

Essential Components of Miller’s Soulful Curriculum Theory

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The soulful curriculum makes the educational environment dynamic and robust. This study’s primary purpose was to identify the essential components of the soulful curriculum from Miller’s viewpoint. An inductive approach and content analysis were applied to achieve this purpose. The essentials, principles, and techniques of the soulful curriculum were extracted from Miller’s perspective, and finally, the critical components of the soulful curriculum were inferred and explained by integrating the essentials, principles and techniques of Miller’s Curriculum. Accordingly, we reviewed Miller’s two seminal works called *Holistic Education* and *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum*. The cause for selecting these two works was comprehensiveness and consistency in expressing John Miller’s ideas fundamental to orientation. By integrating the results, the essential components of the soulful curriculum were categorized into six dimensions: holism, introspection, naturalism, connectivism, balancing, and energization.

Keywords: soulful curriculum, holism, naturalism, connection, John Miller

Introduction

A soulful curriculum attempts to find some ways for identifying students’ talents (Nutall, 2006; Miller, 2019). Encountering such a curriculum, students can obtain an opportunity to find out some questions about the meaning and destination of life, glorification of joyfulness and beauty, appreciation of vitality, development of creative capacities, identification of the limitations in some dimensions of a specified curriculum, social evolution, and ability to pass through life’s phases calmly and without tension (Nutall, 2006). Using soulful elements, such as meditation, imagination, contemplation and presence in the curriculum has many positive effects such as decreasing teachers’ and students’ distress, increasing concentration, enhancing safe interpersonal relations, raising awareness of self and others, truly encountering negative feelings, increasing positive feelings such as joyfulness and passion, decreasing addictive and destructive behaviours, improving career, sport and educational performance, motivating, and increasing creativity and positive change in the brain structure (Irwin & Miller, 2016). By considering the soul as a source for energy and providing necessary arrangements in the way of morale boosting, it is possible to elicit expansion of the soul in curriculum. The soul is an energy source in human beings and causes motive and vitality. The deepest feelings and tendencies are located in the soul, and when discovered and

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truly applied, a deep satisfaction will be generated (Miller, 2000). When the soul is being ignored, students are converted into automated robots or templates so that their minds will be inactively filled with teachers' knowledge (Peterson, 1999).

As noted by Miller (1996), a mechanistic view on education results in the absence of joyfulness and vitality in the learning process. Curriculum is a living entity and it is a must to avoid supposing it as a map (Pinar, 2011). It is instead achievable by creating the beauty of soulful learning in the classroom (Sierk, 2014). Keeping distance from the meaning of curriculum as a map stems from the notion "currere" which distinguishes this reality that each student had his or her own special past, present and future, and to let the special nature of each student shape his or her life and practices in the classroom. An education system with a dynamic and living curriculum tries to identify and foster all personal and physical dimensions of learners and their effects on the curriculum (Sierk, 2014). However, the common curricula ignore some of the dimensions and keep a mechanistic and partial view toward human beings. Branching and partitioning curricula, focusing on objective tests, standardizing knowledge and isolating students from nature are other problems in the common curricula (Miller, 2010; 2019). Ben David (2014) conceives contemporary educational programs as mind-to-mind education in which students' minds are expected to be filled with information and mental content of teachers; in return, an ideal education is the one that involves the heart and soul of students in learning process.

As one of the contemporary experts in curriculum, John P. Miller, criticizes the competitive context in education and the branching and partitioning curricula, and instead, presents comprehensive and logical guidelines on designing and composing a holistic and soulful curriculum. He is one of the main facilitators of soulful curriculum in the educational network and his studies focus on holistic and soulful learning, meditation in educational sessions and curriculum orientations (Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 2012). Thus, this study aimed at describing and explaining Miller's curriculum theory and identifying the essential components of a soulful curriculum in his ideas and thoughts.

Methods

This study is a content analysis of Miller's selected works. The analysis unit used specialized words and concepts. A researcher-made check-list was used for data collection. A recoding process by a second evaluator was used in order to evaluate reliability according to the content analysis method. Two key works of Miller were selected, and then five pages of each work were picked out (a total of ten pages). These pages were delivered to the second recoder, and at last, the amount of congruence between the findings of the two recoders was calculated. The observed value was equal to 0/89. The validity evaluation was performed based on specialized judgement. For this aim, five specialists in the education field were appointed to judge and report the processes of concept selection and coding. They reported high congruence among the findings evidenced by the validity of coding process.

Results

Fundamental Orientations of John Miller's Thoughts

In this section, the basic orientations of Miller's thoughts are explained by mainly focusing on his two comprehensive works, namely *Education and the Soul: Toward a Spiritual Curriculum* (Miller, 2000) and *The Holistic Education* (Miller, 2019). Texts from these and other related works are directly quoted or indirectly extracted and cited. Then, essential components of the soulful curriculum are implicitly or explicitly extracted from his viewpoints. In order to obtain a purposive review of Miller's works, answering three core questions was considered the basis of this study: (1) What are the necessity and causes of developing a soulful curriculum from the viewpoint of Miller? (2) What are basic principles of a soulful curriculum from the viewpoint of Miller? and (3) What are the main techniques for ensouling a curriculum according to Miller? The answers to these three core questions have been shown in Tables 1-3.

