

Phänomenologische Erziehungswissenschaft

Malte Brinkmann · Johannes Türstig ·  
Martin Weber-Spanknebel *Editors*

# Emotion – Feeling – Mood

Phenomenological and Pedagogical  
Perspectives



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# **Phänomenologische Erziehungswissenschaft**

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Editors

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*Editors*

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*We would like to dedicate this book to Vasiliki Karavakou, who tragically died in 2019. Vasiliki Karavakou was Professor of Philosophy at the Department of Educational and Social Policy, School of Social Sciences, Humanities and the Arts at the University of Macedonia (Thessaloniki, Greece). She was a regular and most welcome guest as well as an accomplished speaker at our Symposium on Phenomenological Research in Education in Berlin. Her contributions to these conference proceedings bear witness to her dedication to phenomenology as well as to her commitment to social justice. We are very sad that she is no longer with us.*

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# Introduction

Malte Brinkmann, Johannes Türistig,  
and Martin Weber-Spanknebel

Emotions, feelings, and moods are omnipresent in pedagogical processes and practices of learning, education, teaching, Bildung, and socialization. Curiosity, enthusiasm, surprise or anger, desperation, wrath, disappointment, fear, envy, shame, jealousy or outrage as well as love, compassion, and thankfulness are central moments of experiences of learning and Bildung in engagement with the self, with others and the world. Since the late 1990s, ‘forgotten connections’ between emotion and education are rediscovered in the course of the so-called emotional turn in philosophy (Nussbaum 2001; Demmerling and Landweer 2007), in neuro-sciences (Damasio 2007), in history (Plamper 2012), in sociology (Senge and Schützeichel 2013), in anthropology (Frevert and Wulf 2012) as well as in pedagogy (Reichenbach and Maxwell 2007; Schäfer and Thompson 2009; Seichter 2007; Huber and Krause 2018). Phenomenology and phenomenological research in education has made important contributions to a qualitative, concise, and substantial description and specification of feelings, emotions, and moods since its beginning more than 100 years ago (Brinkmann 2018). Well-known representatives are Scheler’s study of the “grammar of emotions”, Copei’s work on “fruitful moments in the process of Bildung”, Sartre’s study of nausea, Heidegger’s and Bollnow’s analyses of moods from the angle of existential phenomenology, Dietrich von Hildebrand’s phenomenology of value-feeling, Plessner’s

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study of laughing and crying, Michel Henry's phenomenology of incarnation or Günther Buck's work on "negative experiences".

In contrast to the phenomenological approach, feelings, emotions, and moods were mainly considered as an adversary of reason, rationality, and discourse throughout the twentieth century. As a result of the logocentric dualism, they were mostly ignored. Especially in pedagogical contexts, they were considered a disturbance of *Bildung* and education, which were oriented towards rationality and competence. Here as well, feelings, emotions and moods were overlooked in the best case. Yet more often, they were put into service of an alleged higher reason, rationality, or power of judgment and were disciplined and suppressed. Within this perspective, neither their inner logic nor their fundamental relevance for *Bildung*, learning, education, and teaching was recognized.

Yet, philosophy and pedagogy can equally look back on a long tradition respecting the relevance of feelings. For the "elders" in philosophy (Aristotle, Plato, Seneca, Spinoza, Nietzsche) as well as in pedagogy, feelings, emotions, and moods were always seen as obvious requirements and important elements of a relation to oneself, to others, and to the world. This notion can be found in the pedagogy of the eighteenth and nineteenth century, for example in the works of Rousseau (*amour de soi, amour propre, pitié*), Pestalozzi (pedagogical love), Schiller (aesthetic education), and Herbart (pedagogical tact).

