Lifelong Learning Book Series 17

Terry Hyland

Mindfulness and Learning

Celebrating the Affective Dimension of Education

Springer

Mindfulness and Learning

Lifelong Learning Book Series

VOLUME 17

Aims & Scope
"Lifelong Learning" has become a central theme in education and community development. Both international and national agencies, governments and educational institutions have adopted the idea of lifelong learning as a major theme in the coming years. They realize that it is only by getting people committed to the idea of education both life-wide and lifelong that the goals of economic advancement, social emancipation and personal growth will be attained.

The *Lifelong Learning Book Series* aims to keep scholars and professionals informed about and abreast of current developments and to advance research and scholarship in the domain of Lifelong Learning. It further aims to provide learning and teaching materials, serve as a forum for scholarly and professional debate and offer a rich fund of resources for researchers, policy-makers, scholars, professionals and practitioners in the field.

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For Josephine Lynch, mindfulness practitioner par excellence–may she and the mindfulness-based courses she teaches in Dublin continue to thrive and prosper

The heart has its reasons which reason knows nothing of… We know the truth not only by the reason, but by the heart

– Blaise Pascal

Editorial by Series Editors

This further volume in the Book Series on Lifelong Learning being published by Springer is an outcome and extension of some of the important issues that are raised in the *International Handbook of Lifelong Learning*. It is the product and gift of the hard work of our colleague Terry Hyland, who is the author of one of the chapters in Section One of that symposium *Lifelong Learning, Mindfulness and the Affective Domain of Education*. In this new work he has gone on to develop and extend his thinking set out in the *International Handbook* and to devote a separate volume to the exploration of this theme.

He maintains that there have been recent developments in educational thinking and policy-making that call for serious review and re-appraisal. One such development is claimed to be a proposed replacement of the traditional goals of knowledge and understanding with the inclusion of a 'therapeutic turn' – personal and social objectives concerned with enhancing and developing confidence and self-esteem in learners. In this work Terry Hyland argues that there are some educationally justifiable goals underpinning this 'therapeutic' approach. He contends that the therapeutic function – the affective domain of learning – is more valuable and significant than is generally acknowledged and certainly at least as important as the cognitive undertakings and activities with which education, as traditionally conceived, has been largely concerned. He holds that this claim may be justified by an examination of the concept of 'mindfulness'– an immensely powerful and valuable notion which is integrally connected with the centrally transformative and developmental nature of learning and educational activity at all levels. The adoption and incorporation of mindfulness strategies within lifelong learning programmes and activities may, he argues, go some way towards re-connecting the cognitive and affective dimensions of education. Here Terry Hyland is uttering a *Cri de Coeur* for the attention, consideration and adopting of a new model of lifelong learning, one that moves away from the concerted concern for the cognitive, and elaborates and extends it into the realm of the affective and emotional.

In this bold and important work Terry Hyland is concerned to propose and proffer a series of novel and thought-provoking contributions to the current debate about the nature, values and purposes of education and much of its current aims,

emphases and orientations. He proposes a set of initiatives for altering and redirecting much of its orientation in what he sees as life-altering directions. He puts forward for his readers:

- An explanation of how education – from school to university – is in dire need of a rejuvenation of its affective function
- An exploration of the links between mindfulness – non-judgmental present-moment awareness – and learning at all levels of provision
- A Buddhist justification of the importance of the emotions in educational activity of all kinds incorporating traditional contemplative traditions and modern secular therapeutic approaches to Buddhism
- A detailed investigation of the therapeutic function of education drawing on philosophical, historical, psychological, psychotherapeutic and neuro-scientific evidence to justify the foregrounding of affective education at all levels of provision

Included in Terry's writing are his offerings of:

- A cogent and passionate critique of the dominance of cognitive outcomes in contemporary educational provision
- An extended justification of the enhancement of affective objectives in educational theory and practice covering all aspects of learning teaching and curriculum
- A well-informed and detailed argument about the importance of mindfulness in enhancing the education of the emotions in lifelong education, covering developments in schools, colleges, universities, vocational education and training, teacher education and research

Terry Hyland has done us all a signal service in the writing of this book. His work has demonstrated a clear commitment to the emancipatory potential of lifelong learning and in particular towards its affective dimensions. His argument is that the contemporary focus on cognitive competencies, the transition to work and the role of vocationally useful attributes, whether for school leavers, graduates or adult learners in general, needs to be conceived more realistically and coherently as part of an ongoing and interactive lifelong learning process, one that will reorient its approach in a direction where affective attributes are valued and honoured. The community environment, he believes, can provide individual and collective opportunities to build on and integrate learning gains in the affective domain, already gained from classrooms, lectures, workplaces and community agencies of all kinds, into learning overall as a community concern. Seeking to ground learning in the affective domain, he argues, is an important part of lifelong learning, as it is a site for personal and general forms of learning. In Hyland's view, such a re-direction will add increments to an enlarged understanding of the important role that can be played by adopting such an approach in the formation of a new philosophy of education.

