

# Review of: "The Catholic School: Holistic?"

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There is a lot of potential with this article. I'll just provide some ideas for improvement below.

The abstract is a bit awkward. For example the second sentence has the word 'perspective' written twice. I might also include a sentence on what is meant by the word 'holistic' because the author seems to suggest that a holistic approach is a response to the 'preponderance' of science in the Catholic school curriculum. However, it's not quite clear what 'holistic' is referring to. Also, it might be helpful to state in the abstract what part of the world the article is focused on. Catholic school in Germany is quite different than Catholic school in Mexico for example. A few changes in the abstract would help a potential reader get a clearer sense of what the article is about. If the article intends to speak of the Catholic school in general, then maybe that could be stated clearly here as well-but I'm not sure that would be very effective because there is quite a wide variety of approaches to Catholic schooling.

In the body of the text, I think a bit more explanation/clarity as to what is meant by 'holistic' would be helpful. If the argument is that the Catholic school needs to become more holistic, then maybe that should be something stated more clearly up front so that the rest of the text is focused on developing a picture of what that would look like in practical terms. If the argument is that we need to engage with Lonergan because of current deficiencies in Catholic schools, then more specific information about what is deficient needs to be shown.

It might also be worth talking about the differences between primary and secondary schooling. My own children's experience in Catholic primary school does not fit the description put forth by the author. In other words, it is not very 'dualistic'. Moreover, primary school pedagogy is very different to secondary school pedagogy. A lot of the thoughts of the author would seem, at first glance, to be more associated with secondary schools due to the heightened focus on testing and the resultant need to engage with secular forms of knowledge construction and acquisition. However, the degree to which that happens is probably nationally, regionally, state, or even county specific (if one is referring to the US for example).

One way to develop an effective line of argumentation would be to do the following: 1) explain what Catholic schooling looks like today in some specific part of the world (primary/secondary or both; 2) why it fails to live up to a genuine Catholic understanding of holism as it relates to knowledge; and 3) what Lonergan's philosophy can offer in terms of remedying this situation. A second option would be to simply scrape any reference to what is actually going on in Catholic schools today, and instead focus on developing a speculative picture of what a more direct, contemporary engagement with Lonergan would do for Catholic education/schooling on both a primary and secondary school level. In the second

case, something new about Lonergan would probably have to be uncovered or demonstrated that builds on previous work on education focused on Lonergan. As the article now stands, it seems to be caught somewhere in between these two trajectories so that there isn't quite enough proof to demonstrate that Catholic schools around the world are not 'holistic' nor deficient, and as a result, the need to engage with Lonergan as a solution to this problem is not entirely convincing. That doesn't mean that what the author says in regard to Lonergan is not interesting, only that the need to do so is not clearly laid out.

I think there are potentially a lot of good ideas here, but I would think either more proof of problems inherent to Catholic school is needed that justify the engagement with someone like Lonergan, or a simpler, and more straightforward development of what a contemporary Lonergan-inspired Catholic school would look like (at either the primary and/or secondary level). In other words, what is needed is a) more empirical proof of how Catholic schools are falling short in terms of what the author generally describes, or; b) a new, speculative reading of Lonergan, and what a Catholic primary or secondary school inspired by this new reading would look like in practical terms.