

SchoolPLUS: Creating Community Schools Through Integral Development

Robert Regnier

University of Saskatchewan

Abstract

When the *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School - School^{Plus} A Vision for Children and Youth (2001)* called upon Saskatchewan educators to build school, community, and human service partnerships, the task force recommended that the formulation of holistic foci for meeting the needs of children in response to “tectonic” shifts that had shaken the ground of schooling. In recommending a holistic paradigm through which to transform schools to be more responsive to distinct learning requirements, the authors sought to increase the capacities of schools to support richer expressions of human meaning and purpose, which would extend supportive structures to include the marginalized. In this paper, I recommend the notion of *integral development* through self-generating transformation of community, inter-subjectivity, and differentiation as the basis for continuing to build toward the School^{PLUS} vision.

Keywords: School^{PLUS}; integral development; transformation; community; holistic



School^{PLUS}: Creating Community Schools Through Integral Development

The idea of “integral” development advanced by Edmund O’Sullivan (1999) in his book *Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century* combines notions of community, subjectivity, and differentiation as constitutive elements of self-generating, transformative change. This idea of development, distinct from even “integrated” development, which relates the parts to a whole, offers a conceptual basis for continuing to advance the insights of the final report, the *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School—SCHOOL^{PLUS}: A Vision for Children and Youth* (2001), (School^{PLUS} report). The introduction of School^{PLUS}, initially through the widespread consultation processes, which led to its development and subsequently through policy development and implementation, brought a new attention in the province to thinking about schools and what they should be seeking to accomplish. The task force built their recommendations on the idea of holism as a vehicle for integrating some work of government agencies and community organizations with schools to provide increasingly broad, inclusive, and rich services for children and youth. Within the context of the report’s purpose to offer more direct support to children and youth, the idea of holism offers a major improvement over fragmented community and individual government agency working relations with children, youth, and schools. This paper queries into what constitutes the requirements for a notion of “holism” adequate to the ideal of development recommend in the report.

School^{PLUS} report recommendations include the collaboration among community and government organizations through schools which otherwise may have little or no functional relationship with one another. The School^{PLUS} task force, therefore, advocates for relationships which mutually fulfill significant elements of their mandates through direct services to youth and children in schools. Since the School^{PLUS} report’s release in 2001, various projects have seen integration of social service, justice, and health services in many schools in Saskatchewan and increased involvement of community-based and business partnerships with schools. Nutana Collegiate in Saskatoon Saskatchewan is an example of one high school which has an Integrated School-Linked Services Team which builds services and service partnerships to “accommodate those youth coming to the school with complex social, emotional, health and developmental challenges” (Nutana Collegiate Integrated School Linked Services, n.d.). Among its resources, the school supports:

- a community developer,
- Students and Kids Center,
- Millie’s Early Learning Center,
- prenatal support program,
- primary care nurse practitioner,
- family support center,
- career employment counselor, and
- an Integrated School Linked Services worker.

It boasts a wide range of service partners including the John Howard Society, Family Service Saskatoon, and Saskatoon Police Services and sixteen education and business partners including the Affinity Credit Union, the Mendel Art Gallery and Wanuskewin Heritage Park. Through the emergence and evolution of these relationships, the school and school community have engaged in evolutionary processes of self-definition with its partners to serve and support the schools community development and student support possibilities in relation to the programmatic needs of the school and the flourishing of its students.

