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.

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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

life' (p. 165) – under the label of behaviourist skills and competencies (Hyland 1999). The original worries and concerns, however, still seem to be around. Ecclestone et al. (2005) continued to argue against the 'idea that education should play a prominent role in fostering students' emotional intelligence, self-esteem and self-awareness' (p. 182). The central claim of the recent book by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) is that:

> Sponsored enthusiastically by the British government and supported by numerous academic researchers and a huge professional and commercial industry, a deluge of interventions throughout the education system assess the emotional needs and perceived vulnerability of children, young people and adults and claim to develop their emotional literacy and well being (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. ix).

Offering general support for these critics of therapy within the context of the discourse on adult education theory and practice, Jane Thompson (2007) has expressed similar misgivings. She observes that:

> In the popular wisdom of adult education practice it is certainly the case that ideas about confidence, emotional intelligence, and self-esteem are commonplace. The literature of funding applications, project reports and evaluation exercises are full of claims by policy-makers and practitioners alike that interventions targeted at so-called non-traditional learners and socially excluded groups give rise to increased confidence and self-esteem (p. 303).

Such developments, Thompson argues, are dangerous – not only because they neglect or marginalise some of the traditional core values of adult learning concerned with developing knowledge and understanding for active citizenship but also in their tendency to suggest that 'developing confidence and self-esteem can remedy a wide range of personal and social problems' with the result that this 'distracts attention from the structural causes of inequality…and from the widening gap between rich and poor more generally'(p. 304).

1.2 Has There Been a Therapeutic Turn?

Does this dystopian vision of contemporary learning and education accord with reality? What do these claims about a therapeutic turn actually mean and are they justified in terms of educational policy developments and practice over recent years? First of all we need to be certain of what exactly we are looking for in the form of a turn towards therapeutic education. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) assert:

> We define any activity that focuses on perceived emotional problems and which aims to make educational content and learning processes more 'emotionally engaging' as 'therapeutic education' (p. x).

As indicated already, I am concerned to advocate an enhancement of the affective domain of learning and would not naturally choose to use the term 'therapeutic education' but – since this seems to have become the label of choice which informs the debate in this sphere – I will use it as a short-hand way of referring to those features of educational development I wish to discuss. I would not object to the heavy emphasis on emotions revealed in the aforementioned quotation since standard accounts of

affective learning emphasise the role of emotions, and emotional development is also central to my own thesis. However, it needs to be pointed out here (and this will be stressed throughout) that the cognitive and affective domains can be viewed as inextricably connected and mutually dependent (Peters 1972; Hepburn 1972; Weare 2010), and that the references to emotions in an educational context directs attention to learning experiences which encapsulate quite complex activities such as receiving, internalising and organising information from a wide range of sources, in addition to 'developing a value system and demonstrating self-reliance' (Fawbert 2008, p. 90). There is a cognitive aspect of all emotions and an affective dimension of cognition; this is what Scheffler (1991) attempts to emphasise in his work on the 'cognitive emotions'.

There may be some truth to Furedi's (2003) critique of contemporary society in terms of its fostering of a 'victim culture' in which a pre-occupation with emotional well-being and self-esteem serves to anesthetise people in times of social and economic risk and uncertainty. Similarly, Sommers and Satel's (2005) warnings about the excesses of therapy and the dangers of our over-reliance upon it can be heeded without rejecting the many educational benefits of work in this sphere (Smeyers et al. 2007). We might accept that there is simply too much emphasis on personal counselling and individual rights and not enough on active citizenship duties and responsibilities in current times. It must also be acknowledged that – if all this is true – it is regressive and disempowering. What is difficult to discern, however, is how this putative change in general attitudes and ethos is influencing educational trends to any great extent.

Many of the actual examples cited by Ecclestone (2004a, b), for example, are drawn from the general field of counselling and the popular press, not specifically from educational contexts. She regrets the replacement of 'optimistic Rogerian ideas about humans' innate potential and drive for empowerment' with 'pessimistic images of people locked in cycles of social depression caused by emotional problems' (2004a, p. 13). If this were true, it would be most regrettable. However, it could be argued that – apart from a highly theoretical, inspirational impact akin to that of Paulo Freire on adult literacy tutors – Rogers has never had any *practical* influence on the English post-school education system. I would suggest that the alleged pessimistic perspectives have no greater impact or influence on the business of learning and teaching in the post-16 sector.

Similarly, although there may be some evidence for the rise of the 'diminished self' (Ecclestone et al. 2005) in popular culture, claims about its transference to specifically educational contexts require more justification than references to the use of Goleman's writings on emotional literacy and intelligence in a number of contemporary projects (this is discussed in more detail later). In this respect, we can reflect again on the popularity of Rogers and Freire in post-school learning texts, and the *actual* impact these have on everyday practices. The 'learning prescriptions' mentioned by Ecclestone et al. (2005, p. 186) seem to be unduly distorted for the purposes of criticism and do not reflect the huge advances made in learning support services at all levels of post-school provision. More recently, Hunt and West (2006) have suggested that – far from offering a diminished conception

of learning – the integration of educational and therapeutic processes through the use of psychodynamic notions can be empowering for learners and teachers alike. The discussion of mindfulness ideas and practices later is intended to engage with just such notions of selfhood by examining their place in educational debate (Hyland 2009, 2010).

1.3 The Diminishment of Learning

However, staying with developments in the post-compulsory sector for the moment, I think the idea of a 'diminishment' (the term used by critics of the therapeutic turn though 'impoverishment' and 'debilitation' – the label preferred by Smeyers et al. 2007 – would be equally suitable and are used below to refer to similar processes) of learners and learning may, indeed, have some purchase as a result of the predominance of utilitarian and economistic conceptions over the last decade or so. Policy studies of this sector (Ainley 1999; Lea et al 2003; Hyland and Merrill 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007) suggest that the key trends at this level over recent years have been the rise of undifferentiated skill-talk, an obsession with prescriptive learning outcomes and the dominance of CBET. The so-called therapeutic turn pales into insignificance alongside the damage wreaked by CBET and the behaviourist outcomes movement, bringing with it 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 1996; Hyland 1999; Hyland and Winch 2007). Emphasising affective goals and fostering motivation and confidence in learners is, arguably, far less dangerous than suggesting that all that counts in education and training is providing bits of evidence to satisfy narrow, mechanistic performance criteria.

Moreover, many of the initiatives referred to by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) in further education (FE) colleges which point 'towards a strong caring and nurturing ethos' (p. 66) are, as Cripps (2002) explains, a necessary counter-balance to the competitive, economistic and managerialist ethos which has transformed those institutions in recent decades. Avis (2009) has argued that the resulting 'performativity…operates within a blame culture', where accountability becomes a means by which the institution can call to account its members (p. 250) and that this has led to a decline in creativity, risk-taking and trust in the post-school system.

In addition to these post-school trends, it is worth noting at this point the arguments of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) about the rise of therapeutic practices in the school sector. Their account includes references to the use of 'circle time', 'feelings trees', 'worry boxes' and the use of psychodrama in primary schools (pp. 28–35) – in addition to a discussion of such initiatives as peer mentoring, personal, social and health education and citizenship modules in the secondary sector (pp. 55–60) – but there is little attempt to link such trends with the radical transformation of these sectors over recent years by the performance, accountability and managerialist culture

mentioned earlier (schooling is discussed in more detail in Chap. 9). The obsession with standards and league tables in the school sector since the 1990s is directly connected with the emergence of concerns about the affective side of education. As Cigman (2008) suggests:

> A standards agenda involves identifying and possibly shaming children and schools that fail. The social consequences of educational failure include disaffection, delinquency, violence and so on: the very problems that the standards agenda set out to address…It was this concern that led to a supplementary agenda focusing on so-called non-cognitive traits like confidence, motivation, resilience, well-being and self-esteem…The idea emerged that there are necessary affective conditions for successful learning, and that these can be usefully boosted, heightened or enhanced (p. 540).

Writing in a similar vein about the revival of concerns about happiness and well-being in educational discourse, Smith (2008) observes that:

> As I have described it, the 'long slide to happiness' begins with the unexceptionable observation that an education system dominated by targets and testing is experienced as arid by both pupils and students on the one hand and those who teach them on the other (p. 570).

Since the post-16 sector has been influenced even more than schools by the imposition of top-down policy changes (a fact specifically mentioned by Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 65) linked to the skills and employability agenda, it is not difficult to understand why a post-16 counter agenda concerned – as in the schools – with affective learning outcomes might well emerge. My argument, however, is that this reaction has been far too timid, lacklustre and indiscriminate (as the recent evaluation of SEAL discussed earlier suggests), and that there should be a more vigorous and systematic re-emphasis of affective objectives in this sector. Most learners in the post-school sector are either studying (increasingly preparing to *re-sit* examinations these days) for GCSEs/A-levels or pursuing vocational qualifications, so the notion that such programmes are more than marginally concerned with building self-esteem or emotional intelligence is difficult to accept (basic skills or 'skills for life' discussed later is, of course, extremely vocational and employment-led and has little to do with the affective domain).

There is more than enough scope to argue that much of this post-16 learning is grossly *deficient* in precisely this affective area; it does not connect or engage sufficiently with the emotions, values and wider interests which learners bring with them to post-compulsory institutions (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007). Writing about American education in recent years, Palmer (1998) noted similar tendencies and criticised educators' 'excessive regard for the powers of the intellect…our obsession with objective knowledge' and recommended learning programmes which stress 'subjective engagement…the power of emotions to freeze, or free, the mind' (p. 61).

The increase in mental health and emotional/behavioural problems in the post-school sector is now being acknowledged with a view to researching and implementing strategies to remedy the main problems (Warwick et al 2008). All this is symptomatic of the wider emotional distress experienced by many people in Western industrialised states which Harvey (2005) has linked with the relentless rise of neo-liberalism since

the 1970s, a trend robustly challenged by writers such as James (2008) and Gerhardt (2010) referred to in the Preface. If we connect all this with Thompson's (2007) worries about the possibility of a therapeutic turn weakening the links between education and social action, we might suggest that before people can change the world they need to change themselves. The reaffirmation of the significance of the affective domain – using mindfulness-based (MB) approaches as a vehicle for this – can help to strengthen the social citizenship goals of education in addition to enhancing learning and motivation generally (this is taken up in greater depth in Chaps. 5 and 12 in which the 'socially engaged' aspects of mindfulness are discussed).

It does not seem sensible to suggest that a sector which has been dominated for the last decade or so with ill-founded skill-talk and behaviourist CBET is somehow awash with affective objectives. It is true that certain features of competence-based learning have been perversely (mis-) matched with progressive, individualised and student-centred strategies (Hyland 1999), but this pedagogic absurdity no longer confuses or misleads anyone working in the further and higher education sector. Moreover, it is difficult to make much sense of Hayes' idea that basic skills (2003, p. 55) – a self-evident pre-requisite for learning of *any* kind – is an example of the reduction of education to therapy. For learners, young or old, who achieved little at school and associate learning with anxiety, grief and failure, a concern with foundational skills, attitudes and motivations may be exactly what is called for at this stage.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) provide lots of evidence in their book based on conversations with teachers, analysis of mission statements of schools and colleges, and references to emerging government policy initiatives – and lots of quotations from the interpersonal counselling and emotional management industry – but, as Kinman (2008) noted in her review of the book, the 'authors provide little in the way of peer-reviewed evidence for the strong assertions in the book' and 'rely heavily on "pop psychology" texts and unsupported hypotheses'(p. 50). To be fair, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) do confront this issue of evidence for the therapeutic turn fairly and squarely and argue that they are charting a broad 'cultural shift' in politics and society which has become a 'central focus for education policy' (pp. 146–147). However, even though I think it is better to maintain a reflective agnosticism about the precise extent of a therapeutic turn, my case is that, if there is little evidence of such a trend, then it is a great pity since the widespread transformations of the system mentioned above do seem to merit a resurgence of attention to this dimension of education.

1.4 Conclusion

To summarise this initial overview of the so-called therapeutic turn in education, it is possible to identify four main errors made by the critical commentators:

1. There is a serious underestimation of the radical impoverishment of education over the last three decades through the obsession with standards, skills, competences and narrow employability objectives.

2. The extent to which affective goals concerned with emotional, social and psychological growth in learners has influenced educational activity has been grossly exaggerated.
3. In the light of (1) and (2) the critics have failed to see the urgent need for a re-affirmation of the importance of the affective domain of education.
4. The general thrust of the arguments is that educational development is primarily intellectual or cognitive and this leads to a one-sided and narrow conception of the educational task and a diminished notion of learning.

The following chapters seek to address all these points by, firstly, investigating the links between therapy and education and, secondly, by exploring how the principles and practice of mindfulness can help to re-invigorate the affective dimension of learning at all levels.

Chapter 2
Education and Therapy

2.1 Therapeutic Education or Educational Therapy

In their investigation of the various accounts of the relationship between therapy and education, Smeyers et al. (2007) identify three principal 'climates of thought'. They observe that:

> First, there is the conception of therapy as an obvious good, a practice that helps people lead more fulfilled and less unhappy lives…Second, and partly in reaction to the first, there is increasing scepticism, even hostility, towards therapy and its influence…Therapy is charged with encouraging a debilitating climate of dependence to which it then presents itself as a solution. Third, it may seem to some that the only essential and important questions concerning therapy are whether or not it can be proved to be effective and if so how to do it (p. 1).

The writers go on to justify their rejection of all three approaches in favour of a 'more balanced and nuanced treatment of therapy and its connections with education' and which argues against 'the idea that a sharp conceptual division can be made between education and therapy'(Smeyers et al. 2007, p. 1). This broadly sums up my own position, though the particular emphasis placed on mindfulness and affective education in the following chapters represents personal perspectives on education and therapy.

I intend to explore the potential inter-relationships and overlaps between education and therapy by referring to Peters' (1966) original analysis of the concept of education. It needs to be emphasised here that this has been subjected to much critical analysis and revision – not least by Peters himself (Peters 1973, 1983) – and I will be referring to some of these later developments in philosophy of education discussions about the legacy of this approach to educational analysis hereafter and in later chapters. At this stage – accepting that this initial normative conception has, at the very least, remained one which later discussions, however critical, need to take account of (Cuypers and Martin 2009; Bailey 2010) – I am using Peters' original ideas and methods for exploratory and heuristic purposes.

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In explaining and justifying his conception of education as the initiation into worthwhile activities, Peters (1966) makes use of an analogy between activities of 'education' and those of 'reform'. He argues that education is like reform in that it 'picks out no particular activity or process' but, rather, it 'lays down criteria to which activities or processes must conform'. It is suggested that:

> Both concepts have the criterion built into them that something worthwhile should be achieved. 'Education' does not imply, like 'reform', that a man should be brought back from a state of turpitude into which he has lapsed; but it does have normative implications…It implies that something worthwhile is being or has been intentionally transmitted in a morally acceptable manner (p. 25).

I suggest that a similar sort of analogy holds in respect of education and therapy. Neither process picks out any specific method or technique, yet both imply the achievement of a desirable state of mind.

In the case of education, this state involves the development of knowledge and understanding, and in the case of therapy there is the goal of enhancing mental health and well-being by, for instance, removing delusions, breaking harmful habits or developing more wholesome or nourishing thoughts and actions.