We believe that this important work comes forward at an especially significant and fruitful time when the worlds and institutions of learning and work in the community are in a state of considerable, not to say radical, change and upheaval. We believe that educational institutions, education professionals and individual teachers

and learners will benefit enormously from reading and reflecting on the messages contained in this iconoclastic work. We are pleased that the work helps carry forward the agenda of the Springer Book Series on *Lifelong Learning*. We thank the anonymous international reviewers and assessors who have considered, reviewed and assessed the proposal for this work, for they have played such a significant part in the progress of this work to completion. We trust that its readers will find it as stimulating, thought-provoking and controversial as we have found it. We commend it with great confidence to all those working in this field and especially to those with interest in and concerns for exploring and developing its affective potential.

We are sure that this further volume in the Springer Series will provide the wide range of constituencies working in the domain of lifelong learning with a rich source of new material and challenges for their consideration and further investigation. We believe that it will encourage their continuing critical thinking, research and development, academic and scholarly production and individual, institutional and professional progress.

April 2011

David Aspin
Judith Chapman

Preface

The principal and overriding thesis of this book is that education in all spheres stands in need of a rejuvenation of its affective function, the impact it has on the emotional, social, moral and personal development of learners. There has hardly been a more urgent time to seek such a renewed emphasis on affective goals. Education at all levels of the system has been seriously impoverished over the last few decades through an obsession with standards, targets, skills and competences, and this has resulted in a one-dimensional, economistic and bleakly utilitarian conception of the educational task (Ainley 1999; Lea et al. 2003; Hyland and Merrill 2003; Avis 2009). According to this model, only cognitive goals – and, within this sphere, only a circumscribed range of basic skills and competences – are the business of education, whose main role is seen as that of providing employability credentials for people who are competing for jobs in the global economy (Allen and Ainley 2007).

It should be noted at this stage that 'education' (defined here descriptively in terms of state provision) is meant to incorporate developments from school to university in keeping with a lifelong learning perspective (as discussed in more detail in Chap. 9). My main experience and expertise, in fact, is in UK (primarily English) post-compulsory education and training (PCET), but, although I will have much to say about this sphere, it is my contention that the trends under discussion pervade all levels of provision from the primary stage through to higher education. Indeed, such trends – the commodification of knowledge reflected in an obsession with economistic outcomes in terms of standards, skills and competences – represent global changes which have unduly influenced most modern education systems over the last few decades from the USA (Palmer 1998; Brighouse 2006) to Europe and Australasia (Ball 2007; OECD 2010). Moreover, such policy drivers have had an impact at all levels of national systems including curricula, assessment strategies, research priorities and teacher education (Baker and Wiseman 2005; Hayden et al. 2007).

As will be argued in later chapters, these minimalist, reductionist and instrumentalist developments do not even satisfy the minimum requirements of adequate vocational training, let alone match the requirements of an all-round educational entitlement for learners (as noted in the recent Wolf Report (2011) on vocational

education in England). At the same time, there has been growing evidence of increasing mental health problems in contemporary society. The review of evidence survey which accompanied the recent UK Government report *Mental Capital and Wellbeing* noted that the most recent available national survey indicated that 16.4% of the UK population has some form of mental illness, and that this figure would be greatly increased if we looked at mental health or flourishing as opposed to illness (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 12). Estimated costs of mental illness have been placed at '£77 billion per year for England when wider impacts on wellbeing are included, and £49 billion for economic costs alone' (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 21), not to mention the untold suffering of individuals and families of untreated or mistreated mental illness.

