgeable, Thinkers, Communicators, Principled, Open-minded, Caring, Risk-takers, Balanced, Reflective.

The sections below describe the other core elements of IB education where the IB philosophy is recognized. According to the MYP document (IB 2014, p 18), the IB philosophy is expressed through all aspects of the MYP curriculum, but the document mentions that specific attention is given to the aspects of:

- conceptual understanding
- teaching and learning in context
- approaches to learning
- community service and action
- language and identity

- learning diversity and inclusion


The points mentioned above are essential aspects given a significant amount of space in the MYP document's section on understanding the IB philosophy (IB 2014, p 9-28). For this thesis, they provide important background information before analyzing and discussing MYP in relation to holistic education principles. That is why space is given to a brief description of each of these points below.

Conceptual understanding.

In the MYP document, conceptual learning and conceptual understanding are argued to be an essential part of how knowledge is gained and how meaning is constructed. Concepts are described as big, abstract ideas that help students shape their understanding of larger issues and reach beyond facts and topics. Concepts are ideas and principles that can be generalized; and it is claimed that this makes it easier for students to transfer knowledge from one domain to another (IB 2014, p 14). There are two types of concepts used in the planning of teaching units: key concepts; and related concepts. There are 16 key concepts defined in the MYP document, and they are meant to be used across the subject groups as larger ideas leading to exploration and inquiry. The related concepts are defined in each of the subject guides in the MYP and are more subject-specific.

Teaching and learning in context.

The MYP document states that all learning happens within contexts. A context is defined as a set of circumstances, events, or settings. The focus on the more abstract key concepts and more specifically related concepts all happens within a context. Understanding the concepts in a context is said to enhance learning for students in the MYP age group. It helps the students connect concepts to their own experiences and lives, and contexts can be chosen and designed to stimulate learning. MYP has a focus on learning in global contexts to develop internationally minded students and promote global engagement. The global contexts are Identities and Relationships, Orientation in space and time, Personal and cultural expression, Scientific and technical innovation, Globalization and sustainability, Fairness, and development (IB 2014, p 19).

Approaches to learning: Inquiry-Action-Reflection.

The IB aims for the student's development of his/her own ability to manage and evaluate their own learning. The MYP document states that the interplay between the three principles; Inquiry-Action-Reflection, promotes learning with students. The document defines this as a constructivist approach to teaching and learning. With the help of these principles, students collaboratively construct meaning and make sense of the world around them. The process is described as asking (inquiry), doing (action), and thinking (reflection). The central first step in this process, inquiry, frames the written, taught, and assessed curriculum in IB programs. Prior knowledge and experience establish the students' basis for further learning, and inquiry-based teaching and learning are meant to encourage students' curiosity. Structured inquiry into established bodies of knowledge and complex problems is the method described in the document (IB 2014, p 11).

In the MYP program, the learning is organized in units of inquiry, which are both interdisciplinary and subject-specific. The units of inquiry are organized from a key concept, and a statement of inquiry is the main focus of the unit. The approaches to learning are supposed to make the students "learn how to learn" (IB 2014, p 20) and should help the student develop skills that can be used across subjects. The approaches to learning skills the student should develop are divided into communications skills, social skills, self-management skills, research skills, and thinking skills.

Community service and action.

According to the MYP document, action, in the document described as learning by doing and experiencing, is central to all the IB programs. Service, seen as a subset of action, is described as a central value in the IB programs. The IB's aim is that the students become caring members of society who demonstrate a personal commitment to service and act to make a positive difference for others and the environment (IB 2014, p 22). The MYP document states that the service actions help the student make connections between what they learn in the classroom and what they experience in the community they give service to. The MYP document emphasizes the importance of doing the service actions together with other students as a shared commitment towards a common good (IB 2014, p 23).

<u>Language and identity.</u>

In the MYP document, we find a particular focus on the importance of language in identity formation. This especially applies to the age group MYP students are in (adolescence). Multilingualism is part of IB schools, and often students will have a different mother tongue than the language of instruction. Specific emphasis is placed on language's role in interpersonal communication skills, on promoting group cohesion and inclusion, and identifying with and belonging to appropriate groups. As adolescents will want to belong to groups they can identify with, they can develop particular ways of expressing themselves that differ from established, or normal, ways of expressing themselves in the school environment. The MYP document states that teachers should place extra consideration and caution if considering switching between languages or language codes as negative or unwelcomed behavior amongst bilingual students. The students in IB schools are from diverse backgrounds, and it becomes of high importance that the students are able to express themselves adequately (IB 2014, p 26).

<u>Learning diversity and inclusion.</u>

The IB philosophy should with its principles and practices call schools to organize themselves in ways that value student diversity and respect individual learning differences. Valuing differences and diversity is also seen as a key aspect of being internationally minded. The MYP program is meant to be inclusive and should cater to all students' different needs, including students with diverse learning needs. Differentiated teaching practices that adapt appropriate individual learning goals for students are seen as essential to inclusion (IB 2014, p 27)

This introduction to IB theory has provided some theoretical background for understanding the IB and the MYP curriculum for the analysis and discussion in this thesis. In the next chapter, we will look at the choice of methodological approach in this paper.

# 3. Method

This chapter describes the theory of science this thesis is based on and the research methods used in data collection and analysis. I will argue why I mean the choices made are the most suitable for the research question. At the end of this chapter, I will describe challenges with the method chosen and possible personal biases.

The foundation of the research method and analysis is philosophical hermeneutics, and the approach is interpretative. Hermeneutics is chosen because of its interpretative nature, as the thesis research question is concerned with interpreting what holistic education means in the MYP document. Since this thesis interprets a text, a reason for choosing hermeneutics is that the method originated from text interpretation. According to Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, p 91) hermeneutics was in its beginnings used to interpret and understand the meaning of passages or smaller parts of the Bible in relation to the whole Bible. In my view, the understanding of parts in relation to a whole could be interpreted as holistic and is in line with the theme of this thesis. Hermeneutics is concerned with the reader's "intuitive" insight, and by reading a text, the reader could recognize patterns in a complex whole and come to sudden insights by illuminating the patterns, rather than in a logical reasoning way (Alvesson & Sköldberg 2009, p 91). This approach appeals to me personally, and I strive for these moments of "aha" experiences that these understandings give.

Hermeneutic approaches can vary, and Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, p 91) describes a distinction between objectivist hermeneutics and alethic hermeneutics. Objectivist is an approach that seeks to distinguish between the subject conducting a study (researcher) and the object being studied (material). This approach was intended to make cultural sciences more accepted and closer to natural sciences and their objective research methods. Alethic hermeneutics, on the other hand, makes less of a distinction between the researchers objective role and the material under study. Alethic hermeneutics is more concerned with the researcher's preunderstanding, their context, or the "lifeworld" they belong to, and the context the material studied belongs to (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, p 96). Alethic hermeneutics does not consider the polarity between the subject and object like objective hermeneutics, but is instead concerned with the researcher's understanding of the studied material and the "revelation of something hidden" in the material. In my understanding, this means that the researcher is not just an objective observer but shaped by preunderstanding and influenced by the material under study. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, p 97) transcends these two seemingly opposites and claims most hermeneutic researchers will to some extent, follow both

approaches in the same study and argues that the two approaches are, in fact, complementary. This thesis will mainly follow the alethic approach. However, while interpreting, I, as the researcher, am also aware of the value and importance of being objective when doing research and aim to do meta-reflection on my interpretation to see how my preunderstanding colors my interpretation. Gadamer criticizes the demand for freedom of preunderstandings, or what he calls "prejudices" in his book Truth and Method (2004):

*"The overcoming of all prejudices, this global demand of the Enlightenment, will itself prove to be a prejudice, and removing it opens the way to an appropriate understanding of the finitude which dominates not only our humanity but also our historical consciousness."* Gadamer (2004, p 277).

Gadamer argues that we all have preunderstandings and that trying to ignore or deny them rather than to consider them when interpreting text might make the text less meaningful to us:

*"To try to escape from one's own concepts in interpretation is not only impossible but manifestly absurd. To interpret means precisely to bring one's own preconceptions into play so that the text's meaning can really be made to speak for us"* (Gadamer 2004, p 398).

The hermeneutic approach in its basic form consists of a pendular or back-and-forth movement between the reading, interpretation, and understanding of the whole text and, on the other hand, the reading, interpretation, and understanding of its parts. This movement is described as "The Hermeneutic circle" and the circle pictures that the researcher first reads the text as a whole and makes the interpretation of it. After that, the researcher reads the text again, interpreting the parts of the text. After that, the researcher rereads the whole text, interprets, then the parts and interprets and so on. In this way, the researcher will get a deeper understanding of the text and make even better or more precise interpretations. The Hermeneutic circle is mainly the objectivist hermeneutic approach. The same movement can be pictured for the movement between preunderstanding and understanding by the researcher when reading and rereading the text. First, the researcher reflects on his /her preunderstanding, then reads the text, then reflects on his/her understanding of the text. This movement is largely the alethic hermeneutic approach. Alvesson & Sköldberg (2009, p 104) merges these two approaches into the same circle and assumes that they might be different, but not contradictory. I would consider the hermeneutic circle a holistic approach to research with the moving back and forth between understanding the whole and the parts, preunderstanding, and understanding, and seeing the material and researcher in context.

As a tool for structuring the reading, coding, and making of notes in the document analysis, Brymans steps of coding in qualitative analysis have been a guideline (Bryman 2016, p 581-583). I will briefly describe my understanding of the main steps of the coding below. These steps have served as a guideline in the reading and coding process, and I have followed the steps, although not in minute detail. In the last step, where the researcher's interpretation is added, I have drawn upon ideas from thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke 2006, p 83-84).

According to Bryman (2016, p 581-583) the first step is reading the text as a whole: getting to know the text, looking for what it is about, and noting major themes found in the text. The second step is rereading the text in more detail, marking the text (underlining/highlighting), making notes or annotations in the margins, generating labels for codes and putting code labels into the margin, highlighting keywords. The third step is coding the text systematically. In this stage, the researcher indicates what parts of texts are about, what themes there are, and indexing them. The researcher reviews the codes, makes new codes if necessary, and eliminates repetition and similar codes (combines codes), and considers grouping of connected codes. In stage three, there may be more codes than is necessary, but this is acceptable because the number of codes can be reduced later. The fourth step is relating general theoretical ideas to the text. As coding is only the first part of the analysis, the researcher's interpretation must be added; and this happens in stage four. The interconnectedness between codes is analyzed, and codes are related to the research question and literature in this stage.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p 83-84) suggest that there are two ways of coding and subtracting themes when coding qualitative data. The inductive way (bottom-up) is coding the data without a pre-existing coding frame, and that the researcher reads the text and assigns codes to themes as she/he goes along. In this way, themes are drawn out of the data, by the researcher, without deciding upfront what to look for. The deductive way (top-down) is where the researcher reads and codes the text from a predefined coding frame and interprets meaning or themes into the text according to this frame. In this thesis, the coding is done with a pre-existing coding frame, and with in-depth knowledge of the definitions of what holistic education means in the research literature. As such, it would not be an inductive coding, as I, the researcher, will be strongly affected by the definitions of holistic education in the literature. The approach to coding is more in line with the deductive approach. This is because the thesis analyzes how the MYP document's themes correspond with the ideas, principles, and definitions of holistic education.

As mentioned earlier (chapter 2), the analysis categories are based on J. P. Miller's (2007, p 6-14) three basic principles for defining holistic education, Balance, Inclusion, Connection and their sub principles. According to Bryman's (2016, p 581-583) steps of coding in qualitative analysis the document was read several times, assigning codes according to the analytical framework described below. In the first reading, the text was marked with the three different categories in the parts of the text interpreted to fall within the three broad categories: 1 (balance), 2 (inclusiveness), 3 (connection). Individual words were marked, as well as whole phrases and passages, and whole sections of text. The second coding was done using the expanded descriptions of the three broad principles. J. P. Miller (2007, p 6-14) expands on the broad principles and subdivides them into smaller principles or themes. These subdivisions I use as subcategories in my analysis. I will briefly mention the subcategories of the main categories below. Further explanation of the categories was made in the theory chapter and will be briefly described in the discussion chapter, where it is needed for clarity in the discussion.

Category 1, Balance is divided into the following subcategories

    1.1 Individual versus group learning

    1.2 Content versus process focus

    1.3 Knowledge versus imagination in construction of meaning

    1.4 Rational versus intuitive thinking

    1.5 Quantitative versus qualitative assessment

    1.6 Technique versus vision of the whole child in teaching strategies

    1.7 Assessment versus learning focus

    1.8 Technology versus program focus

Category 2, Inclusiveness is divided into the following subcategories

2.1 Transmission position,

2.2 Transaction position

2.3 Transformation position.

Category 3, Connection is divided into the following subcategories

3.1 Linear thinking and intuition

3.2 Mind and body

3.3 Different domains of knowledge

3.4 Individual (self) and community

3.5 Humans and earth

3.6 Ego and soul

There are some challenges to the method chosen in this thesis as the document analysis is based on drawing out statements and passages of text. Choosing which statements or passages of text to draw out is the first challenge, as several statements can have similar content. There is only room for a limited number of statements to be analyzed. In addition, the statements are taken out of the context of the whole document, which can alter the meaning. When assigning sentences or statements to categories it is challenging to analyze more than a few at a time. It would be difficult to assign whole pages or document sections to categories as one would need to break them down into smaller pieces for analysis. There is the chance of losing some of the larger picture and not be fully "holistic" when breaking the findings down to make the analysis more comprehensible. As such, the method has some weaknesses, but tries to live up to the hermeneutic ideal of interpreting the text as a whole. In the discussion chapter, the aim has been to have a more overall and inclusive discussion of larger perspectives. As the thesis is concerned with analyzing and discussing the meaning of "holistic" in the IB philosophy and curriculum, less effort is made to identify where the program is not holistic. The focus is on identifying statements that can be placed in the analysis categories and comparing how the MYP elements correspond with holistic education principles. This might seem contrary to other scientific methods and not in line with Popper's falsification theory, which might be seen as a "gold standard" for conducting research. Despite this, the approach opens for discussion of differences between the MYP document and holistic principles.