1. What are the necessity and causes of developing a soulful curriculum from the viewpoint of Miller?

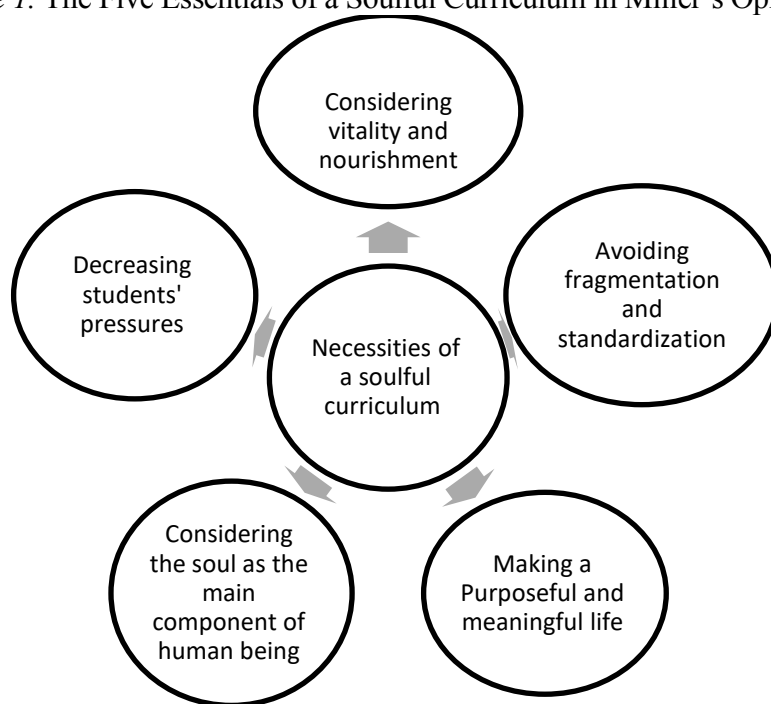
Table 1. Essentials of the Soulful Curriculum from Miller's Viewpoint

Text	Primary concepts	Essentials
Without soul, our society seems to lack a basic vitality or energy. By reclaiming soul, we find that the classroom or any educational encounter takes on a new vitality and purpose. Students and teachers no longer go through the motions, but instead feel alive and nourished in what they do (Miller, 2000, pp. 3-4). By bringing soul into education, we can make our classrooms more vital and energizing places (Miller, 2000, p. 9). The pressure for quantifying all learning without concern for quality represses the student's soul. Instead, we can learn to bring onto the Earth an education of deep joy where the soul once again learns to sing (Miller, 2000, p. 12).	Attention to vitality, Energization, Nourishment or joyfulness in educational systems	Attention to vitality and Nourishment or joyfulness in educational systems
The pace of life itself is soulless. We all seem in a mad rush to acquire and consume. Children too feel the pressure. We are told constantly that the purpose of schooling is to prepare our children to compete in a global economy (Miller, 2000, pp. 3-4). We now live in a period when educators are more interested in testing students than exploring how they can learn and develop as human beings (Miller, 2007, p. vii). Education in many cases has become a series of tests and hurdles rather than focusing on learning. The more we emphasize tests and rewards, the less children learn. As a result, schooling can become a grim pastime where children feel a variety of academic and social pressures (Miller, 2000, p. 4).	Mental pressures, Global competition, Testing, Social pressures	Decreasing imposed mental pressures on students
Soulful elements such as meditation, imagination, contemplation and presence in curriculum have many	Soulful elements, Secrets and innermost	Considering the soul as the main

<p>effects, including among others, reducing teachers' and students' stress and increasing their interpersonal relations, motivation, self-awareness to detect harmful reactive patterns of thought, feeling and action, positive emotions, including happiness and compassion, enhancing performance, whether in work, sports, or academics, stimulating and releasing creativity and so on (Irwin & Miller, 2016, p. 95).</p> <p>The holistic curriculum is rooted in the presence of the teacher (Miller, 2007, p. 190).</p> <p>To deny spirit is to deny an essential element of our being and thus diminish ourselves and our approach to education. By bringing soul more explicitly into the educational process, we can have an education for the whole person rather than a fragmented self (Miller, 2000, p. 9).</p> <p>We are not capable of union with one another on the deepest level until the inner self in each one of us is sufficiently awakened to confront the inmost spirit of the other (Miller, 2019, p. 33).</p> <p>In the industrialized society we live in our heads, denying our deeper knowing and intuitions (Miller, 2019, p. 6).</p> <p>This tranquil, well founded, wide-seeing soul is no express-rider, no attorney, and no magistrate: it lies in the sun and broods on the world (Miller, 2000, p. 29).</p> <p>We can awaken the inner self through contemplation and love (Miller, 2019, p. 33).</p>	wonder of a human being	and most necessary component of a human being
<p>Unfortunately, the human world since the Industrial Revolution has stressed compartmentalization and standardization. The result has been fragmentation. This fragmentation permeates everything. First, we have separated economic life from the surrounding environment and the result has been ecological devastation. We seem to have poisoned everything, including the vast expanses of the oceans, because we see ourselves as separate from the organic processes that surround us. Second kind of fragmentation is social fragmentation. Third form of fragmentation is within ourselves. Finally, another form of fragmentation is in our culture –a lack of shared sense of meaning, or mythology (Miller, 2019, p. 5).</p> <p>The reason why the world lacks unity and lies broken and in heaps is because man is disunited with himself. We find ourselves disconnected from our bodies and our hearts. Education specifically has done much to sever the relationship between head and heart (Miller, 2019, pp. 5-6).</p>	Compartmentalization, Fragmentation, Standardization	Avoiding fragmentation and standardization
<p>A soulful approach to education can help bring vitality and a deeper sense of purpose and meaning to classrooms (Miller, 2000, p. 10).</p> <p>Holistic education assumes the individual should build his/her own identity, the real meaning and purpose of the life through the connection with society, nature and spirituality (Miller & Nozawa, 2005, p. 45).</p> <p>Spiritual intelligence or wisdom is one of the main goals of transpersonal psychology. Wisdom is intelligence rooted in the soul. The ancients call this the 'thinking heart.' Wisdom links intuition and intelligence in order to deal with the large questions: What is our role in the universe? How can we deal with human suffering? (Miller, 2019, p. 31).</p>	Purpose, Meaning, Identity	Making a purposeful and meaningful life

