

Holistic Learning for Stimulation of Participant's Basic Potential – Narrative Review

Salix Fini Maris
Universitas Nusa Putra

Article Info

Article history:

Received November, 2025

Revised November, 2025

Accepted November, 2025

Kata Kunci:

Pembelajaran Holistik
Potensi Dasar
Teori Kecerdasan Majemuk
Pembelajaran Berbasis
Pengalaman
Tinjauan Naratif

Keywords:

Holistic Learning
Basic Potential
Multiple Intelligence Theory
Experiential Learning
Narrative Review

ABSTRAK

Praktik pembelajaran umum, yang lebih berfokus pada prestasi akademik, mengurangi makna pembelajaran. Memperoleh nilai atau pengetahuan hanya menekankan kecerdasan tanpa memperhatikan aspek lain, mengabaikan potensi sejati kemampuan manusia. Manusia secara inheren memiliki potensi dasar yang dapat tumbuh dan berkembang secara dinamis. Konsep potensi dasar ini menjadi dasar untuk mempertimbangkan apakah kecerdasan adalah satu-satunya atribut yang dimiliki manusia. Pembelajaran holistik adalah landasan pembelajaran yang sepenuhnya merangkul kompleksitas manusia: kognitif, sosial, emosional, dan intelektual. Landasan ini berkaitan dengan potensi dasar yang dapat dikembangkan pada siswa, seperti kemampuan sensorik, penalaran, empati, dan hati nurani. Berdasarkan hubungan ini, terlihat bahwa pembelajaran dapat dilakukan dengan menggunakan pendekatan kecerdasan majemuk, yang menyatakan bahwa setiap orang memiliki beragam jenis kecerdasan, sehingga pembelajaran dapat dilakukan dengan berbagai cara. Penerapan teori kecerdasan majemuk konsisten dengan pembelajaran pengalaman, di mana siswa dengan pendekatan kecerdasan apa pun dapat difasilitasi melalui pembelajaran konkret, reflektif, konseptual, dan aktif. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk merumuskan kerangka kerja praktis untuk pembelajaran holistik menggunakan pendekatan kecerdasan majemuk dan pembelajaran berbasis pengalaman untuk meningkatkan potensi kognitif, intelektual, sosial, dan emosional dasar. Dengan menggunakan metode tinjauan naratif, ditemukan bahwa pembelajaran terintegrasi dapat mengembangkan semua dimensi siswa, dari kognitif hingga spiritual.

ABSTRACT

Common learning practices, which focuses more on academic achievement, diminishes the meaning of learning. Acquiring grades or knowledge only to emphasizes the intellect without addressing other aspects neglect the true potential of human abilities. Humans inherently possess basic potential that can dynamically grow and develop. This concept of basic potential is the basis for considering whether the intellect is the only attribute possessed by humans. Holistic learning is a foundation for learning that fully embraces human complexity: cognitive, social, emotional, and intellectual. This foundation relates to the basic potential that can be developed in students, such as sensory abilities, reasoning, empathy, and conscience. Based on this relationship, it shows that learning can be carried out using a multiple intelligence approach, which states that each person possesses diverse types of intelligence, so learning can be carried out in various ways. The application of multiple intelligence theory is consistent with experiential learning, where students with any

intelligence approach can be facilitated through concrete, reflective, conceptual, and active learning. This study aims to formulate a practical framework for holistic learning using a multiple intelligences approach and experiential learning to enhance basic cognitive, intellectual, social, and emotional potential. Using the narrative review method, it was found that integrated learning can develop all dimensions of students, from cognitive to spiritual.

This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.



Corresponding Author:

Name: Salix F. Maris

Institution Address: Universitas Nusa Putra

e-mail: salix.finimaris@nusaputra.ac.id

1. INTRODUCTION

The educational and learning process is generally assessed based on scores—how high a learner’s results are after going through the process. Educational institutions ultimately gain recognition or accreditation when their graduates achieve good grades and accomplishments. However, these scores do not necessarily prove that learners have deeply and sustainably understood the learning process. Learning is a complex process of knowledge construction, involving not only familiarity with material but also a combination of experience, reflection, and social discourse [1].

This raises the question: how much time does a human need to understand all the knowledge in the world? Each individual has different amounts of time and varying foundational abilities that determine the effective duration required to complete a particular learning process. Students or learning participants, before committing to a learning process, already possess their own inherent potential, referred to as basic potential. This basic potential becomes the main focus of this study to understand initial learning priorities before advancing to higher levels, and how to continuously develop that potential. Riyono (2023) states that the quality of basic potential remains at the same level if it is not developed or is sub optimally nurtured in the process [2].