School^{PLUS} as a Holistic Approach

The School^{PLUS} committee made several important recommendations to transform Saskatchewan schools into community schools. Undertaken through broad consultation with the Saskatchewan public, the report was presented as a response to “tectonic shifts” in which the “ground on which ‘school’ stands has been shaken” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 5). “To re-create school and human services in the image of children and youth” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 113), the task force called “for a visionary spirit prepared to make a generous commitment of human and financial resources in the cause of a brighter future” (p. 113), and sought “decisive and determined action” to grasp the “urgency and significance of the moment, the magnitude of the concerns raised and the responses they invite” (p. 113). Furthermore, the School^{PLUS} task force called for substantive, complex changes in how schools are conceptualized and relate to society. In this regard it made three central recommendations: “That a community school philosophy be adopted for all public schools in the province” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 47); “[t]hat the responsibility for School^{PLUS} be seen as belonging to all human service departments - Social Services, Health, Justice, Saskatchewan Education, Post Secondary Education and Skills Training - as well as their third-party agencies, and community organizations” (p. 53); and “[t]hat the Government of Saskatchewan authorize the principle that all services to children and youth in the province shall be delivered in a truly integrated environment that is school-linked and, where feasible, school-based” (p. 64). The broad base of support that the task force garnered served as a major impetus for education reform initiatives Saskatchewan.

Within the first five years following 2001 when the School^{PLUS} report was commissioned, policy development by the Saskatchewan ministry of education supported initiatives to advance the School^{PLUS} model. Government response to School^{PLUS} came in the form of *Securing Saskatchewan’s Future, Ensuring the Wellbeing and Educational Success of Saskatchewan’s Children and Youth: Provincial Response – Role of the School Task Force Final Report* released in February of 2002. The advancement of School^{PLUS} was supported through the Saskatchewan School Boards Association, Saskatchewan Teachers Federation, Saskatchewan Educational Leadership Unit—University of Saskatchewan, and Saskatchewan Instructional Development and the Research Unit—University of Regina. In 2004, the government established Pre-Service, In-Service and Community and Youth Leadership Tables to advance School^{PLUS} throughout the province. Although policy initiatives in direct relation to School^{PLUS} have subsided particularly since the Saskatchewan Party came to form the provincial government in 2007, continued policy development in the area or related to School^{PLUS} may hold considerable promise for children and youth because the basic recommendations of School^{PLUS} remain sound. The notion of integral development may provide some insights to support advancement of the idea of holism utilized in the 2001 School^{PLUS} report.

However, when the general idea of holistic change is advanced as a basis for school development, it can simply mean linear change from one holistic or non-holistic form to another holistic form. Holistic change may not mean a dialectical or complex processes of change in which new school partners emerge into and/or out of relationship(s) with the school to effect unrealized possibilities or to center initiatives over time. Holistic change, instead, may merely mean movement from one static whole to another static whole; and it may not imply movement from a static to a dynamic whole. Furthermore, holistic notions can overemphasize harmony rather than the need to overcome resistance, contestation, and discord in change. The task force recommends a notion of holistic change in support of School^{PLUS} report recommendations in the form of integral development, change that is dynamic rather than static, dialectic rather than linear and constituted by continuous creative initiative and self-critical assessment.

We will fail to understand the role of the school if we believe that everything is pretty much business as usual; that the challenges the schools face today call simply for a little problem solving here, and a little fire control there. Nothing could be further from the truth. (Tymchak, 2001, p. 39)

In the School^{PLUS} report, Tymchak (2001) identified at least three kinds of demands to be addressed for agencies, schools, and communities to develop holistic environments for youth and children in response to the tectonic factors including demographic change, special needs, globalization, poverty, mobility, rural depopulation, curriculum reform, career concerns, violence, and cross-cultural concerns. The first demand was for recognition of the broad diversity of unmet needs that children and youth have in the wide variety of circumstances and conditions throughout the province (Tymchak, 2001, p. 4-20). This demand was in contrast to looking for structures and processes that address a limited or narrow range of needs. The second demand was to provide a framework to increase the capacity of agencies, schools, and communities to be responsive to these needs (p. 39-41). This demand meant making it possible for schools and communities to become increasingly resourceful and inventive. The third demand was to address these demands holistically as a community of agencies through a community schools philosophy (p. 114-115). In identifying the third demand, the task force report made specific suggestions for developing and sustaining a community school philosophy. Through its report, the task force moved the discussion of community schools and community school philosophy beyond the, then, current limitations of the provincial “Community Schools” approach, funding, and programs; it recommended stakeholder participation and commitments to support community school philosophy; and it identified specific funding and other initiatives for the government of Saskatchewan to advance the approach implied in such a philosophy. In analyzing these factors, the report suggested that addressing them all in a holistic manner was a meaningful challenge to the people of Saskatchewan. In fact, finding a framework to address them all was the point of the report. “We believe strongly that the whole community, including the state, needs to take responsibility for the education of children and youth” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 37). In recognition of how the role of the school has historically shifted at times of need and can, therefore, be altered again, the report insisted that recognizing this diversity in these tectonic shifts was core to re-conceptualizing the whole. The extent to which participants would be unable to identify and address the diversity of needs would constitute the limitations of the report’s implementation.