Considering the items in Table 1, the essentials of a soulful curriculum from the viewpoint of Miller can be depicted as Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Five Essentials of a Soulful Curriculum in Miller’s Opinion



2. What are basic principles of a soulful curriculum from the viewpoint of Miller?

Table 2. Basic Principles of a Soulful Curriculum from the Viewpoint of Miller

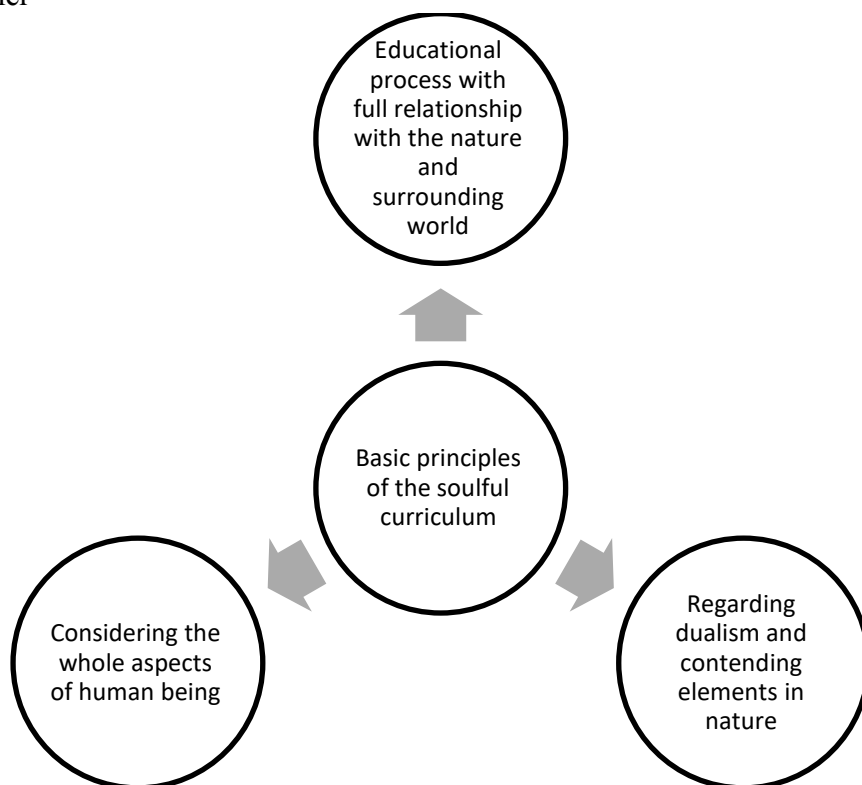
Text	Primary concepts	Basic principles
<p>The focus of the holistic education is on relationships: the relationship between linear thinking and intuition, the relationship between mind and body, the relationships among various domains of knowledge, the relationship between the individual and community, the relationship to the earth, and our relationship to our souls (Miller, 2019, p. 89).</p> <p>The holistic curriculum sees the student in relation to community. Community refers to the classroom, the school community, the community of one’s town and nation, and the global community. The student develops interpersonal skills, community service skills and social action skills (Miller, 2000, p. 13).</p> <p>Spirituality manifests a relationship between inner life and endless world, achieved by visualization, meditation and dream work (Miller, 1983, p. 230).</p> <p>There are many different ways in which we can connect academic disciplines and school subjects. For example, Waldorf education connects subjects through the arts</p>	<p>Connectedness, Relationship, Counterdependence, Dynamism, Unity, Harmony</p>	<p>Education in full relationship with the nature and the surrounding world</p>