Indeed, it would seem that therapy is even closer to education than the notion of reform since – at least, in the mindfulness-based (MB) approaches recommended throughout the book – there is a mutual interest in the Socratic method of 'mental midwifery' (Hyland 2003, p. 75). The spirit is captured perfectly in the dialogues in which Socrates functions as a mouthpiece and representative of the philosophical views of Plato. In *The Republic*, Plato rejects the 'conception of education professed by those who say they can put into the mind knowledge that was not there before'; the business of the educator is not that of implanting sight but, rather, of 'ensuring that someone who had it was turned in the right direction and looking the right way' (1955 edn., p. 283). Admittedly this has more to do with method than content, but it is an important factor and will be discussed in more detail in Chaps. 9–12 in which the educational implications of mindfulness are examined in depth.

It would be useful to look more closely at Peters' specific criteria of education as a way of further elaborating the extent of the connections between therapy and education. The three principal areas (a fourth one concerned with the distinctions between education and training is discussed in later chapters, especially Chap. 10) are:

1. That education implies the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it.
2. That education must involve knowledge and understanding and some kind of cognitive perspective, which are not inert.
3. That education at least rules out some procedures of transmission, on the grounds that they lack wittingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner (p. 45).

Taking each of these in turn, we can determine how far therapy – and especially MB strategies – satisfies the criteria.

Therapeutic activity may be considered worthwhile insofar as it involves the progression from a less to a more desirable state of mind and being. Certainly direct transmission or teaching is less common in a therapeutic relationship than it is in

education (though intrinsically valuable autodidacticism is prized in both spheres) but the significant point is that worthwhile learning is still taking place. The central purpose of MBT is to free the mind from automatic, ruminative thought and action and this is equivalent to the Socratic method of freeing the mind from delusions and error in order to pave the way for genuine learning. Mindfulness cultivates the awareness – especially that which 'emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally to things as they are' (Williams et al. 2007, p. 47) – which is a prerequisite for meaningful and productive teaching and learning. As Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) explain about their experience of using MBT strategies in American schools:

> Mindfulness and education are beautifully interwoven. Mindfulness is about being present with and to your inner experience as well as your outer environment, including other people. When teachers are fully present they teach better. When students are fully present, the quality of their learning is better (p. xi).

Both spheres involve the attention to and modification of consciousness and modes of thinking and both aim at a form of enlightened awareness which pays due attention to values and feelings. Peters (1966) was perhaps the most distinguished and foremost advocate of a traditional liberal education grounded in forms of knowledge, but he took great care to leave room for individual development and personal relationships in teaching and learning. He observes that:

> the ability to form and maintain satisfactory personal relationships is almost a necessary condition of doing anything else that is not warped or stunted. If the need to love and be loved is not satisfied the individual will be prone to distortions of belief, ineffectiveness of lack of control in action and unreliability in his allegiances. His attempt to learn things will also be hampered by his lack of trust and confidence. A firm basis of love and trust, together with a continuing education in personal relationships, is therefore s crucial underpinning to any other more specific educational enterprise (p. 58).

Can therapy be said to incorporate the knowledge, understanding and active cognitive perspective required by Peters' second criterion? Certainly, there are clear differences in types of knowledge utilised and exemplified in the fields of education and therapy. These can be illustrated by examining the 'forms of knowledge' which, Hirst claims, cover the whole domain of human endeavour and provide the foundations of a liberal education, which has been traditionally viewed as a 'process which frees the mind from error' (Schofield 1972, p. 154). Originally, seven (or eight, depending on the particular interpretation) disciplines or forms – distinguishable from each other by their conceptual and logical frameworks, methodology and truth criteria – were identified by Hirst (1965): 'mathematics, physical sciences, human sciences, history, religion, literature and the fine arts, and philosophy' (p. 131), in addition to theoretical and practical fields of knowledge which combined elements from the forms (and also incorporated morality). In later versions these were revised; history was subsumed into the human sciences, mathematics and logic are called symbolics and literature and the fine arts are labelled aesthetics; doubt is cast about whether religion is a genuine form, and a new area 'awareness and understanding of our own and other people's minds' (Hirst and Peters 1970, p. 63) is identified.

In later comments on the forms of knowledge, Hirst (1974) was concerned to stress that the forms do not exhaust the aims or content of educational practice. He observed that:

> much commonsense knowledge and many forms of experience, attitudes and skills may be regarded as lying outside all the disciplines we have…Many forms of education, including liberal education in my sense, will have objectives some of which come from within the disciplines and some of which do not (p. 98).

The knowledge and understanding which guides many therapeutic processes may be characterised as that 'commonsense knowledge', experience, attitudes and skills referred to by Hirst (for a recent critical discussion of these ideas, see Bailey 2010). However, there is also clear evidence within therapeutic practice of the utilisation of aspects of the human and physical sciences and, especially, of the area labelled 'awareness and understanding of our own and other people's minds' (this area is examined in more depth in the next chapter). In addition, the aims of education and therapy in terms of freeing the mind from error and delusion to make way for creativity and openness in learning are in close harmony. As will be explained later, the MB approaches I am concerned with have their origins in the 'mindfulness' which lies at the core of Buddhist contemplative traditions. To conclude this section it is worth considering the view of one such practitioner, Thich Nhat Hanh, particularly his conception of mindfulness and work. He advises us to:

> keep your attention focused on the work, be alert and ready to handle ably and intelligently any situation which may arise – this is mindfulness. There is no reason why mindfulness should be different from focusing all one's attention on one's work, to be alert and to be using one's best judgment. During the moment one is consulting, resolving, and dealing with whatever arises, a calm heart and self-control are necessary if one is to obtain good results…If we are not in control of ourselves but instead let our impatience or anger interfere, then our work is no longer of any value. Mindfulness is the miracle by which we master and restore ourselves (Hanh 1991, p. 14).

This message applies to any form of work, including the 'work' of learning, teaching and education.

The final criterion which needs to be satisfied for any activity to be educational concerns the use of methods which respect the wittingness and autonomy of learners. Obviously this rules out certain therapeutic practices such as hypnotherapy and behaviour modification but, equally, it rules out many educational practices involving coercion, punishment and indoctrination (Hirst and Peters 1970).

Smeyers et al. (2007) point out that – although those forms of therapy which consist of 'doing things to people' in a manipulative manner may be ruled out on educational grounds – 'many therapists in fact are concerned precisely to distinguish therapy as a relationship between autonomous human beings from therapy as a set of techniques' (pp. 1–2).

Versions of therapy which respect personal autonomy are, I would suggest, well to the fore in MB approaches. Investigating the links between Buddhist practice and psychoanalysis, for example, Rubin (2003) explains the 'similarities between both traditions' and observes that:

> Both are concerned with the nature and alleviation of human suffering and each has both a diagnosis and 'treatment plan' for alleviating human misery. The three other important

> things they share make a comparison between them possible and potentially productive. First, they are pursued within the crucible of an emotionally intimate relationship between either an analyst-analysand or a teacher and student. Second, they emphasise some similar experiential processes – evenly hovering attentions and free association in psychoanalysis and meditation in Buddhism. Third, they recognise that obstacles impede the attempt to facilitate change (pp. 45–46).

This account is strikingly similar to the sort of learning and teaching encounter favoured in open and progressive education which emphasises student-centredness, autonomy and independent learning with the teacher acting as a facilitator, guide and resource person (Hyland 1979; Lowe 2007). In addition, we can detect the idea of removing obstacles to learning and freeing the mind from error that is characteristic of liberal education.

Staying within the contemplative tradition, Salzberg and Goldstein (2001) explain how the 'function of meditation is to shine the light of awareness on our thinking'. The educational implications are brought out clearly in their description of how:

> The practice of bare attention opens up the claustrophobic world of our conditioning, revealing an array of options. Once we can see clearly what's going on in our minds, we can choose whether and how to act on what we're seeing. The faculty used to make those choices is called discriminating wisdom…the ability to know skilful actions from unskilful actions (p. 48).

MBT approaches can have a potential impact on both the means and ends of education. Not only do they provide the foundations for productive learning, but also offer a blueprint to guide the direction of that learning. As Hanh (1999) observes:

> Mindfulness helps us look deeply into the depths of our consciousness . . . When we practice this we are liberated from fear, sorrow and the fires burning inside us. When mindfulness embraces our joy, our sadness, and all our mental formations, sooner or later we will see their deep roots . . . Mindfulness shines its light upon them and helps them to transform (p. 75).

Thich Nhat Hanh is called 'Thay' (which means 'teacher' in Vietnamese) in the Zen tradition within which he works, and the lessons he teaches in mindfulness – the intrinsic valuing of present moment being, awareness and activity – are not dissimilar to those of any teacher inspired by the philosophical principles underpinning the notion of education outlined earlier. As Peters (1973) puts it:

> To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view. What is required is not feverish preparation for something that lies ahead, but to work with precision, passion and taste at worthwhile things that lie to hand (p. 20).

To conclude this section, I would argue that the therapeutic processes exemplified in MB strategies fully satisfy the criteria for education outlined by Peters. It should be noted here that the specific normative concept outlined earlier was later expanded to incorporate wider, more value-neutral perspectives on educational systems as well (Peters 1973, 1983). In addition, philosophers of education such as Winch (1996) and White (1997) have pointed to the legitimacy of advocating broader, less prescriptive conceptions of the educational task such as the 'preparation for adult life' or simply 'upbringing'. White (1997), in particular, suggests that

discovering what 'the aims of education are should be tantamount to working out what it is to be well brought up' and that a 'relatively uncontroversial claim is that education has to do with bringing people up to lead good lives' (pp. 86–87).

However, this still leaves us with the practical task of determining what is entailed in equipping and enabling learners to lead good lives. It is here that the issues raised by Peters' writings on the concept serve a useful purpose. Clearly, when the concept of education is employed in discourse, sometimes it refers to specific aims and values – such as cognitive learning, autonomy or good citizenship (Bailey 2010) – and sometimes it simply picks out the value-neutral, descriptive idea of the education or schooling system of a particular state or country. Thus, a certain level of ambiguity in references to education is inevitable, and it is always advisable to note any potential confusion or conflation of the different senses of the term.

Some specific examples might serve to highlight the specific/general and descriptive/evaluative features of the concept of education. The notion of education for citizenship, for instance, has received renewed emphasis in the UK in recent years (McCowan 2010), and it has traditionally been foregrounded in European and US education policies. Such notions are also predominant in Brighouse's (2006) general recommendation that the 'central purpose of education is to promote human flourishing' (p. 42). Which senses of 'education' are being appealed to here, the descriptive or the evaluative? Clearly, both are implied in the arguments. The education systems (descriptive) of the UK, Europe and the USA are referred to in addition to prescriptions (evaluative) for what such systems of provision *ought* to include (both writers go on to elaborate upon citizenship and human flourishing respectively).

It could be argued that Peters has performed a useful service in alerting us to the different senses of education at the same time as unearthing (mutable) public presuppositions about the value and purposes of educating people. In recent work in the philosophy of education which re-appraises Peters' work (Cuypers and Martin 2009) a number of educators were concerned to pay tribute to the valuable and lasting legacy of this approach to understanding the nature and purpose of education. Katz (2009), for example, argues that:

> One central virtue of R.S. Peters' conceptual analysis is his distinction between the meaning of education in one of its central uses and the content of education…Peters has reminded us of something that we cannot afford to forget: namely that we need to justify the content of education not once and for all time, but over and over again with each new generation (p. 106).

More significantly, Barrow (2009) suggests that – in spite of the criticisms of Peters' specific analysis of the concept of education and his own revisions of the original ideas – Peters may have been 'nearly right' in the original formulations. He observes that:

> criticism of his [Peters'] position has overall been entirely contradictory. To some, what he has to say about education is too specific, to others it is too empty; to some it is too prescriptive, to others not prescriptive enough; to some it is too traditional and conservative, to others it is too idiosyncratic, even iconoclastic (p. 15).

Barrow concludes by arguing that:

> *a propos* Peters' recantation, that in fact the identification of education and worthwhile knowledge is entirely correct. Granted there is the separate and further question of what knowledge is worthwhile…it is surely something that any thoughtful person of any society and era would agree upon: educated people are those who have what is regarded as worthwhile knowledge (p. 18).

In the account of the links between therapy and education proposed earlier, I am suggesting that 'therapy' satisfies the specific, evaluative criteria for 'education' originally outlined by Peters, and also – in relation to the broader, descriptive idea of education – that educational aims linked to the promotion of mental health and well-being can be promoted through greater emphasis upon the affective domain of learning. The MBT processes I am recommending would be perfectly compatible with these wider conceptions. Moreover, such strategies have the potential to transform and reform practice with a view to improving and humanising learning and teaching in ways suggested by a number of critical commentators on current educational practice (Palmer 1998; Fielding 2001; Blake et al. 2000; Brighouse 2006; Allen and Ainley 2007; Weare 2010).

2.2 Philosophical Connections

Many years before my own attempt to map the philosophical links between education and therapy (Hyland 2009, 2010), and also 35 years before Smeyers et al. (2007) noticed that 'Education, rightly understood, is thus one of the richest kinds of therapy' (p. 6), Wilson (1972) pointed out that there are many connections and overlaps between the two fields of activity. He observed that:

> Education involves initiation into activities, forms of thought, etc. which conceptually must be…worthwhile or justifiable. Different types of justifications, or different descriptions of the mode in which they are worth-while, may apply to different activities or groups of activities. Thus some may be called 'therapeutic', others described as 'enlarging the personality'… These justification phrases may be said to represent the 'aims of education'; and 'therapeutic' or 'contributing to mental health', may represent one such aim (pp. 91–92).

More specifically, Wilson detects an overlap between 'part of the area we call lack of mental health and part of the area we might call lack of education'. He observes that:

> In so far as education is concerned with mental health, therefore, it will be because there are educational activities which develop various kinds of rationality (i.e. which do not only increase awareness in various fields), help people to develop their potentialities and improve their grasp of various forms of thought, but which by doing these things help to free people from irrationality (not just from ignorance) (pp. 86–87).

Unlike Wilson, Peters does not view mental health as an aim of education, primarily because of his view about aims generally which is essentially that, as a normative concept, education specifies intrinsic value criteria which aims or activities

should satisfy rather than prescribing ends extrinsic to education (1973). However, as Gribble (1969) suggests, this does not mean that Peters' criteria rule out aims such as 'mental health', 'creativity', 'growth' or 'self-realisation'; expanding on this point he notes:

> Peters is not saying that it is completely pointless to refer to "growth" or "self-realization" as educational aims – it just doesn't get us very far until we begin to specify those activities which will realize the self in worthwhile ways or define the appropriate direction of growth (p. 77).

In fact, for Peters (1964), mental health is inextricably linked to teaching, to the methods and procedures of educational processes, rather than to the processes themselves. He is forthright in asserting that:

> There are ways of teaching skills which may be damaging. And the importance of such skills can be emphasised with complete disregard for basic needs like love and security. Warped and stunted children may result from foolish methods of teaching. This is where talk of mental health, of integration, and of wholeness is relevant as a negative counsel of great importance. It is something that educators should never neglect while they educate people (p. 84).