The School^{PLUS} task force broadened the notion of community schools beyond the limitations of the Saskatchewan government’s, then, funding formulas for its community schools program with its application to schools with high ratios of “high-risk” students, exclusion to elementary schools, and core and perimeter phenomenon (Tymchak, 2001, p. 46-47). Second, it identified community school philosophy with several values, beliefs, and goals including that schools are integral to communities, communities are resources to schools, parents are valued partners, community culture is reflected in schools, schools take a developmental approach to children (Tymchak, 2001, p. 47-48). Then, the task force identified and called upon stakeholder groups to “find appropriate ways to support this philosophy” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 48), “promote an approach to leadership and school administration,” (p. 48), and provide appropriate funding for expanding the community school program.

Holism as the Vehicle for Change Through School^{PLUS}

The School^{PLUS} task force called for an increasingly holistic and integrated approach to “providing an environment of other human service support for children and youth ... to meet the needs of the whole child in an integrated manner” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 45). In clarification of its call for distinct change, the task force reported that although some previous movement in the direction of the report had been undertaken, it had “been accomplished in spite of what school and the other agencies currently are: separate and distinct agencies” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 45). At the core of the report’s holistic vision is the “concept that public education take place within the larger context of human services – by whatever name” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 45). The conviction for integration is reiterated conversely as providing “human services for children and youth in the context of the school” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 45). This conviction clearly formulates an interest in supporting an integrated, holistic approach for the care of children.

The task force recommended “a new kind of institution dedicated to the needs of children and youth ... by creating a new kind of environment altogether ... [to overcome] the “apparent competition between public education and the other needs of children” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 44); and it is a response to the demands on schools to “deliver more and more services and meet more and more needs that schools were never intended to” (p. 44), but have undertaken as a matter of pressing necessity rather than mandated accommodation. The report’s offer of a holistic perspective on transformative change promised progressive rather than frustrated responses to the needs of children and youth fragmented by separated delivery agencies. The task force recommended moving beyond the traditional bureaucratic system of departmental line mandates and called for interdepartmental initiatives. Implementation of recommendations, in fact, were to depend on the very strength of this holistic approach which recognizes that responding to the needs of children and youth can be undertaken effectively within an understanding of the complexity, interconnectedness, and unity of the whole broader environment. While the *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School—School^{PLUS}: A Vision for Children and Youth* (2001) report fulfilled the requirements of its mandate, providing a substantive analysis, and garnering wide public support fostered through broad based consultations, as well as suggesting structures and processes that reflect elements of an integral development approach, the task force did not explicitly recommend an “integral development” approach. The issue of concern here is neither the adequacy of the initial report nor the adequacy of developmental assumptions through which the recommendations and implementation of the report have been made. Rather, the task here is to suggest a framework for continuing to interpret and implement policy within an integral development framework.