<p>(Miller, 2019, p. 17). This connection can involve listening to what Western industrialized society can no longer hear these voices, which include the sounds of animals, the rippling of the stream, or even the roar of the wind. This connection involves seeing ourselves as part of the web of life rather than separate from the earth (Miller, 2019, p. 17). The soul is the deepest part of being, which at the same time is connected to the highest principle of the universe – God, or the Tao (Miller, 2019, p. 31). For centuries, various philosophical and spiritual traditions have discussed the two selves of human nature. One self is our ego, which is our socialized sense of who we are. It involves all the roles we play such as wife/husband, father/mother, daughter/son, as well as our job identity. Beyond this self is what has been called our soul, or 'big person'. The soul opens to us when we hear a piece of music, see a child at play, are deeply involved in our work, or are simply being present in nature. Our ego sees self as separate from everyone else and often competing with others in a never-ending struggle. There is no struggle for the soul since it senses a deep connection to others and all life. It realizes separation is an illusion exposed by a fundamental unity (Miller, 2019, p. 17). Transcendental education is located in the higher self or center in which an individual experiences unification or connection with other forms. In such education, self-transcendence is the optimal purpose of education (Miller, 1983, p. 96). Nature at its core is interrelated and dynamic. We can see this dynamism and connectedness in the atom, organic systems, the biosphere, and the universe itself. Unfortunately, the human world since the Industrial Revolution has stressed compartmentalization and standardization. The result has been fragmentation. Nature is composed of interconnected systems that form multilevel structures. At each level are 'integrated, self-organizing wholes consisting of smaller parts and at the same time, acting as parts of larger wholes' (Miller, 2019, p. 5). Soul tends to connect rather than separating (Miller, 2000, p. 28). Love joins the individual soul with the world soul (Miller, 2019, p. 24). Spiritual intelligence or wisdom is one of the main goals of transpersonal psychology (Miller, 2019, p. 31). Intuition is a direct knowing. In contrast, linear cognition involves a sequential, observable process. Intuition was characterized as seeing without glasses, hearing without filters, touching with ungloved hand. The immediate character of intuition does not imply accuracy, rightness, or moral goodness. It does imply commitment and clarity. In the intuitive mode, there is no mediator (Miller, 2019, p. 92). Wisdom links intuition and intelligence in order to deal with the large questions (Miller, 2019, p. 31).</p>		
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<p>All things have arisen mutually and mutually supportive, in the sense that they require one another as a condition of their existence. The man requires the woman; the woman, the man; the night requires the day; the day the night; the good, the bad; the bad, the good and so on (Miller, 2019, p. 10).</p> <p>The holistic curriculum attempts to restore a balance between linear thinking and intuition. Various techniques such as metaphor and visualization can be integrated with more traditional thinking approaches so that a synthesis is achieved between analysis and intuition (Miller, 2019, p. 16).</p> <p>The yin and yang need each other for there to be health in the cosmos, the earth, cultures, institutions (e.g., schools and classrooms), and the individual. If one predominates to the exclusion of the other, sickness arises. One could argue that Western culture and education have been dominated by the yang, which tends to emphasize the rational, the material, the masculine, and the individual to the exclusion of the intuitive, the spiritual, the feminine, and the group (Miller, 2019, p. 10).</p> <p>This imbalance in the Western life has led to sickness in cultures and institutions (Miller, 2019, p. 10).</p> <p>A soulful curriculum recognizes and gives priority to the inner life. It seeks a balance and connection between our inner and outer lives (Miller, 2000, p. 49).</p> <p>The focus of holistic education is on relationships: the relationship between linear thinking and intuition (Miller, 2019, p. 16).</p> <p>Providing opportunities for rest, renewal, and ritual every seven days and seven years would help heal the dualisms that exist in ourselves and in our workplaces. These dualisms include "masculine/feminine; yin/yang; day/night; north/south; east/west; human/divine" (Miller, 2007, p. 44)</p>	<p>Mutuality, Balance, Integration,</p>	<p>Regarding dualism and contending elements in the nature</p>
<p>Holistic education considers a broader conception of learning and a vision of the whole child (Miller, 2007, p. 7). To link body, mind, and spirit is to seek the wholeness that is at the heart of holistic learning. (Miller et al., 2005, p. 235).</p> <p>Transformational learning acknowledges the wholeness of the child. The curriculum and child are no longer seen as separate, but as connected, but as a whole (Miller, 2019, p.14).</p> <p>The aim of the transformation position is the development of the whole person. The student is not reduced to a set of learning competencies or thinking skills, but is seen as a whole being. Certainly when we view the student as less than a whole person, we diminish the opportunity for authentic learning (Miller, 2019, pp. 14-15).</p> <p>From a holistic perspective, it is possible to see the whole human body, including the smallest cell, as learning, growing, and developing (Miller, 2007, p. 90).</p> <p>A broader vision of education is needed that includes a focus on the whole person (Miller, 2000, p. 4).</p>	<p>Holism; Growth of a person as a whole</p>	<p>Considering the whole aspects of human existence in education</p>

Considering the items in Table 2, the main principles of a soulful curriculum according to Miller can be depicted as Figure 2.

Figure 2. Three Basic Principles of a Soulful Curriculum from the Viewpoint of Miller



3. What are the main techniques for ensouling a curriculum according to Miller?

Table 3. The Basic Techniques for a Soulful Curriculum from the Viewpoint of Miller

Text	Primary concepts	Basic techniques
<p>The damage done to inner life, to aloneness and quietness, through the imposition of banal or pornographic or violent images by television is a considerable wound. I have written extensively on the use of meditation, by teachers, to help them become more centered in their lives and in the classroom. However, the use of meditation by students is a much more difficult and controversial issue. Despite the difficulties, more and more people are beginning to make the case for meditation in the schools (Miller, 2000, p. 50).</p> <p>One important reason for requiring meditation is that it can be a form of self-learning. Insightful meditation considers mindfully watching our own experience, for gaining deeper insight into ourselves and learning from ourselves and own experiences (Miller & Nozawa, 2005, p. 43).</p> <p>Bonaventure considers three eyes for a triple vision, as explained: the eye of flesh, of reason, and of contemplation; the eye of flesh, to see the world and what it contains; the eye</p>	<p>Quietness, Centralization, Insightful presence, Thoughtful vision, Deep vision, Personal experiences, Being in the moment</p>	<p>Meditation</p>