Feelings, emotions, and moods are difficult to access, especially because of their volatility, subjectivity, and their unpredictability but also because of their overpowering and affective character as well as their persistence. They are structured implicitly and a discursive specification of feelings, emotions, and moods is only possible in an ex-post rationalization. The conceptual and categorical distinction between these phenomena, their epistemological status, their genesis, and the methods, methodology, and aims of researching them still is unclear. The relation of emotion, cognition, and body or corporeality as well as the culturality and situativity on the one hand or universality on the other (Ekman 2004) are still controversially discussed. Phenomenological approaches of researching feelings, emotions, and moods can introduce important distinctions and contributions to these questions.

Phenomenological analyses are able to avoid and dismiss the Eurocentric dualism of body and mind or the dualism of passion and cognition. They highlight the corporal and social dimensions and they can distinguish between intentional correlatives of feelings and emotions and the specific relations to others and the world in certain moods. They are also able to focus on the process-, act- and experience-character of emotions as well as on passivity and vulnerability in their experience.

Against this background, phenomenological research on education has opened a perspective on *Bildung of* emotions and *Bildung through* emotions (Stenger 2012), which takes a stance against a logic of optimization, regulation, and normalization. By this, the dualism between a spaceless inner world of emotions and the visible behavior, which means between an inner mind and a visible body, can be overcome in a productive way. This dualism is especially dominant in biological, medical, and psychological models. On the other hand, a phenomenological theory of intentionality – in its non-positional or pathic dimensions – can introduce important differentiations. On this basis, a phenomenological pedagogy of emotions is able to identify feelings, emotions, and moods as a significant and essential basis and process of *Bildung*, learning, and education. In addition, the characteristics and qualities of experiencing emotions can be described and analyzed and can be made fruitful for pedagogical processes.

Starting from a phenomenological approach to the subject of emotions, feelings, and moods, a variety of connections can be found. These connections are first taken up in this volume from an interdisciplinary point of view by elaborating relations to theories of *Bildung*, education, learning, upbringing, and to aesthetic and medial experiences in a fundamental analysis. In the course of the phenomenological methodology, emotions, feelings, moods, and atmospheres can be distinguished and described more precisely. In addition, descriptions and analyses of emotions, feelings, and moods or atmospheres are presented in empirical studies from a phenomenological perspective. From an intercultural perspective, connections are sought between Western and Eastern world views, especially to Confucianism of Asian cultures in Korea and China. A further perspective opens up when we aim at differentiating particular emotions, feelings, and moods and describe and analyze them in their respective specific quality of experience. Connections for pedagogical and educational research are established when systematic relations to the concepts and practices of education, upbringing, learning, and growing up are developed. Finally, these can be differentiated and specified again if they are explored within particular pedagogical fields and institutions.

In this volume, we trace different approaches of phenomenological educational science and seek further perspectives on an educational phenomenology of emotions.<sup>1</sup> The book is divided into five parts.

In Part I, the fundamental role of emotions and feelings for rationality and education is elaborated from different perspectives. The metaphor of the heart as the center of emotions and feelings is the main focus of this part. First, the

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<sup>1</sup> We sincerely thank Samira Trummer and Katrin Klees for their accurate and dedicated editing, proofreading and formatting of the contributions.

significance of emotions and feelings for a theory of education is developed in a fundamental theoretical perspective (Bruzzone). Then the significance of emotions as an expression of human nature through the mind for moral education in Korean Confucianism is explained (Chung). In a methodological and pedagogical perspective, commonalities and differences between practice-theoretical and New Phenomenological approaches to affects and their systematic relation to education are explored (Wicke). Finally, “Thinking with the heart” is presented as the central topos in the Hebrew paradigm of pedagogy (Koerrenz).

Daniele Bruzzone opens the first part with his article on “The Strength of Emotions and the Weakness of Feelings” to give a “Phenomenology of Affectivity as a Pedagogical Challenge”. To tackle this venture, he starts by problematizing the separation of emotionality and rationality, a perspective that he traces back to Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and Scheler. Bruzzone then points out the relationship between feelings and values, emphasizing the ethical dimension of emotions. Following Scheler’s idea of the *ordo amoris*, the author places emotions in their relevance for a theory of Bildung. He does so by stating that the education of the heart is the very core of Bildung since it is responsible for the formation of a person’s moral character and personality. Concluding his article, Bruzzone hints at possible methodological consequences that could be useful in the context of the education of prospective teachers.