Holistic learning, which involves the development of cognitive, social, and intellectual dimensions [3], is an important direction to examine in terms of stages and models that can enhance human basic potential. The goal of such learning is to help learners become critical thinkers, confident individuals, independent learners, and capable decision-makers in real-life situations [4].

From this perspective, the study of holistic learning is constructed through the integration of several approaches aimed at stimulating learners’ basic potential. Approaches such as multiple intelligences, integrated human development, learner-centered learning, and experiential learning are combined into a unified learning model to provide comprehensive guidance and create a more adaptive and dynamic learning environment. Each learner inherently has unique strengths and ways of learning; therefore, this approach emphasizes engagement, active participation, and meaningful, personalized learning experiences.

The integration of learning with real-life experiences enables learners to construct knowledge through direct experience, reflection, and application. Meanwhile, the learner-centered approach ensures that the process responds personally to individual contexts and needs. Thus, integrated and inclusive human development balances

cognitive, intellectual, social, and emotional growth as interconnected dimensions of learning.

Therefore, this study aims to formulate a practical and applicable framework for holistic learning that not only measures outcomes through scores but also captures depth of understanding, adaptability, and the sustainability of learners' development. A practical learning model derived from holistic learning theory also serves as a guide for enhancing basic potential in cognitive, intellectual, social, and emotional aspects. Tytler et al. (2013) have provided strong evidence for multimodal exploration, particularly in the development of representations, where the use of multimodal tools supports learners' conceptual understanding and deep meta-representational learning [5]. A comprehensive learning process is needed to identify its components and their relationship to building learners' foundational development. Through this model, learning is expected to become a continuous process that optimally nurtures learners' basic potential in a comprehensive and meaningful way.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 *Holistic Learning*

Understanding the self, life purpose, values, and morality forms the main foundation of holistic education [6]. Education is no longer focused solely on academic achievement, but also on the formation of a complete personal identity. Learners are encouraged to understand who they are, what life goals they want to achieve, and which values guide their actions. The moral dimension also plays an important role, as it shapes an individual's ability to distinguish between right and wrong and to make ethical decisions. Holistic education has five main components that support the overall development of learners: cognitive skills, social-emotional skills, physical development, moral development, as well as self-efficacy and responsibility.

Although there are various philosophical and practical approaches within holistic

learning theory, there is one core principle that unites them: the belief that everything in this world is interconnected [7]. This principle of interconnectedness emphasizes that individuals cannot be understood in isolation from their environment, society, and life context. The interconnectedness is between all human dimension, such as intellectual, emotional, physical, social, imaginative, and transpersonal dimensions [8]. In holistic education, this principle is manifested through the design of learning and learning experiences that are integrative. Learning designs are no longer structured separately across disciplines, but instead connect various fields of knowledge to create a more comprehensive understanding.

Holistic education does not aim to offer a single fixed model of learning; rather, it seeks to challenge fragmented and reductionist assumptions within mainstream culture and educational systems [9]. Conventional approaches often separate aspects of learning into disconnected parts, thereby neglecting the complexity of human experience. Holistic education emerges as a critique of such conventional approaches by emphasizing the importance of viewing learners as whole individuals. This includes integrating intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual aspects in the learning process.

To realize the vision of holistic education, there are three fundamental principles that serve as its main foundation: balance, inclusion, and interconnectedness [10]. The principle of balance emphasizes the importance of developing all aspects of the learner proportionally, including cognitive, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions.

2.2 *Basic Potential*

The concept of basic human potential is understood as an innate capacity that enables individuals to develop, rather than merely the result of effort. Riyono (2023) argues that basic human potential consists of four main layers: sensory abilities, reasoning (including cognition, logic, and rationality), empathy, and conscience [2]. These four layers form an integrated foundation for individual development and play a role in lifelong learning processes. In line with this, human

potential is also defined as a latent capacity that allows individuals to grow, learn, adapt, and develop cognitively, emotionally, socially, and morally [11]; [12]. This perspective positions humans as beings with the ability to develop holistically across various dimensions of life.