<p>of reason, to see the soul and what it contains; the eye of contemplation, to see God and that which is within Him (Drake & Miller, 1991, p. 5).</p> <p>Meditation encourages being in the moment and thus facilitates our presence as teachers. As the practice develops, teachers in Professor Miller's class find they are less reactive in the classroom. For example, one teacher in a previous study said, "I don't remember the last time I raised my voice." She added that a student once asked, "Miss, how come you're so calm all the time?" (Irwin and Miller, 2016, p. 88).</p> <p>We do not need to teach young children to meditate. In many ways they already meditate with their focus on the here and now (Miller, 2000, p. 57).</p> <p>Since many adolescents feel a great deal of stress related to schoolwork and or peer pressure, meditation could serve as a preventative to stress-related physical, emotional, or mental illness (Miller, 2000, p. 52).</p> <p>One of the key factors in the development of healthy emotions and an inner life is the ability to monitor one's feeling state (Miller, 2000, p. 50).</p> <p>Children who are in the company of adults who are attuned to the child's emotions are more likely to grow up to be healthy and successful citizens (Miller, 2000, p. 51).</p>		
<p>Another tool for enhancing intuition is metaphor. Metaphorical thinking involves making connections between two words or ideas that are not normally related but which share some commonality (Miller, 2019, p. 104). In synectics, three analogies are important: direct analogy, personal analogy, and compressed conflict. Using analogy in synectic teaching allows the student to make a familiar stranger and a stranger familiar (Miller, 1983, p. 185).</p> <p>Metaphorical thinking involves making connections between two words or ideas that are not normally related but which share some commonality. For example, the human kidney is like a fuel filter in that both screen out certain molecules (Miller, 2019, p. 104).</p> <p>In synectic teaching, we use the metaphor for growing students' creative skills. Because its reliance on processes in the right hemisphere of the brain, synectics can be considered as a spiritual perspective (Miller, 1983, p. 185).</p>	<p>Metaphor, Intuition, Metaphoric thinking, Analogy, Synectics, Certain processes in right hemisphere</p>	<p>Metaphorical teaching</p>
<p>Our education system too has little respect for silence. In silence, we can learn to listen to voices of the earth. We can also begin to hear other people at a much deeper level (Miller, 2000, p. 136).</p> <p>We are overwhelmed by the spoken and written word, yet much change occurs silently within the soul of the person and the soul of the institution. However, our lack of sensitivity to the nonverbal means that we often overlook elements that contribute to successful change within an institution. The problem with words is that they can never totally convey the meaning of direct experience. Again the spaces between what we say allow our words to have meaning. If we crowd these spaces, our speech tends to lose its impact. It is often in the silent spaces that the soul can see what needs to be done (Miller, 2000, pp. 48-49).</p>	<p>Listening, Non-verbal means, Silent spaces</p>	<p>Silence</p>

<p>One example of using visualization in science is to have students imagine magnetic fields around a transformer. The students can see themselves as electrons in the wire of the coil and experience the movement generated by the rapidly changing force field. Then the students can visualize themselves as electrons moving faster and faster as the two fields surrounding the coils interact and come closer. Another example of visualization in science is to have students imagine themselves as white blood cells moving through the circulatory system in the human body. First, they visualize the blood being re-circulated through the heart. The students can also imagine the white cells and their role in the immune system in fighting disease (Miller, 2019, pp. 100-101).</p>	<p>Visualization, Imagination, Experience</p>	<p>Visualization</p>
<p>It is helpful to have a place where we can write down our deepest feelings and longings. For example, we can write about our love and feelings for others here. We can record moments when we felt the ego drop away and the soul was exposed (Miller, 2000, p. 135). Autobiography, then, can provide a silent bond between teacher and student. Clearly, such work must be handled with sensitivity and care by the teacher (Miller, 2000, p. 73). Marion Woodman writes: "Another way I nurture my soul is by keeping a daily journal. My journal is my soul book. It is my dialogue with God. Since the age of twelve, I have searched for my essence, and I have recorded my terrors, my hopes, my delights in my journal. In doing this I have affirmed my own feelings and my own values. I have sought to discover my unique purpose. In this way, I have tried to live my own truth, which often ran counter to the culture" (Miller, 2000, p. 135)</p>	<p>Deep senses, Hopes, Terrors, Delights, Values, Purposes, Personal realities</p>	<p>Writing a daily journal</p>
<p>Select a piece of music that evokes strong images for you. Play it for the class (after a relaxation exercise and suitable introduction) and ask them to let the music suggest images, moods, feelings, and sensations to them. Tell them to be receptive to whatever comes to them as the music plays. Afterward, ask them to talk or write about the experience in either prose or poetry (Miller, 2019, p. 102). One of the most popular ways of using visualization is to take the students on a journey of some kind and then have them write a story about their journey (Miller, 2000, p. 57).</p>	<p>Strong images, Moods, Feelings, Sensations, Reception, Transcendence, Talking or writing about the experiences in either prose, poetry, story, etc.</p>	<p>Creative writing</p>
<p>Dreams ceased to be valuable guides for self-direction The language of dreams is highly symbolic. These symbols may come from our personal consciousness or from the collective unconscious. Working with these symbols provides greater insights and meanings. Dreams are a powerful tool for greater self-direction and self-awareness (Miller, 2000, pp. 65-66). I have a dream that one day it will be universally acceptable for students of all ages to study their dreams. This work will be considered both valuable and meaningful in directing each student towards their greatest potential. Dream work will find a place in language arts, secondary English, art, drama, music and religious studies. I look forward to a day when dreams will be considered an important method of holistic education,</p>	<p>Dream, Self-direction, Self-awareness, Symbolic language, Holistic education, Access to self, Messages from the self, Dream-based reality, Inner life and</p>	<p>Dreamwork</p>