Next, I will inform the reader about my possible biases and my preunderstandings. I am regularly in contact with IB schools in my daily work, and I am generally positive to them. My preunderstanding of holistic education is that I tend to favor educational approaches

focused on the development of the whole child, following the European "bildung" tradition rather than the Anglo-American education tradition. In this thesis, it would be understandable if the reader finds the discussion part framed positively towards holistic education or interpreting the MYP curriculum and the IB philosophy in the direction of being holistic. Both holistic education and IB education are, in my interpretation, driven by values. This makes it more challenging to have a neutral standpoint when analyzing them, as I compare them with my values. It could be seen as a weakness of this thesis that I am positive to holistic education ideas and values and the IB education ideas and values, but judging this I leave to the reader. Now, we move on to the next chapter, where the findings will be described and analyzed.

# 4. Results and analysis

In this chapter, I will report on and analyze the results of the document analysis. The first sub-chapter 4.1 is dedicated to presenting the results in a condensed form with an overview of the different categories. The second sub-chapter 4.2 is dedicated to the analysis of the results. I will make the utmost effort to present the data in a structured way so it will be possible for the reader to follow the results and analysis in a continuum. I have limited the number of passages of text or statements to the most relevant for answering the research question. Before going into the analysis, the results from the coding will be presented in the next sub-chapter.

## 4.1 Presentation of results

The document analysis of the MYP curriculum framework was done by assigning statements in coding categories they indicate similarities with. The section below presents the results in a condensed with the number of statements in each coding category. The MYP document uses the word holistic, or holistically, on nine instances in different statements. These are also assigned to the coding categories and are analyzed together with other statements. The table on the next page shows what categories in which the statements are placed.

Total number of statements assigned to categories: 18

| Categories | Number of statements (findings) |
|---|---|
| 1. Balance (total) | IIIII I |
| 1.1 Individual versus group learning | I |
| 1.2 Content versus process focus | |
| 1.3 Knowledge versus imagination | |
| 1.4 Rational versus intuitive thinking | I |
| 1.5 Quantitative versus qualitative assessment | I |
| 1.6 Technique versus vision of the whole child | III |
| 1.7 Assessment versus learning focus | |
| 1.8 Technology versus program focus | |
| | |
| 2.Inclusiveness (total) | I |
| 2.1 Transmission position | |
| 2.2 Transaction position | |
| 2.3 Transformation position | I |
| | |
| 3. Connection (total) | IIIII IIIII I |
| 3.1 Linear thinking and intuition | |
| 3.2 Mind and body | I |
| 3.3 Different domains of knowledge | II |
| 3.4 Self and community | IIIII II |
| 3.5 Humans and earth | I |
| 3.6 Ego and soul | |
| | |

The table shows that category 1, connection, has six findings in total. In subcategories 1.1, 1.4, and 1.5, there is one finding in each. In subcategory 1.6, there are three findings and no findings in subcategories 1.2, 1.3, 1.7, and 1.8. The concentration of findings in category 1.6 Technique versus vision of the whole child, indicates more statements concerning a holistic view of the child in the MYP document.

In category 2 there is one finding in subcategory 2.3 transformation position, and no findings in 2.1 and 2.2.

In category 3 there is a total number of eleven findings. In subcategory 3.2, there is one finding. In subcategory 3.3, there are two findings. In subcategory 3.4, there are seven findings. In subcategories 3.1, 3.5, and 3.6, there were no findings. As the table shows, the majority of the findings are in category 3, connections. Seven of the findings are assigned to subcategory 3.4 connections between self and community. This indicates that most statements are related to the child's connection to his/her community.

That the findings are concentrated in a few subcategories indicates that some aspects of holistic education are present in the MYP document, while others might not be as present. The next chapter will analyze this.

## 4.2 Analysis

In the following subchapter, the most significant results from the study will be presented in coding categories. The choice of presenting the results in the coding categories was made to make it as easy as possible for the reader to follow the analysis structure. One could have chosen to present the data chronologically as the findings were made when reading the document. However, the assumption is that the reader is not familiar with the MYP document, and thus it could be a source of confusion if the structure of the MYP document was followed. The main categories are marked with bold text and the subcategories are underlined. The statements coded as findings are assigned a sub-heading (in italics) called '*finding one*,' '*finding two*,' and so on in each of the subcategories. This is done to keep track of the numbers of statements assigned to each subcategory. For each finding, I will first cite the statement and then analyze how it corresponds to the holistic education principles.

**Main category 1. Balance**

Subcategory 1.1 Individual versus group learning

*1.1 Finding one Individual versus group learning*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 84) states:

*"• Group work—teachers need to document carefully the input of individuals working in a group situation so that the achievement levels for individual students can be determined."*

I chose to assign this statement to '*category 1, balance subcategory 1.1 individual vs. group learning*' as the statement concerns this issue. The MYP document states that the classroom should be dynamic and that students should be able to change from group work to individual work and vice versa according to their needs (IB 2014, p 75). The document also states that individual learning goals can be achieved through collaborative practices and cooperative learning. It states that when there is a culture for collaboration in the school, it supports students learning via problem solving and inquiry. This will also foster inclusion in the school (IB 2014, p 27). The MYP is here in line with Miller's focus on holistic education's balance between individual and group work. Miller (2007, p 7) refers to North America when he states that the current education trend focuses on individual competition rather than group

collaboration. He states that focus on individual achievement and testing creates an unbalance in the classroom and that the concern for accountability and a test-driven curriculum might not cater to individual or group differences (Miller 2007, p 144). Further, he states that collaborative learning in groups builds community in the classroom and fosters a safe environment for the students to learn (Miller 2007, p 149). The positive interdependence in student collaboration is, according to Miller, fundamental to holistic learning.

In Rudge's holistic education principles, the group versus individual work is mentioned under two of the principles, caring relations and democracy. The principle of caring relations, she describes as being at the heart of holistic education (Rudge 2008, p 150). This principle involves building a community amongst the students and with their teachers. She states that only in caring learning communities will the children's potential prosper. The principle includes the aspect of collaboration and cooperation in groups (Rudge 2008, p 155) and in her analysis of the different school systems, collaboration and cooperation are very much present in all of the schools.

Regarding the principle of democracy, group work and collaboration are mentioned as a part of this principle. In Rudge's analysis of the different school systems, she states that it varies how the principle is applied in the classrooms and the schools, but that where it is visible, students co-construct and co-create group projects and learn through collaboration (Rudge 2008, p 188). Here we can see apparent similarities to the MYP document that focuses on group learning processes and collaborative learning. When researching the balance between individual and group work in the MYP document, the document has 65 instances of the words, individual, individuals, or individually. The majority of the statements regarding individuals concern the inclusion of individual students' diversity and differences in individual learning needs and goals differentiation. There are some statements directly on individual assessment, one of them under the heading "Using MYP assessment criteria" regarding group work and individual achievement within the group. When explaining MYP as a contextual curriculum, the MYP document states that teaching tailored to individuals and their learning styles and learning needs is desirable and helpful for students (IB 2014, p 17). When it comes to diversity and inclusion, the document states that schools and teachers need to value diversity amongst students and individual differences in learning. Teachers who differentiate their practices give students the possibility to develop, pursue, and achieve individual learning goals (IB 2014, p 27). The document mentions collaboration or collaborative 67 times. The majority of these mentions are regarding students' collaboration in

learning and groups work, as the statement above exemplifies. The collaborative construction of meaning is also mentioned as important when describing collaboration (IB 2014, p 14).

There were no findings assigned to subcategories 1.2 and 1.3.


Subcategory 1.4 Rational versus intuitive thinking

*1.4 Finding one Rational versus intuitive thinking*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 9) states:

*"The learner profile is the IB's mission in action. It requires IB learners to strive to become inquirers, knowledgeable, thinkers, communicators, principled, open-minded, caring, risk-takers, balanced, and reflective. These attributes of internationally-minded people represent a broad range of human capacities and responsibilities that go beyond a concern for intellectual development and academic content. They imply a commitment to implement standards and practices that help all members of the school community learn to respect themselves, others, and the world around them."*

As mentioned in the theory chapter (2.2), the IB learner profile is considered to be at the center of IB education describing the aims of the programs and represents IB's mission in action (IB 2014, p 9). The MYP document refers to three learner profile attributes where holistic learning is implied, "balanced," "open-minded," and "communicators" (IB 2014, p 4). These three learner profile attributes are analyzed separately: "balanced" in subcategory 3.2 finding one, "open-minded" in subcategory 3.4 finding one, and "communicators" in subcategory 3.4 finding two. Here the overall description of the learner profile attributes and the intentions behind them are analyzed.

The statement above can be linked to several of Miller's criteria for holistic education. One interesting aspect here is where the learner profile attributes are said to *"go beyond a concern for intellectual development and academic content"* (IB 2014, p 9). This can be interpreted to resemble what Miller refers to as the balance between rational and intuitive thinking. That is why the statement is assigned to '*category 1, balance and subcategory 1.4, rational vs. intuitive thinking'*. When Miller describes this balance, he says that the dominating education systems and culture favor rational and linear thinking to solve problems. He is arguing that a more holistic approach would be to merge rational and intuitive thinking. The IB statement above does not say anything about intuitive thinking but talks about human capacities that go beyond intellectual development. When reading this together with the MYP document's

statements on the aims to teach students to care for each other and the world, one can interpret it as more than a purely rational approach to solving problems.

Looking at Rudge's (2008, p 23) principles, we can recognize the principle of "human wholeness" in the statement above. The IB learner profile attributes are described as representing a broad range of human capabilities and responsibilities concerned with more than intellect and academics. Rudge (2008, p 122) writes that the principle concerns the education and development of all aspects of the child, intellect, emotions, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual. Alongside the whole child's education, holistic educators call for a balanced education, seeking a balance between intellect and feelings, logic and creativity, analytic and intuitive thinking, amongst other areas.

Subcategory 1.5 Quantitative versus qualitative assessment

*1.5 Finding one Quantitative vs. qualitative assessment*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 78) states:

*"Across a variety of assessment tasks (authentic performances of understanding), teachers use descriptors to identify students' achievement levels against established assessment criteria. MYP internal (school-based) assessment uses a "best-fit" approach in which teachers work together to establish common standards against which they evaluate each student's achievement holistically."*

Further down on the same page, it is stated that the assessment aims to consider the whole student's development.

*"Assessment in the MYP aims to:*

*• support the holistic nature of the programme by including in its model principles that take account of the development of the whole student."*

The above statement is concerned with a holistic assessment. The statement is placed in '*category 1, balance and subcategory 1.5 quantitative vs. qualitative assessment*' as the MYP document focuses on qualitative assessment strategies. Another statement detailing how to plan assessment regards the same issue:

*"MYP-published assessment criteria and the school-based modified criteria are described as holistic, in that they offer general, qualitative value statements about student achievement."* (IB 2014, p 87).

The MYP document first mentions assessment in the mission statement where it says that the IB organization works "*to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment"* (IB 2014 p, vi).

The term rigorous assessment is not used more than once in that specific order of words in the document, but there is some further explanation in appendix 4 of the document, which is a glossary of MYP terms. When explaining the word "Curriculum framework," The document says:

*"The MYP curriculum framework establishes structures and pedagogical approaches that identify and rigorously assess the level to which students achieve aims and objectives."* (IB 2014, p 112).

Here we can recognize the focus on rigorous assessment mentioned in the mission statement and focus on achieving aims and objectives. The word rigorous is also used in the section of the MYP document concerning principles of MYP assessment, which states that:

*"In order to provide students with opportunities to achieve at the highest level, MYP teachers develop rigorous tasks that embrace a variety of assessment strategies."* (IB 2014, p 78)

There is some detailed explanation of how to develop sufficiently rigorous tasks for assessment in the section describing the planning of assessment in the MYP document.

*"Teachers will need to understand fully the implications of each criterion and the achievement levels before designing assessment tasks. Many of the highest level descriptors require teachers to design open-ended tasks so that students can choose, for example, which techniques or skills to apply."* (IB 2014, p 87)

The MYP document describes six different assessment strategies but states that the list is not exhaustive and that the strategies can be combined to get a balanced view of student achievement (IB 2014, p 85). The assessment strategies described are observation, selected-response (tests/quizzes), open-ended tasks, performance, process journals, and portfolio assessment. When reading the assessment strategies' explanations, the one strategy closest to testing would be the selected response strategy. This method is not promoted as a summative assessment or end assessment, but as a quick assessment to give formative feedback. Also, the performance strategy is not a testing or summative form of assessment only, but according to the description:

*"The MYP uses the term "performance" in its widest sense to describe all forms of assessment where students are assessed on their ability to demonstrate predetermined learning objectives."* (IB 2014, p 86)

The assessing and reporting in MYP are done using achievement level descriptors that describe differences in accomplishment between students for each assessment criterion. The achievement level descriptors are given numerical values for the different achievement levels on the MYP grading scale (IB 2014, p 94). The grading scale range goes from 1-7, where level 1 achievement represents very limited quality work, and 7 represents high-quality work.

The MYP assessment strategies are all strategies that measure student achievement of learning objectives or performance, and they could seem to come close to Miller's description of qualitative holistic assessment strategies. Miller (2007, p 8) describes qualitative assessment, like portfolio assessment, to be assessment methods where a continuum of student work can be seen and assessed. Compared to Rudge's (2008, p 205) examples of holistic assessment, some similarities can be recognized in the MYP. Rudge exemplified holistic assessment as focusing on the whole child's development, not only academic performance, and the giving of descriptive feedback, avoiding tests and grades. The analysis of assessment in MYP shows that there are some similarities between MYP and Miller and Rudge's examples of holistic assessment, but this topic needs further inquiry and discussion. The MYP focus on academic rigor and grading will be discussed in the "Holistic assessment" subchapter. (5.1.1).

Subcategory 1.6 Technique versus vision of the whole child

*1.6 Finding one Technique vs. vision of the whole child*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 9) states:

*"Promoting open communication based on understanding and respect, the IB encourages students to become active, compassionate lifelong learners. An IB education is holistic in nature—it is concerned with the whole person. Along with cognitive development, IB programmes and qualifications address students' social, emotional and physical well-being."*

The statement says that IB education is holistic because it is concerned with the whole person, including the student's intellectual, social, emotional, and physical wellbeing. The same text states that IB encourages the development of compassion in the students. This statement is compatible with the first principle Miller defines and is placed in '*category 1 balance and subcategory 1.6 technique vs. vision of the whole child*'. According to Miller (2007, p 11),

holistic education is concerned with developing the whole child, where the child is not reduced to individual competencies or skills but seen as a whole being. Miller argues that teachers working from this position will use diverse approaches to learning by a range of methods, also involving the child's creativity. This will then let the student make meaningful connections that promote learning.