In his book, *Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st Century*, Edmund O’Sullivan (1999) valorizes holistic education. In his advocacy for education that “identifies with the emergent universe in its variety of manifestations” (pp. 75), O’Sullivan (1999) views holism regarding “all things as part of an indivisible unity or whole ... [and] time developmental in nature” (pp. 75). In this perspective, in which “all events can be seen from an evolutionary viewpoint” (pp. 75), O’Sullivan (1999) cautions against holistic approaches to educational development limited by static perspectives that put undue “emphasis on harmony and integration” (pp. 208). Rather than serve as vehicles for transformative change, static holistic approaches can arrest possibilities for evolutionary development by accommodating forms of integration that are incapable of supporting and sustaining creative initiative. Instead of instituting alternative change models that ensure flexibility and provide for evolution of structures and processes in response to the needs of children and youth, some holistic models may integrate school change into alternatives that

remain or become rigid, non-transformative and non-responsive to the direct needs of children and youth.

What will ensure that integration of services offered through the School^{PLUS} approach not simply consist of a holistic but “static” or “inert” responses to the education and other needs of children and youth? While the task force recommended that changes to schooling be undertaken within holistic assumptions to ensure integration, not all holistic paradigms may be sufficient. Some holistic paradigms may not be sufficiently holistic because they recognize entities as separate and distinct realities which are only to be integrated through external relations. For example, while various agencies may regard themselves as part of School^{PLUS}, these agencies may operate independently from the schools per se and with relative isolation while located within the School^{PLUS} paradigm and with relative isolation within particular schools. It may be possible, for example, to have justice or social services worker in schools but not become an integral part of the school, nor an integral part of schools culture. In such cases, holism can mean being integrated into schools but not “integral” to schools. When agencies do in fact become vital to a flourishing and responsive school culture, they become more than a simple addition to it. They become an integral to its whole purpose and creativity.

Models of holism which assume linear notions of time and space and of cause and effect may not sufficiently provide for dynamic notions of change and evolution. It is possible to have agencies, for example, that could simply include a School^{PLUS} mandate in their work as one of many mandates to which they attend as they would any other management line item through which they deliver services and without allowing for the creation of new synergies and relations to merge among and with other agencies in schools. Furthermore, other notions of holism which are pre-occupied with harmony, fail to acknowledge the disharmony and tension inevitable in change processes. In this understanding of holism, where every agency or group is given a “piece of the pie,” changes in relation and definition of services may allow schools to move to a new stage or phase or category of development but lack the capacity for some continuous creative emergence.

Integral Development Theory as a Framework to Advance Holistic Change

To ensure that the task force’s recommendations and its consequent policy thrusts are interpreted and implemented within a framework that supports the creative evolution of structures and processes, this paper recommends an integral model of development that “will be generative and open ended, offering an understanding of evolutionary processes that includes a critical role for stress in the transformation of evolving systems” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 209). O’Sullivan’s (1999) takes up the work of Thomas Berry which reconceptualizes human experience in relation to how the post modern view of the cosmos as creative, self-educating and self-emergent and how the human species and its education is best understood within appreciation of notions of creative self-emergence. Edmund O’Sullivan was professor at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto for more than three decades and taught child development, educational psychology, critical mass media studies, critical pedagogy, and cultural studies.

O’Sullivan (1999) takes up Berry’s notion of integral development as a concept which has the potential to avoid the pitfalls of holistic approaches that are static and/or non-developmental while responding to the crisis of mechanistic approaches that are linear and fragmented. Besides moving out of mechanistic world view models and into holistic ones that appreciate the interconnectedness of the world, integral development comprehends change as internally creative rather than externally driven. This notion provides a framework to interpret

the holistic notions in School^{PLUS} as appropriate for creating, sustaining, and regenerating initiatives that are responsive to the needs of children and youth.