The attachment to reason, cognitive perspective and to the normative values of the concept of education outlined earlier is clearly evident in Peters' discussion of the role of the emotions in education. Displaying a commitment to rationality similar to the aforementioned account by Wilson, Peters (1972) has demonstrated the clear and distinct connections between human emotions, motivation and the sort of reasoning associated with the development of knowledge and understanding. In considering why we attach the label 'emotions' to concepts such as 'fear, anger, sorrow, grief, envy, jealousy, pity, remorse, guilt, shame, pride, wonder and the like', Peters argues that our main criterion for selection is 'the connection between emotions and the class of cognitions that are conveniently called appraisals' (pp. 466–7). He goes on to suggest that such appraisals are:

> constituted by seeing situations under aspects which are agreeable or disagreeable, beneficial or harmful in a variety of dimensions. To feel fear is, for instance, to see a situation as dangerous; to feel pride is to see with pleasure something as mine or as something that I have had a hand in bringing about (Peters 1972, p. 467).

Since 'emotions are basically forms of cognition', we may legitimately refer to and recommend the 'education of the emotions' (Peters 1972). Wilson (1972) is getting at something similar when he argues that 'we can say that certain educational processes just *are the same as* some processes which increase mental health: that some forms of teaching are identical with some forms of psychotherapy' (p. 89, original italics). The idea is that both learning and therapy involve the development of knowledge, values, emotions, understanding, reason, skill, experience and insight, and both are equally necessary for accessing work, social relationships and the wider communities of practice which constitute the good life (these issues are discussed at length in Chaps. 6 and 7).

In this sphere of philosophical conceptions of educational development, it is worth concluding this section by referring to the very last sentence in the book by

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) which serves to bring out the profound differences between us. They conclude with the claim that 'What makes humanity is the intellectual and an education based on *cogito ergo sum* not *sentio ergo sum'* (p, 164, original italics). One of my main reasons for seeking to re-affirm the value of the affective domain is to caution against such dangerously one-sided conceptions of the educational enterprise in the attempt to regain a broader notion of the education of the whole person exemplified in the progressive tradition (discussed in Sect. 2.3).

Descartes' infamous *Cogito* has, arguably, been responsible for more philosophical wrong turnings than anything else in Western thought. Ryle (1973) demonstrated how 'Descartes' myth' had resulted in the 'intellectualist legend' which wrongly assumed that there was 'an antithesis between the physical and the mental' (p. 32), and this led to the false dualisms between mind and body, theory and practice and knowing how and knowing that. That other famous Frenchman, Rousseau (1966 edn), was equally mistaken in declaring that 'to exist is to feel' since 'we had feelings before we had ideas' (p. 348). As later chapters indicate, it is a fact that the emotional brain evolved prior to intellectual capacities but our current existence cannot be defined exclusively in terms of either one or the other since human activity necessitates mind/body and cognitive/affective elements working together in conjunction. Searle (1985) criticises the legacy of Descartes on the grounds that it has led to an 'inherited cultural resistance to treating the conscious mind as a biological phenomenon like any other' (p. 10). Placing all this in the context of human evolution, Pinker (1997) explains clearly 'why we have emotions'; he argues that the

> emotions are mechanisms that set the brain's highest level goals. Once triggered by a propitious moment, an emotion triggers the cascade of goals and sub-goals that we call thinking and acting…no sharp line divides thinking from feeling, nor does thinking necessarily precede feeling or vice versa… (p. 373).

This connects well with the analysis of the education of the emotions, particularly with the analysis by Peters (1972) and Scheffler's (1991) notion of cognitive emotions. In commenting on Scheffler's thesis, Standish (1992) explains how it is a 'rationality which transcends the dualism of head and heart' and:

> explicitly rejects the common assumption that cognition and emotion are worlds apart and illustrates coherently the ways in which rationality and the passions are intertwined. What is of interest to the scientist and what is understood in the work of art…involve a combination of perception and feeling (p. 117).

As will be discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7, the affective domain can be said to incorporate much more than the cognitive emotions discussed here. There are also ethical and aesthetic values to be included, in addition to the non-conceptual, less intellectual emotions such as sympathetic joy, loving kindness and compassion associated with the Buddhist origins of mindfulness. It needs to be remembered that, although cognitive theories of learning are more conducive to the sort of all-round development advocated here than behaviourist ones, some theories (as discussed in later chapters) still have a marked tendency to undervalue the sphere of emotions at the expense of the intellect (Sotto 2001). In terms of enhancing mental well-being, an

educational programme would be incomplete without a discussion of the negative passions of greed, hatred and envy, and how mindfulness can help to mediate and temper such emotions. However, the cognitive emotions outlined earlier do have a central role to play in providing a philosophical bridge and justification for examining the links between education and therapy.

2.3 Education and Well-Being

A central slogan in the progressive education movement of the earlier twentieth century was 'we teach children – not subjects', and this was, as Dearden (1968) suggests, a direct reaction to the drab authoritarianism and inhuman social utility of the elementary school tradition in England (graphically depicted and satirised in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times* and D.H. Lawrence's *The Rainbow*). What was to become the paradigm text of the progressive movement – the *Plowden Report* published by the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1967 – described the ideal school environment as 'one in which children learn to live first and foremost as children and not as adults'. It was recommended that schools should set out to 'devise the right environment for children, to allow them to be themselves', and special emphasis was placed upon 'individual discovery, on first-hand experience and on opportunities for creative work' (Plowden Report 1967, pp. 187–188). This was an attempt to inject a new tone of moral responsibility in respect of the pedagogic *in loco parentis* task, the fundamental spirit of which is consummately illustrated in Gibran's words (1964 edn, pp. 22–23) from *The Prophet*:

> Your children are not your children.
> They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.
> They come through you but not from you.
> And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.
> You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
> For they have their own thoughts…
> You may strive to be like them, but seek not to make them like you.
> For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.
> You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth…
> Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness.

Although there was always more rhetoric than reality (in a way similar to that surrounding the impact of Rogers and Freire on post-school education) about the claims that progressive philosophy was transforming English schools in the 1960s and 1970s (Hyland 1979; Lowe 2007), such ideas did inspire the open education movement in America as the earlier influences of Dalton and Dewey were rediscovered and applied to new times. Rathbone (1971), one of the leading open education exponents of the period, claimed that Plowden's views on the nature of childhood underpinned the 'open education ethic' which entailed treating children with 'courtesy, kindness, and respect…valuing [the child] as a human being whose rights are no less valid than those of an adult' (p. 112). In a similar vein, the new openness in education was described as 'a way of extending the school's human

dimension' (Pluckrose 1975, p. 3) and, more grandly, an 'attempt to create a new human and social world' (Bremer 1975, p. 18). In the stress on student-centredness and individualised learning, such perspectives later came to influence post-school education (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007) as well though – in an era of behaviourist outcomes – any such affective aims could never be more than marginal to the acquisition of qualifications for working life.

In the midst of all the rhetoric it is not difficult to recognise a number of fairly unexceptionable notions about the fact that education is about personal development as well as acquiring knowledge and skills, and that even Peters' (1966) liberal conception of education as the development of knowledge and understanding for its own sake must, in some sense, be linked to more general ends such as human flourishing or the promotion of a just community (Marples 2010). To be sure, the subject-matter of education cannot just be, as Whitehead (1962) once grandiloquently put it, 'Life in all its manifestations' (p. 10) nor, as Dearden (1972) correctly argues, can the 'aim of education *simply* be happiness, quite without qualification' (p. 111). However, as Dearden goes on to emphasise, there 'is no question of whether or not happiness is valuable…the question is rather that of how important happiness is, compared with other values, in a specifically educational situation' (p. 109). Similarly, Smith (2002) suggests that 'self-esteem can usefully be admitted into our educational scheme of things as a significant good, but not one pursued directly, still less exclusively' (p. 99). For educational purposes, what needs to be attached to all-embracing external ends about self-esteem, happiness or human flourishing are internal objectives concerned with the development of knowledge, understanding, autonomy and values which will enable those being educated to construct and participate in communities which promote and reinforce such flourishing. The affective dimension of educational activity – linked to both processes in terms of stimulating learners' interests and motivation and also to content in the acknowledgement that knowledge and skills cannot be completely separated from human values and emotions (Palmer 1998; Hyland 1998) – is arguably what is being highlighted in referring to the therapeutic function of education. Smeyers et al. (2007) are absolutely correct in saying that 'in our own time therapeutic approaches tend to be connected with progressive conceptions of education' (p. 4).

2.4 Transforming Education Through Therapy

In addition to exploring the links between education and therapy, Smeyers et al. (2007) are also:

> interested in ways in which education may itself stand in need of therapy – perhaps through the incorporation of therapeutic approaches but especially, and more importantly, in terms of the need to retrieve education from the current state of its debilitation (p. 4).

Aspects of this debilitated state and the ways in which therapies based on mindfulness will be explored in depth in later chapters. At this juncture, however, it

would be useful to attempt an overview of this task as both a preliminary and introduction to the later discussion.

In a powerful philosophical critique of the 'nihilistic' tendencies – the 'devaluation of value' – of educational policy and theory at the turn of the twenty-first century, Blake et al. (2000) write:

> Perhaps the most glaring example of our devaluation of value is the reduction of complex educational aims and purposes, of the whole question of what education is for, to a matter of raising standards, understood as a matter of children, schools or whole educational systems…moving from lower to higher positions on league tables, entirely as if educational achievement were no different from that of a football team pulling clear of the relegation zone or becoming a contender for promotion (p. xi).

This devaluation of educational aims and purposes – through technicist obsessions with school effectiveness, targets, end employability skills and competences – is constructively criticised in ways which have subsequently been reinforced by commentators on policy trends from school to university (Lea et al. 2003; Hyland and Winch 2007; Avis 2009).

What, then, can therapy hope to do for education in such impoverished times? The general answer offered by Smeyers et al. (2007) asks us to learn the lessons taught by Wittgenstein's analytic techniques which may help to bring educational concepts 'back to the ordinary circumstances of their use'. For Wittgenstein, philosophy is 'like therapy for when we see how language actually works philosophical problems disappear and philosophical questions come to an end' (p. 219). Wittgenstein suggested that philosophy was 'a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language' (1974 edn., p. 47). The suggestion, then, is the bewitchment of education – brought about by the technicist and economistic language of performativity and managerialism – can be clarified if not dispelled by lessons drawn from therapeutic perspectives and processes.

Learning from psychoanalysis we might, according to Smeyers, Smith and Standish, learn to cure the 'madness' which currently bedevils education with lessons drawn from therapy, particularly, following Bentall (2003), if we are mindful of the arbitrary and shifting interpretations of madness and the need to 'use the word "mad" to avoid connotations of sickness'(Smeyers et al. 2007, p. 172). The critical account proceeds with the observation that:

> Our criteria stand in need of application – that is, judgment – and in judgments we exercise our words; therapy depends upon the sensitive exercise of practical reason, not least in the words that we use. Success in these matters involves an "authentic gauging", the metre-making movement of the poetic, and this is a responsibility of language (Smeyers et al. 2007, p. 123).

Drawing on poetry, narrative, qualitative research and literary criticism, the writers address this therapeutic project with considerable aplomb.

My own use of therapy – especially that inspired by mindfulness – has broadly similar aims in relation to the re-affirmation of the place of the affective within the general aims of education (Hand 2010). As mentioned earlier, connections between Buddhist principles and psychological/psychotherapeutic practice are increasingly

being drawn and applied. Segall (2003a) has observed that the 'degree to which Buddhist theory and practice parallel certain aspects of both the cognitive-behavioural and experiential psychotherapies is truly remarkable' (p. 165). Mindfulness practice is concerned to understand and transform mental activity in ways which free the mind from error and enhance clarity and insight in relation to all aspects of experience. In this respect it is on all fours with the aims and purposes of educational activity, and the long and highly developed ethical tradition upon which it is founded has the potential to invigorate and enrich learning and teaching at all levels.

2.5 Conclusion

The connections, inter-dependence and overlapping themes of perspectives in education and therapy have been explained and justified. This process has moved us from the circumscribed and value-impoverished technicist and economistic accounts to more holistic perspectives of the all-round development of learners' characteristic of progressive and liberal education. As a description of the educational philosophy that I would wish to advocate, it would be difficult to better that offered by Oakeshott (1972):

> Education, I have contended, is the transaction between the generations in which newcomers to the scene are initiated into the world which they are to inhabit. This is a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, moral and religious beliefs, relationships, practices – states of mind in which the human condition is to be discerned as recognition of and responses to the ordeal of consciousness…To be initiated into this world is learning to become human; and to move within it freely is being human, which is an "historic", not a "natural" condition (p. 47).

The attention to and modification of consciousness is also a central goal of mindfulness practice and MBT approaches, and this is another aspect of the process of becoming human. As Gunaratana (2002) puts it:

> In a state of mindfulness, you see yourself exactly as you are. You see your own selfish behaviour. You see your own suffering. And you see how you create that suffering. You see how you hurt others. You pierce right through the layer of lies that you normally tell yourself, and you see what is really there. Mindfulness leads to wisdom. (pp. 152–153).

In the next chapter, the origins, nature and scope of mindfulness are examined in more detail.

Chapter 3
The Nature of Mindfulness

3.1 Buddhist Origins

The original meaning and force of mindfulness can best be understood against the background of its natural home within the foundations of Buddhism. In the context of the *Dharma* (literally the fundamental nature of the universe revealed in the Buddhist canon of teachings and precepts, Keown 2005), mindfulness is of overriding importance. Technically, mindfulness is the seventh strand of the noble eightfold path which is designed to lead to nirvana or the end of suffering, but this needs to be interpreted within the framework of the four noble truths which 'cover under their spacious umbrella the central tenets of Buddhism' (Carrithers 1996, p. 54).

Thich Nhat Hanh – the renowned Vietnamese Zen Buddhist monk and campaigner for peace and justices – describes the four noble truths as 'the cream of the Buddha's teaching' (Hanh 1999, p. 9). He goes on to explain that:

> The First Noble Truth is suffering (*dukkha* in Sanskrit, the language used in early Buddhist texts)…We all suffer to some extent. We have some malaise in our body and our mind… The Second Noble Truth is the origin, roots, nature, creation and arising (*samudaya*) of suffering. After we touch our suffering, we need to look deeply into it to see how it came to be…The Third Noble Truth is the cessation (*nirodha*) of creating suffering by refraining from doing the things that make us suffer…The Fourth Noble Truth is the path (*marga*) that leads to refraining from doing the things that cause us to suffer (Hanh 1999, pp. 10–11).