According to Rudge's analytical framework, the IB statement above would fall into the category of "human wholeness," which concerns educating the whole child (Rudge 2008, p 34). Rudge states that the focus on developing human wholeness always has been central to humanistic education; it is also central to holistic education in an expanded form, including spirituality. According to Rudge, human wholeness is discussed as five essential elements amongst contemporary holistic educators: intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic, and spiritual (Rudge 2008, p 34).

The MYP document does not mention aesthetic and spiritual in their definition of the students' wellbeing, but spiritual health is mentioned in the MYP document (IB 2014, p 60). The aesthetic is a key concept in the MYP, and the study of aesthetics is aimed to develop skills for critical appreciation and analysis of art, culture, and nature (IB 2014, p 56). Aesthetics is part of the MYP global context of personal and cultural expression, with the leading inquiry; what is the nature and purpose of creative expression? (IB 2014, p 61). One can see similarities between holistic education and the MYP view of the whole person, even if there are differences in the elements described.

*1.6 Finding two Technique vs vision of the whole child*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 33) states:

*"Counsellors serve as a link between school, families and the curricular and non-curricular aspects of the programme, and are effective in maintaining a holistic balance towards addressing student needs."*

This is another statement containing the word holistic that can be interpreted to concern the whole child, as it speaks of both curricular and non-curricular activities. The statement is found in a section of the MYP document where school structure and main functions of the different roles in an IB school is described, and the statement speaks of the role of school counselors.

This statement can be linked to the previous statement that the IB is concerned with the development of the whole person and the different wellbeing areas. This statement is placed in the same category as the previous statement, '*category 1, and subcategory 1.6 technique vs. vision of the whole child*' as it fits with Miller's (2007, p 11) view of the whole child. It could seem that this statement is a practical application of the concern for the whole person, as it states that the school should have someone assigned the role of counselor and the counselor should "*maintain a holistic balance towards addressing student needs*" (IB 2014, p 33). The same statement says that the counselor should "*serve as a link between school, families and the curricular and non-curricular aspects of the programme*". This can be seen as the IB intends that schools should care for the whole child, also in non-curricular aspects of the program. This finding can be seen to fit into Rudge's human wholeness principle (2008, p 34).

*1.6 Finding three Technique vs. vision of the whole child*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 44) states:

*"The identity of a school is reflected in its written curriculum. A written curriculum that includes co-curricular activities will better reflect a holistic view of school values and mission."*

This statement is placed in '*category 1, balance and subcategory 1.6 technique vs. vision of the whole child'* because of the clear intentions in the statement of seeing co-curricular activities as important. The co-curricular activities the MYP document gives examples of can be interpreted to be holistic, as they concern experiential learning that will promote the values described in the mission statement cited below.

The activities given as examples of co-curricular activities in the MYP document is experiential education, service within the community, outdoor adventure, and education for citizenship (IB 2014, p 44). When it comes to values and mission, the MYP document describes the IB learner profile attributes as shared values (IB 2014, p 10), although not defining it further. The mission statement says that the IB

*"aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect."* (IB 2014, p vi).

The mission statement also says that the IB programs

*"encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."* (IB 2014, p vi).

In the statements above, we can identify the values of being compassionate, caring, understanding, respectful, inquiring, and knowledgeable.

The MYP document further emphasizes the development of personal values within students:

*"The IB aspires to empower people to be active learners who can empathize and pursue lives of purpose and meaning, and who are committed to service. An IB education aims to develop the consciousness, perspectives and competencies necessary for global engagement, as well as the personal values that can lead to principled action and mutual understanding."* (IB 2014, p 12)

Here we can identify the value of being empathic, living with purpose and meaning, giving service, being globally engaged, taking principled action, and again the value of being understanding (same as in the statement discussed above).

Miller (2007, 20-21) states that values are derived from recognizing the interconnectedness of reality and further elaborates on how values affect us. Miller differs between positive and negative values and how they affect us. He states that negative values foster separateness and paranoia and that positive values make us feel connected. Miller defines compassion as being a central positive value in the philosophical underpinnings of holistic education. The value of being compassionate is, as shown above, also written into the IB mission statement.

Rudge states that the four school systems she researched indirectly promoted moral and ethical values like understanding, respect, and tolerance. There was a focus on establishing respectful and caring relationships between all school community members (Rudge 2008, p 146). She further writes that one of her defining principles of holistic education, c*aring relations* is central to holistic education, and the values of being respectful, emphatic, accepting, and mutual affection and trust are part of caring relations. She does not use the word compassion specifically, when describing caring relations, but compassion is a central value to one of the holistic school systems she analyses, Neo Humanistic schools. The values of non-violence, compassion, justice, tolerance, respect, friendship, and love are taught there (Rudge 2008, p 156).

There were no findings assigned to subcategories 1.7 and 1.8.

**Main category 2. Inclusiveness**

There were no findings assigned to subcategories 2.1 and 2.2

<u>Subcategory 2.3 Transformation position</u>

*2.3 Finding one transformation position*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 14) states:

*"The International Baccalaureate (IB) values education more as the transformation of personal understanding and the collaborative construction of meaning, and less as the transmission of knowledge and rote memorization of facts. Consequently, conceptual understanding is a significant and enduring goal for teaching and learning in IB programmes."*

As mentioned in the theory chapter of the thesis, Miller (2007, p 6-14) differs between three educational orientations, the transmission position, the transaction position, and the transformation position. I choose to place the above statement that the IB organization value transformation of personal understanding in '*category 2 inclusiveness, subcategory 2.3 transformation'*. The statement can be interpreted to describe transformation as an educational orientation, as the IB "*values education more as the transformation of personal understanding and the collaborative construction of meaning*." The statement also says that IB favors the transformation of understanding over the transmission of knowledge and rote memorization of facts.

According to Miller (2007, p 11-12), the transformation position is holistic and includes the two other educational orientations, transmission, and transaction. This educational orientation considers the whole child, and the child and the curriculum are seen as connected and not separated from each other. Students are encouraged to make connections between various learning methods and activities because it helps to construct meaningful knowledge.

Rudge does not describe the transformation position as an educational orientation, other than when referring to Miller (Rudge 2008, p 18). She does write that some theorists see "self-transformation" as the ultimate goal of holistic education (Rudge 2008, p 13) and includes inner transformation as a part of the principle of spirituality (Rudge 2008, p 22).

**Main category 3. Connection**

There were no findings assigned to subcategory 3.1.

Subcategory 3.2 Mind and body

*3.2 Finding one Mind and body*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 4) states:

*"From its beginning, the MYP was guided by three principles that have had special currency for learners aged 11–16, inspired by the IB mission: holistic learning, intercultural awareness, and communication."*

*"Holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication are implied in, or are a part of, the IB learner profile, especially in the attributes "balanced," "open-minded" and "communicators.""*

Looking at the first and second statements, it says that IB favors holistic learning. Holistic learning is not defined further anywhere in the document, but the statement refers to the learner profile attributes of "balanced," "open-minded," and "communicators" as holistic.

The learner profile attribute "balanced" will be analyzed here, while "open-minded" and "communicators" will be analyzed in subcategory 3.4, should an example of them be found.

"Balance" means balancing different aspects of life, emotional, physical, and intellectual wellbeing both for the student him/herself and others, recognizing the interdependence between people and with the world we live in (IB 2014, p vii).

The learner profile attribute "balanced" could be interpreted to fall in line with what Miller states as one of the three foundational principles of holistic education, connections (coding category 3). In explaining the "connections" principle, Miller states that the principle of connections attempts to move us from fragmentation to connectedness. I place "balanced" in '*category 3 connection, subcategory 3.2 mind and body'*. In my interpretation, the connection between body and mind, which Miller emphasizes, can be recognized in the "balanced" attribute of the learner profile as this emphasizes the connection and balance between emotional, physical, and intellectual wellbeing.

Spiritual health is not explicitly mentioned in the "balanced" learner profile attribute, but as the attribute concerning the balance between emotional, physical, and intellectual wellbeing,

it is reasonable to interpret that as a part of it. Spiritual health is mentioned in the MYP document as a part of the exploration of the global context of Identities and Relationships. Here the students should explore the questions "Who am I?" and "Who are we?" The description for these questions is that the students should explore identity, including personal, physical, mental, social, and spiritual health, human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures, and what it means to be human (IB 2014, p 60).

Miller states that the connection between body and mind can be explored through movement, dance, and drama. In appendix 4 of the MYP document "Glossary of MYP terms," in the explanation of "Discipline," dance is mentioned as a discipline within the MYP subject group Arts (IB 2014, p 112). The document also mentions that students regularly should have the possibility to choose his/her own learning methods and media, amongst them, music, arts, and drama (IB 2014, p 25). Aesthetics is one of the key concepts mentioned in the MYP document (IB 2014, p 56) and both visual arts and performing arts are related concepts in the MYP (IB 2014, p 107).

Another indication that the MYP document emphasizes the body-mind connections is in the description of the approaches to learning skills (ATL) framework. Under the sub-heading affective skills, the document asks: How can students manage their own states of mind? The ATL skill in this category is called Managing states of mind, and the subcategory is Mindfulness. It states that the student should practice being aware of body-mind connections (IB 2014, p 100).

The above indicates the MYP document paying some attention to the balance of the relationship between the body and the mind. In the list of subject-specific related concepts, one of the 12 related concepts in the Physical and Health education subject group is "Balance" (IB 2014, p 107). It is not explicitly stated how this exact concept is to be explored, but I chose to interpret that the related concept could have something to do with the balance between physical and emotional, psychological and spiritual health.

From reading what the IB document says on the body-mind connection, this could be interpreted to indicate some slight similarities to Rudge's principle of spirituality, although it is a very weak indication. According to Rudge (2008, p 25), most theorist writing on holistic education acknowledges human spirituality and its importance. Several theorists argue that the principle of spirituality differentiates holistic education from other alternative approaches

to education. The view of spirituality advocated by the theorists is broad, inclusive, and open, and does not belong to any particular faith or religion.

Rudge states that the holistic education vision of spirituality does not necessarily involve faith in a personified God, although it could. The holistic education principle of spirituality also differs from the more individualistic New Age notion of spirituality, which, according to Rudge, emphasizes personal empowerment and self-aggrandizement. The holistic education vision of spirituality generally embraces four concepts. First is the concept of a divine reality, larger than the world of things, lives, and mind. Second is the concept of interconnectedness and interdependence between all beings in "the web of life." The third is the concept that there is a purpose to every life in the universe. Fourth is the concept of a continuous plan of the evolution we are all part of (Rudge 2008, p 25).

The aspect of spirituality is not described in detail in the IB document, where spiritual health is mentioned. The concept of spirituality that Rudge describes and the MYP documents mention of spiritual health cannot be interpreted to be the same, as there is no description of spiritual health in the document. It could be argued that the questions in the MYP curriculum, Who are we? and Who am I? are existential questions that when exploring them, it could be expected that the students would touch on subjects linked to spirituality in a larger context. The aspect of spirituality is discussed in chapter 5.4.

The word balance and balanced is used several places in the MYP document, and I choose to add how the other use of the word correlates with Miller and Rudge's criteria of holistic education being balanced. In the MYP document, the word balance, or balanced, is mentioned 28 times, and I will describe shortly other uses of the word balance below. In the MYP document, balance is also a word used in describing the curriculum itself, as broad and balanced between subject groups (IB 2014, p 40). Balanced is a word used when describing the different teaching strategies that can be used within the program, and that the principle of balance should provide choices that are meaningful to the teacher when choosing teaching strategies (IB 2014, p 73). The classroom is supposed to be balanced, meaning that teachers should balance between the aim of the students' understanding and construction of meaning and the aim of students acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes (IB 2014, p 75).

Miller explains the principle of balance meaning to be a balance between two seemingly opposites who are interdependent with each other. He refers to the YIN-YANG principle from eastern philosophies when explaining what he means by balance. The two seemingly

opposites depend on each other to function healthily. One side cannot exist without the other, and there is a small part of the one in the other. According to Miller, the two, seemingly opposites, are interconnected and, in fact, complementary. If there is an imbalance between them, the opposites will not function in a healthy way (Miller 2007, p 6).

Rudge (2008, p 123) states that holistic educators call for an education that seeks balance. This means a balance between feelings and intellect, analytic and intuitive thinking, logic and creativity, content and process, individual and group learning, concept and experience, learning and assessment. Rudge also refers to Carl Rogers and states that he argued strongly for an approach to learning that would balance and combine masculine (intellect and logic) and feminine (intuition and feelings) capacities (Rudge 2008, p 234, note 349) and that the quest for balance amongst holistic educators echoes the work of Rogers.

Subcategory 3.3 Different domains of knowledge

*3.3 Finding one Different domains of knowledge*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 40) states:

*"The MYP's holistic philosophy of education provides the basis for a broad and balanced curriculum that includes eight subject groups. The MYP is designed to help students develop disciplinary and interdisciplinary understanding through concurrently taught courses in each subject group in each year of the programme."*

In IB's description of their program model, the curriculum is described as "broad and balanced" with reference to the eight subject groups in MYP:

*"language and literature, language acquisition, individuals and societies, sciences, mathematics, arts, physical and health education, and design."* (IB 2014, p 6).

The broad and balanced statement also refers to the IB philosophy's focus on conceptual understanding, teaching and learning in context, approaches to learning, community service, language and identity, and language diversity and inclusion (IB 2014, p 6). In the statement, I interpret the "broad and balanced" as also regarding the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary aspect of the curriculum. This because the MYP program works in units of inquiry around the key concepts. These key concepts are, as mentioned in the theory chapter, interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary. In the MYP document teaching through concepts is explained as a broad educational approach, incorporating thinking in different ways, diverse experiences, and interdisciplinary learning (IB 2014, p 14).