<p>one that nourishes the mental, physical and spiritual needs of each student. I envision a time when dream work and meditation in education will not be considered unique, mystical or mysterious (Miller, 2000, p. 64). According to Jung, dreams can allow us to access the Self. Images that come forth in dreams can indicate messages from the Self (Miller, 2000, p. 66). The difference between the da Vincis of this world and others is that they can pluck a thought or an idea that comes to them in the still of night, in a dream and create from it reality. To them the true world is their inner world. Above all, they are good listeners, not only to other people but [to] that small, quiet voice within (Miller, 2000, p. 67).</p>	<p>quiet voice within</p>	
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Based on the items on Table 3, the techniques of a soulful curriculum from Miller’s viewpoint can be depicted as Figure 3.

Considering the items in Table 3, it can be inferred that the four processes of intuition, contemplation, transcendentalism and presence are used in the seven techniques of the soulful curriculum. These four processes can be regarded as contextual processes of a soulful curriculum. In addition, Miller conceives the soul as the core component and considers true instructing and learning as a concentration on a person as a whole by focusing on his/her soul. The relationship among contextual processes of a soulful curriculum can be depicted as Figure 4.

Figure 3. Seven Techniques of a Soulful Curriculum in Miller’s Opinion

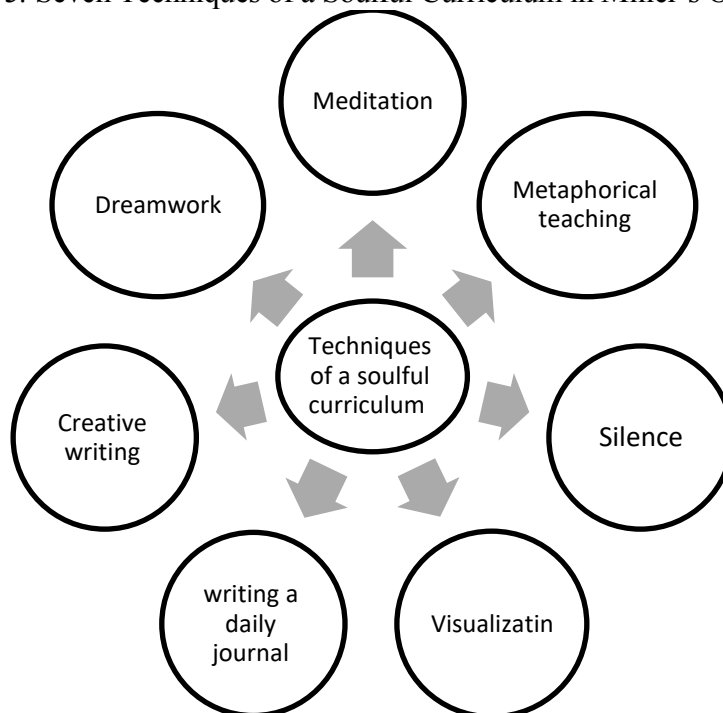
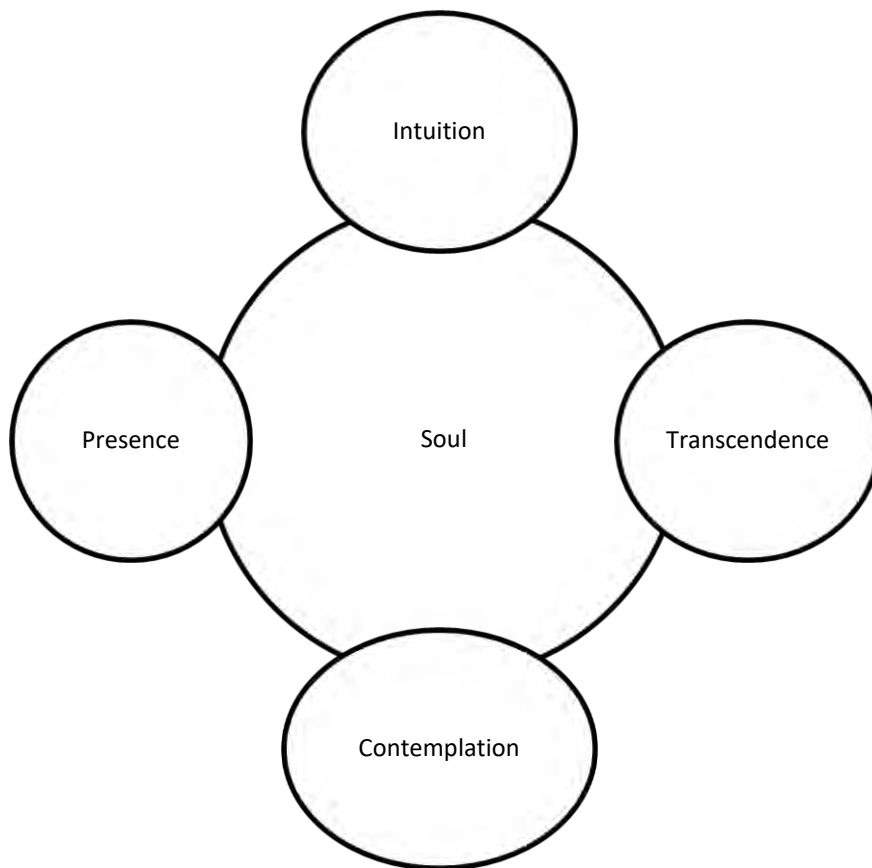