In a number of writings over the last few years, Oliver James (2007, 2008) has argued that levels of emotional distress in industrialised, urbanised societies are much higher for English-speaking countries such as Britain, USA, Canada and New Zealand than they are in other nations such as France, Spain, Belgium, Japan and the Scandinavian states. Using the World Health Organisation (WHO) definition of emotional distress to include illnesses such as 'depression, anxiety, substance abuse and impulse disorder' James (2008, p. 10) contends that – contra recent fashionable notions about genes – such distress has little genetic causation but is directly linked to both parental upbringing and the impact of 'selfish capitalism' which expounds radically materialistic values in conjunction with bringing about a deterioration of income levels and working conditions for millions of ordinary people in mainly English-speaking countries over the last 30 years or so. Gerhardt (2010) presents similar arguments in her survey of the 'selfish society' brought about by neo-liberal economic policies. Addictive and mindless consumption connected to growth for its own sake (or rather for the sake of a minority of rich capitalists) has brought us to the brink of disaster. She expresses this in graphic terms in saying that, over the last few decades, many people in the developed world have been:

> Like children let loose in the sweet shop, we have gorged ourselves on everything we could get hold of, blissfully unaware of the true cost of our activities. We have been careless or ignorant of the impact of our behaviour on the poorest and most powerless inhabitants of the planet, on our own children, and on the environment itself (p. 17).

Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) have demonstrated the impact of such careless self-interest on the world's richest nations in indicating direct correlations between inequality of income and levels of mental illness, addiction, rates of imprisonment, levels of trust and the general health and well-being of nations. In all cases the data are unequivocal: 'most of the important health and social problems of the rich world are more common in unequal societies' (p. 173).

We might safely assume that the global economic meltdown and recession which has occurred in the last few years has exacerbated these problems. Indeed, in a UK survey in March 2010 by the mental health charity *Together–UK* (*http//:www.together-uk.org*) it was revealed that 62% of British people had experienced mental health problems at some time in the previous year (in this context, see also BBC 2010). All of the critics of selfish capitalism point to the need to return to collective

values and more caring, less materialistic communities characterised by trust, compassion and empathy. Gerhardt (2010) is clear that the 'moral makeover' required to bring about change involves attention to emotions, a feature noticeably absent from materialistic individualism and neo-liberal conceptions of society. As she puts it:

> The moral and emotional issues that we have to deal with as a society are the same as those we begin to grasp in the cradle: how to learn to pay attention to others and their feelings, how we manage conflict between people and how we balance our own needs with those of others (p. 310).

Clearly, education has a vital role to play in this important sphere of personal growth and development and, traditionally, it has been the broad affective domain (Lang et al. 1998; Weare 2010) which has been concerned with this sphere of activity. However, just at the time when there appears to be a welcome return to affective goals in the UK system, a number of commentators have been moved to criticise what they call the 'dangerous rise of therapeutic education' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009). In the first two chapters, I examine this so-called therapeutic turn in education in detail in an attempt to provide a philosophical and pragmatic justification for the therapeutic function of education. Next comes the discussion of mindfulness – an increasingly influential concept and process in educational, psychological and health spheres in America and Europe in recent years – and its power to transform the affective dimension of learning, teaching and education. The origins of mindfulness in Buddhist traditions are examined as a background to the recent reconstruction of the concept as a general therapeutic process and practice. After investigating the education of the emotions and the scope of the affective domain, the final chapters then go on to elaborate and justify the value of mindfulness in relation to learning, teaching, the curriculum, levels and sectors of the education system and the aims of education in general.

Against this contextual background the following chapters are intended to achieve three main aims:

1. To re-assert the importance of the affective dimension of learning in contemporary educational theory and practice in the face of, on the one hand, the relentless technicism and utilitarianism of much current practice and, on the other, the critics of the so-called 'therapeutic turn' which, it is claimed, has led to the pursuit of social/personal objectives connected with emotional well-being at the expense of general educational objectives
2. To demonstrate how the concept and practice of 'mindfulness' – non-judgmental, present moment awareness and experience – can enrich learning at all levels thereby contributing, not just to the enhanced achievement of general educational goals, but also to remedying the gross deficiency of the affective/emotional aspects of contemporary theory and practice
3. To outline a mindfulness-based affective education (MBAE) programme and show how it might be introduced into educational provision from the early years to adult education with a view to harmonising the cognitive-affective balance across the system

Contents

List of Acronyms

AME	Association for Mindfulness in Education
CBET	Competence-Based Education and Training
CBT	Cognitive Behaviour Therapy
DCSF	Department for Schools, Families and Children
DFEE	Department for Education and Employment
DFES	Department for Education and Skills
FE	Further Education
HE	Higher Education
MB	Mindfulness-Based
MBAE	Mindfulness-Based Affective Education
MBCT	Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy
MBSR	Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction
MBT	Mindfulness-Based Therapy
NVQ(s)	National Vocational Qualification(s)
PCET	Post-Compulsory Education and Training
P4C	Philosophy for Children
PSHE	Personal, Social and Health Education
SEAL	Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning
TAFE	Technical and Further Education
3MBS	Three-Minute Breathing Space
VET	Vocational Education and Training