When submerging deeper into the key concepts' inquiry, predefined related concepts are used for each subject group. On top of that, teachers and students can develop their own related concepts to inquire in more detail. The MYP framework is interdisciplinary as it puts subjects into larger groups. The key concepts in the MYP are meant to be accessible for all students as learning tools, no matter the individual abilities or aptitudes of the student. The key concepts are meant to be a way into knowledge via inquiry, and the individual students can learn in different breadth or depth (IB 2014, p 56). The key concepts are transdisciplinary across subjects, and the related concepts are meant to be more subject group-specific.

The MYP curriculum has a focus on both interdisciplinary and disciplinary learning. The curriculum for the primary years, ages 3-11, PYP is called transdisciplinary and is the predecessor in the IB continuum (IB 2014, p 7). MYP aims for students to learn about the world in connections made beyond individual subjects' horizon through interdisciplinary learning (IB 2014, p 13). Teachers in the MYP are given the responsibility that interdisciplinary teaching is conducted and that it fosters interdisciplinary understanding, and encourages broad perspectives on complex issues. Interdisciplinary learning in MYP is defined as the process where students' understanding of different bodies of knowledge from different subjects are integrated, and the student gains new understanding (IB 2014, p 46). Interdisciplinary teaching's key qualities are that it should be grounded in different disciplines, integrative and purposeful (IB 2014, p 47).

The interdisciplinary understanding from the statement above would be the same as what Miller (2007, p 133) describes as holistic thinking. This is where subjects are integrated through problems as we see the MYP does with its key concepts. Miller divides connections amongst subjects into three levels. a) Multidisciplinary, where the disciplinary subjects stay separate, but links are made between the subjects. b) Interdisciplinary, where two or three subjects can be integrated around a problem. c) Transdisciplinary, where several subjects are integrated around larger or broader themes. In my interpretation, the way MYP subject groups are organized would fall into the interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary levels of integrated curriculum according to Miller's definition. That is why this statement is assigned to '*category 3, connection and subcategory 3.3 connections between different domains of knowledge*'.

Rudge (2008, p 115) describes the transdisciplinary approach to be mixing or blending different disciplines or subjects into thematic units for exploration/inquiry and often around projects. Rudge describes the interdisciplinary approach to typically integrate knowledge from one discipline or subject into another. According to Rudge (2008, p 113), the transdisciplinary

and interdisciplinary approaches to teaching and learning fosters one of Rudge's defining holistic education principles, interconnectedness. We can see that Rudge and Miller describe the two levels of integrations between subjects or disciplines slightly differently, but there is similar meaning in the definitions. Their definitions would be mainly in line with the MYP documents definition of interdisciplinary:

*"In the MYP, interdisciplinary learning is generally defined as the process by which students come to understand bodies of knowledge and modes of thinking from two or more disciplines or subject groups and integrate them to create a new understanding."* (IB 2014, p 46).

Transdisciplinary themes are mentioned in the MYP document when describing the transition between the IB Primary Years Program (PYP) and the MYP (IB 2014, p 7). When the document describes the MYP global contexts, it states that they are developed from and an extension of PYP transdisciplinary themes (IB 2014, p 18). When the document describes the MYP unit planning process, it states that it is required for schools and teachers to do unit planning both across and within subject groups to ensure common approaches to teaching and learning in the MYP units. The MYP document states that this collaborative planning will ensure interdisciplinary learning and demonstrate the students' need to use knowledge, skills, and concepts from different subjects to solve problems (IB 2014, p 29). The MYP document also clearly describes the minimum requirements of teaching hours for each subject group for each year level to meet subject group aims and objectives (IB 2014, p 40). We can see that there is a focus on disciplinary learning, but the interdisciplinary aspect is very much present in the MYP document.

*3.3 Finding two Different domains of knowledge*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 14) states:

*"A concept is a big idea—a principle or conception that is enduring, the significance of which goes beyond aspects such as particular origins, subject matter or place in time (Wiggins and McTighe 1998). Concepts represent the vehicle for students' inquiry into issues and ideas of personal, local and global significance, providing the means by which the essence of a subject can be explored."*

Conceptual understanding is one of IB education's core elements where IB philosophy is described in the MYP document (IB 2014, p 14). When explaining conceptual understanding's role in IB education, there are several instances where there are similarities between IB's explanation and Miller's (and Rudge's) principles of holistic education. In the statement

above, we see concepts explained as big ideas which significance goes beyond place in time, particular origin, or subject matter. Concepts are explained as the method of students' inquiry into larger, overarching issues of personal, local, and global significance. This statement can be linked to Miller's defining criteria of holistic education, where he discusses the connections between different domains of knowledge, in that the IB statement says that concepts are meant to go beyond the subject matter. I place this finding in the '*category 3 connection, and subcategory 3.3 connection between different domains of knowledge*' because it concerns the student's inquiry and exploration of ideas and issues beyond specific subjects.

Further, on the same page, the MYP document (IB 2014, p 14) states:

*"Concepts have an essential place in the structure of knowledge. They require students to demonstrate levels of thinking that reach beyond facts or topics. Concepts are used to formulate the understandings that students should retain in the future; they become principles and generalizations that students can use to understand the world and to succeed in further study and in life beyond school."*

Above we see that the MYP document states that concepts have an important place in the structure of knowledge and require students to think beyond facts and topics. Below we see that working with concepts is meant to lead students towards a deeper understanding of subject groups, teach students to appreciate ideas that transcends disciplinary boundaries, and help students apply ideas and transfer skills to new situations. This, together with the intent that concepts should be explored and re-explored from various perspectives, could be interpreted to be in line with Miller's criteria of connections between different knowledge domains.

 *"The exploration and re-exploration of concepts lead students towards:*

*• deeper understanding of the subject group*

*• appreciation of ideas that transcend disciplinary boundaries*

*• engagement with complex ideas, including the ability to transfer and apply ideas and skills to new situations (Erickson 2008).*

*Students gradually work towards a deepening of their conceptual understanding as they approach concepts from a range of perspectives."* (IB 2014, p 14)

The statement below shows that concepts have overlapping concerns and interconnections, and are supposed to help the student connect facts and topics with the concepts. The concepts are also meant to help students transfer knowledge and understanding between subjects and disciplines. This would also be in line with Miller's criteria of connections between different domains of knowledge.

*"Key concepts are powerful, abstract ideas that have many dimensions and definitions. They have important interconnections and overlapping concerns. Key concepts engage students in higher-order thinking, helping them to connect facts and topics with more complex conceptual understanding. Key concepts create "intellectual synergy" (Erikson 2007) and provide points of contact for transferring knowledge and understanding across disciplines and subject groups".* (IB 2014, p 15).

Subcategory 3.4 Self and community

*3.4 Finding one Self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 4) states:

*"Holistic learning, intercultural awareness and communication are implied in, or are a part of, the IB learner profile, especially in the attributes "balanced", "open-minded" and "communicators."*

The first learner profile attribute "balanced" was analyzed in subcategory 3.2, finding one, and the second learner profile attribute "open-minded" and third learner profile attribute "communicators" will be analyzed here. The second learner profile attribute, "open-minded," is in the statement above said to be one of the parts where holistic learning is implied in the MYP. "Open-minded" is in the MYP document described as the students' attribute of critically appreciating his/her own personal history and the culture he/she belongs to alongside the traditions and values of others. The student should be willing to evaluate his/her and others' points of view and grow from the experience (IB 2014, p vii).

This learner profile attribute is placed in '*category 3, connections and the subcategory 3.4 self and community'*. In this principle, Miller (2007, pp. 13-14) states that holistic education focuses on the students' relationship with the community. Miller refers to the community in the classroom, the school community, the larger community of one's town or nation, and the global community. According to Miller, the student should develop interpersonal skills, community service skills, and social action skills. When analyzing the open-minded attribute, it is possible to recognize MYP's similarities to Miller's definition, like in the focusing on the

appreciation of others' values and traditions, which would be necessary in a MYP setting in international schools where students come from various countries' cultures and religious backgrounds. The interpersonal skills Miller describes would be fundamental for students to develop to be part of a diverse international class and school community.

The third learner profile attribute said to be one of the parts where holistic learning is implied in the MYP is the attribute "communicators." This attribute focuses on that students should be able to express themselves in more than one language, collaborate with others, and listen to others' perspectives (IB 2014, p vii). The "communicators" learner profile attribute could be interpreted to fall into the same subcategory as the "open-minded" and is counted as one finding. Regarding the relationship between the self and community, Miller (2007, p 14) emphasizes that the students should develop interpersonal skills. Reading Rudge's definitions of holistic education, the above could be seen as similar to parts of the "caring relations" category where the relationships between teacher and student, and amongst students themselves, are seen as the foundation for learning (Rudge 2008, p 35).

Although not mentioned as one of the learner profile attributes where the holistic aspect is especially recognized, the learner profile attribute "Caring" is relevant to the analysis. Care and caring are essential to holistic education and are recognized in Miller's principle of connections between self and community (Miller 2007, p 13). Care is seen as important in building community in the classroom, school, and local community (Miller, 2007, pp. 148-161). The learner profile attribute of "caring" also fits in Rudge's principle of "caring relations" (Rudge 2008, p 150). The explanation of the learner profile attribute "Caring" the MYP document states the following:

"*Caring*

*We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us*." (IB 2014, p vii)

We see here that empathy, compassion, and respect are mentioned together with commitment to service and making a positive difference to others. These are important values in the IB and easily recognizable in both Miller and Rudge's holistic principles, as mentioned above. The service and action part of the "Caring" learner profile attribute is analyzed in finding seven in this category.

*3.4 Finding two Self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 3) states:

*"The IB diploma program was established in 1968 to provide an international education that would enable young people to better understand and manage the complexities of our world, and to provide them with the skills and attitudes to take action to improve it"* (IB 2014, p 3).

This statement is on the history of the IB organization and its programs. This statement can provide a deeper understanding of the MYP program's foundations, aims, and philosophical underpinnings. It says that IB education will enable students to understand and manage the world's complexities and give students skills and attitudes for taking action to improve the world. This is similar to what Miller (2007, p 14) describes as social action skills. The statement contains a clear connection between each student (self) and the world (community). Thus, I have placed the statement according to Miller's criteria in '*category 3, connections and subcategory 3.4 self and community'*. The statement corresponds well with the contents of this criterion as Miller describes that self and community refers to the school community and the larger community. In holistic education, the student develops interpersonal skills, community service skills, and social action skills (Miller 2007, p 13-14)

Further, the same section of text in the MYP document says:

*"Such an education was grounded in the more progressive educational thinking of the time but also in the belief that the world could be made better through an education that focused on concepts, ideas, and issues that crossed disciplinary, cultural, national and geographical boundaries."* (IB 2014, p 3)

Here again, we can see the IB focus on making the world a better place through an education focused on larger or broader themes and issues relevant to society at large and is interdisciplinary, cross-cultural, and global. This statement is not assigned to a separate category as it is found in the same section of text as the previous statement.

Looking at the two IB statements above, we can recognize Rudge's principle of interconnectedness (Rudge 2008, 14-15) in the global focus of the IB. We can also recognize "caring relations" (Rudge 2008, p 150) in the aim of making the world a better place and "Democracy" (Rudge 2008, p 184) in the empowering of students to improve the world.

*3.4 Finding three Self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p. vi) states:

*"The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments, and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right."*

This is the IB Mission statement, and some of the aspects will be analyzed below. It will not be a full analysis of every passage in the statement, as the mission statement is being referred to in other subcategories. As we see in the mission statement, the overall message it conveys is that IB is an education concerned with developing students who help create a more peaceful and better world and develop intercultural understanding and respect for others. In the mission statement, it is possible to recognize Miller's criteria of connections between individual and community, and the statement is placed in '*category 3 connection, subcategory 3.4 self and community'*.

Rudge (2008, p 23) writes that the most common principle in all holistic education practices, or the most common principle most all holistic educators refer to, is the principle of interconnectedness. Interconnectedness means that everything in the universe is part of the same "whole" and interconnected (Rudge 2008, 14-15). We can recognize the principle of interconnectedness in the IB's concern with making the world a better and more peaceful place and how the students can help achieve this.

*3.4 Finding four Self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 16 ) states:

*"A concept-based model is used in the MYP because it encourages students to:*

*achieve higher levels of critical, creative and conceptual thinking as students analyze complex global challenges, such as climate change, international conflicts, and the global economy, and create greater subject depth through the study of discipline-specific related concepts"*.

This statement is regarding the student's relationship with the larger, global community and its challenges. This statement is assigned to '*category 3 connection, and subcategory 3.4 self and community*', as it can be seen as similar to what Miller writes on the connections between the individual student and larger community. The statement concerns what the concept-based model encourages students to, and the reasons for using this model in the MYP.

The above statement does not directly fall into any of Rudge's criteria. It could be closest related to her criteria for holistic education called democracy. Democracy is, according to Rudge, a principle that is widely incorporated in the holistic education movement, and that contemporary holistic educators refuse to accept rigid authoritarian systems ruled by economic, social, or cultural power (Rudge 2008, p 24).

*3.4 Finding five Self and community*
The MYP document (IB 2014, p 10) states:

*"The learner profile informs the IB's educational philosophy and stands as a clear and concise statement of the values that inform a community that encourages the development of international mindedness."*

According to the MYP document, students' development of international-mindedness depends on a school learning environment that sees the whole world as the broadest context for learning. The students should learn about the world from both the curriculum and interaction with others. The aim of developing international mindedness is to promote intercultural understanding, respect for others, care, and the students wish to create a better and more peaceful world (IB 2014, p 12). It is also stated that international mindedness is developed through global engagement and multilingualism, together with intercultural understanding (IB 2014, p 24). This statement is placed in the '*category 3, connection, and 3.4 connection between individual self and community*'. Miller (2007, p 159) writes that global education helps students see themselves as part of the global community and their interdependence with others in a global community. According to Miller, holistic education and global education shares the same principles of interconnectedness and interdependence. Selby (1999 pp, 125-141) describes global education as a sister education to holistic education focusing on environmental and ecological perspective, sharing the aspect of holism. In Rudge's principles, we can recognize the IB focus on international-mindedness in the principle of interconnectedness (Rudge 2008, p 14-15).