What is integral development? O'Sullivan (1999) selects the phrase "integral development" in his work over holistic or integrated development because it connotes "a dynamic evolving tension of elements held together in a dialectical movement of both harmony and disharmony" (pp. 208-209). This notion "includes a critical role for stress in the transformation of evolving systems" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 208-209), a notion crucial in acknowledging that significant change in social and cultural systems requires overcoming various forms and structures of resistance. Integral means that holistic perspectives are not integrated merely constituted as static interconnections but are time-developmental in nature, evolutionary, and self-generating. This theory of integral development, therefore, champions creative transformative approaches in which self-generating, self-regulating creativity is regarded as central to development. This self-generation comes through enhancing and supporting process of differentiation in learning and teaching lured by the specificities of time, place, and purpose, rather than through definitions that reduce them to merely essential or reductionist behaviors, patterns and protocols. This self-generation comes through processes that create and constitute the ongoing subjectivity of persons and nature and through the dependent and engaged inter-relatedness of human beings in communion with one another and their environments. This notion which, when used to interpret and implement report recommendations, may allow participants and systems at different places to sustain their own agency and to create and re-create possibilities for agency.

To develop his theory, O'Sullivan (1999) draws most substantively upon the work of Thomas Berry who theologizes the creative evolutionary characteristics of the universe. In formulating his notion of integral development, he explicitly refers to Illya Priogine and Isabelle Stengers theory of dissipative structures. In their theory, ever higher forms of life evolve irreversibly through "fluctuations" of "integral systems of flowing wholeness" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 209). Within this perspective, the system's structural integrity remains constant until dissipation in the flow of energy causes the system to reorder itself into a new system which is "more integrated and connected than the previous one" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 209). "An integral mode of development will be generative and open-ended, offering an understanding of evolutionary processes that includes a critical role for stress in the transformation of evolving systems" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 209). This view follows from the tendency of living systems to recreate themselves. In education, school participants and their supporting agencies can evolve teaching and learning processes and conditions to be differentiated to need and condition, attentive to the possibilities for self-creative subjectivity, and cognizant of the potential for generating and living in supportive community and solidarity. This notion of integrated development builds on the view that the very evolution of the universe and nature which has given rise and continues to sustain the ongoing emergence of life is the basis for self regulating social, political and personal life.

What is it that will make creative transformation possible? For O'Sullivan (1999) the creative transformative processes of integral development occur through differentiation, subjectivity, and communion. He theorizes about integral development which regards creativity as constituting the broad arc of development in evolution. In his perspective, evolution is a dynamic emergence "when a system reaches beyond its present structure towards new orders of self-organisation" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 210). This self-regulating process is referred to as autopoiesis, self-creation. He sees that three principles "exist as dynamic emergent evolutionary processes" and "define the very essence of creativity itself" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 210). Differentiation, subjectivity, and communion reflect the self-creativity of the evolutionary processes of which humanity is a self-reflecting part. Through

these three dimensions “[i]ntegral development allies the deepest development of the primordial self with the deep structure of the cosmos” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 222). Within this structure, O’Sullivan recognizes each human as the consequence of “an incredible evolutionary history and creativity within which we draw from moment to moment” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 222). Each human being and community is a unique and distinct part of the trajectory of the self extending from the beginning of time with an open destiny to what one can become as a distinct part of this continually self-emergent universe. The purpose of education is to give each person and community access to the greatest possible flourishing within the trajectory of one’s open destiny.

Differentiation

All beings can be distinguished from one another by the intelligibility of their characteristics and history of their relationality through time and place. Each person, each learner, each community is, therefore, not simply differentiated by external manifestations of qualities. Rather, each is differentiated by the specificity of the complexity of distinct characteristics that constitute unique interiority of each person, community, and environment created through history, by relatedness to the rest of the world, and by its yet unactualized re-creative potential. Students and communities are not carbon copies of other students and communities. They do not have the identical potential and possibilities as one another. Each child and youth exists within specific social, gender, economic, racial, cultural, and other relations. Each has been influenced episodically and/or continuously by events and circumstances, and has developed distinctive capabilities, sensibilities, interests and potential in relation to distinctive possibilities. Each school and potential school community or social, political, and economic matrix of relations is similarly distinct.