Basic human potential is understood as the result of dynamic interactions among neurobiological, cognitive, and socio-affective processes that evolve within social and environmental contexts throughout life [13]; [14]; [15]. This indicates that potential is not static, but continuously shaped and influenced by experiences, environment, and social interactions. Therefore, human potential reflects not only the capacity to learn, but also the ability to adapt and survive in the face of complexity and change. This approach underscores the importance of learning environments that support the holistic development of individuals so that their basic potential can grow optimally and sustainably.

2.3 Multiple Intelligence Theory

The theory of multiple intelligences proposed by Howard Gardner offers a new perspective in understanding human intellectual potential. Gardner (1983; 1999) states that each individual possesses various types of intelligence that develop in different ways, not limited to academic ability alone [16]; [17]. He identifies nine types of intelligence: linguistic, logical-mathematical, visual-spatial, musical, kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, intrapersonal, and existential. This concept emphasizes that each individual has a unique intelligence profile, and therefore learning approaches cannot be standardized.

This theory asserts that effective learning processes require the use of diverse strategies and methods that can accommodate this variety of intelligences. Accordingly, educators or facilitators are expected to design learning experiences that are varied, contextual, and adaptive so that all learners' potentials can develop optimally. Furthermore, Chetry and Prakash (2020) emphasize that learning assessment should not focus on a single dimension of

intelligence, but should be able to measure various forms of intelligence according to individual differences [18]. This highlights that assessment must be designed comprehensively to reflect learners' actual abilities. Through this approach, education can become more inclusive, equitable, and capable of developing human potential holistically.

2.4 Experiential Learning

Experiential learning, when integrated with the multiple intelligences approach, has increasingly developed as a strategy to create effective learning environments in the era of globalization and technological advancement [19]. This approach places learners at the center of the learning process (learner-centered), where they are actively involved through direct experience [20]. This engagement allows learners to use all their senses, resulting in deeper and more contextual understanding [21]. Thus, real-life experiences serve not only as a means of learning but also as a medium for constructing meaning and developing skills relevant to everyday life.

David A. Kolb (1984) states that knowledge is formed through a combination of grasping and transforming experience [22]. The Experiential Learning Theory (ELT) model developed by Kolb consists of four main stages: Concrete Experience (CE), Reflective Observation (RO), Abstract Conceptualization (AC), and Active Experimentation (AE). These four stages are dialectically interconnected in forming a continuous learning cycle. Through this process, learners not only receive information but also reflect on it, understand concepts, and test them in real-life situations. This approach strengthens adaptive and deep learning while accommodating the diversity of learners' potentials and learning styles in a holistic manner.

3. METHODS

The research method used in this study is a narrative review, an approach that presents a synthesis of literature in an argumentative manner to support the study's

conclusions. According to Xiao and Watson (2017), a narrative review aims to organize and interpret various sources of literature to strengthen understanding of a topic, thereby producing comprehensive conclusions [23]. In this approach, the discussion is structured into several sections or units that represent the main concepts or key variables being analyzed. Ferrari (2015) explains that each unit contains an in-depth discussion, including a critical evaluation of relevant literature [24].

The stages of this method begin with determining keywords that align with the research focus, which are then used to search for scholarly sources. This is followed by establishing selection criteria to identify relevant and high-quality literature. The next stage involves critically evaluating the content of the literature to identify the contributions, strengths, and limitations of each source. The final stage is constructing a systematic and integrated narrative, resulting in a logical and argumentative exposition that supports the overall objectives of the study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A holistic learning approach that integrates the concepts of basic human potential, multiple intelligences, and experiential learning demonstrates that effective education is not only oriented toward academic achievement, but also toward the development of the whole person. A synthesis of various sources shows that meaningful learning must be able to capture depth of understanding, encourage adaptation to change, and ensure the sustainability of individual development throughout life. The practical framework formulated in this study emphasizes the integration of cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and spiritual dimensions through contextual and reflective learning strategies.

4.1 Application of Multiple Intelligences in Cognitive, Social, Emotional, and Intellectual Development

The theory of multiple intelligences provides an important foundation for understanding the diversity of learners' potential. Each type of intelligence contributes specifically to the development of different dimensions of the self, yet collectively forms an integrated whole. Linguistic and logical-mathematical intelligences play a dominant role in cognitive and intellectual development. Linguistic intelligence supports symbolic thinking, communication, and conceptual understanding, while logical-mathematical intelligence strengthens reasoning, analysis, and problem-solving. In practice, discussion-based learning, debates, reflective writing, and problem-based learning can optimize these intelligences.