*3.4 Finding six self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 61) states:

*"Students will explore the interconnectedness of human-made systems and communities; the relationship between local and global processes; how local experiences mediate the global; the opportunities and tensions provided by world-interconnectedness; the impact of decision-making on humankind and the environment."*

The MYP global context described in the statement above concerns globalization and sustainability. The global context falls into '*category 3 connection, subcategory 3.4 self and community'*. In this statement, it is possible to see some similarities between Miller's (2007, pp. 13-14) focus on the relationship between the individual (self) and community and the MYP documents focus on the interconnectedness between human-made systems and communities and the impact of decision-making on humankind and the environment. Interconnectedness is one of the eight defining principles of Rudge's analytical framework. According to Rudge, all the theorists writing on holistic education, she builds her analytical framework on agrees on the principle of "interconnectedness" (Rudge 2008, p 26). Interconnectedness in Rudge's model means that everything is fundamentally interconnected, ranging from the interconnectedness of subjects to the interconnectedness of humans and the planet as a whole. The principle of interconnectedness then includes the interconnectedness described in the MYP global context above.

*3.4 Finding seven self and community*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 22) states:

*"IB learners strive to be caring members of the community who demonstrate a personal commitment to service, and act to make a positive difference to the lives of others and the environment."*

The MYP program promotes service actions for the larger community, and there is a mandatory community project the students have to complete in the MYP years 3 and 4 (IB 2014, p 6). The service and action in IB programs are emphasized as a way of both learning and making a positive difference to both others and the environment. Action is seen as learning by doing and experiencing, and when giving service one is learning to be a caring

member of a community. Service action or community service does play an essential part in the student's development of the learner profile attributes IB seeks to develop (IB 2014, p 22).

The statement above is assigned to '*category 3 connection, subcategory 3.4 self and community'*. Miller (2007, p 14) describes community service skills and social action skills as part of the relationship and connection between self and community and similarly the MYP document describes community projects and service actions as an integral part of the MYP program. The MYP community projects' service actions are designed for the student to contribute to the community around the school or larger community via giving service. As we see above the part concerning service action and community service, there is similar meaning and content both in Miller's principle and in the MYP document.

In Rudge's analysis of holistic school systems' pedagogical features, there is a strong focus on building community, especially within the schools (Rudge 2008, p 146, 151-153). There are not many clear indications of service action or community action outside of the schools in her analysis, but being caring members of their community is mentioned in both her "Caring relations" (Rudge 2008, p 150) and "Democracy" (Rudge 2008, p 184) principle of holistic education. As such, the IB statement above would fall into these of Rudge's principles. Rudge (2008, p 197) also states that holistic educators advocate for experiential learning, and as we see above, the IB notion of service and action is defined as a way of learning and experiencing.

Subcategory 3.5 Humans and earth

*3.5 Finding one Humans and earth*

The MYP document (IB 2014, p 12) states:

*"IB students and teachers are encouraged to engage the world through developmentally appropriate explorations of local and global concerns, including the environment, development, conflicts, rights, and cooperation and governance. Globally engaged people critically consider power and privilege, and recognize that they hold the Earth and its resources in trust for future generations."*

According to the MYP document, IB promotes global engagement amongst students and seeks to develop students' engagement to address global challenges. The statement above resonates with Miller's definition of a holistic relationship between humans and earth (Miller 2007, p 14). The statement is placed in '*category 3, connection and subcategory 3.5 humans and earth'*. Miller writes that the connection between humans and earth involves humans

seeing themselves as a part of the web of life rather than separate from it. When the MYP document states that students should "*recognize that they hold the Earth and its resources in trust for future generations" (IB 2014, p 12),* it can be seen in line with Miller's definition.

According to Rudge's defining principles of holistic education, the statement above falls into the principle of "reverence for life and nature," where Rudge says that students should develop ecological awareness and be "educated for earth literacy" (Rudge 2008, p 96-97). The MYP statement speaks of ecological awareness development but does not contain the more spiritual aspect of "reverence." We find evidence of this other places in the MYP document as well, for example, when the document states that students should develop environmental awareness (IB 2014, p 75) or when the document states that students should explore both local and global concerns, including environmental concerns (IB 2014, p 12). The students in MYP are supposed to learn about human impact on the environment in both the global contexts "globalization and sustainability" and scientific and technical innovation" (IB 2014, p 19). The service and action principle also includes the aim of students making positive differences to others and the environment (IB 2014, p 22). The MYP key concept of "global interactions" focuses on the connections between individuals and communities and their relationship to the environment from the perspective of the world as a whole (IB 2014, p 57).

There were no findings assigned to subcategories 3.6.

In this chapter, we found that some categories and subcategories have findings with elements of holistic education in them, and in the next chapter, these findings will be discussed.

## 5. Discussion

This chapter discusses themes from the findings in two main categories further, but not all subcategories. The two first themes are related to subcategories that have the highest number of findings assigned to them. The last theme is chosen for discussion because it is present only to a small degree in the MYP document. The discussion will also include findings from other categories when relevant to the themes. The broad overall themes are:

Theme one, "Education of the whole child." From findings assigned to main category one, balance, the overall theme or "trend," which sticks out is how the MYP document describes the IB as concerned with the whole child's education. Educating the whole child is also the core theme and central premise of holistic education. The most findings in category 1 are

assigned to 1.6 technique vs. vision of the whole child with three findings. The other three findings in category 1 were assigned to one different subcategory each.

Theme two, "Interconnectedness – relationships and community connections." The largest number of findings within category 3 was in subcategory 3.4, self and community, where seven of the eleven (total for category 3) findings were placed. This subcategory concerns the relationships and connections between the student and the community, meaning community in the classroom, school, local and global community (Miller 2007, pp 13-14).

Theme three, "The aspect of spirituality in IB". This theme can be interpreted as missing in the MYP document, and it is an essential theme in holistic education. Holistic educators acknowledge the aspect of spirituality, and it is seen as what differentiates holistic education from other progressive education movements (Rudge 2008, p 4 and 14).

## 5.1 Education of the whole child

Education of the whole child, the essence of holistic education

As one can read in chapter 2.1 on holistic education theory in this thesis, one of the main defining principles of holistic education is the idea of educating the child as a whole and not just specific parts. John Miller (2019, p 149) states:

*"The one principle that almost all holistic educators agree on is the importance of teaching the whole child, that is, body, mind, and spirit. The forms of doing this can vary widely, but the vision of human wholeness remains at the core of holistic teaching and learning."*

We find IB's intention of educating the whole child in the MYP document: *"An IB education is holistic in nature—it is concerned with the whole person"* (IB 2014, p 9). This statement was analyzed in the results chapter of the thesis, and here it will be discussed with the help of Hare's (2011, p 47-48) arguments. Hare states, *"The education and development of the whole person in its broadest sense are at the core of IB philosophy"* (Hare 2011, p 47). When arguing for this statement, he refers back to both official IB documents (IB 2002a, IB 2002b in Hare 2011, p 47) and authors on the IB history (Peterson, 1987 p 33 in Hare 2011, p 47). Both sources state that IB education concerns the development of all aspects of the student. In the MYP document, being concerned with the whole person means addressing students' social, emotional and physical wellbeing, and cognitive development (IB 2014, p 9). The same page in the MYP document states that the development of compassion in students is encouraged.

I would agree with Hare's interpretation of the IB as holistic in the sense that it is concerned with the whole person. When reading the IB documents, it is clear that the intention is to educate and cater for the development of the whole child. This is in line with the main defining principle of holistic education, educating the whole child. It is interesting to notice that Hare (2011, p 46) also writes that if asked to define what holistic means and how it is practiced in the MYP, IB educators' response would most likely vary and be inconsistent. Hare is in his interpretation in line with both Miller and Rudge's criteria. Miller (2007, p 11) describes that the development of the whole person is the aim of the transformation position in holistic education. Rudge's principle of human wholeness incorporates the vision of educating the whole child (Rudge 2008, p 34). Another author stating the same is Schreiner (2009, p 761), who writes that the concept of the whole person includes the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic and spiritual part of every person. Bone (2019, p 70) writes that it is not possible to only focus on one area without affecting all aspects of a person. Bone further writes that having a holistic perspective means to recognize the interconnectedness of all things.

As a reference to the discussion of the IB being holistic, I include here the views of an IB Primary Years Program (PYP) teacher, Rebecca Ryder. Although the PYP is the primary years' education in IB and the MYP is the middle years' education, their philosophical basis is the same. As such, it makes Ryder's view relevant in this discussion. Ryder is one of the contributors to a book called *Teaching from the Thinking Heart; The practice of holistic education*, where she writes on how she teaches holistically in an IB PYP class. Ryder (2014, p 75) states that she believes strongly in educating the whole child and that when focusing on children's social, personal, and emotional development, along with academic success, she has witnessed rapid and immense growth in students.

Hare (2011, p 48) argues that the interrelatedness of the subject areas indicates a holistic view on children's learning and that IB education is holistic, although he does not find sufficient to describe MYP as holistic alone. In my view, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary teaching might indicate learning from different perspectives, but one can ask if it incorporates more than intellectual learning. Ryder (2014, p 75) writes that her approach to teaching holistically in the IB PYP program is by cultivating curiosity via inquiry-based learning. She states that creating opportunities for the students to explore, investigate, and discover, inspires students to a feeling of awe and wonder. The feeling of awe and wonder she sees as one of the goals of holistic education.

When reading Ryder's approach to teaching holistically, one could ask if the level of how holistic the interrelatedness of subjects is would depend on how they are taught. She further writes that she combines various pedagogical approaches and seeks a balance between educational orientations (Ryder 2014, p 76). Ryder writes that she combines all three educational orientations described by John P. Miller (Miller 2007, p 10-11), transmission (students are given information directly), transaction (problem-solving and inquiry-based learning), and transformation (students learn holistically) positions. Ryder states that the educational orientation she most often uses is the transaction position, where students solve problems or pursue inquiry. When she is using the transformation position, Ryder states that the students play and work creatively, cooperatively, and artistically and that this helps students have authentic and meaningful connections with their learning (Ryder 2014, p 76).

Another sign of the MYP being holistic, according to Hare (2011, p 48), is the breath of the MYP program, and that it addresses features beyond the intellectual domain. Examples of these features are the need for meaning, relevance, sense of worth and value. Recognition that the MYP students, aged 11-16 are going through a time of transition in their life is also given. Further, he argues that the aesthetic education in the MYP can be interpreted as another indication that the program is holistic, even if he also means that aesthetic education is not emphasized enough in the MYP literature. We can recognize some of the aspects Hare sees as holistic in the MYP in what Ron Miller (1997, p 219) writes about holistic educators:

*"Holistic educators recognize that all aspects of human life are fundamentally interconnected. They contend that education must respect the dynamic and mutually supportive relationships between the intellectual, emotional, physical, social, aesthetic/creative, and spiritual qualities of every person. Children do not simply learn through their minds, but through their feelings and concerns, their imaginations and bodies."*

In R. Miller's perspective above, we see that the focus is on all sides and aspects of the child would cover the features given as examples by Hare (2011, p 48), the need for meaning, relevance, and sense of worth and seeing each individual in the transition period of adolescence. These features would in my interpretation, be essential to address for holistic educators. The features Hare mentions are part of the child's qualities catered for by holistic educators, as seen in Ron Miller's quote. Especially in the emotional and spiritual qualities, we can recognize the need for meaning, relevance, and a sense of worth and value. The aspect of spirituality in IB is not so outspoken in the MYP document. Although not outspoken or clearly defined, the spiritual aspect can be recognized to some degree in the need for meaning,

relevance, worth, and value. I would interpret these needs to go beyond the emotional and intellectual realm. They can also be seen as needs that need to be catered for if the person should maintain spiritual health. Spiritual health is not defined in the MYP document but presented as part of exploring the questions "Who am I" and "Who are we" in the global context of identities and relationships. In the explanation to questions, the MYP document states this:

*"Students will explore identity; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures; what it means to be human."* (IB 2014, p 60).

Marian de Souza (2009, p 526) writes that children and young people's wellbeing should be a primary concern for society. She refers to rising numbers of children and adolescents afflicted by social and health problems, including mental illness, with depression being the most common. She sees a need for education that seeks to educate the whole child and enhance students' intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellbeing. She writes that moral and social aspects fall under these four broad categories of wellbeing. When we compare the IB citation above to what de Souza writes on spiritual wellbeing, it is possible to interpret the IB's concern for spiritual health as similar to what de Souza addresses.

According to a study done amongst university students, we can read interesting findings on how exposure to holistic principles potentially would have benefitted them. Lauricella & MacAskill (2015 p. 54) found that, on average, 70% of respondents believed that learning more about holistic principles during their primary and secondary education would have helped them achieve more success in university. The principles defined as holistic in the study were meaning/purpose, personal identity, connections to the community, connections to the natural world, and humanitarian values. Relating to the discussion above on Hare's (2011, p 48), position that addressing questions of meaning, relevance, values, and sense of worth are features of holistic education in IB, we can recognize these features in what is defined as holistic principles in the study of Lauricella & MacAskill (2015 p. 54). Almost three-quarters of the participants (74%) responded that learning more about their meaning and purpose in life would have benefitted their success after high school. Meaning and purpose are in the study explained more in detail; why they are here, what makes one unique, individual capabilities, strengths, personal path, confidence, a deeper understanding of one's chosen career area, or study area (Lauricella & MacAskill (2015, p. 62).

As we can read in what is defined as holistic principles in Lauricella & MacAskill's study, they do not describe spirituality as one of their holistic principles. One could argue that questions around values, identity, meaning/purpose could be seen as spiritual, but we will not discuss what spirituality means further in this theme. The aspect of spirituality in holistic education, including its meaning and definitions, and the sense that this aspect is not outspoken explicitly or present in the MYP document will be discussed in detail in subchapter 5.3. From the discussion above it is clear that the IB focuses on education of the whole person, and there are many similarities between the holistic education principles and the MYP document. We will now discuss the holistic assessment practices described in the MYP document as this belongs to the theme "Education of the whole child".