In his study on “Humanity and Emotion in Korean Confucian Tradition”, Ki-Seob Chung shows that the Confucian tradition places emotion above intelligence. Education as the condition of humanity is based on the relationship between humanity and emotion. The first part of this study shows that moral emotion is the criterion of humanity, focusing on the concept of *ren* (仁) of Confucius and the four moral emotions of Mencius. Also, Zhu Zi’s thoughts on the relation of mind nature, and emotion, presented in a second step, emphasize the extraordinary importance of emotions in Korean Confucianism. Emotion is here considered as the expression of human nature through the mind. The author then focuses on the Four-Seven debate between Confucian scholars of the Chosun dynasty in Korea. In a last step, Chung elaborates on the fact that education in Korean Confucianism was self-cultivation to preserve the original state of mind that contains human nature. Finally, he makes clear that the self-controlling appearance of the body as a method of self-cultivation is still meaningful for modern education.

Lars Wicke takes perspectives from Practice Theory, New Phenomenology, and New Materialism into consideration and addresses the relationship between “Affects and the Intelligibility of Education”. To do so, he starts with affects and points out their role for the performativity of the social as a basic condition of being-in-the-world. Wicke states that focusing on affects makes it possible to

grasp the relational structure of a phenomenon as said affects appear as a condition of the possibility of perceiving social phenomena as specific ones. From this perspective, he compares the approach of new materialism with the new phenomenology in the tradition of Schmitz. He then addresses the relevance of affects for educational research and concludes that a perspective that focuses on affects may lead to a new way of conceptualizing the relation between a researcher and the subject he or she is researching, in his example education.

The contribution “The Breath and the Heart. Phenomenological Perspectives From the Hebrew Paradigm” concludes the first part. Ralf Koerrenz takes a systematic, historical and cultural look at another aspect of the relation between emotion, mind respectively reason and education. In an classical European perspective, the author unfolds the Hebrew paradigm of pedagogy based on guiding motifs of the anthropology outlined in the Hebrew Bible. The breath and the heart play a special role in understanding the unity of feeling and understanding in reason. In Hebrew thought, the determination of Being Human can never be understood without the integration of history. In Hebrew thought, history refers above all to the exodus with its dialectic of enslavement and liberation. The heart as the seat of a holistically conceived reason beyond the juxtaposition of *ratio* and *emotio* is referred to as a hearing of the story of the exodus. Thinking with the heart is an expression of the relationship between mood and emotion. It always contains a critical reason – critical under the conditions of the exodus. It is always connected with the mood of memory on the one hand and the passion for liberation on the other which means a liberation of mankind to a critical view of his presence.

Part II of this book focuses on the relevance and relation of emotions in and to learning, Bildung and understanding. The first two contributions examine the relationship between learning and emotions from a foundational theoretical perspective, focusing on interruptive, discontinuous, and pre-predicative – on the one hand with regard to the significance of negative experiences (Buck) and negative emotions for learning (Rödel), and on the other hand concerning the significance of non-proportional consciousness (Husserl) and its pre-reflexive and pre-predicative dimensions. The two following contributions deal with the phenomenon of understanding and its relation to emotions – once with reference to Augustine and experiences of Bildung (Murillo), and secondly with regard to a phenomenology and pedagogy of atmospheres with Heidegger and Bollnow (Friesen).