Visual-spatial and kinesthetic intelligences enrich cognitive processes through concrete experiences and non-verbal representations. Visual-spatial intelligence helps learners understand abstract concepts through images, maps, or models, while kinesthetic intelligence enables learning through movement and physical activity. Both intelligences support more active learning styles and reinforce understanding through direct experience.

Musical and naturalistic intelligences contribute to the development of emotional sensitivity and connectedness with the environment. Musical intelligence enhances the ability to recognize patterns, rhythm, and emotional expression, while naturalistic intelligence fosters ecological awareness and the ability to classify natural phenomena. Their integration in learning can create more contextual and meaningful experiences.

Interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligences play a central role in social and emotional development. Interpersonal intelligence enables individuals to understand others, collaborate, and build healthy social relationships. Intrapersonal intelligence, on the other hand, helps individuals understand themselves, including their emotions, motivations, and life goals. Both are essential in developing empathy, emotional regulation, and self-awareness.

Meanwhile, spiritual or existential intelligence provides a dimension of meaning

and purpose in learning. This intelligence helps learners reflect on life values, understand the meaning of existence, and make ethical decisions. Its integration transforms learning from merely informative into transformative. Therefore, applying multiple intelligences in holistic learning requires a flexible, multimodal, and inclusive curriculum design. Each learning activity should be designed to accommodate diverse intelligences so that all learners' potentials can develop optimally.

4.2 Integration of Experiential Learning in Encompassing Multiple Intelligences

Experiential learning provides an operational framework that enables the systematic integration of multiple intelligences through the learning cycle. Each stage in the experiential learning cycle contributes to activating different types of intelligence. The concrete experience stage involves learners' direct engagement in real activities. At this stage, kinesthetic, naturalistic, and interpersonal intelligences are highly dominant. For example, experiments, simulations, or field projects allow learners to learn through physical experience and social interaction.

The reflective observation stage encourages learners to reflect on their experiences. Intrapersonal and linguistic intelligences play a crucial role in this process. Learners are invited to write reflections, engage in discussions, or analyze experiences from multiple perspectives, thereby deepening their understanding. The abstract conceptualization stage involves forming concepts and generalizations from experience. Logical-mathematical and visual-spatial intelligences are dominant at this stage. Learners develop theories, models, or systematic frameworks of understanding based on their reflections.

The active experimentation stage is the process of applying concepts in new situations. This stage integrates nearly all intelligences, including kinesthetic, interpersonal, and logical-mathematical. Learners test their ideas in practice, making

learning a continuous cycle. In addition, musical and spiritual intelligences can be integrated across all stages through creative and reflective approaches—for instance, using music in learning or reflecting on life values in every learning experience. Thus, experiential learning is not only a method but also an integrative framework capable of accommodating diverse intelligences. This approach ensures that learning is not one-dimensional, but instead engages all aspects of the learner.

4.3 The Influence of Experiential Learning on the Development of Basic Human Potential

Experiential learning plays a significant role in developing basic human potential, which includes sensory abilities, reasoning, empathy, and awareness. This approach places experience at the center of learning, enabling the activation of all layers of potential simultaneously. Sensory abilities develop through direct involvement in concrete experiences. Activities such as field observations, experiments, or simulations allow learners to use all their senses, strengthening perception, enhancing attention, and enriching learning experiences.

Reasoning develops through reflection and conceptualization processes. In experiential learning, learners do not merely receive information; they analyze, interpret, and generalize their experiences. This process strengthens critical, logical, and systematic thinking skills. Empathy develops through social interaction and reflection on experience. Collaborative activities, group discussions, and project-based learning enable learners to understand others' perspectives. Reflecting on social experiences also helps them develop emotional sensitivity and the ability to understand others' feelings. Awareness—both self-awareness and contextual awareness—develops through deep reflection. Experiential learning encourages learners to understand the relationship between experience, values, and

life goals. This strengthens personal identity and the ability to make wise decisions.

Furthermore, experiential learning supports the sustainability of individual development. The continuous learning cycle allows learners to keep learning from experience, adapt to change, and develop their potential over time. A supportive, inclusive, and reflective learning environment is a key factor in ensuring that basic human potential can grow optimally.

5. CONCLUSION

The findings of this study indicate that the integration of multiple intelligences, experiential learning, and the concept of basic human potential can produce a practical and

applicable framework for holistic learning. Learning that is designed in an integrative manner is capable of developing all dimensions of learners, ranging from cognitive to spiritual aspects. Experiential learning serves as a bridge that connects various intelligences with the development of basic human potential through meaningful experiences.