Brazier (2003) explains that the 'teaching of the Four Noble Truths is a cornerstone of Buddhist understanding' which 'offers an analysis of the basic human process of responding to life's afflictions and a framework for understanding and working with the pain in our own lives and in the world' (p. 8). Thus, the key truths concerning the existence of suffering (*dukkha* is sometimes also interpreted as 'anguish', Batchelor 1998, or simply 'unsatisfactoriness', Gunaratana 2002), its origins and nature, the possibility of ending or transforming it and the way or method of transformation represent the bedrock of Buddhist philosophy and practice, and the role for learning and education is clearly and fully in evidence. It is worth examining the truths in detail as

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expressed in the Buddha's original words in a translation of the *Samyutta Nikaya* (one of the early Pali – the original language spoken by the Buddha – *sutras* or teachings; Bodhi 2000). Of the first truth of *dukkha* the Buddha observes:

> The noble truth of dukkha, affliction, is this: birth, old age, sickness, death, grief, lamentation, pain, depression and agitation are dukkha. Dukkha is being associated with what you do not like, being separated from what you do like, and not being able to get what you want (Samyutta Nikaya, 61.11.5).

When we encounter such suffering, certain instinctive and seemingly universal and inevitable responses arise within us. About this, it is said that:

> The noble truth of *samudaya*, response to affliction, is this: it is the search for self re-creation that is associated with greed. It lights upon whatever pleasures are to be found here and there. It is thirst for sense pleasure, for being and non-being (Bodhi 2000, 56.11.6).

In the flight from suffering and pain, a natural impulse in humans is to run away, to seek refuge in materialism and sensual pleasures. As this refuge crumbles in the inevitable disappointment and striving of the will leading to an unquenchable thirst for ever new diversions and experiences, illusions are shattered and compulsive patterns and habits are formed in the never-ending cyclical struggle to escape from the human condition. As an alternative to this, the Buddha taught:

> The noble truth of *nirodha*, containment, is this: it is the complete capturing of that thirst. It is to let go of, be liberated from and refuse to dwell in the object of that thirst (Bodhi 2000, 61.11.7).

The final stage is *marga*, the path or method of escaping this apparently endless cycle of strife:

> The noble truth of *marga*, the right track, is this: It is the noble eight limb way, namely right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness right *Samadhi*[concentration] (Bodhi 2000, 61.11.8).

Dhammananda (1987, p. 90) illustrates the eightfold path in terms of the following categories:

Wisdom	*Morality*	*Mental Culture*
1. Right understanding	3. Right speech	6. Right effort
2. Right thought	4. Right action	7. Right mindfulness
	5. Right livelihood	8. Right concentration

Right, used in this context, is not always necessarily a moral or an ethical right (though the primary principles of non-harming, benevolence, compassion and loving kindness inform everything, not just speech action and livelihood) but, rather, an indication of what is beneficial in a pragmatic sense. It is *right* in terms of achieving the desired end of reducing or relieving suffering (Hanh 1999, p. 11). This primary pragmatic focus is of the first importance and well worth marking since the later discussions of mindfulness and education will be informed by this function. Batchelor (1998) insists that 'there is nothing particularly religious or spiritual about this path' (though, of course, just about anything, such as sport or forms of art, can be pursued

as if they were religions!) and that 'it encompasses everything we do. It is an authentic way of being in the world' (p. 10). This is echoed in Segall's (2003a, b, c) assertion that 'Buddhism is a form of radical empiricism. The Buddha taught that one should not take his word on his authority, but that one should see things for oneself' (p. 92).

Of the inter-relationship of all the elements of the four noble truths, Brazier (2003) observes that the:

> teaching describes the spiritual life, a life that flows in the direction of purposeful action. The teaching is also a description of a process. One element flows from another. If we have the right vision, we think the right way. If we think the right way, we speak the right way; if we speak the right way, we act the right way. If act the right way we employ ourselves ethically; if we employ ourselves ethically, we put in full effort. If we put in full effort, we become mindful, and if we are mindful we experience Samadhi. Samadhi, the state of clear, meditative mind, in turn brings us vision. The eight steps therefore make a complete cycle, and the Buddha called this the Dharma Wheel (p. 15).

For each of the four noble truths, there is a requirement that we recognise and come to understand the nature and origins of suffering, and are encouraged to seek practical ways of realising the central goal of reducing or relieving suffering in ourselves and others. The process may be illustrated as follows (Hanh 1999, p. 30):

Four noble truths	Twelve turnings
Suffering	Recognition: This is suffering Encouragement: Suffering should be understood Realisation: Suffering is under stood
Arising of suffering	Recognition: This is an ignoble way that has led to suffering Encouragement: That ignoble way should be understood Realisation: That ignoble way is understood
Cessation of suffering (well-being)	Recognition: Well-being is possible Encouragement: Well-being should be obtained Realisation: Well-being is obtained
How well-being arises	Recognition: There is a noble path that leads to well-being Encouragement: The noble path has to be lived Realisation: The noble path is lived

According to Hanh (1999), mindfulness is 'at the heart of the Buddha's teaching' and that when right mindfulness is present:

> The Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path are also present. When we are mindful, our thinking is Right Thinking, our speech is Right Speech, and so on. Right Mindfulness is the energy that brings us back to the present moment. To cultivate mindfulness in ourselves is to cultivate the Buddha within (Hanh 1999, p. 64).

Noting that the Sanksrit word for mindfulness, *smriti*, means 'remembering', in the sense of constantly 'remembering to come back to the present moment', Hanh outlines what he describes as the seven 'miracles of mindfulness' (Hanh 1999, pp. 64–67). These are to 'be present and able to touch deeply' all we experience; to 'make the other – the sky, the flower, our child – present also'; to 'nourish the object of your attention'; to 'relieve the other's suffering'; to 'shine the light of mindfulness on the object of your attention, and at the same time shine the light of mindfulness

on yourself'; to 'see something we hadn't seen before' and so reap the 'fruits of understanding, acceptance, love, and the desire to relieve suffering and bring joy'; and, finally, through all this to bring about 'transformation', leading to a 'happy and healthy life, transforming suffering and bringing forth peace, joy and freedom'. The spirit of all this is beautifully captured in Wordsworth's lines from *Tintern Abbey*:

> To them I may have owed another gift,
> Of aspect more sublime: that blessed mood
> In which the burden of the mystery,
> In which the heavy and the weary weight
> Of all this intelligible world,
> Is lightened—that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affections gently lead us on . . .
> While, with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things.
>
> William Wordsworth—*Tintern Abbey* (1987, p. 130)

3.2 Modern Interpretations of Mindfulness

Contemporary perspectives on mindfulness generally allude to its origins within contemplative Buddhist traditions, though there is a wide variation in terms of the emphasis placed on this ancestry and, thus, the extent to which modern interpretations are informed by earlier principles and processes. In their use of mindfulness in approaches to mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) treatments for depression, Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2002), for example, are content to note that:

> Mindfulness lies at the core of Buddhist meditative practices, yet its essence is universal. It has to do with refining our capacities for paying attention, for sustained and penetrative awareness, and for emergent insight that is beyond thought but that can be articulated through thought (p. viii).

Kabat-Zinn (2005), one of the most influential contemporary proponents of secular or therapeutic mindfulness, similarly appeals to the universality of mindfulness notions whilst at the same time paying homage to what might be called its natural home. He observes that 'mindfulness, which can be thought of as open-hearted, moment-to-moment, non-judgmental awareness, is optimally cultivated through meditation' and 'its most elaborate and complete articulation comes from the Buddhist tradition'. However, he is at pains to state that 'I am not a Buddhist' but, rather, a 'student of Buddhist meditation, and a devoted one, not because I am devoted to Buddhism *per se,* but because I have found its teachings and its practices to be so profound and so universally applicable, revealing and healing' (pp. 25–26). Elsewhere, Kabat-Zinn (2003) explains that the Buddhist origins of mindfulness reveal: a coherent phenomenological description of the nature of the mind, emotion, suffering and its potential release, based on highly refined practices aimed at systematically training and cultivating various aspects of mind and heart via the faculty of attention…And mindfulness, it should be noted, being about attention,

is also of necessity universal. There is nothing particularly Buddhist about it (pp. 145–146).

In a similar vein, Siegel (2007) suggests that there 'are many ways of cultivating mindful awareness, each of which develops an awareness of the faculties of the mind, such as how we think, feel and attend to stimuli'(p. 11). His work at the Mindful Awareness Research Centre at UCLA (http://www.marc.ucla.edu) draws on a wide range of traditions – such as Buddhist meditation, yoga, tai chi chuan and qui quong – all of which represent different ways of 'training attention and letting go of a strict identification with the activities of the mind as being the full identity of the individual' (Siegel 2007, p. 11). Similarly, Harris' (2006) robustly secular notion of such strategies – which are applicable to any everyday activity such as driving, washing dishes or solving problems, not just to contemplative or meditative practices – describes them in terms of 'investigating the nature of consciousness directly through sustained introspection'(p. 209).

The emphasis on training, cultivation and development brings out the important links with learning and education and, in this respect, the particular interpretation of mindfulness by Langer (1989) deserves a special mention. Whilst according due merit to 'Eastern teachings of mindfulness' and admitting that the 'moral aspect of mindfulness' by which the mindful state may lead to right action does touch upon her own thesis, Langer stresses that her 'work on mindfulness has been conducted almost entirely within the Western scientific perspective' (p. 78). Highlighting the potential of mindfulness in enhancing well-being in education, work with older people, health, creativity and the workplace, Langer's description of the 'key qualities of a mindful state of being' (Langer 1989, p. 62) – consisting in creating new categories, being open to new ideas and aware of more than one perspective – will be important in exploring the educational implications of mindfulness discussed in greater depth in later chapters.

This transformative conception of mindfulness (echoing ideas of Peters on education discussed in the last chapter) is fully in line with the original constructions. As Gunaratana (2002) reminds us, mindfulness 'is the English translation of the Pali word *sati*…*Sati* is an activity' (p. 137). He goes on to describe this activity as:

> mirror-thought. It reflects only what is presently happening and in exactly the way it is happening. Mindfulness is non-judgmental observation. It is the ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, one sees without condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things exactly as they are in their natural states (p. 139).

Gunaratana outlines three 'fundamental activities of mindfulness' (Gunaratana 2002, pp. 142–145):

(a) Mindfulness reminds us of what we are supposed to be doing – attention is concentrated on one item (breathing, walking, moving or any other activity being pursued) and, should the mind wander from this focus, mindfulness reminds you of this and brings the mind back (gently, uncritically and with compassion) to its object. Repeated practice of this process helps to establish new mental habits to combat automatic and mindless mental activity.

(b) Mindfulness sees things as they really are – the 'bare attention' aspect of mindfulness neither adds not subtracts anything from perception. When mindful, we simply notice what is arising in the mind, label it, then notice the next thing, and then return to the object of meditation.
(c) Mindfulness sees the true nature of phenomena – in the original Pali interpretation of the Dharma, three truths of existence are said to be revealed through the practice of mindfulness: *anicca* (impermanence), *dukkha* (unsatisfactoriness) and *anatta* (selflessness, i.e. the absence of a permanent, immutable Self).

In relation to these basic truths, Gunaratana suggests that:

> Mindfulness alone has the power to reveal the deepest level of reality available to human observation. At this level of inspection, one sees the following: (a) all conditioned things are inherently transitory; (b) every worldly thing is, in the end, unsatisfying; and (c) there are really no entities that are unchanging or permanent, only processes (Gunaratana 2002, p. 144).

In later chapters it will be argued that – though MB practices may indeed be powerfully transformative – their value as vehicles for learning and teaching requires the addition of activities other than meditation to bring about worthwhile educational outcomes.

As mentioned earlier, Kabat-Zinn and associates have been largely responsible for transforming the original spiritual/contemplative notion into a powerful and ubiquitous therapeutic tool based on forms of meditation and mindfulness practices. Mindfulness simply means 'paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment and non-judgmentally' in a way which 'nurtures greater awareness, clarity, and acceptance of present-moment reality'. Such practice – whether this involves breathing, walking meditation or giving full non-judgmental attention to everyday activities – can offer a 'powerful route for getting ourselves unstuck, back in touch with our own wisdom and vitality' (Kabat-Zinn 1994, pp. 4–5). Such a simple idea has proved astonishingly successful in a vast range of contexts including the treatment of depression, addictions of various kinds and the promotion of physical and mental health and wellbeing generally (Baer 2006; Williams et al. 2007; these applications are examined in greater depth in Chap. 5).

Since there may be a tendency to associate mindfulness exclusively with passive inner experience it is important to look more closely at its constituent features in order to display the specifically developmental and educational implications. Kabat-Zinn (1990, pp. 33–38) offers a clear characterisation in terms of seven key aspects.

1. Non-judgmental – involving the assumption of an impartial witness of our own experience. When we begin paying close attention to the activity of our own mind, it soon becomes apparent that almost all thoughts and images are accompanied by a process of categorising and labelling in the form of noting some as bad and some as good. Instead of this constant judging – and the attendant favouring/disfavouring of certain patterns – we are asked to let go of such mechanical reactions and just be with the experience of thinking itself.

2. Patience – an executive virtue in almost any context, in mindfulness work it means the wisdom not to strive or worry too much about external ends or goals, so that such constant planning and deliberating does not overwhelm our perception of the present moment. It is this unbidden mental restlessness which Schopenhauer described as the blind striving of the will and, interestingly, he also turned to Eastern spiritual practices to look for solutions (Hyland 1985).
3. Beginner's mind – we are asked not to let our past experience and knowledge get in the way of our present thoughts and perceptions. The idea is to cultivate an attitude of seeing things as if for the first time so as to be alive to unforeseen or previously unacknowledged possibilities in experience.
4. Trust – the development of a basic trust in the importance and value of our own thoughts, feelings and experiences. This does not mean neglecting external forms of knowledge and authority but, rather, always, balancing these against our own authentic vision of the world (as perhaps we may do anyway, often very unmindfully).
5. Non-striving – if mindfulness is practised through forms of meditation it has no goals beyond itself thus is not susceptible to constant criticism and revision. We are simply paying attention to anything that is happening and this is the only end. If mindfulness is applied to other activities – whether practical ones like driving a car or theoretical ones such as solving a problem or making a decision – the ends of goals are inherent in these activities. Mindfulness simply assists in their achievement by directing attention only to the basic features and effective means whilst closing out extraneous influences.
6. Acceptance – this involves a willingness to see things as they really are, not as we would like them to be. It does not mean being passively resigned to tolerating present conditions but – by accepting the full reality of the present – allowing for change and development. Whether it involves our personal or our professional lives, acceptance leads to a facing up to rather than an avoidance of what we uniquely experience and perceive.
7. Letting go – attending to inner experience soon reveals a range of thoughts and images which we want to either avoid or hold on to. The tendency towards aversion or desire in terms of automatic, unreflective selection of states of mind – just as with the mind's natural proclivity to dwell on the past or plan for the future - is to be resisted in mindfulness practice. The idea is to simply watch thoughts and ideas appear and disappear without necessarily wanting to hold on to anything. Such letting go is perhaps the most difficult part of a practice which seems – on first inspection – to be so incredibly, almost naively, simple.