Figure 4. Contextual Processes of the Soulful Curriculum in Miller's Opinion



Essential Components of Miller's Soulful Curriculum Theory

After explaining the main elements embedded in Miller's thoughts on necessities, the principles and techniques of the soulful curriculum in Tables 1-3 and Figure 4, a comprehensive and integrative view has been described in this section in order to extract essential components of the soulful curriculum. Considering Miller's main works and what was mentioned above, it can be said that Miller conceives the soul as the main part of human existence. Therefore, it is necessary to regard human soul and his/her main features as the essential component of the soulful curriculum. Figure 5 depicts the main features of the soul and their relations.

Figure 5. Main Features of the Soul and their Relations

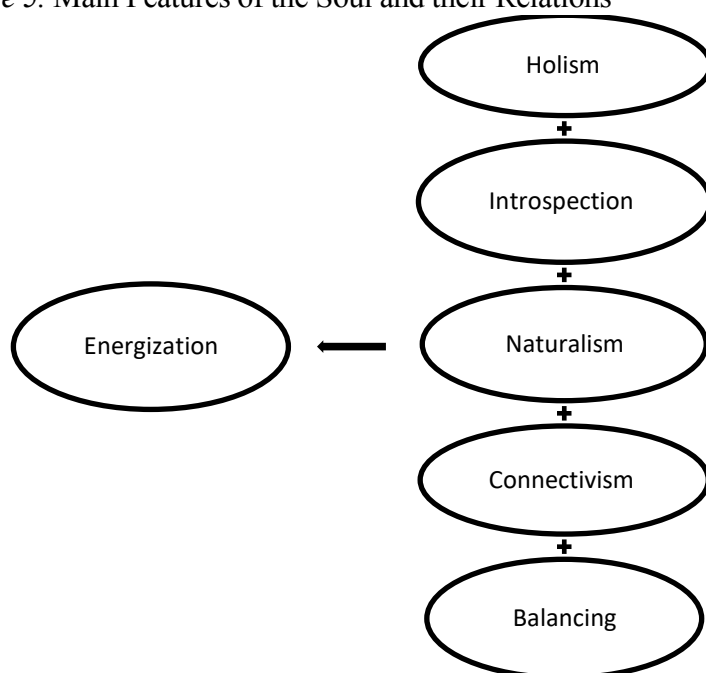


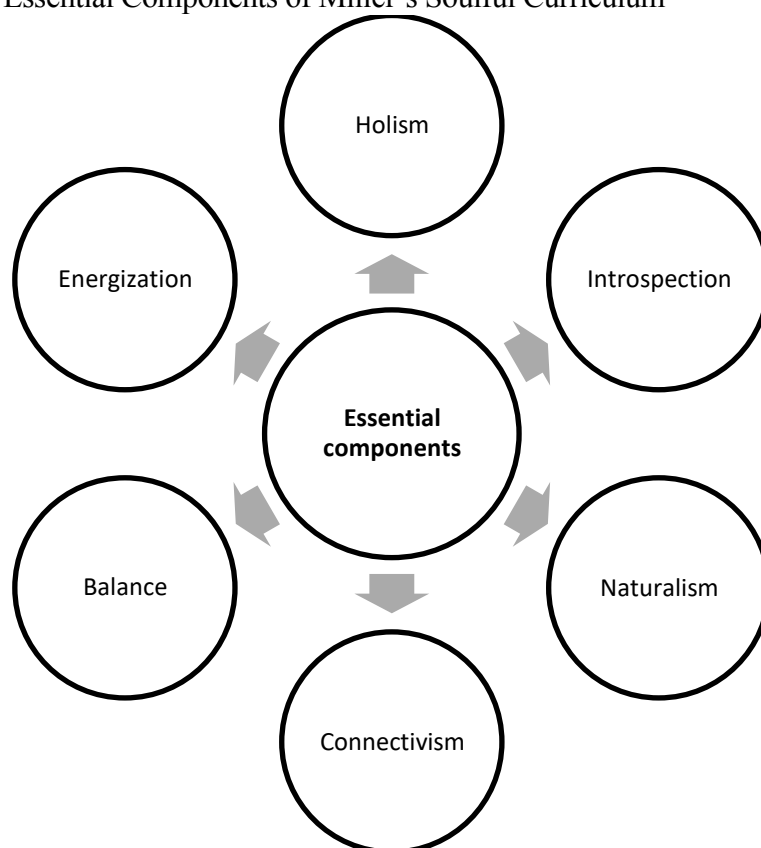
Figure 5 shows that energization is the result of full consideration of these five features of the soul (holism, introspection, naturalism, connectivism and balancing). As a result, essential components of Miller's soulful curriculum can be explained in the six axes summarized in Table 4 and depicted in Figure 6.