This framework emphasizes that future education needs to move from fragmented approaches toward ones that are integrated, adaptive, and sustainable. Thus, learning does not only produce individuals who are academically competent, but also individuals who are able to understand themselves, adapt to their environment, and contribute positively to social life.

REFERENCES

- [1] Rybska, E.; Blaszak, M. (2020). Holistic education – a model based on three pillars from cognitive science. An example from science education. 2 (49), 45-59.
- [2] Riyono, B. (2023). Constructing the Theory of Human Basic Potential Based on Quranic Messages: Study with Maqasid Methodology. *Minbar. Islamic Studies*. 16(2):449–475.
- [3] Maris, SF. (2024). Holistic Learning for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development Program. *West Science Business and Management*. 2 (1), 1-8.
- [4] Dughi, T.; Rad, D. (2023). Relationship Building in a Pedagogical Setting for Holistic Teaching and Learning. *Holistic Teaching and Learning Environments for Well-being: A Handbook for Teachers Based on Classroom Stories and Practices across Asia and Europe*. 146-154.
- [5] Tytler R., Prain V., Hubber P., Waldrip B. (eds.) (2013), *Constructing representations to learn in science*. Springer Science & Business Media.
- [6] Ingabire, H. (2024). Holistic Education Approaches: Nurturing the Whole Child. *Research Output Journal of Education* 3(3):11-15.
- [7] Clark, J. (2005). Curriculum studies in initial teacher education: The importance of holism and project 2061. *Curric. J.* 16, 509–521.
- [8] Johnson, Andrew (2023) "Holistic Learning Theory: More than a Philosophy," *Journal of Contemplative and Holistic Education*: Vol. 1: Iss. 2, Article 3.
- [9] Miller, R. (2000). Beyond reductionism: The emerging holistic paradigm in education. *Humanist. Psychol.* 28, 382–393.
- [10] Miller, J.P. *Holistic Curriculum*. (2019). In *The Holistic Curriculum*, 3rd ed.; University of Toronto Press: Toronto, ON, Canada; pp. 5–21.
- [11] Bronfenbrenner, U. (1979). *The ecology of human development: Experiments by nature and design*. Harvard University Press.
- [12] Maslow, A. H. (1954). *Motivation and personality*. Harper & Row.
- [13] Cantor, P., Osher, D., Berg, J., Steyer, L., & Rose, T. (2019). Malleability, plasticity, and individuality: How children learn and develop in context. *Applied Developmental Science*, 23(4), 307–337.
- [14] Immordino-Yang, M. H., Darling-Hammond, L., & Krone, C. R. (2018). *The brain basis for integrated social, emotional, and academic development: How emotions and social relationships drive learning*. Aspen Institute.
- [15] Jamaludin, A. (2024). Developments in science of learning in education. In D. Hung, A. Jamaludin, & A. A. Rahman (Eds.), *Applying the science of learning to education* (pp. 1–18). Springer Nature.
- [16] Gardner, H. (1983). *Frames of mind: The theory of multiple intelligences*. New York: Basic Books. 11.
- [17] Gardner, H. (1999). *Intelligence reframed: Multiple intelligences for the 21st century*. New York: Basic Books.

- [18] Chetry, KK., Prakash, S. (2022). Multiple Intelligence Theory as Pedagogical Process and Its Relevance in New Education Policy 2020. *International Journal of Novel Research and Development*, 7(8), 24-35.
- [19] Al-Kalbani, M. S., & Al-Wahaibi, S. S. (2015). Testing the Multiple Intelligences Theory in Oman. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 190, 106–112.
- [20] Helate, T. H., Metaferia, T. F., & Gezahegn, T. H. (2022). English language teachers' engagement in and preference for experiential learning for professional development. *Heliyon*, 8(10).
- [21] Hasan, F., Maemoonah. (2024). Effectiveness of Experiential Learning Based on Multiple Intelligence to Increase MI Student Learning Interest. *Ideguru : Jurnal Karya Ilmiah Guru*, 9(1), 165-173.
- [22] Kolb, D.A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- [23] Xiao, Y., Watson, M. (2017). Guidance on Conducting a Systematic Literature Review. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 1 –20.
- [24] Ferrari, R. (2015). Writing narrative style literature reviews. *The European Medical Writers Association*, 24(4), 230-235.