The assessment practices in the IB aims to take into account the development of the whole student and assess each student's achievements holistically (IB 2014, p 78). As follows from the analysis in chapter 4.2, subcategory 1.5, some points need further inquiry and discussion. The IB uses more qualitative assessment strategies and less quantitative assessment (testing). This is in line with what Miller (2007, 8) and Rudge (2008, p 133) describes as the focus of holistic education. However, the MYP document also focuses on academic rigor and does use grades. In her analysis of the different school systems considered holistic, Rudge (2008, p 205) sums up that they have comprehensive assessment forms. The assessment practices in the different holistic school systems focus on developing the whole child rather than academic performance only. The practices usually avoid tests and grades and do more of continuous evaluation of academic performance, assignments, and behavior. Progress is reported in the form of descriptive feedback given to parents (Rudge 2008, p 133). At this point, we can recognize some differences in the type of assessment, where the MYP uses a clearly defined grading scale with a focus on academic rigor. In contrast, the holistic school systems represented in Rudge's work do not use numbered grading scales. The similarities would be the use of descriptive feedback, as explained above.

There is in the MYP document a recognizable focus on academic rigor. In the approaches to teaching chapter of the MYP document, one section is devoted to teaching academic honesty (IB 2014, p 76-77).  Moreover, one section in the assessment for learning chapter is devoted to understanding misconduct (IB 2014, p 94). In this, we can see that the IB focuses on academic rigor in a more explicit way than what is given as examples of the holistic educators. When questioning what "rigorous" means, the above can give some clues, but in my view, there are some conflicting ideas on assessment in the MYP document. On one side,

the mission statement promotes rigorous assessment. However, when explaining how assessment tasks should be constructed, the document calls for open-ended tasks, process journals, and portfolio assessment (IB 2014, pp. 85-87). The assessment strategy called "selected response," which is explained as a test/quiz, is meant to be used as a quick assessment of a students' level, not a summative assessment leading to a final grade. A question legitimate to raise here is how objective the assessment can be when it is not based on tests where scores are calculated objectively. My presumption here would be that a teacher giving a grade to a student after assessing their work over an extended period might be affected by their relationship with the student, affecting the assessment's objectivity.

Regarding academic rigor, Ryder (2014, p 79) writes that many interpret academic rigor and excellence as "quiet classrooms with rows of desks filled with obedient test-taking children." She writes that many see the purpose of schooling to get admission to a university and a high paying job career. As a holistic educator, she states that it can be challenging to convince others that it is beneficial for children to focus on their interests, feelings, and wellbeing, rather than on test scores and exam results. In a results-driven era with an extreme focus on outcomes, the teachers can be pressured to raise achievement levels and student success. Ryder (2014, p 80) claims there is a lack of understanding that educating the whole child, letting them learn with their hands and heart, in addition to their head, is achievement and success in itself.

Hare (2006, p 303) writes that in the lack of a clear definition and explanation in the MYP of what holistic education means, he has worked on defining values characterizing holistic education. From these values, he has drawn a set of attributes and behaviors and developed a person profile identifying student capabilities and what they should be able to do, and with what outcomes. Hare (2006, p 311) states that the person profile's outcomes can be used for assessment. At the same time, he describes that it is challenging to assess personal and interpersonal aspects, compared to knowledge or skills-based aspect of a student's development. Hare (2011, p 53) also writes that a number of the outcomes (key indicators) are better assesses via student self-assessment or peer-assessment rather than teacher-led-assessment.

Rudge (2008, p 133) refers to holistic education assessment practices as assessing the whole child's development and not separate academic performances in single subjects. She refers to Waldorf, Reggio, and Montessori education as practices where testing and grading are avoided, and one instead practices daily assessment of the students' assignments, academic

performance, and behavior in class. Instead of testing, scorecards, and grading, the parents and the child receive descriptive evaluations of their academic achievements and overall development. Rudge describes these assessment approaches as very comprehensive and present in the holistic education models she has analyzed. The holistic assessment practices Rudge refers to are far away from the testing and measuring practices dominating education globally, as mentioned in this chapter.

Although the MYP program has a grading scale, the MYP document mentions some grading practices that are not compatible with the IB philosophy on grading. The document states:

*"Inappropriate grading practices*

*The following grading practices are inappropriate and are counter to MYP assessment principles.*

*• Determining grades using a proportion of scores for classwork, homework, and tests*

*• Determining grades by averaging summative performance scores over the year*

*• Using single pieces of work to determine final grades"* (IB 2014, p 92)

Here we see that using final exams to determine final grades is not compatible with MYP assessment principles. Also, the use of averages of summative performances, like tests, are not compatible with the assessment principles. In this sense, the assessment principles of MYP with qualitative assessment and assessing several pieces of work over time are similar to what Miller (2007, p 8) describes as a holistic approach to assessment.

The need for grades to score a student's points for admission to non-IB programs raises a question on how holistic assessment can be when there is a need for final grades. Examples would be if an IB MYP student would transfer to a state high school or upper secondary education, or when an IB Diploma program student applies to enter a university. Formative holistic assessment might be very good for the development of a child but to enter a university, one needs summative final grades to score a student's academic performance for admission. How possible it is to have holistic assessment practices when the common focus in education is testing and grading? Holistic assessment seems to be in contradiction to the reigning paradigm in education globally of testing and measuring.

Biesta (2010, pp 10-27) claims in his book "Good education in an age of measurement" that the current paradigm has focused on global economic competitiveness when measuring kids'

performance in schools and measuring it by testing in specific subjects. This is counter to assessment strategies used in holistic education, where a continuum of student work is looked at and assessed as a whole. J. P. Miller (2007, p 8) writes that the quantitative assessment, which is represented by standardized testing, is the dominant assessment strategy in today's education system in what he calls "the age of accountability." J. P. Miller is critical to the US "No child left behind" program, which he means enforces standardized testing on kids..

Biesta (2010, p 50) criticizes the same idea of accountability as Miller does. He states that managerial accountability as the leading approach to education today reduces educators' opportunities to take responsibility for the results of their educational approaches. Using the word "accountability," Biesta refers to a technical-managerial definition of the word, meaning one's duty to present auditable accounts. As an example of a Norwegian perspective, Nordkvelle and Nyhus (2017, p 229) states that strong influences by international organizations like the EU, WTO, The World Bank, UN, and OECD with a focus on accountability have replaced a national-cultural perspective on education. This with the OECD's PISA tests as the dominating influence. They further state that phenomena like accountability and teaching to the test are dominating Norwegian educational discourse.

In my understanding, accountability means that all activities must be measurable, or else they are wasted. Wasted might be a strong word, but when reading the origin of the term "accountability" according to Biesta (2010, p 50), it seems legitimate. "Accountability" is a financial term. The underlying assumption of the term is that accounts that are not auditable are prone to illegalities, fraud, and waste. When you transfer this idea to education to "hold the educators accountable," one can ask if this is the most beneficial way to treat educators and students. Should educators be held accountable in the same way as someone doing budgeting and spending in a company?

Gidley (2009, pp 533-535) criticizes the governing worldview that dominates our planet for its effects on education. Gidley labels it a modernist worldview of scientific materialism and associated epistemology of reductionism. She states that there is a conflict in social sciences where the reductionist and scientistic mode of formal thinking has created a neo-fundamentalist and economic-rationalist backlash against qualitative research. She explains that the conflict affects education with a dominating focus on accountability and audit culture. Gidley calls this obsessive quantitative accountability practices in a narrowly designed science of education. It is difficult to conclude in this discussion if the MYP documents described assessment practices are fully holistic. However, from the discussion above, they

seem more in line with holistic assessment principles than the dominating "accountable" testing and measuring practices.

## 5.2 Interconnectedness – relationships and community connections

*"Holistic educators recognize that on a fundamental level, everything is interconnected."*

(Miller, 1997, p 219).

As we have seen earlier in this thesis, interconnectedness is an underlying principle most holistic educators agree on (Rudge, 2008, p 23, Miller 2007, pp 148-149, Bone 2019, p 70, Eude 2019, p 63). The large number of findings related to community connections, in subcategory 3.4, self and community does in my interpretation show that the MYP document has a clear focus on the interconnectedness between the students and their communities, helping the students become active, caring members of the different communities they belong to. Communities mean both the small personal and local scale communities and larger global scale communities. J. P. Miller (2007, p 159-160) writes that global educators focus on the student being part of a larger community similar to holistic educators, and there are similarities between definitions. Care and caring is an essential value in holistic education. Both John P. Miller (2007, p 192, 2019, p 14) and Ron Miller (1997, p 215) refer to Nel Noddings' writings on care in schools as an inspiration to holistic educators. We could recognize the care for the world as a whole in the mission statement (IB 2014, p vi), in the learner profile attribute "caring" and also in the "open-minded," "communicators" and "balanced" learner profile attributes (IB 2014, p vii). We can also recognize it in the references to the history and backgrounds of the IB programs, where the aim was to provide an education that would give students the understanding, skills, attitudes, and knowledge to manage and improve a complex world (IB 2014, p 3).

As part of the explanation of the "balanced" learner profile attribute, the MYP document (IB 2014, p vii) says: *"We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live."* In this statement, we can see an acknowledgment of being interdependent on others and the world at large. The interconnectedness that holistic educators refer to (Rudge, 2008, p 23, Miller 2007, pp 148-149, Bone 2019, p 70, Eude 2019, p 63) is recognized in the statement. The MYP document is in line with holistic education's principles and definitions of interconnectedness/interdependence. The focus on intercultural understanding and respect, care, communication skills, and open-mindedness are holistic education qualities. These are qualities and traits that are set into life and taken action upon in the service as action part of

the MYP. Service and action is seen as a way of learning by doing and experiencing in the MYP (IB 2014, p 22) similar to holistic educators focus on experience-based education (Forbes 2003, p 29). Hare sees an indication of the MYP being holistic in the community and service element of the MYP. The involvement with community and giving service results in a *"heightened awareness of social roles and responsibilities and a clearer understanding of the world around them"* (Hare 2011, p 49).

The IB mission statement itself, analyzed in subcategory 3.4, also indicates a holistic perspective, without using the word holistic. The themes from the mission statement, a better world, peace, understanding, and respect are core themes that all holistic educators are concerned with. J. P. Miller (2019, p 15) states, *"whole children and whole human beings are fundamental to building a world where all beings develop and thrive."* Brantmeier (2019, p 80) writes on the confluence of aims in holistic education, sustainability education, and peace education. They all aim for a peaceful and connected world, where all can live and prosper with health and wellbeing. These aims are similar to what the IB mission states as aims for IB education, and we can recognize the aspect of interconnectedness in the mission statement.

Eude (2019, pp 62-64) criticizes mainstream education policy for not focusing on matters of spiritual, moral, social, and cultural character and only focuses on cognitive development, academic attainment, and performativity. He argues that a holistic view of education is broader and focuses not only on what can be measured. He breaks down a holistic view of a child's development into eight categories, spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, physical, social, emotional, and aesthetic. He states that these categories must not be seen as separate but interlinked and overlapping. In my view, the interlinked and overlapping categories can also be understood as interconnectedness, and the categories are recognizable in both the IB mission statement and the learner profile.

IB's idea of making the world a better place through education, might not be considered progressive in 2020, but when the IB diploma program was introduced in 1968, they were progressive, according to the MYP document (IB 2014, p 3). As I see the IB mission statement, it recognizes the students' interconnectedness in the world and with the world. Also, it recognizes students' ability to contribute to a better world. Encouraging children to find their place in the world, and take action to affect the world for the better, can be seen as a holistic view of the child. As we saw from the analysis of the "Caring" learner profile attribute, compassion is emphasized (IB 2014, p vii). Miller (2007, p 21) refers to the Dalai Lama's teachings when he states that when we experience interdependence and

interconnectedness, a natural sense of compassion tends to arise. The MYP document does not state that the IB education aims to develop a group mentality to affect the world's state. In my interpretation, IB's impact could lay in the empowerment of the individual child, and in developing the child's ability to cooperate with others. By collaborating with other students on these larger issues, one could see the potential for empowering children in a way they can affect the world in practical terms. If the IB mission statement results in children's real empowerment, the statement would not just be lofty rhetoric but give practical value. We can recognize the principle of interconnectedness in IB's focus on social action skills, intercultural understanding, and respect. Also, in learning global perspectives and working with issues concerning the whole world. In this sense, IB seems to be in line with holistic principles.

## 5.3 The aspect of spirituality

In the results and analysis chapter, the word "spiritual" was found only once in the MYP document, where it refers to spiritual health. Spiritual health is mentioned in the same sentence as personal, physical, mental, and social health as one of many focus questions in describing the MYP global context of Identities and Relationships (IB 2014, p 60). Spiritual health is related to spirituality, but there is no in-depth explanation of what it means. The analysis chapter pointed out that the aspect of spirituality is mainly missing in the MYP document, at least directly outspoken. Subcategories related to spirituality, like 3.6 connection between ego and soul, and 3.1 linear thinking and intuition, have no findings. The subcategory of connection between mind and body (3.2), humans, and earth (3.5) has one finding. The absence of the aspect of spirituality in the MYP document is an important finding, and is the reason for giving it attention in the discussion.

Spirituality is, as we have seen earlier, an essential aspect of holistic education. Schreiner (2009, p 758) states that there is "overwhelming consensus" amongst holistic educators, the integrated view of spirituality differs holistic education from other approaches to education. A question that arises here is why spirituality is not outspoken or emphasized in the MYP document. One could interpret the lack of findings in the subcategories related to spirituality as a sign that IB is not holistic, but this question needs further discussion. Could it be that the term "spirituality" itself is problematic?

Gidley (2016, p 190) writes that the term spiritual might be controversial, but its use in higher education in the USA is increasing. Even if we are not discussing higher education in the USA here, it is relevant as it speaks of how the term is used in education. Further, Gidley

(2016, p 191) writes that spiritual development and related qualities are found within education that emphasize care, contemplation, empathy, love, and reverence. She also states that, globally, many educational researchers advocate for the inclusion of spirituality in education. Gidley writes that in both the UK and Australia, perspectives of non-denominational spiritual awareness have been reviewed to become parts of national education policies (Gidley 2016, p 196). The England national curriculum mentions spirituality briefly when stating the aims of the education overall, and subject-specific in the English language curriculum, where reading is seen as promoting spiritual development. The citation below is from section 2.1 in the England curriculum framework for key stages 1-4.