Like any process or activity which is concerned principally with introspection and a focus on inner thoughts and feelings, there seems to be a natural tendency to assign it a limited value because of its apparent passivity and subjective inward-looking character. If the attitudinal features of mindfulness outlined by Kabat-Zinn earlier are not sufficient to dispel this myth, we can usefully examine the description

of mindfulness by Williams et al. (2007, p. 48) which brings out the active, developmental and educational features of such practice (in line with the original Pali roots of *sati*). They note that mindfulness is:

1. *Intentional* – concerned with cultivating an awareness of present moment reality and the choices available to us
2. *Experiential* – focussing directly on present moment experience rather than being pre-occupied by abstractions
3. *Non-judgmental* – it allows us to see things as they are without a mental assignment of critical labels to our thoughts, feelings and perceptions

In a similar context, Smith (2002) observes that some sort of 'inward turn' is 'often (but wrongly) associated with therapy in general' (p. 95). However, mindfulness does seem to be able to deal with such criticisms effectively, particularly when the traditional and modern conceptions are taken together. In recent years there has been a lively debate about the relevance of Buddhist thought to Western psychology and psychotherapy (Segall 2003a, b, c; Epstein 2007), and a consensus seems to have emerged about the commonalities and mutual objectives of the different traditions. Rubin (2003) explains how 'Buddhism points toward possibilities for self-awareness, freedom, wisdom and compassion that Western psychology in general, and psychoanalysis in particular, has never mapped' (p. 50, these points are taken up again in Sect. 3.3). These possibilities are realised in the growing range of therapeutic mindfulness strategies used in health programmes (Garfinkel 2006; Williams et al. 2007) and in the demonstration of the educational value of mindfulness (Langer 2003; Siegel 2007).

The immense potential of paying close attention to our thought processes should not be under-estimated. In its normal state, the mind is often in flux as it fixes on one object after another in a random and dissipated manner. By 'cultivating mindfulness', the Dalai Lama (2005) reminds us, 'we learn first to become aware of this process of dissipation, so that we can gently fine-tune the mind to follow a more directed path towards the objects on which we wish to focus' (p. 160). It is important to note that such attention has:

> a deliberate intention that helps us select a specific aspect or a characteristic of an object. The continued, voluntary application of attention is what helps us maintain a sustained focus on the chosen object. Training in attention is closely linked with learning how to control our mental processes (Dalai Lama 2005, p. 161).

This control – which can be an end in itself in the therapeutic uses of mindfulness – is linked to the central Buddhist enterprise in the process of eliminating unhelpful and misleading conceptions of the self. There is, of course, a similar critical tradition in relation to the concept of selfhood in Western philosophy stemming from Hume's famous observation in his *Treatise* that 'I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception' (1964 edn, p. 239, original italics). Within the Buddhist tradition the notion of 'non-self' is remarkably similar to both Hume and the social constructionist (Berger and Luckmann 1971) and deconstructionist (Derrida 1977) perspectives of more recent times (see pp. 110ff for more discussion of these points). Brazier (2003) explains the position clearly in observing that the Buddhist:

> approach is neither to build nor to abase the self. It is to recognise the reality of our existential position in relationship with the world. It recognizes our dependency upon conditions, and especially upon our physical environment… The teaching of non-self is not a denial of the existence of the person as a complex entity, functioning in a complex world. Non-self theory places people in dynamic encounter with one another and with the environment they inhabit. It acknowledges the ever-unfolding social process and the ways in which people provide conditions for one another (p. 138).

This notion of the self as being essentially a social construction has significant implications for the applications of mindfulness to learning in relation to both educational practice and, more informally, to wider applications in society and community. Since the 'mind arises from the brain', Kosslyn (in Brockman 2005) argues, it is also appropriate to suggest that the development of mind draws on 'the brains of other people' (p. 154) since this requires the ongoing assistance and support of others. The idea is that 'social prosthetic systems' (SPS), in which we rely on others to extend our reasoning abilities, are crucial to the growth of mind and brain. He notes that:

> A key element of serving as an SPS is learning how best to help someone. Those who function as your SPSs adapt to your particular needs, desires and predilections. And the act of learning changes the brain (Brockman 2005, pp. 155).

In a similar vein, applying recent developments in cognitive neuroscience to principles of learning, Goswami (2008), argues forcefully that 'learning is social'. She explains that:

> We have social brains. The wealth of studies of infant and animal cognition are showing more and more clearly that the complex mammalian brain evolved to flourish in complex social environments (p. 391).

3.3 Mind, Mindfulness and Psychotherapy

In the previous section it was observed that the key areas of continuity between the older (Buddhist, contemplative) and the newer (therapeutic, reflective) conceptions of mindfulness were to be located in the mutual emphasis on attending to the activity of the mind with a view to training and transforming consciousness in order to enhance perception, emotional stability and general mental well-being. It is for this reason that a number of psychologists and psychotherapists (Epstein 2005; Waldon 2006) have regarded Buddhism as a form of study of the nature of the mind. Germer (2005) asserts simply that 'reading early Buddhist texts will convince the clinician that the Buddha was essentially a psychologist' (p. 13).

What then are the main features of Buddhist psychology? Olendzki (2003) suggests that the Buddhist notion of the human condition is not so very different from contemporary perspectives. In summary this is:

> An organism, comprised both of physical and mental factors and processes, lives in a dynamic equilibrium with its environment, both shaping and being shaped by that environment as a response to various internal and external sets of conditions (p. 11).

Of course, early thinkers could have known nothing about the evolutionary biology of the brain, not to mention the findings of neuroscience mentioned in later chapters. However, notwithstanding all this, the Buddhist model of the mind developed two millennia ago to try to explain human responses to suffering has remarkable parallels in contemporary psychology and psychotherapy. Brazier (2003, pp. 44–45) explains that there are six senses in the Buddhist model – each sense or *vijnana* is not seen as a passive receptor but as an active agent in an essentially striving or grasping mind – with, in addition to the normal five of sight, hearing, touch, taste and smell, a sixth sense known as *mano-vijnana*. The sixth sense is 'the mind's eye or the mind as a perceiving organ'. We would probably use the label of 'consciousness' or 'self awareness' for this capacity today, though Brazier insists that the term 'imagination' gets closest to it. Siegel (2010) uses the term 'mindsight' – reflective self-awareness – to refer to this holistic mental capacity.

This model, as already alluded to, implies a radical conception of the self which runs counter to a number of contemporary perspectives but does have parallels in philosophy, for example, as already mentioned, in Hume's attack on the intelligibility of 'the self' (Tenelbum 1968, pp. 215ff). Chappell (2005) reminds us – in his examination of the 'inescapable self' as it applies to ethics, epistemology and philosophy of mind – that both Heracleitus and the Buddha had reached broadly the same conclusion as Hume as long ago as the fifth century BC. Indeed, the notion that the self as a subjectively constructed narrative can be found in diverse spheres of thought from history to psychology, political science and literary criticism. As Chappell puts it:

> Humean, deconstructionist, Buddhist, Heracleitean, or Marxist historian: all of these different schools of thought move, in their different ways, towards the same conclusion about the self. The conclusion is that selves are causally and explanatorily inert because they do not actually exist as parts of the fabric of the world (p. 220).

Moreover, recent studies in neuroscience have cast doubt on the concept of a centre of consciousness, a central and unified 'self' or 'I' directing all aspects of our behaviour. Blackmore (2005) discusses the counter-intuitive idea that – although we make the standard assumption that there is a unified centre to all our acts and experiences – this feeling is not supported by studies of consciousness. Neuroscientific research indicates that there are many facets of consciousness which can be linked to different brain states but little evidence of brain states which correspond to a single entity or source of consciousness. Certain fundamental assumptions – such as the notion of a fixed and unchanging self located in a conscious mind through which flow a 'stream of ideas, feelings, images and perceptions' – have, according to Blackmore, to be 'thrown out' (p. 128). So how are we to proceed? Blackmore suggests that we:

> start again with a new beginning. The starting point this time is quite different. We start from the simplest possible observation. Whenever I ask myself "Am I conscious now?", the answer will always be "yes". But what about the rest of the time? The funny thing is that we cannot know. Whenever we ask the question we get an answer – yes – but we cannot ask about those times when we are not asking the question (p. 128).

Even more intriguing is the ground-breaking work by Libet (2003) using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) scanning techniques which indicates

that activity in the brain's motor sections – when subjects are asked to perform actions or respond to sights, sounds or touches – actually *precedes* consciousness of such perceptions. If consciousness *follows* awareness, perception and behaviour, therefore, how can such activity be said to have been *caused* by consciousness? Moreover, if we are not in complete conscious control of our thoughts and actions, does this not imply that we cannot be held accountable for them since they are in some sense determined by factors outside our control?

As Dennett (2003) points out in reviewing such studies, there is a crucial difference between determinism and fatalism. Consciousness studies do not justify abandoning the distinctions between voluntary and involuntary behaviour. Even if there is no seat or centre of consciousness, thoughts and actions are still generated by states of mind which *are* (in the case of voluntary behaviour) under our control. In this respect, Harris (2010) observes, in referring to his own neuroscientific work on epistemic mind states, that:

> Decisions, intentions, efforts, goals, willpower, etc., are causal states of the brain, leading to specific behaviours, and behaviours lead to outcomes in the world. Human choice, therefore, is as important as fanciers of free will believe (p. 105).

Indeed, it is in order to enhance and refine the control we have over the welter of mind/body states influenced by instincts and powerful emotions that MB strategies are recommended as powerful learning tools to combat mental afflictions and enhance general well-being. As argued in Chap. 2, this form of therapeutic intervention can be regarded as a genuinely educational process.

The reflective self-awareness that Siegel (2007) has called 'mindsight' is central to both Buddhist and therapeutic aspects of mindfulness. The process involves decentring and de-coupling from the self and, as noted earlier, this has been especially marked in recent developments in neuroscience and contemporary psychotherapy. According to the *mano-vijnana* model, 'everything that I perceive is a visitation or object. It is not me' (Brazier 2003, p. 49). This conception is linked to the idea that each of the senses – indeed all of the so-called aggregates of 'form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness' which 'contain everything…in nature and in society' (Hanh 1999, p. 176) – are conditioned and outwardly focused, clutching at experience with either desire or aversion.

In Western culture, Brazier (2003) explains, 'we are preoccupied with our mental processes and identify with them. We find it difficult to believe that our thoughts are not part of "me". Buddhist approaches…tend to be outward-focused. The focus is not "Who am I?" but "How do I see the world?"'(pp. 49–50). Our reactions to suffering were discussed in looking at the origins and nature of mindfulness in the last chapter. The Buddhist notion of the self – or rather *anatta,* not-self – cannot be divorced from these basic beliefs.

The question of who 'I am', Batchelor (1998) argues, 'appears coherent only because of the monologue we keep repeating, editing, censoring, and embellishing in our heads'. He continues:

> The present moment hovers between past and future just as life hovers between birth and death. We respond to both in similar ways. Just as we flee from the awesome encounter with

> birth and death to the safety of a manageable world, so we flee from the pulse of the present to a fantasy world. Flight is a reluctance to face change and the anguish it implies. Something in us insists on a static self, a fixed image, impervious to anguish, that will either survive death intact or be painlessly annihilated (pp. 24–25).

The self-delusional, desperate and impractical nature of all this is brought out clearly and powerfully by Brazier:

> The self is a defence that we create against the uncertainties of existence. Faced with our day-to-day encounters with *dukkha*, the afflictions that we inevitably encounter as part of being alive, we find ways to protect ourselves from the natural feelings that arise and threaten to overwhelm us…we are constantly re-creating ourselves out of the patterns of reaction into which we fall…Although we refer to the self as if it were an entity, in fact this use of language reifies a process that does not result in anything substantial at all. Rather, the self is a collection of experiences that constantly forms and re-forms (2003, p. 39).

Given the limitations of culture, time and place, it is interesting – just as in the links between quantum physics and Buddhist notions (Dalai Lama 2005) and between meditation and the findings of neuroscience (Goleman 2003; Siegel 2007) – how much contemporary psychotherapy has discovered to be valuable and useful in Eastern contemplative traditions. There seems to be a form of *philosophia perennis* at work here, a perennial philosophy about the nature of humankind and reality. This indeed is the view of Wilber (1979) who suggests that, corresponding to the perennial philosophy, there exists a 'perennial psychology…a universal view as to the nature of human consciousness'. Such a conception underpins Wilber's 'spectrum of consciousness' model in which 'human personality is a multileveled manifestation or expression of a single consciousness, just as in physics the electromagnetic spectrum is viewed as a multibanded expression of a single, characteristic electromagnetic wave' (pp. 7, 9).

Rubin (2003) describes how 'Buddhism can challenge the limitations of a psychoanalytic view of the self that is excessively self-centred and restrictive' (p. 49). Further benefits flow from the increased clarity gained through mindfulness meditation which tends to lessen distractedness and foster a 'wholehearted attention' (Horney 1987, p. 18) that Freud recommended as the ideal basis for the psychoanalytic encounter. In addition to developing 'cognitive insight', meditation practice, according to Rubin (2003), 'promotes greater tolerance for whatever we experience, including affect' (pp. 54–55). The 'similarities between both traditions' are summarised by Rubin in his observation that 'both are concerned with the nature and alleviation of human suffering and each has a diagnosis and "treatment plan" for alleviating human misery'. He goes on to note that there are:

> three other important things they share make a comparison between them possible and potentially productive. First, they are pursued within the crucible of an emotionally intimate relationship between either an analyst-analysand or a teacher-student. Second, they emphasise some similar experiential processes – evenly hovering attention and free association in psychoanalysis and meditation in Buddhism. Third, they recognise that obstacles impede the attempt to facilitate change…resistance and defensive processes in psychoanalysis and the 'hindrances' in Buddhism (pp. 45–46).

Observing that the 'degree to which Buddhist theory and practice parallel certain aspects of the theory and practice of both the cognitive behavioural and experiential

psychotherapies is truly remarkable', Segall (2003a, b, c, pp. 165–166) lists a wide range of approaches, treatments and processes which illustrate this productive and fruitful symbiosis:

- Perls et al. (1951) – a continuum of awareness technique based in Gestalt psychology which uses insight meditation
- Roemer and Orsillo (2002) – treatment of generalised anxiety disorders using mindfulness-based techniques
- Marlatt (2002) – application of mindfulness in treating addictions of various kinds
- Hayes et al. (1999) – development of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy based on mindfulness meditation

In addition, there is the growing application of MBCT/MBSR and related therapies using the practices discussed in the next chapter which are examined in greater depth in Chap. 5.

In conclusion, it is possible to regard psychology and psychotherapy as a sphere of work (and we might view learning, teaching and educating in a similar way) and determine whether it satisfies the criteria of 'right livelihood'. Hanh (1999) tells us that to 'practise right livelihood....you have to find a way to earn your living without transgressing your ideals of love and compassion. The way you support yourself can be an expression of your deepest self, or it can be a source of suffering for you and others' (p. 113). Fundamental principles of non-harm to all sentient beings, and the nourishment that emanates from compassion and loving kindness are foregrounded here. Although the caring professions – health, education, social work and the like – might be considered to be especially relevant in terms of right livelihood, mindful and compassionate practices linked to the relief of suffering are clearly relevant to all walks of life.