Severin Sales Rödel focuses on the relationship between emotions and learning. He starts from the claim that so-called negative emotions are the ones being

most fruitful for learning and challenges this assumption by taking a life-world-perspective. Rödel criticizes that emotions, in general, have long been viewed as separated from a process of learning that was understood as a cognitive or intellectual process. In doing so, he draws on the theory of negative experience according to Buck and Meyer-Drawe. He uses the phenomenological methodology of description, variation and reduction by analysing an example from videographic classroom research. Rödel points out that a phenomenological analysis makes it possible to reveal the complexity of a life-world experience in learning and can show how both learning and emotions are rooted in a pre-predicative relation to the world that includes embodied, emotional as well as intellectual elements.

The second article in this section also focuses on the pre-predicative and discontinuous events in the learning experience. Sang-Sik Cho opens up “A New Dimension of Learning Through the Concept of ‘Non-Positional Consciousness’ in Phenomenology”. His starting point is an analysis of the limitations of cognitive model theory on learning phenomena. With Husserl’s emphasis on the pre-reflexive and pre-predicative operating dimension of consciousness, Cho raises new and fundamental perspectives for a theory of learning that always includes processes of consciousness. He claims that Husserl’s concept helps to understand learning phenomena such as products of creative ideas, an emergent leaping discovery, and an unexpected insight. These abnormal learning events can’t be explained through traditional cognitive learning theories as ‘unilinear progressive models’. But the question remains whether the concept of non-positional consciousness can be a general conceptual instrument to explicate the phenomenon of learning.

Based on Sartre’s emphasis on the existential significance of emotion, in his article “Affects in Bildung: Notes for an Analogical Understanding of Emotions” Fernando Murillo focuses on the question of the significance of emotions and affects for processes of Bildung. Especially with reference to St. Augustine’s Confessions, he tries to work out the formative function of emotions, which is localized between the external world on the one hand and the inner dispositions considering self-world on the other hand. In doing so, the author is guided by the theological concept of *analogia entis*, which for him means that the approach to the transcendent is analogous to the examination of the things in the world themselves. For this, he conceives emotions as a kind of sign, which already refers to something else and which in its affects builds the ground for Bildung. Murillo assigns a special importance to the emotion of love as the most fundamental one.

In his article “Atmospheres and Understanding: Past, Present, and Future”, Norm Friesen points out the relevance of atmospheres, moods, or *Stimmungen*

for processes of understanding, especially in classroom interactions. With reference to Heidegger and Bollnow, he asserts that a shared mood or atmosphere strongly affects the way the world is disclosed to us. In doing so he points out the hermeneutic dimension of moods. Friesen also shows that moods are able to connect past, present, and future. In this capacity, they can be seen as a key to address the classical pedagogical paradox of freedom and constraint, in which the question of the necessary sacrifice of the child's present for the sake of the future arises. Friesen then discusses the implications of such a perspective for pedagogical research and practice. Using an illustrative video example from classroom research, he describes practices of teaching and learning as fundamentally atmospheric experiences and discussed what makes an atmosphere specifically pedagogical.

The third part of this volume focuses on the existential qualities of experiences of emotions and moods focusing on the examples of shame, disquiet, and anxiety. The productive possibilities of the experience of shame for *Bildung* are discussed and thus the orientative, evaluative and educative functions of emotions are elaborated (Brinkmann). Then, the mood of anxiety in the experience of adventure and detour is made fruitful for education in an existential-philosophical perspective (Madrussan) and finally, an intergenerational perspective on upbringing under conditions of existential anxiety and care is sketched (Shchytsova).

Malte Brinkmann initially explores the orientative, evaluative, and *Bildungs*-effect of shame. He focuses on the connection between emotions and *Bildung* and takes a closer look at the possibility of a *Bildung of* emotions and a *Bildung through* emotions. His article is based on a fundamental critique of the dualism of reason and emotion and elaborates on the life-world orientation function of emotions. First, emotions, moods, and atmospheres are systematically distinguished in a phenomenological analysis. Going further, Brinkmann examines the function of emotions for social and moral judgment and evaluation, which makes it possible to evaluate their relevance for processes of learning. Based on the example of the emotion shame, which he illustrates using an example from classroom research, he shows that emotions can initiate negative experiences. Negative experiences are framed in terms of a phenomenology of emotions and identified as existential experiences. With such an expanded theory of negative experiences, emotions can then be understood as the starting point of a reflexive process of learning and *Bildung* in which the possibility of a transformation of the self-world-relation arises.