Within the scope of School^{PLUS}, the notion of differentiation in the idea of integral development sees each set of school, community, and agency potentialities practically sustaining their own subjective creativity by drawing upon those possibilities which exist specifically for relations and initiatives among them. Each becomes creative to the extent that each draws practically upon available resources and responds to need and demands from within the trajectory of their mutually related historical development and emergent possibilities. Within this model, “striving for differentiation” is key to defining and implementing a provincial plan of school reform destined to foster community development and community philosophies of education that care for and support children and youth. Communities of learning are such communities by virtue of the particularity of their members, internal relations, external relations, historically received potential and emerging possibilities. The same is the case with each student. The self-enjoyment of each school as a community of learners and teachers, the creativity of each student, classroom, and school community, and the articulation of overall and immediate purposes in the work and growth of schools requires breaking bonds that try to define and reduce human experience to oppressive monochromatic sameness’s. Just as sexism was and is a form of reductionism that relegated women outside of human rights, deliberative recognition of essential and constructed gender differences liberated women to fully flourish and allowed men to more adequately benefit in the richness of gender distinctiveness. The same value for everyone is found in recognizing the worth in cultural distinctiveness, overcoming racism, and providing support for students with mental health issues.

The notion of differentiation as part of human self-creativity is inspired by recognition of the infinite distinctions of difference and the continuing generation of difference in the universe. It is by virtue of differentiation that the world has become so rich in its burgeoning display of various realities. Although “[t]he unique properties of each reality determine its

absolute value both for the individual and for the community” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 232), monocultures of the modern world force communities and schools into structures and processes that overlook value in diversity. Schools are notorious for such standardization as is exemplified in the current rush to standardized testing and high stakes testing in spite of efforts to differentiate realities and values through assessment for learning and of learning. Each learner, at any moment through the trajectory of their education, possesses distinctive creative capacities that are a function of the vector forces of life and learning that bring them to their ongoing current learning circumstances. Schools and communities need the wisdom to assist learners take advantage of the most meaningful distinctive learning possibilities that imaginative teachers and communities can identify and generate. Through processes of learning as differentiation in School^{PLUS}, students, teachers, agencies and school systems can identify and assess what constitutes and offers the most worthwhile resources and possibilities in the specific particularities of their situations and how that value might be appropriated.

Subjectivity

While the principle of differentiation in integral development recognizes the unique histories of events that constitutes each person, community, and agency, the principle of subjectivity realizes “that the universe consists of subjects: centres of sentience and spontaneity...sources of autonomous activity” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 192) and recognizes this subjectivity as “the self-organising capabilities of a living universe at all levels” (pp. 192). In this view, all entities have an “interior identity and formation” (O’Sullivan, 1999, pp. 210), “each individual has [its] own inner articulation” (pp. 232), and “each human being has a deep intentionality which is enriched by its own history in the world” (pp. 247). The ethical imperative of subjectivity is to develop this interiority to flourish through a full range of aesthetic, moral, and intellectual abilities beyond egocentric, alienated, and fragmented limitations.

Human subjectivity within this view is determined essentially by the creative capacity of subjects to select from the influences and relations that constitute their history and situation those elements most beneficial to shaping their present and future circumstances while positively excluding irrelevant or detrimental influences and relations. On each occasion, these influences and relations coalesce into the actual distinct subject (the concrescence) that one is. The self-creation of each learning occasion within this view, therefore, is both initially determined by the past from which learning arises and by selective projection into the future. The creative combining of inherited and projected characteristics constitutes subjectivity. The subjectivity of learning occasions begins as defined by the trajectory of past influences. However, how each subject feels about the past is also a function of how one imagines the past, and what constitutes possibilities for the future is a function of how one imagines the future. Through the creativity of learning, one appropriates what is relevant from one’s past and from the broadest framework of possibilities in their lived experience as one moves from learning event to event.