Segall (2003a, b, c) concludes his survey by considering 'psychotherapy as Buddhist practice'. He observes:

> At its best, practising psychotherapy can be conceived as a form of right livelihood that depends, to a great extent, on right speech. As such, every encounter with a client becomes a spiritual encounter for the therapist. The therapist's tasks are to (1) maintain mindfulness, (2) avoid ensnarement in transient states of desire and aversion that might divert the therapeutic endeavour, and (3) skilfully employ compassionate and discerning speech with the intent of relieving the client's suffering. This kind of moment-to-moment attentiveness and compassionate non-egoistic focus is consistent with all forms of psychotherapy… (pp. 168–169).

3.4 Conclusion

The origins, nature and functions of mindfulness – from its roots in Buddhist contemplative traditions to modern secular, therapeutic perspectives – have established a foundation upon which to examine various conceptions of mind and consciousness which characterise psychology and psychotherapy. This provides the background for the discussion of mindfulness practice in the next chapter and the applications of

mindfulness in Chap. 5. It is suggested that the notion of right livelihood may be applied to all occupations and professions, and some of the concepts and themes uncovered in the overview of mindfulness connections with psychotherapy will inform the discussion of the education of the emotions, the affective domain and various specialist spheres of learning in later chapters.

As indicated earlier, Smeyers et al. (2007) – in addition to examining the connections between education and therapy – are also interested in 'ways in which education may itself stand in need of therapy…in terms of the need to retrieve education from its current state of debilitation' (p. 4). Subsequently, they state that 'we need the idea of psychoanalysis, some would say, because education has come to name a process that is relentlessly instrumental' (p. 204).

This comment reinforces the central thesis of this book. Education has become morally and affectively impoverished in recent years and – *contra* the critics of the so-called therapeutic turn discussed in the first two chapters – urgently requires a re-invigoration not a diminution of its affective function. This task – during which I return to specific arguments about the therapeutic turn in relation to different sectors of education – is taken up in greater depth in Chaps. 9–12.

Chapter 4
The Practice of Mindfulness

4.1 Practical Foundations

In the previous chapter a number of characteristic features of mindfulness – both ancient and modern – were examined in the process of investigating the nature and purpose of mindfulness. Chief amongst these was Kabat-Zinn's description of the seven 'attitudinal factors' which function as foundational prerequisites of mindfulness, and these can be connected with the contemplative tradition incorporated in what Hanh (1999) called the (interestingly, the same number) seven miracles of mindfulness. Before examining some of the practical ways of developing mindfulness, it would be useful to expand upon these foundational elements.

Segal et al. (2002) suggest that, rather than consisting in any particular method or approach, there are 'many different methods and techniques' for cultivating mindfulness. The process implies:

> Developing and refining a way of becoming more intimate with one's own experience through systematic self-observation. This includes intentionally suspending the impulse to characterise, evaluate and judge what one is experiencing. Doing so affords multiple opportunities to move beyond the well-worn grooves of our highly conditioned and largely habitual and unexamined thought processes and emotional reactivity (p. viii).

Siegel (2007) observes that a 'useful fundamental view is that mindfulness can be seen to consist of the important dimensions of the self-regulation of attention and a certain orientation to experience' (p. 11). Bishop et al. (2004, p. 232) proposed the following two key stages or elements of the process:

1. The self-regulation of attention so that it is maintained on immediate experience, thereby allowing for increased recognition of mental events in the present moment
2. A particular orientation towards one's experiences in the present moment, an orientation that is characterised by curiosity, openness and acceptance

Similarly, in the Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (a form of CBT which emphasises the 'balance, integration, or synthesis of opposing ideas…the integration of

T. Hyland, *Mindfulness and Learning: Celebrating the Affective Dimension of Education*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 17, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1911-8_4,

acceptance and change', Baer 2006, p. 18) advocated by Dimidjian and Linehan (2003, p. 166), a stage-sequence model of mindfulness is described in terms of:

1. Observing, noticing, bringing awareness to thoughts, feelings and sensations
2. Describing, labelling and noting these
3. Participating non-judgementally and with acceptance

It is clear that a number of key features of MB approaches recur in all these diverse accounts of practice. Siegel's (2007, p. 12) review of the wide literature revealed five factors that seemed to cluster from surveys of the field undertaken:

1. Non-reactivity to inner experience – thoughts and feelings are perceived without any urgent need to react
2. Observing/noticing/attending to sensations, perceptions, thoughts and feelings – remaining present with these even when they are unpleasant or painful
3. Acting with awareness, not on automatic pilot – a determination to concentrate and minimise extraneous distraction
4. Describing/labelling of thoughts and feelings with words – verbally articulating beliefs, opinions and expectations
5. Non-judgmental of experience in terms of resisting the urge to criticise our thoughts and feelings as, perhaps, irrational or inappropriate

The qualities of curiosity, openness and acceptance that occur throughout accounts of the pre-requisites of mindful practice are also relevant to learning and development in educational contexts, and these will feature in the more specific discussions of the significant links between education and mindfulness in the later chapters. Two other key elements relevant to practice are worth mentioning here as spheres that need to be satisfactorily accommodated in order to cultivate mindfulness: our tendency towards 'rumination' and 'experiential avoidance'. These figure prominently in MBCT practice and are explained by Crane (2009, p. 11) as follows:

- Rumination is a particular style of self-critical, self-focused, negative thinking. It is preoccupied with and driven by the desire to 'solve' the emotional challenge of unhappiness or lowered mood
- Experiential avoidance is the attempt to remain out of contact with the direct experience of challenging thoughts, emotions and body sensations

Thus, whereas rumination and avoidance place obstacles in the way of achieving mindfulness, the cardinal virtues of curiosity, openness and acceptance – along with the key attitudinal factors outlined earlier – will, ideally, help to remove such obstacles. However, with learning in mind, it may seem that some of these features of mindfulness practice – non-judgmental attention, acceptance and non-reactivity and suspension of criticism towards awareness, for instance – could possibly have a counter-educational appearance about them. Although this is a false appearance, it is important at this stage to deal with potential difficulties and possible objections.

4.2 Challenging Mindlessness

Langer's (1989, 2003) writings on mindfulness and education devote much time to explicating its opposite, that which is to be avoided at all costs: mindlessness. The roots of mindlessness, for Langer, are to be found (amongst other things which will be examined more deeply in later chapters) in false beliefs in our limited resources, acting from a single perspective and relying on automatic behaviour. Since 'switching off the auto-pilot' – a form of de-coupling or de-centring from immediate experience – is a central recommendation in all mindfulness practice, it is worth looking at in some detail.

Being on 'automatic pilot', according to Crane (2009), describes 'a state of mind in which one acts without conscious intention or awareness of present-moment sensory perception'. She goes on to note that the 'ability to operate on automatic pilot is highly developed in the human species' and 'confers upon us a considerable evolutionary advantage yet also increases our vulnerability to emotional suffering' (pp. 21–22).

Such a qualification is both necessary and significant and, indeed, will also apply to other human traits relevant to mindfulness and education such as our emotional responsiveness, our facility in goal-oriented activity and our mastery of the left-brain achievements in language, logic and literal thinking (Siegel 2007). Consider the learning of a skill for the first time; take driving as an example that most of us have to learn at some stage in life. As we learn to steer along roads and avoid other cars safely, master the changing up and down of gears and (most crucial of all) co-ordinate the clutch in sequence with the brakes, all of this takes up our full attention and concentration. After some time, however, we may become adept in all these skills and techniques, and the brain's automatic pilot allows us to drive safely whilst reserving mental and emotional energy for other activities. Thus, the ability to undertake complex activities such as driving, walking, doing housework and typing whilst part of our brains are operating on automatic pilot is, not just a crucial coping and survival mechanism, but also greatly expands the range and diversity of skills and activities we are capable of undertaking.

However, as Crane (2009) suggests the 'harmful effects of automatic pilot arise when it is carried over to the ways in which we process our emotional experience' (p. 22). Living on automatic, according to Siegel (2007):

> places us at risk of mindlessly reacting to situations without reflecting on various options of response. The result can often be knee-jerk reactions that in turn initiate similar mindless reflexes in others. A cascade of reinforced mindlessness can create a world of thoughtless interactions, cruelty and destruction (p. 14).

The avoidance of difficult emotions which seems to be as much a feature of the human condition as the other vicissitudes of existence tends to be magnified by automatic behaviour. At this level, the avoidance process is aided by the problem-solving, ruminative, 'doing' mode which – though perfectly suited to cognitive and goal-oriented tasks – leaves the emotional problems untouched under the guise of devising false strategies for their solution. Rumination in this sphere, Crane (2009)

argues, is 'propelled by the attempt to solve an emotional problem' through analysis and conceptualisation. Yet, there may be no 'long-term solution to these difficult experiences – they are an aspect of the constantly fluxing experience of being human. Our emotional life is not a problem to be solved and yet we have a tendency to live as if it was' (p. 33).

Mindfulness practice invites us to move from 'doing' mode to 'being' as a way of appreciating the ways in which our mind deals with feelings and thoughts. In this mode, 'attention is intentionally placed on present-moment experiencing' and 'experience is held within an attitudinal framework characterized by acceptance, kindliness, interest, warmth and non-striving' (Crane 2009, p. 44). The notion of 'acceptance' is prominent in many mindfulness-based approaches and it is worth examining this in more detail. Acceptance entails embracing everything that is happening in our lives with the qualities of kindliness, openness and trust without relying on habitual patterns of reaction to and avoidance of difficult experiences. Indeed, it is this accepting non-reactivity which paves the way – after due attention to the reflective mindfulness cultivated through non-judgmental attention – for us to *respond* creatively to events rather than, as is often the case in the sphere of emotions, habitually *reacting* to them via well-trodden grooves (emotions and non-reactivity are discussed in more detail in Chap. 6).

Lest there be a tendency – as with mindful practice in general – to think that this process is self-indulgent or impassive, Brach (2003) articulates the dynamic and constructive nature of what she terms 'radical acceptance'. Rather than resignation, it is only by initially perceiving, understanding and accepting our experiences that allows for a 'fundamental shift that opens the way to genuine, lasting change'. She goes on to explain how such acceptance:

> acknowledges our own experience in this moment as the first step in wise action. Before acting or reacting, we allow ourselves to feel and accept our grief for how the earth has been polluted, our anger about the destruction of wildlife, our shame about how we have been mistreated, our fear about what others may think about us, our guilt about our own insensitivity. No matter what the situation, our immediate personal experience is the fundamental domain of radical acceptance. This is where we cultivate the genuine wakefulness and kindness that underlie effective action (pp. 40–41).

This raises the general point about mindful practice being, not simply an end in itself (though intrinsic engagement is always possible and, indeed, often present in both traditional and modern contexts), but a means to the end of living a mindful life characterised by emotional well-being, mind/body harmony and, ideally, overall equanimity. Thus, doing, problem-solving or general intellect is not eschewed in mindfulness practice; the invitation is to see their limitations and understand the necessity of balancing and harmonising them with modes of being, acceptance and openness (the need for cognitive/affective inter-dependence is examined in greater depth in Chaps. 6 and 7).

In a similar vein, the non-critical, non-judgmental and non-reactive elements of mindfulness do not entail the abandonment of our critical, cognitive and spontaneous faculties. As Gunaratana (2002) reminds us, mindfulness is:

> an impartial watchfulness. It does not take sides. It does not get hung up in what is perceived. It just perceives. Mindfulness does not get infatuated with the good mental states.

> It does not try to sidestep the bad mental states…Mindfulness treats all experiences equally, all thoughts equally, all feelings equally. Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed…. Mindfulness is non-conceptual awareness…bare attention (pp. 139–140).

Within this bare attention we temporarily suspend critical, judgmental and problem-solving faculties in order to clearly apprehend and understand our mental activity. Out of this comes the possibility of re-engaging with consciousness in an unclouded and invigorated manner. Siegel's (2007) research demonstrated that the disengagement from automatic processes cultivated through mindfulness practice led to 'lasting changes in such observable traits as the flexibility of affective and cognitive styles and patterns of interaction with others' (p. 155).

These then are the attitudinal prerequisites, values foundation and framework of ground rules within which mindfulness practices may take place. What, then, are these practices and how are states of mindfulness to be achieved?

4.3 Mindful Breathing

Attention to the breath is the most basic and fundamental tenet of mindfulness practice in both the older contemplative traditions and the newer therapeutic approaches. In the Dharma the Buddha's teaching (sutra) on the *Full Awareness of Breathing* is one of the oldest in the canon, and fundamental to all the other elements. The practitioner simply sits and concentrates on the breath and practises with the thoughts: 'Breathing in, I know I am breathing in. Breathing out, I know I am breathing out' (Hanh 1996, p. 5). So important was this practice that the sutra goes on to adumbrate sixteen methods of inhaling and exhaling. Breathing, Hanh tells us, is 'a means of awakening and maintaining full attention in order to look carefully, long and deeply, see the nature of all things, and arrive at liberation' (Hanh 1996, p. 19). Kabat-Zinn (1990) observes that the 'breath plays an extremely important role in meditation and healing'. He goes on to explain that:

> While we could theoretically focus on our heart beating instead of our breathing, the breath is much easier to be aware of…In focusing on the breath when we meditate, we are learning right from the start to get comfortable with change. We see that we will have to be flexible. We will have to train ourselves to attend to a process that not only cycles and flows but that also responds to our emotional state by changing its rhythm…Our breathing also has the virtue of being a very convenient process to support ongoing awareness in our daily lives. As long as we are alive, it is always with us (p. 49).

All breath meditation is a variation on the in/out instructions offered in the Buddhist writings and developed by practitioners over centuries. The contemporary therapeutic approaches to mindfulness meditation are no exception in this respect. As Salzberg and Goldstein (2001) describe the process:

- Allow the breath to become natural, so you're not trying to force or control it in any way.
- Notice the place where you feel the breath most distinctly. It may be the in-and-out movement of air at the nostrils…You may feel the breath most distinctly with the rising and falling of the chest or the abdomen…

- Wherever you find it most natural, most easy, allow your mind to rest in that place and feel the breath
- As you feel the breath, you can make a silent mental note to sharpen the concentration: "in" as you feel the breath go in; "out" as you feel it leave the body…
- You don't have to make the breath special. It doesn't have to be deep or long or different from however it is and however it changes. It's happening anyway, so simple be aware of it…one breath at a time (p. 33)

Within some disciplines (*samadhi* meditation for example), the breath is used simply as an object of concentration designed to clear the mind of extraneous thought. Burnett (2009) recommends this form of meditation for use in schools as a process of calming students, and, indeed, in the 3MBS described later, such a simple idea (simple in conception but not in execution!) can be shown to be effective as a valuable preparation for *any* kind of activity. However, it is the oldest form of breath meditation, *vipassana* or insight meditation, that is being recommended here and this is the one used in all the contemporary MBT approaches. Gunaratana (2002) describes it as:

> An ancient and codified system of training your mind; a set of exercises dedicated to the purpose of becoming more and more aware of your own life experience. It is attentive listening, mindful seeing, and careful testing. We learn to smell acutely, to touch fully, and really pay attention to the changes taking place in all these experiences. We learn to *listen to our own thoughts without being caught up in them* (p. 31, italics added).