Elena Madrussan focuses on the relationship between mood and education in an existential-philosophical perspective. In her contribution on "The Mood of

Disquiet and Education”, mood is understood fundamentally as a relationship between subject and world. She identifies the mood of disquiet in this context as a crucial existential situation that is particularly fruitful for a pedagogical discussion. First, the author acknowledges that disquiet is accompanied by negative features, but with reference to Kierkegaard, Freud and Jaspers, she elaborates that disquiet can also have positive aspects, while also being existentially arduous. Disquiet then enables the search for oneself, for knowledge, and for new interpretations of reality. Madrussan discusses the positive possibilities of two educational experiences that she sees as addressing the mood of disquiet: adventure and detour. She argues that disquiet should be reinvigorated as an extraordinary source of formative vitality, especially because it can be exhibited as meaningful from an educational perspective.

In the third contribution in this part “Anxiety and Upbringing: Rethinking Existential Anthropology From the Intergenerational Perspective”, Tatiana Shchyttsova poses a fundamental question about the existential difference between being-an-adult and being-a-child. She starts from an intergenerational perspective with Eugen Fink, in which the coexistence of adults and children is seen as an interplay of non-hierarchical, equal forms of life that cannot be reduced to one another. In order to pursue her question, the author deals with Heidegger’s, Fink’s, and Kierkegaard’s answers to the question of the human being from a primarily philosophical perspective. Thereby Shchyttsova focuses on the phenomenon of anxiety. She emphasizes the fundamental difference between the existential anxiety experienced by adults and the existential anxiety experienced by a child. Finally, this difference is illuminated from a pedagogical perspective as the primary task of upbringing, whereby upbringing, in turn, comes into view as an intellectual-emotional nourishment.

In Part IV of this volume, representatives of phenomenological emotion research are introduced and made fruitful for educational contexts: Dietrich von Hildebrand, Max Scheler, Agnes Heller, and Michel Henry. The first two contributions deal with the relationship between feelings, values, and education. This is explained on the one hand with Dietrich von Hildebrand’s ethical personalism and his phenomenology of value-feeling for a theory of education (D’Addelfio) and on the other hand with Max Scheler with regards to the feeling of love for teacher practice (Qiao and Zhu). Then Agnes Heller’s theory of feelings is made fruitful for educational theory and care theory contexts (Schneider-Reisinger). In the fourth contribution, Michel Henry’s theory of incarnation and especially his ‘pathological’ decentering of intentionality is made fruitful for education in the context of a redefinition of emotional intelligence (Koopal and Vlieghe).

Giuseppina D'Addelfio opens this part with an account of Dietrich von Hildebrand's ethical personalism under the title "Value-Feeling and Moral Education: Pedagogical Remarks on Dietrich von Hildebrand's Phenomenology". She discusses the pedagogical relevance of the intentional act of value-feeling (*Wertfühlen*). Namely, as Husserl and some of his disciples showed, our first relationship to value is emotional and, therefore, involves a pre-theoretical apprehension that von Hildebrand calls value-feeling. This recalls the main claims on emotions shared by the members of the Munich and Gottingen Circle: i.e., the stratification of emotional life, the intentionality of emotion and feeling, and, most of all, their moral dimension. After briefly portraying von Hildebrand's early life, his references to Edmund Husserl's ethics is depicted to define possible links between feeling, ethical experience, and moral education. Finally, the author highlights how such an account entails the seminal personalism to be found in von Hildebrand's later works as well as an implicit theory of education.