*"Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based\* and which:*

- *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society"* (Department of Education, 2014)

When writing on how to interpret what is meant by spiritual in the English curriculum, Eude (2019, p 64) explains spiritual development as involving searching for answers to some possibly difficult questions of purpose, meaning, and identity. Questions he relates to spiritual development are; Who am I? Where do I fit in? Why am I here? Questions he relates to moral development are; How should I act? What sort of person do I want to become? Questions he relates to cultural development are; Where do I belong? What is my identity? All the questions Eude suggests are easily recognizable within the inquiry into global contexts in the MYP, especially in the global context "Identities and relationships" (IB 2014, p 60). Eude explains that spiritual development does not mean the same thing as religious development and emphasizes a distinction between spirituality connected to, or not connected to religion (Eude 2019, p 64). On this theme, Schreiner (2009, p 756) writes that spirituality in an educational context must be broad enough to include a religious contribution and simultaneously acknowledge a spiritual dimension to life that includes values, commitments, and aesthetic concerns.

The Australian national curriculum mentions spiritual health as a part of the definition of wellbeing in the subject area of Health and Physical Education. In the glossary with the definition of terms used in the curriculum, we find what is meant by spiritual health and wellbeing.

*"Spiritual health: A positive sense of belonging, meaning, and purpose in life. It includes values and beliefs that influence the way people live, and can be influenced by an individual's connection to themselves, others, nature, and beyond."*

*"Wellbeing: A sense of satisfaction, happiness, effective social functioning and spiritual health, and dispositions of optimism, openness, curiosity, and resilience."* (ACARA, 2012).

In the definition of spiritual health in the Australian curriculum above, we see that it is similar to how Eude (2019, p 64) interprets spiritual development in the English curriculum, with questions of meaning, purpose, and identity. Existential questions like "who am I" and "who are we" are included as examples of focus questions to work within the global context of identities and relationships in the MYP document.

*"Who am I? Who are we? Students will explore identity; beliefs and values; personal, physical, mental, social and spiritual health; human relationships including families, friends, communities and cultures; what it means to be human."* (IB 2014, p 60).

As possible example explorations to develop from these focus questions, the documents give the following:

*"• Competition and cooperation; teams, affiliation and leadership*

*• Identity formation; self-esteem; status; roles and role models*

*• Personal efficacy and agency; attitudes, motivation, independence; happiness and the good life*

*• Physical, psychological and social development; transitions; health and wellbeing; lifestyle choices*

*• Human nature and human dignity; moral reasoning and ethical judgment; consciousness and mind."* (IB 2014, p 60).

Hare (2011, p 49) offers some possible reasons why spirituality is not emphasized in the MYP document. He writes that the difference between cultures, communities, and individuals on what spirituality means can be one reason for not emphasizing it. Another reason is that it could be seen as a very personal matter, and Hare argues that this topic is best left as a highly personal agenda. He claims that spiritual development will be influenced by the students' knowledge and experience gained in personal encounters. Hare states that the students will face opportunities for such encounters within the MYP setting. One area where such

encounters might happen is the connections between self and community, where students develop a sense of awareness and concern for the community. Hare's argues that some sort of spiritual development in the student is highly likely to happen in the MYP program.

In my interpretation, the question of why spirituality is not emphasized in the MYP is not fully answered by Hare's explanations. The explanations seem to be in line with the last section's assumption that spirituality is a sensitive and personal subject, and when having students from diverse backgrounds and cultures belonging to different religions, faiths, or convictions, it can seem sensible to have less emphasis on the topic. Less emphasis can be understandable as IB programs are offered in various countries, with different laws regarding freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of association and assembly. Because of this, it is possible IB programs need different degrees of adaptation in different countries. That would open the question of how true to holistic ideals one can be in the IB. One example here could be what Elkady (2011, p 183) writes on teaching in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a country with 52 IB world schools (IB 2021a). National guidelines for teaching in the UAE bans teaching religious, social, and political views contradicting Muslim values. She further writes on the problematic sides of self-censorship as she interprets the national guidelines as broad and not precisely detailed. It is then left up to the teacher to determine what contradicts Muslim values, and teachers would rather err on the safe side. This is understandable. According to the EU annual report on human rights and democracy, there are important challenges regarding civil and political rights in the UAE (EU 2019, p 178). In particular, freedom of expression and assembly and freedom of religion and belief are areas of concern (EU 2019, p 179).

Another example is China, which has 203 (IB 2021a) IB world schools. The EU annual report on human rights and democracy states that the human rights situation is of significant concern (EU 2019, p 192). Many human rights violations are reported in China in areas of freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief, and freedom of association and assembly. The report gives the example of religious groups being oppressed in China, mentioning Islam with 'de-Arabisation' in the Xinjiang province, Buddhism in Tibet where Communist Party representatives are included in the management of monasteries, and Christianity with a protestant pastor advocating religious freedom being sentenced to prison (EU 2019, p 192-193).

One can ask how easy it is to teach aspects of spirituality, principles of tolerance, respect, intercultural understanding, and not at least critical thinking, which is emphasized in the IB

programs, under conditions like the two examples above. Freeman (2014, p 134) emphasizes the importance of being mindful of the sensitive nature of political questions and that students may have politically charged experiences that are important to consider in the classroom. She gives an example of a Chinese student she was teaching in Canada, having experienced a friend being arrested and imprisoned for being a member of the religious Falun Gong movement which is forbidden in China. Because of his background in the Chinese "saving face" culture of not addressing problems openly, he could not discuss this in the classroom.

The examples above make it easier to understand possible reasons why spirituality is not emphasized in the IB. Religious differences can result in conflicts, and one can understand why this topic needs to be handled with care. The avoidance of the topic in the IB could be due to "political correctness" or avoiding controversy according to what country they are in, or that the IB programs should be acceptable for people of all religions and faiths. This thesis's findings suggest that IB is not in line with the principle of spirituality (Rudge 2008, p 25) in holistic education. If IB programs are supposed to work in totalitarian regimes with limited freedom of belief or countries governed by religious laws, the avoidance of the topic makes sense, but it does not seem holistic.

Following the logic of Hare (2011, p 49) where he argues that spiritual development is best left as a highly personal agenda in the MYP, one could question if another possible reason for not emphasizing spirituality could be that it is seen as a private and sensitive topic by many parents. Those parents are eventually are the "customers" of the IB schools, paying their children's tuition. If they belong to specific religions and specific sets of values and traditions, they want their children to follow or be a part of, it could make teaching or exploring topics like spirituality controversial. As such, it might be easier to avoid the topic all together, learn about different religions, or one religion, rather than children exploring existential questions and reflecting on their own spirituality.

The analysis in this thesis shows that the aspect of spirituality is more emphasized and outspoken in the holistic education movement than in the IB. The holistic education movement approach seems to have a free and even critical approach, where the focus is on each child's experiences and reflections, not on religious systems of belief and religious traditions. Rudge writes that holistic educators '*refuse to accept rigid authoritarian systems ruled by economic, social, and cultural power*' (Rudge 2008, p 184). I interpret this as the holistic standpoint on religious belief systems as well. Holistic education seems to be more focused on the child's ability to reflect freely and openly not imposing how they should think.

This seems like giving the children tools for thinking about, reflecting on and experiencing spirituality. Freedom of belief like this is questionable if it could be practiced in China, where approved religious organizations are obliged to act according to Communist party ideology (EU 2019, p 193). The example from the UAE given earlier with specific topics being banned (Elkady 2011, p 183) also makes it questionable if it could be practiced there. There are a focus and emphasis on being critical thinkers in the IB (IB 2014, p 20, 33, 66, 103), but one can ask how far this goes when the IB is used in countries where human rights and democratic practices are questionable. The word democratic does not occur, and democracy only occurs once in the MYP document as an example exploration in the global context of fairness and development (IB 2014, p 62). The words "human rights" do not occur together in the MYP document. Rights and equal access to opportunity are mentioned in the global context of fairness and development (IB 2014, p 62).

Parish (2018, pp 81-84) has found that there is an inbuilt human rights logic in the IB on a global, organizational level, and it is recognizable in the IB mission statement and learner profile. Her study finds that there are differences in how the human rights logic is implemented on a local school level and varying degrees of student adherence to this logic. Parish found a parallel and more pragmatic logic influencing students and schools more; they compete in an international marketplace of admission to universities. Parish also writes that adopting a particular human rights policy in a school is not required as part of the authorization as an IB school. Reading this, one question arises. Would requiring schools to adopt specific policies be easier in a national curriculum context, where legislation and government would support such requirements? The IB is a private foundation that covers its operational cost by school and examination fees (IB 2021b). This means that IB sells its curricular frameworks in different countries, depending on schools paying for the curricular frameworks, authorization, and member fees. Does this influence the implementation requirements of a human rights policy?

Reading Parish's findings, one can also ask if the IB schools, despite the good intentions recognizable in the mission statement and the learner profile, are subject to the same influences as mainstream education, focusing on competitiveness in an international marketplace. Parish (2018, p 18) writes that it is difficult to distinguish what human rights education is, as it can be taught or inbuilt in the school learning community and different aspects of curricula. She exemplifies religious studies, which can incorporate key components of human rights education like intercultural understanding, tolerance, and respect without

being called human rights education. Following Parish's logic, this could have been similar for aspects of spirituality in the IB, that there is a built in logic but not outspoken. As far as the analysis of this thesis goes, there are no strong indications of this. One could ask is if the inbuilt human rights logic Parish refers to is an intentional strategy. Is it the intent that, possibly controversial topics (in some countries) at the heart of the IB philosophy are introduced in a subtle or hidden way, like a "Trojan horse", instead of being directly outspoken? This remains an open question. In the two next sections, we will learn about criticism directed towards the IB, and criticism towards holistic education.

## 5.4 Critics of IB

In some areas, criticism is directed towards the IB and one area is the learner profile. The learner profile attributes represents values and some raises questions around this. One critic is Starr (2009, p 116), who states that very few would argue with the virtues or ideals stated in the IB learner profile, but that one should question how the implementation of this works out in the multiple, diverse, and various settings the IB programs are delivered in around the world. She asks two critical questions: whose ideals are being represented in the IB learner profile, and how should it be used? Starr (2009, p 118) states that when teaching character traits or virtues as the ones in the learner profile, the focus will be on students' behavior. Her critique is that children who perform virtuous actions continuously will make the actions rote and not natural. Her perspective is that the students need to be actively involved in the learning process and not only perform virtues as repetition. Character education in its simplest form, according to her, is a transmission model that requires little involvement from the student. Starr states that this education model has proven very ineffective in ethical education and that a transmission model of ethics will not work. Wells (2011, p 175) states that other criticism voiced towards the IB learner profile attributes is the lack of theoretical foundation in values acquisition and the lack of detailed instruction on how schools should teach and assess the learner profile attributes

According to Starr (2009, p 117), IB programs are modeled after the British or American education systems, and students commonly pursue university education in the US, Canada, Australia, and Europe. Similarly, Bunnell (2011, p. 270) writes that the "core base" of the IB MYP program is USA, Canada, and Australia. Walker (2010, p 8) writes that the learner profile attributes are founded in a Western humanist tradition and gives recognition to the debate if the IB is truly international or global. He writes that many students see the IB diploma program as their "passport" to higher education in the West. He suggests a less

assertively humanistic learner profile that gives space to regional tradition, a learner profile that is reviewed by a multicultural team and encourages debate, rather than being "a tablet of stone" (Walker 2010, p 9). With references to the United Arab Emirates, Elkady (2011, p 180) describes the dilemma of parents on the one side wanting a western education for their kids, but at the same time finding certain aspects of the IB philosophy problematic.

Tarc (2009a, p 3) writes that there are polarized views on IB, with some being uncritical enthusiasts of IB, and others very critical, dismissing IB as elitist and a mechanism for social reproduction. He also refers to far-right criticism towards IB in the USA, that IB promotes socialism and is un-American. Tarc (2009b, p 251) reasons critics initially saw IB as elitist because it was developed for users of international schools interested in entrance qualification to Western universities. He describes these early users as a relatively narrow social elite. Further, Tarc writes that the IB is a product of multinational collaboration but was far from a fully international program when it began. He writes that the internationalist and transformative ideas in the IB are set against what he calls the "*parochial and elitist actuality of IB in the world*" (Tarc 2009b, p 251). Tarc upholds that the problems of social elitism and uneven access to the programs have endured throughout IB history (Tarc 2009b, p 255).

Bunnell (2011, p 266). writes that there are few publications on the MYP program and that discussions around the IB mainly revolves around the DP program. He states that researchers like himself mostly relies on material from what he refers to as *"IB protagonists and associated 'internal' journals (such as the International Schools Journal)."*(Bunnell 2011, p 266). According to him this makes independent critical inquiry difficult. He also briefly mentions other concerns, not discussed in the public domain but found on an anti-IB website, called [www.thetruthaboutib.com](www.thetruthaboutib.com). The issues raised are financial costs, lack of external examinations, need for summative assessments, amount of jargon, and need for more content (Bunnell 2011, p 269). The website Bunnell refers to is no longer in operation as of 2021, but similar criticism is found on another website, [http://www.truthaboutib2.com/](http://www.truthaboutib2.com/).

## 5.5 Critics of holistic education

As there are many different approaches to holistic education and schools calling themselves holistic, it is challenging to identify criticism, specifically against holistic education in general. Thus, I have chosen to include criticism against Montessori, Waldorf, and Krishnamurti schools, which are seen as three of the oldest and continually existing holistic school systems (Forbes 2003, p 10).

Ron Miller (1997 p 164) writes that the Montessori approach has received criticism for being too free and open where children of different ages work unsupervised alone or together with other children. Miller writes that this approach can seem chaotic and noisy from the point of view of traditional education. Also, the lack of exams and grades are criticized. Rudge (2008, p 65) writes that the students in Montessori schools progress after their own pace and academic ability and that the curriculum is highly individualized. Miller writes that the Montessori system also has been criticized for the opposite of being too open. From a child-centered educator perspective, the Montessori system could be seen as too focused on academic work and too controlled and structured (Miller 1997, p 164).