This last instruction is absolutely crucial and is emphasised in all the ancient and modern accounts. We observe or note thoughts, we do not brood or ruminate upon them, nor do we follow or pursue them. Of course, this is the crux, the most practically challenging aspect of a strategy which appears, on the surface, to be simplicity itself. A useful analogy is that of observing clouds passing over the sky. We may try to cultivate a similar observation of thoughts, feelings or sensations coming and going across the mind. Each one is noted – and we can assign a descriptive label to it such as planning, dreaming, worrying or brooding, perhaps with an attached feeling tone of pleasant, unpleasant or neutral – then it, ideally, is allowed to go on its way.

As soon as we engage the mind in this way, we immediately become aware of the sheer overwhelming volume of mental traffic. Within the space of seconds we are assailed by a welter of plans, worries, dreams, memories, feelings and sensations and – in this seemingly endless and often confusing and distressing stream of consciousness – it may seem impossible to remain calm and let our thoughts pass by. However, just like any other form of training, the secret of success lies in constant practice. To assist in that practice we need to approach meditation with patience, gentleness and compassion. We are neither chasing after anything, nor are we trying to force something. The practice requires us – with the lightest of touches and with kindness and respect for ourselves and others – to simply keep returning to the breath and observing the mental happenings available to us. David Whyte's poem *Enough* (in Santorelli and Kabat-Zinn 2001, p. 3) nicely sums up the task:

> Enough. These few words are enough.
> If not these words, this breath.
> If not this breath, this sitting here.
> This opening to the life
> we have refused
> again and again
> until now.
> Until now.

Over time our facility is enhanced and we begin to feel the immense benefits of something that is so inextricably connected with everyday existence that it is difficult to understand how this spectatorial perspective on the mind has been overlooked for so long. Batchelor (1998) puts this well in observing that:

> Normally we are unaware of the extent to which we are distracted, for the simple reason that distraction is a state of unawareness. This kind of [breathing meditation] exercise can force us to recognize that for much of the time we fail to register what is happening here and now. We are reliving an edited version of the past, planning an uncertain future, or indulging in being elsewhere. Or running on automatic pilot, without being conscious at all (p. 24).

Breath meditation (often called simply sitting meditation since we normally do it in a sitting or lying position) is the most basic form of mindfulness practice and holds a central place in all approaches whether spiritual/contemplative or secular/therapeutic. It is at the core, the *summum bonum*, of the practice. Hanh (1993) – in a work which includes 33 breathing exercises for the nourishment of mind and body – tells us that 'no one can be truly successful in the art of meditating without going through the door of breathing. To practise conscious breathing is to open the door to stopping and looking deeply in order to enter the domain of concentration and insight' (pp. 6–7).

The pre-eminence of breath meditation accounts for its ubiquity in contemporary MBT approaches, particularly in MBCT/MBSR courses. Its perceived effectiveness is illustrated in the recommendations of the 'mini meditation' called the '3 min breathing space' (3MBS). As Crane (2009) explains it can be used at any time during the day – at work, on public transport, in moments of stress – as a form of release mechanism or as quick and easy way to reinforce and support mindfulness practice in day-to-day life. She outlines three steps to the practice:

1. Awareness – step out of automatic pilot, recognize and acknowledge one's current experience;
2. Gathering – bringing the attention to the sensations of the breath in a particular place in the body; and
3. Expanding – the attention into the body as a whole using the particular sensations of the breath as an anchor, while opening to the range of experience being perceived (p. 119).

The use of breath meditation to cultivate mindfulness – and its employment in MBCT and in the promotion of health and well-being more generally – will be returned to later and also in the next chapter.

4.4 Mindful Walking Meditation

Walking meditation is 'meditation in motion' which is valuable in helping 'us make that transition from static repose to everyday life' (Gunaratana 2002, p. 160). Just as we are not learning how to breathe in sitting (breath) meditation, so we are not learning to walk in walking meditation. We simply direct our awareness and attention to the skills and abilities we already possess. Kabat-Zinn (1990) explains that:

> Walking meditation involves intentionally attending to the experience of walking itself. It involves focusing on the sensations in your feet or your legs or, alternatively, feeling your whole body moving. You can also integrate awareness of your breathing with the experience of walking (p. 114).

In formal walking meditation – which is usually slow and methodical though the pace could always be increased – attention is directed towards the stages of lifting, moving and placing the feet. This rhythm becomes second nature after a while and, as with mindful breathing, the mechanics dissolve in the background as the cultivation of mindfulness progresses. The 'primary emphasis in the practice', note Salzberg and Goldstein (2001), 'is to stay centred in the body, feeling the actual sensation of movement'. Any mental noting – for example, of lifting, moving, placing of feet or up/down movement – should ideally 'be very soft, in the background' and used 'simply as a way of helping to keep the mind connected to what's going on' (p. 56).

The idea is that we are not really walking to get anywhere in particular; the journey (like the journey of learning) is more mental than physical with a destination of *bodhichitta* (awakened heart and mind) rather than a geographical location. Hanh (2001, p. 194) illustrates this beautifully in his poem, *Walking Meditation*:

> Take my hand.
> We will walk.
> We will only walk.
> We will enjoy our walk
> Without thinking of arriving anywhere.
> Walk peacefully.
> Walk happily.
> Our walk is a peace walk.
> Our walk is a happiness walk.
> Then we learn
> That there is no peace walk;
> That peace *is* the walk;
> That there is no happiness;
> That happiness *is* the walk.

As with breath meditation, walking meditation can become more flexible and informal. Like the 3MBS, the recommendation is that it becomes a normal part of everyday life, a natural part of the cultivation of present-moment awareness – of bare unadulterated perception and attention – as a way of enhancing mental and physical well-being at all times.

4.5 Mindful Movement

According to Kabat-Zinn (1990), 'Yoga *is* meditation'. This is expanded upon as follows:

> *Yoga* is a Sanskrit word that literally means "yoke". The practice of yoga is the practice of yoking together or unifying body and mind, which really means penetrating into the experience of them not being separate in the first place. You can also think of it as experiencing the unity of connectedness between the individual and the universe as a whole (p. 101).

Although the movements of the body in yoga practice – the stretching of arms and legs, and the various postures adopted – may be thought of as bodily exercise, it can be much more than this if, as with all movements, it is practised mindfully. In MBCT/MBSR programmes the 'body-scan meditation' (Segal et al. 2002, pp. 112–113) – simply lying comfortably and reviewing with awareness all parts of the body in turn – is used extensively and, in a similar way, yoga or other mindful meditation movement may be harnessed to achieve the desired states of attention. The mental and physical health-enhancing benefits of Tai Chi Chuan, in particular, are supported by centuries of practice within both Eastern and Western medical traditions (Ding 2003). Whether we are engaged in breathing, sitting, walking, standing or moving meditation, we are inevitably presented with opportunities to observe our 'doing' mode of activity at close quarters.

Bare attention will easily reveal how – in spite of ourselves – we are trying so hard to perform the activities well, judging and evaluating in order to improve our performance. However, the aim is, gradually and patiently, to let go of this perspective and enter a 'being' mode in which our only consciousness is directed towards what is actually happening in the here and now. For example, I am walking, breathing, stretching my left arm, balancing on my right foot, experiencing the texture of my left calf, and so on, and nothing else need enter our awareness. Participants in such mindful movement practice also typically discover (or, really, uncover) links between bodily sensations and thoughts and feelings. Habitual responses to negative thoughts and feelings – such as the rumination and experiential avoidance discussed earlier in the chapter – can be stored in the body as well as in the mind (especially if we include neural networks as aspects of the physical body). Bringing non-judgmental attention to such states thus helps us towards the letting go and acceptance which is the key to well-being. Crane (2009, pp. 109–113) offers a list of the main areas of learning linked to mindful movement:

- (Re)learning how we can bring attention to and be present with bodily experience – this can help to move us to the felt bodily experiences and away from unhelpful ruminative thought.
- Experiencing the body in motion – helping to bridge the gap between mindful practice and daily activity in all its forms.

- Embodying life experiences and processes through movements and postures – creating a balance through standing/yoga movements and making transitions from one posture to another can create greater awareness of change processes in everyday life as against an obsession with end products, goals and destinations.
- Seeing our habitual tendencies played out – through the deliberate, slow and methodical engagement in movement practice acquaints us with patterns of striving and intensity which we automatically adopt; through enhancing clarity of awareness, movement can show us alternatives to negative cycles and habits.
- Discovering new ways to work with intensity – dealing with difficulties, overcoming strains, aches and tensions in exploring the boundaries in relation to bodily sensations may offer an experience of what may also be possible in testing our limits in relation to thoughts and feelings.
- The experience of present-moment acceptance – accepting the limitations and felt sensations of the body as we find them in the here and now can help to empower us to cultivate responsibility and autonomy in relation to all aspects of mind/body health and self-care.

The links between physical, mental and emotional sensations are (as will be discussed later in connection with educating the emotions) complex, multi-layered and subtly nuanced. As Gunaratana (2002) notes, meditation teachers urge practitioners to be aware of the 'constantly ongoing dance' of bodily movements throughout the day – walking, bending, crawling, running, sprawling, lying – with the injunction to carefully note everything. He concludes:

> It all sounds absurdly simple but don't slight the procedure. This is a powerful exercise. If you do it thoroughly, if you really instil this mental habit deeply, it can revolutionise your experience. It taps you into a whole new dimension of sensation, and you feel like a blind man whose sight has been restored (p. 163).

As with breath meditation, mindful movement *is* seemingly simplicity itself but, as Kabat-Zinn (1994b) reminds us about all the practice, it is 'simple but not easy' and:

> Mindfulness requires effort and discipline for the simple reason that the forces that work against our being mindful, namely, our habitual unawareness and automaticity, are exceedingly tenacious (p. 8).

As a mindfulness practitioner myself for the last 5 or 6 years – I prefer the label 'apprentice meditator' in this respect (though Kabat-Zinn advises silence and humility in everything about the practice) – I can fully endorse the 'simple but not easy' epithet. I have trouble with physical and mental restlessness and often find it difficult to settle down to sitting meditation. However, the immediacy of mindful walking or movement through yoga or tai chi seems to calm the mind much more quickly. The mind-body interaction can be immensely powerful and direct in deliberate and methodical mindful movement. As Williams et al. (2007) observe, the 'direct sensing of the body turns up the volume on the body's messages and turns down the volume on mental chatter' (p. 103).

4.6 Everyday Mindfulness

The whole *raison d'être* of all the practices referred to earlier is to assist the cultivation of mindfulness in all aspects of daily living. We can learn much here from the contemplation of normal, everyday *mindlessness*. Consider the following account from my own daily routine which could easily be applied to the lives of any of us.

> I walk half a mile to the local co-operative store to buy tea, biscuits, milk, and a newspaper. It is a journey of about three-quarters of a mile. I close and lock the front door, turn left and walk about 75 yards to the end of my street where I turn left then immediately right again onto a main road. After turning left, crossing the road at traffic light, walking for around 400 yards, turning right and walking for another 500 yards, I reach the shop and go on. I buy the newspaper and groceries and return home by the same route.

Ten minutes later I am reading the newspaper and drinking a cup of tea without any memory of the 15 min shopping trip. Somehow the 15 min have been lost; I don't remember much about the weather, the people on the streets, the everyday sights and sounds, or which assistant served me in the shop. Why is this? Because I was simply not attending to any of this; as far as the journey is concerned I was mindless though, more correctly, my mind was actually on automatic pilot, perhaps, worrying about the new class I had to prepare for next week, or brooding about what my daughter said to me on the phone the other night. All these – in this case, obviously unpleasant and not very productive – thoughts and feelings are crystal clear yet I can't remember if I had experienced the first glimpse of Spring, found walking a pleasure, or recalled the face of the woman who served me in the co-operative store.

The narrative is typical and not intended to be a criticism of what all of us do in our everyday lives. It is simply a description of the normal, routine mindlessness which the practices outlined earlier are designed to challenge. How is this done? Simply by paying attention to paying attention whenever we can. The challenge requires a desire to be more involved in present-moment awareness in all aspects of life. This requires us to cultivate an awareness of our mental habits – particularly those linked to desire and aversion which have a powerful influence over all our thoughts, feelings and actions – and to be fully in tune with them, observing with curiosity, kindness and openness. In engaging in this practice, we are neither scorning desire, nor aversion due to the 'hindrances' of restlessness, sloth and doubt (Salzberg and Goldstein 2001, pp. 83ff), nor condemning rumination or the avoidance of unpleasantness. In the spirit of the discovery learning and problem solving strategies recommended by educators such as Piaget and Dewey, we are, rather, investigating how we can enhance our well-being through the introspection of consciousness.

To this end, the most prosaic and seemingly mundane aspects of our lives are the most promising subjects. For this reason, all the MB strategies and applications mentioned in the next chapter require participants to pay close attention to activities such as eating, washing, brushing teeth, travelling to work, doing housework, working in professions or occupations and communicating with others. We are so often

in the doing mode of achieving goals and – because this works for so much of our lives in which we need to act and achieve in this way – the automatic pilot is still on in situations in which doing is not really appropriate: talking with friends, reading, listening to music and eating with our families. If we are doing rather than just being, it is so easy to miss the pleasure of music, the emotional tone of a good novel, the flavour and texture of different foods and the full engagement with others which mindful and deep listening and speaking can bring.

All of this everyday mindfulness requires the cultivation of a 'different relationship to experience that is characterised by acceptance/allowing/letting be' (Segal et al. 2002, p. 221). Such a strategy, as explained earlier in the chapter, is dynamic and active; we are not resigning ourselves to what is but discovering how calm, unhurried and non-reactive reflection on what is can help to change the nature of experience in ways which can enrich our minds and bodies. As Crane (2009) reminds us:

> small moments of "coming to" and recognising what is taking place in and around us have a radical effect. In that moment the forward drive of the doing mind has been interrupted. Bringing mindfulness into our routine activities holds the possibility of facilitating this process of disengaging from unhelpful states and supporting a transition into a being mode of mind (p. 131–132).

As observed in many areas of the discussion of mindfulness, it is poetry rather than prose which captures the key points and themes best. In this respect, the general ethos of openness and warmth of welcome to all aspects of experience is expressed as well as it could ever be in Rumi's poem *The Guest-House* (Santorelli and Kabat-Zinn 2001, p. 10):

> This being human is a guest-house
> Every morning a new arrival.
> A joy, a depression, a meanness,
> some momentary awareness comes
> as an unexpected visitor.
> Welcome and entertain them all!
> Even if they're a crowd of sorrows
> who violently sweep your house
> empty of its furniture,
> still, treat each guest honourably.
> He may be clearing you
> out for some new delight.

4.7 Mind, Mindfulness and Brain Neuroplasticity

In the next chapter, I will be reviewing the many applications of mindfulness in which the practices outlined previously have proved effective and successful in achieving a wide range of positive and constructive outcomes. Mindfulness is central to the mind-body medicine recommended by Kabat-Zinn (1990) and Williams et al. (2007), and the research and literature in this field has been expanding rapidly

over the last decade or so. However, we still need to address the question of how and why this mechanism works. How can mindful awareness and practice, for example, enhance learning, help to overcome depression and addiction, relieve the pain of cancer sufferers and serve to galvanise the energies and transform the lives of older people?