Robert Schneider-Reisinger dedicates his article to an analysis of "Agnes Heller's Theory as a Snatch of Thought of an Educational Theory of Emotions". For this purpose, he first locates Heller within Marxist, praxeological, and personalist thoughts. Feeling, emotion, and mood are worked out as terms in Heller's theory. The author then reads Heller's theory as an educational theory and argues that this becomes possible according to two aspects: he understands "being involved" as a *Bildungs*-relation or -movement and contextualizes his thoughts within the setting of a theory of care in pedagogy.

In their contribution about the "Meaning and Practice of Teachers' Love towards Learners", He Qiao and Xiaohong Zhu present a perspective on emotions and feelings that makes Max Scheler's phenomenology fruitful in terms of the practice and theory of teaching and learning in China's schools. In Scheler's theory and phenomenology of love, love is characterized as the essence of human existence and as an intentional act toward values. Love as the heart's openness to someone or something is then related to the teacher's attitude and "feeling of values" of the teacher. Teacher's love is presented as a way of opening the heart to the learners' growth and development, even the academic achievements of learners. The thesis is that for teachers, the responsibility "towards learners" is of higher value than "towards duty" because the role of educating people is more important than the role of imparting knowledge.

Wiebe Koopal and Joris Vlieghe explore "The Intelligent Pathos of Education" in their article on the productivity of Michel Henry's phenomenology. They connect the conventional understanding of emotional intelligence with the phenomenology of Michel Henry. To begin, they take a look at the popular discourse on emotions. Henry is then chosen because his theory of incarnation and his

*renversement de la phénoménologie* offer, as the authors argue, a more ‘pathological’ decentering of the concept of intentionality than classical phenomenological positions such as those of Husserl, Heidegger, or Merleau-Ponty. Henry’s ‘pathological’ decentering of intentionality is then made fruitful for educational contexts in a second step. By situating education in the Henryan tension between subjectivity’s pathic life – reality’s absolute, immanent interiority – and (the) world(s) made up of transcendent, intentional relations to exterior objects, the authors try to establish emotional intelligence as a fundamental educational agency, that keeps world and life connected while at the same time leaving their ontological difference intact. The paper concludes with an analysis of a concrete example in which the collective side of pathic intelligence as lived, post- or pre-intentional consciousness of life shows up.

The relevance of emotions in specific pedagogical institutions and fields is the center of attention in the concluding Part V of this volume. The specific relations between emotion and education and thus also specific pedagogical practices are examined. Topics discussed here are aesthetic education and upbringing in the field of dance education (Westphal), feeling in and for nature in early childhood education (Stenger), Bildung and education in sports education (Cacchiarelli), the complex relationship between image, emotion, and movements or embodiment in schools (Zambaldi) and finally, in the context of adult education, the relationship between vulnerability, emotion, and education for homeless people (Karavakou and Antoniou).

The final part of this volume opens with Kristin Westphal’s contribution from the field of cultural and aesthetic education. ““Affectos Humanos”. Affects in Dance, Theatre and Education” examines affects and emotions in the field of theatre and dance education. Against the background of a pedagogical and phenomenological approach, she mainly discusses two examples: A contemporary dance theatre piece for two- to five-year-old children called *minimax* and a rework/remake of the dance cycle *Humanos Affectos* called *Urheben.Aufheben*. In doing so, she focuses on affects as corporeal expressions and reflects on the extent to which contemporary performance art works with affects artistically and pedagogically.

Ursula Stenger investigates the meaning and relevance of feelings in the field of kindergarten. From the perspective of early childhood research, she asks in a phenomenological perspective about the significance of perceptions and feelings for understanding the constitution of reality, especially the nature, in which we live. Using the example of drawings and stories of children from a Russian day-care center, this question is first elaborated taking into account Rombach’s and Nancy’s thoughts on the soul. This approach is then made fruitful for the analysis

of feeling nature using the example of practices and concepts of experiencing and exploring nature in Russian day-care centers and German early education. Finally, in a posthumanist perspective with Braidotti, the emotional opening to the living beings on earth is developed as an important and necessary value for a life with and in nature. Children's connectedness with nature is described as a soulful experience in day-care center practices.