About the Author

Terry Hyland qualified as a teacher in 1971 and – in addition to teaching in schools, further, adult and higher education – went on to complete B.Ed., M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in educational studies at the University of Lancaster. Following a 2-year secondment as lecturer in education at the University of Sokoto, Nigeria, he taught in post-school teacher education at the University of the West of England (1986–1988) and Mid-Kent College of Higher Education (1988–1991) before taking up the post of lecturer in continuing education at the University of Warwick (1991–2000). He was appointed professor in post-compulsory education and training at the University of Bolton in 2000 and retired from the post in 2009. Prof. Hyland is currently director of Studies for Ph.D. educational research students at Bolton and also research student supervisor at the Irish Institute for Counselling and Psychotherapy Studies in Dun Laoghaire, Ireland. He was appointed honorary visiting professor at the University of Huddersfield in 2006 and is attached to Huddersfield's Centre for Research in Post-Compulsory Education. Dr. Hyland's main research interests are in philosophy of education, education policy studies, vocational education and training, moral education and professional studies and he has published 140 articles and 18 book chapters on a wide range of educational topics. He has also written five books, the most recent of which are *The Changing Face of Further Education* (RoutledgeFalmer 2003, with Barbara Merrill) and *A Guide to Vocational Education and Training* (Continuum 2007, with Christopher Winch). Terry is a keen student of Buddhist ideas and enjoys the role of being a lifelong apprentice learner in mindfulness meditation and practice.

Chapter 1
The Therapeutic Turn in Education

1.1 The Changing Aims of Education

In a recent issue of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* the editor, Paul Standish, welcomed the fact that 'questions of happiness and well-being are prominent in contemporary social policy and practice, and in current policy initiatives they abound' (2007, p. 285). The idea here is that the ultimate ends of education – self-esteem, job and life satisfaction, and the promotion of trust and social justice in the wider community – seem to be taken rather more seriously these days than they were in the drab neo-liberal and utilitarian 1980s and 1990s. Standish goes on, however, to qualify these observations by noting – in the context of a review of recent books recording the rise and fall of progressive education – how certain central features of progressivism (creativity and individualism) are grossly mutated and manipulated in current policy and practice to serve non-progressive and exclusively economistic ends.

These observations need to be placed against the back ground of the trends discussed in the Preface and elaborated in later chapters. In order to set the scene it would be useful to summarise here the key developments in English educational provision over the last few decades from a lifelong learning perspective which covers the whole spectrum from foundational schooling to higher education. As mentioned already, globalising trends stemming largely from the response of modern industrialised nations to the demands of neo-liberal economics and post-Fordist working conditions (Baker and Wiseman 2005) have had a broadly similar and uniform impact on provision in the United States (Palmer 1998; Brighouse 2006) and in Europe and Australasia (Ball 2007; OECD 2010).

At the school level the key policy developments have involved a commodification of knowledge (Fielding 2001; Brighouse 2006) in the form of an overriding concern with outcomes defined as 'standards'. Ball (2001) summarises these policy developments in commenting on the 'policy panopticon' involving the 'use of highly prescriptive systems of accountability – performance indicators, inspections,

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league tables, achievement targets' (p. 53). In what was arguably a reaction to the arid technicism and formulaic instrumentality of the standards agenda and target-driven strategy (Suissa 2008; Cigman 2008) of the New Labour administration in the UK (1997–2010), tentative attempts have been made in recent years to broaden the curriculum by incorporating non-cognitive elements through the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) programme introduced into English schools in 2005 (DCSF 2005, 2007a, b). Even though recent research evaluations have indicated a disappointing lack of impact in terms of broadening curricula to include more affective elements (Humphrey et al. 2010), programmes such as SEAL provide scope for exploiting the, admittedly rather superficial, recent acknowledgement by politicians and policy-makers that the affective aspects of learning have a legitimate place in the education system (BBC 2010b).