Table 4. Main Concepts and Essential Components of the Soulful Curriculum

Essentials	Basic principles	Main techniques	Primary concepts	Essential components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering the soul as the main component of human - Avoiding fragmentation and standardization - Making a purposeful and meaningful life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Considering the whole aspects of a human by educational system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation -Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - Writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concentration on a person as a whole - Reception, - Transcendentalism - Deep vision - Certain processes in right hemisphere - Meaning - Purpose - Identity 	Holism
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decreasing students' pressures 	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation -Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Emotions and senses - Social and mental pressures - Inner life - Deep vision - Inner self - Self-awareness - Deep insight - Certain purposes 	Introspection

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Personal messages - Non-verbal actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hopes - Horrors - Dreams - Presence at the movement 	
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational process with full relationship with the nature and surrounding world - Regarding dualism and different entities in the nature by educational system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation - Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Integration - Connection - Natural elements 	Naturalism
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Educational process with full relationship with the nature and surrounding world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation - Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Connection - Balancing - Integration - Unification 	Connectivism
-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regarding dualism and different entities in the nature by educational system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation - Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrating and balancing dualism 	Balancing
-Considering vitality and nourishment in educational systems	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation - Metaphorical teaching - Silence - Visualization - writing a daily journal - Creative writing - Dreamwork 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vitality - Energizing - Nourishment 	Energization

Figure 6. Essential Components of Miller's Soulful Curriculum



Conclusions

The current view of standard curricula toward the human being is mechanistic and partial. It results in branching and partitioning curricula, focusing on objective tests, standardizing knowledge, and isolating students from nature (Miller, 2010; 2019). In such circumstances, Miller believes that regarding vitality and nourishment, decreasing imposed pressures on students, regarding the most necessary and essential element of human existence i.e., "the soul", avoiding fragmentation, and making a purposeful and meaningful life are the necessities of the soulful curriculum (Table 1).

Heavily competitive space among students (Karamati, 2001), increased school dropout and school escape rates and violent behaviors in schools (Akbari, 2002; Tavvabi-Nejad, 2006), disappointment in teacher-student relationships (Levering, 2010), and students' hate of school (Samkan & Sattari, 2014) necessitate the need for providing a soulful and joyful curriculum, without any tensions and pressures in the educational systems. A soulful curriculum makes opportunities for creativity, vitality, discovering the meaning and destination of life for all students, in the sphere without any tension and competition (Nutall, 2006).

Miller dedicates three essential principles for the soulful curriculum related to the human souls' features: balance, connection and holism. The soul searches for the balance of human existence, connection of inner and outer aspects of human

existence and focus on the totality of human existence. Therefore, three essential principles of the soulful curriculum are: 1) Education must have an entire relationship and connection with nature and the surrounding world; 2) Education must regard dualism and contending entities in nature; and 3) Education must consider the whole aspects of human existence (Table 2). Some techniques needed to facilitate the implementation of the principles of the soulful curriculum in practice. Miller lists these techniques like meditation, metaphorical teaching, silence, visualization, writing a daily journal, creative writing, and dreamwork (Table 3). By reflection on the data shown in Tables 3 and 4, it can be inferred four processes of intuition, introspection, transcendentalism, and presence are applicable in the all of techniques belonging to the soulful curriculum, and these processes are considered as contextual processes of this curriculum (Figure 4). Intuition tends to rest on similarities between phenomena rather than their differences. While thinking is relied upon the left hemisphere of the brain as dominant, the focus is on the differences and distinguishing certain events. While the institution is dominant, the tendency is toward viewing things as the parts of a whole (Miller, 1983).

Transcendentalism is a result of openness to being and appears in one's deep relation with inner self and the cosmos; it necessitates being open to spirituality and accepting it in life.

Introspection is also the highest state of soulful and rational life. Introspection is a state of life full of awareness, energy, and consciousnesses, which is called vitality. Introspection is a kind of soulful wonderment; it is some consciousness of the sacredness that existed in life and human existence; a sort of appreciation for life, consciousness and existence; as well as, introspection presents a clear comprehension of the truth of life and invisible being surrounding us (Miller, 1994). Another process in the ensouling curriculum is the process of presence. According to Miller, presence is all curriculum's role-players' (teacher, principal, and parents) awareness and sensitiveness in behaviors and educational practices (even being aware of timely usage of non-verbal exchanges such as smile and silence) (Miller, 2000; 2011). Presence is the souls' return to manners of daily life and awareness of being present in life; meanwhile, living with presence, we will be placed in space and time conditions, and we will be aware and awake (Miller, 2000).

In most of his works, Miller considers the soul as the most crucial dimension of human existence (Figure 4) and emphasizes its main features and education based upon them (Table 4). In other words, Miller's essential elements of a soulful curriculum are extracted from the soul's features (Figure 5) and include holism, introspection, naturalism, connectivism, balancing, and energization (Figure 6).

With due attention to each of the essential components of the soulful curriculum from Miller's viewpoint, the following suggestions help make a soulful curriculum in the educational system:

- Holism: Regarding all students' existential aspects, talents, and exclusive abilities during designing, implementation, and evaluation of curriculum.

- Introspection: Special attention by teachers about each of students' affections, inner feelings, and inner life in school and classroom.
- Naturalism: Designing and implementing curricula according to nature and the cosmos.
- Connectivism: Considering various connection networks in designing, implementing, and evaluating the curriculum (such as those of students-society and real-life, students-teachers, relationship, and integration curricular subject matters, the relation between inner features of the human being (relation between thoughts and affective aspects, etc.).
- Balancing: Special consideration of the balance between dualities within human existence (such as intuitive and analytical thoughts), or in the outer life of the human being (such as individual and social affairs or gender-related behaviors) in designing the curriculum for different educational levels.
- Energization: Focusing on nourishment and joyfulness in curricula and attempting to increase students' interest in the school environment and curricula.

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