Matteo Cacchiarelli takes a closer look at the relationship between learning and emotions from a sport-pedagogical and sport-philosophical point of view. He argues in his paper "Learning of and Through Emotions. The educational Specificity of the Sport Context" that emotions play a fundamental role in sports, which for him implies a 'sweet tension of uncertainty of outcome', meaning an uncertainty of succeeding or failing, of winning or losing. Sports from this perspective can be seen as emotional experiences for the athletes as well as the spectators of a sports event and implies a potential for learning in both the embodied learning of technical or tactical skills, but also in the intersubjective competition with others during a contest. It is mainly the uncertainty of the contest's outcome that provides the participating athletes with a possibility of breaking with the familiar and opening up to unfamiliar horizons and experiences. In this aspect of opening-up to something new, the author sees not only a potential for learning but also for processes of *Bildung*.

Nazario Zambaldi offers in "E-MOTION: an "Imaginative Variation"" a perspective on the relation between emotion, image, and movement as a particular aspect of embodiment in classrooms. His reflections stem from the videographic research project entitled "Embodied Education through art and theatre" which focuses on classroom research from the perspective of embodiment. The approach focuses on the aspect of motion against the background of both a phenomenological and neuroscience perspective on embodiment and above all theatre perspective. It is precisely the connection and relationship between emotion, image, and movement as a particular aspect of the embodiment that the author calls "E-Motion". The empirical analysis shows that in the space that opens between image and movement or image and action, a visual, imaginative thought is proposed on different theoretical levels.

In the final contribution of this volume, Vasiliki Karavakou and Konstantinia Antoniou present an "Emotionally Responsive Phenomenology in Adult Education" in the context of "Educating the Vulnerable". This approach not only shows the field and field-specific possibilities of a phenomenologically oriented pedagogy but also the social and humane engagement of the authors and especially of Vasiliki Karavakou, to whom this entire volume is dedicated. The authors show for adult education that in contrast to the dominant theories of constructivism,

cognitivism, and behaviorism, a phenomenologically driven proposal appeals to the world of the people's involved inner experiences including their emotions. Here again, it becomes clear: Modern phenomenology has gone far beyond a conceptually primitive understanding of nature or an emotionally deprived and fully calculative sense of rationality. Addressing vulnerability within adult education procures immense problems which are tackled with great difficulty despite all the progress that has been made on the institutional and educational fronts. The purpose of this paper is to introduce the decisive role of emotions in adult learning and educational programs that refer to the needs of socially vulnerable people as it emerged from the outcomes of a pilot program of an educational intervention for homeless people of Greece.

This volume goes back to the fifth International Symposium on Phenomenological Research in Education, which took place under the title "Feeling – Emotion – Mood. Phenomenological and Pedagogical Perspectives" on 1st till the 3rd of April 2019 at the Humboldt-University of Berlin.<sup>2</sup>

The contributions show that phenomenological approaches to emotions, feelings, moods, and atmospheres in their relation to education, learning, and teaching enable and open up culturally different and productive connections. Emotions and feelings represent an important focus of phenomenological research that can open up theoretical, methodological, inter-disciplinary, and intercultural perspectives. The volume also makes clear that phenomenological educational studies can draw on a rich tradition in emotion research (cf. Brinkmann 2018; Brinkmann and Friesen 2018). The productivity of phenomenological emotion research in pedagogy proves itself above all against the background of a rejection of representationalist, colonialist and cognitivist approaches that subordinate emotions and feelings under a universal rationality. In contrast, phenomenological approaches make it possible to highlight the ethical, existential, educational and Bildung-potentials of education through and of emotions.