In the post-school sector, policy studies (Lea et al. 2003; Hyland and Merrill 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007) suggest that the key trends at this level over recent years – primarily in the large further education (FE) sector in Britain – have been the rise of undifferentiated skill-talk, an obsession with prescriptive learning outcomes and the dominance of competence-based education and training (CBET). All these trends have resulted in the radical de-skilling of countless occupations (including teaching), the downgrading of vocational studies and the rise to prominence of a perversely utilitarian and one-sidedly economistic conception of the educational enterprise in general (Avis et al. 2009; Hyland and Winch 2007). The lip service paid to the fostering of social capital in New Labour's education policy was always overshadowed by economic capital priorities (Hyland 2008). Although the current Conservative-Liberal coalition government seems to be adopting a similar tokenistic stance on social capital with references to research on the happiness and well-being of the population (BBC 2010b), the de facto education policy betrays an allegiance to an agenda not unlike the previous government's 'modernising' approach concerned with rolling back state control at all levels and driving up 'standards' by means of traditional modes of teaching and assessment (DFE 2010). Indeed, White (2010) has recently described the current education policy of the coalition government in Britain as 'even narrower' than that of its predecessor and 'more rooted in the past' (p. 309).

The impact of these trends on the adult and higher education (HE) sector – though more gradual and covert than the influence on FE – has been significant, and exacerbated by the ideological and political re-appraisal of the role of universities in social, economic and cultural life. Barnett (1990) has written widely about the 'undermining of the value background of higher education' (p. 8). The central theme is that HE is being undermined epistemologically, through relativistic and post-modernist conceptions of knowledge and, sociologically, through the loss of academic freedom and autonomy as a result of the increasing influence of the state, industry and other outside agencies over what goes on in universities.

Jarvis (2000) locates all such developments in the rise of what he describes as the 'corporate university' (p. 52) which is unduly influenced by the needs of economic capital and the demands for employability skills at the expense of traditional goals. The very same forces which have transformed schooling and non-advanced post-school

provision – the technicist commodification of knowledge and the inordinate emphasis on outcomes defined in terms of employability skills and competences (Barnett 2007; Hyland 2008) – have in the last few decades led to the dominance of economic capital requirements as the defining feature of HE and adult education policy trends (discussed at greater length in Chap. 9).

It is against this background that Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) have drawn attention to the 'dangerous rise of therapeutic education' in the UK system from school to university. Against the policy background sketched above, it may seem highly surprising if not incredible to observers of the policy scene that such developments could conceivably be characterised in terms of a move towards the affective domain of education. More nuanced explanations for all this are developed throughout this and subsequent chapters. At this stage, I would simply offer the suggestion that the critics have noticed tentative moves towards non-cognitive, affective elements in the education system and exaggerated these beyond all recognition. However, the criticisms are serious and need to be answered as part of any attempt to argue for a greater role for affective education and the education of the emotions in state systems of provision.

A few years ago, I offered a tentative response (Hyland 2005) to Ecclestone's (2004a, b) concerns about adult educators' obsession with developing self-esteem. Ecclestone (2004a) was particularly concerned about the growing popularity of notions such as 'self esteem' and 'emotional intelligence' in educational circles. This has led to:

> new professional activities in emotional management, life coaching, mentoring, counselling, and interventions to build self-esteem and make people feel good emotionally in the pursuit of motivation, educational achievement and social inclusion (p. 11).

Moreover, it was claimed that the 'professional and popular support for these ideas' is now so strong 'that they have become a new social and educational orthodoxy' (Ecclestone 2004a).

Hayes (2003) advanced similar arguments in investigating recent policy trends in vocational education and training (VET) in the post-school sector. The proposal is that – alongside the 'triumph of vocationalism' over the last few decades – there has been a 'triumph of therapeutic education', a 'form of preparation for work' arising out of the 'changed nexus between work and education' (p. 54). He goes on to explain that:

> The new vocational skills that are required in the workforce are sometimes called 'emotional' or 'aesthetic' labour. If post-school students are being trained in personal and social skills as well as in relationships, this is training in emotional labour…training in emotional labour… requires and receives a personal and wholehearted commitment to workplace values (Hayes 2003)

What results is a form of VET in which the pursuit of knowledge –the values of 'rationality, objectivity, science and progress' – is replaced by a set of post-modernist relativistic values concerned only with developing 'self-esteem' (Hayes 2003).

It seemed to me then and still does so now that the so-called therapeutic turn is no more than a proper concern with the affective dimension of learning and, moreover, that this needed to be emphasised in the face of the relentless economising of education – what Avis et al. (1996) described as the 'vocationalisation of everyday