On the Waldorf schools, created by Rudolf Steiner, Ron Miller (1997, p 175) writes that it has been criticized for lacking the willingness to re-evaluate and modify curriculum and instructional methods from Steiner's original teachings. He explains this with Steiner having a brilliant and original vision, but with an educational system based on Steiner's esoteric understandings, there is a potential for a cult-like movement. The focus only on Steiner's original teachings has insulated Waldorf schools from mainstream education and scholarship and from adapting to new knowledge and experience. Rudge (2008, pp 60-61) writes similarly that the Waldorf movement is isolated from other educational groups, with its teachers secluding themselves from other educational views and immersing themselves in Steiner's teachings. Nielsen (2004, p 44) writes that some have questioned if Steiner's theory of 'root races' was ideological fuel for the German propaganda machine before and during World War II. Steiner schools in the US have faced legal actions after allegations of unconstitutional religious indoctrination (Nielsen 2004, p 44). Nielsen also problematizes that some Steiner followers see his views as infallible, failing to be critical and discriminating towards his views (Nielsen 2004, p 44).

On Krishnamurti schools, Rudge (2008, p 53) writes that she excluded them from her analysis of holistic education principles' presence in different school systems because of their "methodless" approach. She writes that it is difficult to analyze a pedagogy that varies from school to school. Krishnamurti is referred to as opposed to specific teaching methods, and teachers are free to develop their own methods and ideas corresponding with the children's needs (Rudge 2008, 45). Rudge (2008, p 46) writes that the schools share the philosophical ideas of Krishnamurti, but there is not a described common method or system of education.

# 6. Conclusion

This thesis has aimed to find out what the term holistic education means in the IB MYP program. The curriculum framework "MYP: From principles to practice" has been analyzed with a hermeneutic approach to document analysis, and findings have been discussed against contemporary holistic education theory.

The document analysis has shown some similarities between the statements on holistic learning in the MYP program and the definitions of holistic education made by theorists in the field. The research's main findings are similarities between the MYP and holistic education principles found in the areas of connections and relationships between the individual and community, meaning classroom/school community, local/national community, and global community. Another main area with findings of similarities is the vision of the whole child versus focus on educational techniques. A significant finding is an area where there are differences between the MYP and holistic education principles, the focus on spirituality. Questions have also been raised about the seemingly missing focus on democracy and human rights outspoken in the MYP document. If these aspects are built into the curriculum but not outspoken or intentionally avoided still remains an open question.

To conclude, if the MYP program is holistic or not according to holistic education, principles is challenging. The term "holistic" and "holistic education" is not owned by anyone in the field, nor educators or theorists, and holistic education definitions vary. Also, that this thesis only analyzes one document, and not its implementation and practice gives insufficient background to give an absolute answer. There are similarities between the MYP and the holistic education principles used in this thesis, enough that I would consider the MYP curriculum framework being written intended to be holistic. The term "holistic" in the MYP curriculum I interpret to mean a concern for the education of the whole child and the child's relationship to its community.

If I were to categorize the MYP into one of the two main lines of holistic education development, the MYP would be closest to the "wholism" line concerned with social change. The main finding indicated focus in the MYP on developing students' concern for and becoming acting members of their community. Concern for the community is not the same as working for social change but indicates the focus of the MYP. The other, the "holism" line focuses more on spirituality, is concerned with personal growth, and sees personal processes

essential to solve problems affecting the individual. Holistic educators do not always differ themselves along these lines, but the comparison helps identify the area MYP is closest to holistic principles. The findings presented in this thesis are relevant to the discussion of what holistic means in the MYP program and the extent to which the program is holistic. The findings are also relevant in discussing how to understand the IB philosophy's humanistic principles. As the findings indicate, certain essential aspects are not outspoken in the MYP, like spirituality, human rights, and democracy. The question of why these aspects are not outspoken is still not fully answered.

As referenced in the methods chapter, working with the hermeneutic circle has helped me gain a deeper understanding of the MYP curriculum. The process of first reflecting on my preunderstanding (it is elitist) about the IB, then reading the text and reflecting on my understanding of the text, contemplating if my preunderstanding has changed,  re-reading the text and reflecting again and so on, has helped me understand the IB's intentions better. I have gained insights and learning on the clear intentions of making a peaceful and better world for all in the IB philosophy and that the IB is founded on humanistic values. That has changed my view on the IB in a positive direction. But, I have also learned that there can be differences between the curriculum's intentions and how it is perceived and implemented. Although this thesis does not research implementation, it can seem like there are differences between the IB mission statement's and learner profile's intentions, and the implementation of these intentions in the curriculum.

What remains a question is how the humanistic values the IB is founded in corresponds with operating in countries with questionable human rights and democracy practices. Democracy, including the human rights perspective, is a principle which is foundational to holistic education, but to me, this principle does not seem clearly outspoken in the MYP curriculum. It seems to me that IB chooses what I interpret to be a more pragmatic and adaptable approach, so the curriculum can be used in many countries. It could look like the IB does not follow holistic principles in all areas. To my understanding holistic education would not easily compare with education policies of rigid and authoritarian systems of government. Could it be that IB would be less popular in countries with questionable human rights and democratic practices, if IB were more outspoken on how to teach democracy and human rights? I understand that IB needs to navigate within the paradox between good intentions on one hand, and on the other, pragmatic concerns like adaptability of the curriculum to different countries, outcomes and results. In countries with questionable democracy and human rights

practices, it could also be that IB, with its curriculum based in humanistic values, could have positive impact on students.

I have asked myself the question if there is anything, I could have done differently during the work with the thesis. I see that including more sources and documents on the IB could have led to deeper insight on the IB and possibly more findings relevant to this thesis's analysis. There are still many questions remaining. The question of how the holistic intentions of the MYP program are practiced is one. Intentions in the ideological curricula (Goodlad's first level) might differ from what students experience in the experiential curricula (Goodlad's fifth level). Another question is how the humanistic values and holistic intentions are practiced in countries with questionable human rights and democracy practices. All the unanswered questions above could be interesting for further research, especially if including the two other IB programs, PYP and DP. Studying both the curricula and the practice, including its outcome, could provide us with a more complete picture of the IB's approach to holistic education.

# 7 Literature

ACARA (2012) Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority. *The Australian Curriculum*. Health and Physical Education. Retrieved 3rd January from
https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/

Alvesson, M. & Sköldberg, K. (2009) *Reflexive Methodology. New Vistas for Qualitative Research.* London. Sage

Bai, H., Morgan, P., Scott, C. & Cohen, A. (2019). Holistic-Contemplative Pedagogy for 21st Century Teacher Education: Education as Healing. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (p 1-4). New York: Routledge

Biesta, G. (2010). *Good education in an age of measurement*. London. Routledge

Bone, J. (2019). Moving the Spirit: Holistic Education and Young Children. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (pp 70-78). New York: Routledge

Brantmeier, E. J. (2019). Sustainable Peace for the Planet. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (pp 79-88). New York: Routledge

Braun, V. & Clarke, V (2006) *Using thematic analysis in psychology*, Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3:2, 77-101 https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (fifth edition). Oxford: Oxford University Press

Bunnell, T. (2011) The International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme after 30 years: A critical inquiry. *Journal of Research in International Education* 10(3) 261–274
DOI: 10.1177/1475240911423604

de Souza, M. (2009) The Spiritual Dimensions in Educational Programs and Environments to Promote Holistic Learning and Wellbeing: An Introduction. In de Souza, M., Francis, L. J., O'Higgins-Norman, J. & Scott, D. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing.* (pp 553-561). Doordrecht: Springer

Department of Education (2014). *National curriculum in England: framework for key stages 1 to 4*. Retrieved 3rd January 2021 from https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4/the-national-curriculum-in-england-framework-for-key-stages-1-to-4

Eaude, T. (2019) Addressing the needs of the whole child. Implications for Young Children and Adults Who Care for Them. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (pp 61-69). New York: Routledge

Elkady, E. (2011) The MYP and its cultural context: a reflection from Dubai. In Hayden, M. & Thompson, J. *Taking the MYP forward*. Woodbridge: John Catt Educational Ltd.

EU (2019). *EU ANNUAL REPORT ON HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN THE WORLD 2019 COUNTRY UPDATES*. Retrieved from https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/201007_eu_country_updates_on_human_rights_and_democracy_2019.pdf

Equinox (2019) Equinox Holistic Alternative School. Retrieved 18th February 2019 from https://equinoxschool.ca/helpful-resources/

Forbes, S. (2003). *Holistic Education: An Analysis of its Ideas and Nature*. Brandon, VT. Foundation for Educational Renewal.

Forbes, S.H and Martin, R.A (2004, April) *What Holistic Education Claims About Itself: An Analysis of Holistic Schools' Literature.* Paper presented at the American Education Research Association Annual Conference. San Diego, California, USA. Retrieved from http://www.holisticeducation.net/articles/research04.pdf

Freeman, E. (2014). Identity and authenticity in the ESOL (English as a Second or Other Language) classroom. In Miller, J. P., Irwin, M. & Nigh, K. *Teaching from the Thinking Hearth. The practice of holistic education.* (pp. 131-137). Charlotte, NC. Information Age Publishing.

Gadamer, H-G. (2004) *Truth and Method*, London. Continuum

Gidley (2009) Educating for Evolving Consciousness: Voicing the Emergency for Love, Life and Wisdom. In de Souza, M., Francis, L. J., O'Higgins-Norman, J. & Scott, D. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing.* (pp 553-561). Doordrecht: Springer

Gidley, J. M. (2016) *Postformal Education, A philosophy for a complex future,* London, Springer

Goodlad, J and associates (1979). *Curriculum Inquiry. The Study of Curriculum Practice.* New York: McGraw-Hill

Hare, J. (2006) Towards an understanding of holistic education in the middle years of education. *Journal of research in International Education.* 5(3) p 301–322. DOI: 10.1177/1475240906069453

Hare, J. (2011) Holistic education and the MYP. In Hayden, M. & Thompson, J. *Taking the MYP forward.* (pp 46-57) London: John Catt Educational Ltd.

Hayden, M. & Thompson, J. (2011) *Taking the MYP forward.* Woodbridge: John Catt Educational Ltd.

IB (2014) *MYP: From principles into practice.* International Baccalaureate Organization. Retrieved from:

https://www.spps.org/site/handlers/filedownload.ashx?moduleinstanceid=38372&dataid=21225&FileName=from_principles_to_practice_2014.pdf

IB (2021a) Find an IB world school. *International Baccalaureate.* Retrieved 2nd January 2021 from: https://www.ibo.org/programmes/find-an-ib-school/

IB (2021b) Fees and Services. *International Baccalaureate.* Retrieved 14th January 2021

From: https://ibo.org/become-an-ib-school/fees-and-services/

Lauricella, S. & MacAskill, S. (2015) Exploring the Potential Benefits of Holistic Education: A Formative Analysis. *Other Education: The Journal of Educational Alternatives.* 4(2), pp. 54-78.

Miller, J. P. (2007). *The Holistic Curriculum* (second edition). Toronto: OISE Press.

Miller, J. (2019). Part III. Examples of Holistic Education, Practices. Introduction. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (pp 149-152). New York: Routledge

Miller, R. (1997) *What Are Schools For? Holistic Education in American Culture* (third revised edition). Brandon, VT, USA: Holistic Education Press.

Nakagawa, Y. (2019). Eastern philosophy and holistic education. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (pp 42-50). New York: Routledge

Nielsen, T. W. (2004) *Rudolf Steiner's Pedagogy of Imagination: A Case Study of Holistic Education*. Bern: Peter Lang.

Nordkvelle, Yngve, & Nyhus, Lene. (2017). Management by objectives as an administrative strategy in Norwegian schools: Interpretations and judgements in contrived liberation. I: N. Veggeland (red.), *Administrative strategies of our time* (s. 220-260). New York: Nova Science Publishers.

Novak, B. (2019) Foundations- introduction. In Miller, J. P., Nigh, K., Binder, M. J., Novak, B. & Crowell, S. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Holistic Education* (p 1-4). New York: Routledge

Parish, K. (2018) *An embedded human rights logic? A comparative study of International Baccalaureate schools in different contexts.* PhD dissertation. Inland Norway University of Applied Sciences.

Rudge, L. (2008). *Holistic education: An analysis of its pedagogical application*. PhD dissertation. Ohio State University. Retrieved from:
http://rave.ohiolink.edu/etdc/view?acc_num=osu1213289333

Ryder, R. (2014).  Cultivating Curiosity: Inquiry in an International Baccalaureate Classroom. In Miller, J. P., Irwin, M. & Nigh, K. *Teaching from the Thinking Hearth. The practice of holistic education.* (pp. 73-84). Charlotte, NC. Information Age Publishing.

Schreiner (2009). Holistic Education and Teacher Training. In de Souza, M., Francis, L. J., O'Higgins-Norman, J. & Scott, D. (Eds.), *International Handbook of Education for Spirituality, Care and Wellbeing.* (pp 753-770). Doordrecht: Springer

Selby, D. (1999) Global Education: Towards a Quantum Model of Environmental Education. *Canadian Journal of Environmental Education*, 4(Summer) pp 125-147

Starr, L. J. (2009) A Critique of the International Baccalaureate Learner Profile as a Curricular Document: Context, Hegemony, Hermeneutics and the four Rs. *Yonsei Journal of International Studies*. 1(2). Pp. 115-124. Retrieved from
http://theyonseijournal.com/issues/china-at-60/

Taggart, G. (2001) Nurturing Spirituality: A rationale for holistic education. *International Journal of Children's Spirituality*. 6(3), 325-339. DOI: 10.1080/13644360120100496

Tarc, P. (2009a*) Global Dreams, Enduring Tensions: International Baccalaureate in a Changing World.* New York. Peter Lang.

Tarc, P. (2009b) What is the 'International' in the International Baccalaureate? Three structuring tensions of the early years (1962–1973). *Journal of research in International Education*. DOI: 10.1177/1475240909344679

Walker, G. (2010). *East is East and West is West*. IB position paper. International Baccalaureate. Retrieved from

https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/publications/east-is-east-and-west-is-west-en.pdf

Wells, J. (2011) International education, values and attitudes: A critical analysis of the International Baccalaureate (IB) Learner Profile. *Journal of research in International Education*. 10(2) p 174–188. DOI: 10.1177/1475240911407808