As used within the School^{PLUS} model, integral development of learners requires specific attention to developing educational practices that recognize the historical and situated determinants and limitations of each student’s learning practices. This model requires assessment of the prospects *for* learning which takes into account what constitutes most ideal and feasible possibilities. Creativity in learning, therefore, is viewed as a function of the lure of what constitutes the most interesting and worthwhile prospects of how one is drawn into self-disciplining and self-correcting acquisition of knowledge, and of how one constitutes what is learned into active principles. Learning is the constant recasting of self-emergent

subjectivity where the self engages and re-engages in assessing and selecting the most ideal possibilities for its own development. Within the School^{PLUS} model, the renewal of self-emergent subjectivity of learners, of school staffs and administration, and of schools in their relations with communities and agencies can drive integral development by recreating subjective and inter-subjective agencies and capacities in the novelty of new circumstances. By fostering the emergence of learner, school, and community self-valuing, community school philosophies can be imagined to develop further the subjective and inter-subjective capacity of participants to respond most effectively to the needs of children and youth. Agencies and schools can see themselves as moving from less complex to more complex centers of self-emergent subjectivity and from less sensitive to more responsive agencies for one another and for those they serve.

Communion

O'Sullivan's (1999) notion of communion includes the idea of bondedness to others and to the layered intelligences of bodies and communities of the world. Communion signifies the deep relational qualities through which much of our existence finds ultimate fulfillment. The intricacy of our personal world is embedded in community and much of our existence finds ultimate fulfillment in relatedness (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 192). "The loss of relationship and the consequent alienation is a kind of supreme evil in the universe" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 193). Loss of community occurs through forms of individualism, egocentrism, even autism where humans exclude one another including non-human realities from their world. To be related, however, does not necessarily mean to be in harmony. "There are relationships formed out of disagreements, out of conflicts, out of fear" (O'Sullivan, 1999, pp. 224). It is possible to foster experiences of communality and communion from deep-seated realizations of the interdependence of all parts of the universe. The processes of human communing and community development are rooted in constant creative actualization from the possibilities of relationship they have the potential to become. It is because of difference and the extent and character of difference that community is itself possible. Through the creativity of differentiation, new forms of bondedness and relatedness become possible. Without the ongoing creation and engagement of difference, the formation of new families and communities for example would not otherwise be possible.

The creation of new family, community, school, and agency relationships within the School^{PLUS} model can develop forms of working relationships with rootedness that sustain the belonging needed to explore possibilities and test limits in supportive, nourishing, and forgiving contexts that advance the best developmental interests of children and youth. Community not only fosters processes of differentiation which allow for the emergence of novel relations but it also allows for the emergence of more complex forms of subjectivity. Community, therefore, not only makes it possible for children and youth to discover and habituate value in distinct ways, community makes it possible for agencies and schools to work together in new forms and to maintain processes that allow for the emergence of new relationships. The focus on communion through School^{PLUS} fosters integral development through emergence of novel social, cultural, and political relations among students, families, schools, agencies, and communities.

Conclusion

In making its recommendations, the *Task Force and Public Dialogue on the Role of the School—School^{PLUS}: A Vision for Children and Youth* (2001) presented holistic approaches through which to advance the development of community school philosophies, to locate responsibility for human services in all government departments, third-party agencies, and community organizations, and to deliver all services to children and youth in the province in

an integrated school-linked, school-based environment. This paper has argued that the notion integral development provides a vehicle through which to advance holistic approaches. This theory emphasizes a creative approach to transform schools and communities based on the notions of differentiation, subjectivity, and communion as its fundamental principles for ensuring interagency participation that will actually “optimize services for children and youth” (Tymchak, 2001, p. 51).

References

- Nutana Collegiate integrated school linked services* (n.d.). Retrieved from <http://schools.spsd.sk.ca/nutana/Saskatoon%20Health%20Region.htm>
- O'Sullivan, E. (1999). *Transformative learning: Educational vision for the 21st century*. NY: ZED Books.
- Tymchak, M. (2001). *Task Force and public dialogue on the role of the school, School^{PLUS} — A vision for children and youth toward a new school, community and human service partnership in Saskatchewan*. Final Report to the Minister of Education, Government of Saskatchewan. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Instructional and Research Development Unit.