The editors hope that this conference volume will provide a good overview of the current state of research on these areas within German and international phenomenological educational studies for researchers as well as students and practitioners from different disciplines and professions.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.erziehungswissenschaften.hu-berlin.de/de/allgemeine/forschung-1/phaenomenologische-erziehungswissenschaft/internationale-symposien>

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## **Foundational and Cultural Perspectives on an Education of the Heart**



# The Strength of Emotions and the Weakness of Feelings: The Phenomenology of Affectivity as an Educational Challenge

Daniele Bruzzone

*Die Differenzen zu sehen ist die Leidenschaft der Phänomenologie.*

(Geiger 1933, p. 4)

The phenomenological research and training group at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore was established more than 15 years ago as an offshoot of the pedagogical movement founded by Piero Bertolini (Iori 2016; Tarozzi 2017) with the aim of studying the emotional life and developing the practitioners' existential and relational competence in healthcare, education, and social work contexts. We felt that there was a lack of education and training regarding the emotions in the lived experience of the helping professionals, despite the affective involvement and the personal vulnerability that the daily contact with human frailties produces. For 6 years, we ran a Master's programme in *Relationships and feelings in education and care professions*, targeting educators, psychologists, social workers, nurses, speech therapists, physiotherapists, and so on: people who worked with other people, and who in the course of their everyday interpersonal experience felt the need to care for themselves and to develop their own sensibility as a personal and professional resource. Since then, we have worked in many different settings (early childhood education, rehabs, and therapeutic communities, facilities for older adults and persons with disabilities, hospitals, especially oncology departments, hospices, and palliative care units) and in all these highly diverse

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places we tried to correspond the need for self-care and the search for meaning that is widespread and deep-rooted even in skilled and experienced practitioners.<sup>1</sup>

In light of this experience, we tried to develop a deeper understanding of the emotional life through the lenses of phenomenology. This attempt allowed us to distance ourselves from the psychological approach, which is widely predominant in the emotional and relational training of helping professionals. In the following paragraphs, the opposition between rationality and emotionality is discussed, in order to acknowledge the connection between the capacity to think and ability to feel; emotions and feelings are distinguished as different phenomena in the articulated spectrum of human affectivity, and some insight is provided about the refinement of the perceptiveness of the “heart” as the core of education.

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## 1 Emotional Experience and the Disclosure of Meaning

The cause of this need can probably be attributed to a cultural paradigm that views emotions and feelings mostly as unessential and even dangerous, especially in the workplace. This mistrust of emotionality, which has relevant educational implications, is deeply rooted in our tradition. From Aristotle’s distinction between *nous pathethikos* and *nous poietikos* to the opposition between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* proposed by Descartes, Western culture has pursued the ideal of a rationality that is free of interference from the senses and the emotions and capable of acquiring a kind of knowledge that is exact, impassive and neutral. Within this disjunctive paradigm, *knowing* and *feeling* have traditionally been hierarchically ordered and framed as in opposition to one another: sensibility has been considered the antagonist of reason; passion and feeling have ultimately come to be associated with irrationality. Consequently, imagination, art, and poetry, which are closely bound up with the emotional life, have been viewed as precarious and subjective forms of knowledge, while science and technology, allegedly being

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<sup>1</sup> On the basis of this experience, we have collected professional tales on the emotional side of the work of care (Bruzzone and Musi 2007) and, more recently, I have conceived a four-steps method for the development of emotional competence in health care professionals and social workers (Bruzzone 2020). The first step ( *Activation* ) consists in arousing emotions through autobiographical or projective materials (narratives, paintings, movies); the second one ( *Expression* ) is an attempt to put in words one’s own feeling (even in analogical forms, like images and metaphors) and to communicate it to others; the third step ( *Reflection* ) is oriented to analyzing and understanding the meaning of what is felt and its implications; finally, the last step ( *Consolidation* ) is dedicated to learning and sharing skills and tools for self care in professional contexts (through exercises, action maze, role play, and so on) in order to promote a long term fallout of the training experience.