A good place to start is with the relationship between mind and brain. As Searle (1985) has observed, minds are caused by brains and brains are realised through minds. Hanson (2009) argues that although science does not 'completely understand the relationship between the brain and the mind', a reasonable working hypothesis is that *the mind is what the brain does'* (pp. 10–11, original italics). Such a perspective helps us to move away from the misconceptions and dangerous confusions of the Cartesian body/mind dichotomy (criticised in Chap. 2 and returned to in later discussions) and lead towards a perspective in which the mind is just another biological phenomenon. To this biological perspective on mind, we might also add the notion of the mind/brain as a product of its social context – constructed through evolution as humans adapted to changing functions and settings – as advocated in different ways by psychologists such as Vygotsky (1986 edn) and Mead (1925).

In a similar way, Siegel (2007) asserts that the brain 'is an integrated part of the whole body'. He goes on to elaborate this statement:

> Because the mind itself can be viewed as both embodied and relational, our brains actually can be considered the social organ of the body. Our minds connect with one another via neural circuitry in our bodies that is hard-wired to take in others' signals (p. 48).

What needs to be added to this is that 'attention to the present moment, one aspect of mindfulness, can be directly shaped by our ongoing communication with others, and from the activities in our own brains' (Siegel 2007, p. 50). Recent neuroscientific work indicates, on the one hand, that neural networks in the brain can be altered by experience and, on the other, that mindfulness practice can help to bring about such change. As Doidge (2007) observes, the 'idea that the brain can change its own structure and function through thought and activity is…the most important alteration in our view of the brain since we first sketched out its basic anatomy and the workings of its basic component, the neuron' (pp. xv–xvi). He goes on to describe a wide range of cases – from physical ailments to emotional disorders – in which brain changes have been demonstrated to be connected with either cures or improvements in health. All this contributes to the development of what, in recent work, Siegel (2010) has referred to as an all-encompassing 'mindsight'.

If we then connect this notion of changing the mind/brain through learning (unlearning and relearning) through experience, we can begin to see the powerful educative aspects of MBT approaches. In this respect, this form of learning connects well with the influential experiential learning models developed by Schon (1987) designed for 'reflective practitioners', and by Lave and Wenger (2002) to explain the learning stratagems employed by apprentices and other novices to gain entry into 'communities of practice'.

Through the practices outlined previously, it is possible to reduce unhelpful rumination and experiential avoidance in our mental lives and, when appropriate, to

switch off the automatic pilot for longer and longer periods. Again, the move is from doing to being; as Segal, Williams and Teasdale (2002) put it:

> In doing, it is often necessary to compute the future consequences of goal-related activity… As a result, in doing mode, the mind often travels forward to the future or back to the past, and the experience is not one of actually being "here" in the present moment much of the time. By contrast, in being mode, the mind has "nothing to do, nowhere to go" and so processing can be dedicated exclusively to processing moment-by-moment experience (p. 73).

But the ethical and attitudinal bases of the practice also indicate that mindfulness 'is not just about paying *more* attention, but rather about cultivating a *different,* wiser kind of attention' (Williams et al. 2007, p. 99, original italics). Experiments using fMRI and EEG brain scanning have demonstrated clear and direct connections between meditation and changes in the brain, particularly in relation to brain states and different types of emotion (Goleman 2003). The capacity to generate compassion, loving kindness and 'introspective skill' (Goleman 2003, pp. 11–23) in training the mind through meditation, have been observed in laboratory experiments with meditators. More specifically, Davidson et al. (2003) found 'a shift in the baseline of long-term meditators towards left anterior activation' (Siegel, p. 221) of the brain, and this left shift was also linked with enhancement of immune functions of people who had completed MBCT courses (Davidson and Kabat-Zinn 2004).

MRI scans of the brain's prefrontal cortex have connected negative emotions with the right area and positive feelings with the left (Goleman 2003, p. 340). Moreover, the 'mode of avoidance' (triggered by innate survival instincts) is, Crane (2009) informs us, also associated with:

> An increase in activation of the right frontal lobe relative to the left. The other configuration is a mode of approach in which there is movement towards experience and a sense of welcome and openness to it. Approach is associated with an increase in activation on the left frontal lobe relative to the right (p. 39).

As Siegel (2007) concludes 'mindfulness meditation appears to produce a left shift in frontal activation'. However, he enters a note of caution about studies such as those by Davidson et al. (2003) in which brain scans of people in experimental groups who had completed MBSR/MBCT courses showed an increase in left frontal lobe activity compared with control groups. More research is required, Siegel (2007) suggests, to determine 'if the meditation led to the shift' in participants 'or if the shift led them to meditate' (p. 221).

However, all of this work which connects MBT and brain neuroplasticity is fascinating and, for practitioners, provides scope (for those who need it) for scientific justifications of practice, not to mention immense hope and inspiration. Coupled with all the evidence about the practical applications discussed in the next chapter, we may now come to fully appreciate what Hanh (1991) means in his many writings on the 'miracle of mindfulness'.

4.8 Conclusion

This chapter has outlined a number of mindful practices – breath meditation, walking meditation, mindful movement and everyday mindfulness and – along with the underpinning ethical and attitudinal bases of the practice – has indicated how they may contribute to the enhancement of mental and physical health and well-being. Evidence from neuroscientific research was also adduced in support of the beneficial impact of such practice on the brain. Mindfulness work can change mind/brain functioning in ways which can enrich all aspects of experience. The following chapter examines research and studies about how this has been applied in a range of diverse contexts.

Chapter 5
Applications of Mindfulness

In the previous chapter, the practice of mindfulness, in both ancient contemplative traditions and modern therapeutic contexts, was outlined and described. In this chapter I intend to examine how the theory and practice of mindfulness has been applied in a range of different settings. Since many of these applications involve the combination of mindfulness-based therapy (MBT) with aspects of cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT), it would be useful to begin by exploring the key features of what have come to be known as Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) and Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) strategies.

5.1 MBSR/MBCT

Both these strategies – very similar in terms of their overall structure and functions in 8 week programmes – involve the grafting of MBT approaches onto selected features of CBT which have proved effective in particular contexts. The spirit of this approach to mental health, according to Westbrook et al. (2007), is to avoid 'speculations about unconscious processes, hidden motivations and unobservable structures of the mind and instead to use the principles of learning theory to modify unwanted behaviour and emotional reactions' (p. 2). The key characteristics and principles are summarised as follows (Westbrook et al. 2007, p. 6):

- The cognitive principle – it is interpretations of events, not events themselves, which is crucial
- The behavioural principle – what we do has a powerful influence on our thoughts and emotions
- The continuum principle – mental health problems are best characterised as exaggerations of normal processes
- The here-and-now principle – it is usually more fruitful to focus on current processes rather than the past

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- The interacting-systems principle – it is helpful to look at problems as interactions between thoughts, emotions, behaviour and physiology, and the environment in which the person operates
- The empirical principle – it is important to evaluate both our theories and our therapy empirically

The key connections between mindfulness and therapeutic strategies which eventually emerged as MBCT and MBSR have been alluded to already. Crane (2009) notes that the 'parents of MBCT are Mindfulness-Based Stress reduction, which itself draws from the 2,500 year legacy of mindfulness teaching within its Buddhist context, and also from cognitive-behavioural scientific and therapeutic principles' (p. xviii). MBSR is essentially the approach pioneered by Kabat-Zinn (1990) at the University of Massachusetts Medical Centre for patients with a range of physical and psychological problems. The effectiveness of Kabat-Zinn's work saw it gradually extend to a broader range of contexts and settings including work with chronic pain sufferers, cancer patients and those with personality disorders, in addition to its use in prisons, inner-city communities, medical education and corporate training (Kabat-Zinn 2005). The structure and organisation of both MBSR and MBCT programmes are similar, the 'core difference is the way the programme learning is shaped towards the participants that it is designed for' (Crane 2009, p. 7). MBCT has developed as a distinctive approach in the treatment of more vulnerable people suffering from anxiety and depressive illness (Segal et al. 2002).

5.2 A Standard MBSR/MBCT Course

The general shape of the programme (MBSR/MBCT Course[1]) is 8 weekly 2.5 hour sessions with an additional day of mindfulness after week 6 of the course. There is a structured schedule of homework practice (it is emphasised to participants that this aspect is of crucial importance) involving, typically, 45 mins per day of formal mindfulness practice (body scan, sitting or walking meditation) plus some informal practice and the observation and recording of experience throughout the programme. Participants are asked to complete general questionnaires prior to the course and there is a pre-course discussion with the teacher.

[1] I am especially indebted to Josephine Lynch – a long-standing mindfulness practitioner and teacher of MBSR/MBCT courses in Dublin, Ireland (see www.mindfulness.ie website for more information) – who provided access to the standard material for the 8-week courses and kindly gave much of her time in discussing all aspects of the work with me. This book is dedicated to her.

5.2.1 Week 1

Theme: the theme of the first week – after general introductions and orientation of the group – is to initially describe and discuss mindfulness. A key notion here is that mindfulness begins once we recognise that for most of the time we are operating on automatic pilot. Being with the breath and the body in the present moment is a good way to learn to change our perception and attention.

Activity – raison exercise (eating a single raison very slowly, savouring all aspects of the experience), discussing the experience; training awareness by attending to feelings and bodily sensations with curiosity, kindness and openness; introduction of the body scan (CD of a 45-min guided meditation on parts of the body).

Group homework involves asking participants to practise mindful awareness of everyday tasks such as washing, brushing teeth, dressing, climbing stairs, travelling to work, and so on, and to note thoughts and feelings about the experiences.

5.2.2 Week 2

Theme – further focus on the body is designed to highlight the endless chatter of the mind and how this tends to dominate all our experience and influence reactions to everyday events.

Activity – practising the body scan and breath meditation; discussing barriers to mindfulness (distraction, restlessness, sleepiness); dealing with the wandering mind and the arousal of difficult/painful thoughts and feelings.

Homework involves practice in breath meditation and keeping a diary of pleasant events.

5.2.3 Week 3

Theme – as greater awareness of mental activity is cultivated – especially the experience of the restless and wandering mind – the role of mindfulness through awareness of the body and breath provides scope for greater clarity, focus and control.

Activity – sitting meditation, mindful walking and stretching, review of homework record of pleasant events, introduction of the 3-min breathing space (3MBS) as an effective tool for daily use.

Homework involves using the 3MBS at moments throughout each day, continuing with the body scan, and making a record of unpleasant events.

5.2.4 Week 4

Theme – desire and aversion is the cause of much mental turmoil with the mind grasping at some objects and avoiding others. Mindfulness offers a means of staying present through developing a different, spectatorial and de-coupled way of viewing experience.

Activity – sitting meditation, 3MBS, body scan review, discussion of mechanisms of anxiety/low/mood/depression (handouts from Kabat-Zinn writings).

Homework consists in continuation of sitting meditation practice and regular daily use of 3MBS.

5.2.5 Week 5

Theme – relating to unpleasant or painful experiences with acceptance and non-reactivity (letting be/allowing) can be difficult. However, practice is important and can be highly effective in changing perspectives and establishing a foundation for change.

Activity – 40-min sitting meditation aimed at developing greater awareness of breath, body, sounds and thoughts. Participants are encouraged to note how we relate to all our experiences during sitting. Emphasis on cultivating a different relationship with our thoughts and feelings – de-centring from thoughts and emotions in the spirit of letting be – through mindfulness practice. 3MBS and review of progress.

Continuation of regular 3MBS and sitting meditation (including silent rather than guided sessions) for homework, with compilation of a daily list of mindfulness practice.

5.2.6 Week 6

Theme – negative moods – resulting from rumination and the carrying over of our automatic pilot and doing mode – and the thoughts that accompany them restrict our ability to develop a new relationship with our mental life. Once we begin to understand that thoughts are often just thoughts – mental traffic on the neural highway not facts in the world – we can find freedom to establish new stances in relation to our experience.

Activity – Noting reactions to different thoughts and feelings arising during sitting meditation. Discussion of homework tasks, including reactions to silent meditation sessions. Examine 3MBS as a first step in coping with difficult moments in daily life.

Maintain records of practice on a regular basis for homework, particularly the use of breath in returning to the present in stressful situations or to deal with unpleasant feelings.

5.2.7 Week 7

Theme – participants are guided towards understanding the links between activity and mood. By paying close attention to what either nourishes or depletes us in daily life, it is possible to learn how to recognise and hold the onset of difficult experiences (low mood, anxiety, depression) and create the space to respond to this creatively rather than automatically reacting negatively.

Activity – awareness of sounds, breath, body and feelings during sitting meditation. Compilation of list of pleasurable and mastery activities, and exploration of links between activity and mood. Identification of signal/triggers for relapse to low mood/depression – actions to deal with this.

Homework requires participants to select their preferred mindful practice from those used, and to use this – in addition to the daily 3MBS – to provide an early warning system for and escape mechanism from the harmful cycles of feelings, thoughts and behaviour.

5.2.8 Week 8

Theme – Regular mindfulness practice helps maintain balance and stability in life. Good intentions can be reinforced if they are connected with reasons for taking care of oneself.

Activity – Body scan practice and review of range of exercises used throughout the programme. Revision of all learning and plans about how best to maintain momentum and discipline developed on the course.

The final week's session normally incorporates the discussion of a range of suggestions for recognising and creatively responding to lapses from mindfulness, and participants are encouraged to design their own plans for this. The 3MBS – and Boronson (2007) has an effective 1-min version of this – is recommended for daily use, along with regular practice in sitting meditation and the body scan.

Rosenberg's (1998, pp. 168–170) tips for maintaining mindfulness throughout our daily lives are also well worth noting:

1. When possible, do just one thing at a time.
2. Pay full attention to what you are doing.
3. When the mind wanders from what you are doing, bring it back.
4. Repeat step 3 several billion times.
5. Investigate your distraction.

Whether the practice is formal or informal, the important element is remembering to tune into our breathing throughout each day. As the poem by Annabel Laity (Hanh 1996, preface) reminds us:

> Breathe and you know that you are alive,
> Breathe and you know that all is helping you.
> Breathe and you know that you are the world.

The essence of informal practice, Kabat-Zinn (1990) tells us, is 'always the same. It involves inquiring of yourself, "Am I here now?", "Am I awake?". The very asking usually brings us more into the present, puts us more in touch with what we are doing' (p. 438). There is an interesting parallel here with the arguments of Blackmore (2005) referred to in Chap. 3 who noted that asking the question 'Am I conscious now' is the only certain way of establishing its presence. As mindfulness practice develops and present-moment awareness is expanded over time, we may come to see – not just our thoughts, feelings and overall experience – our conception of ourselves differently. This is what Hanson (2009) means in suggesting that 'an awakening mind means an awakening brain' (p. 11). The lines from Derek Walcott's poem *Love After Love* (Housden 2003, p. 95) neatly sum up these sentiments:

> The time will come
> When, with elation,
> You will greet yourself arriving
> At your own door, in your own mirror,
> And each will smile at the other's welcome,
> And say, sit here, Eat.

5.3 Anxiety and Depression

Statistically, around 12% of men and 20% of women will suffer from depression at some stage in their lives (Williams et al. 2007, p. 16). As was mentioned in the Preface, a survey conducted in March 2010 by the mental health charity *Together-UK* (*http//:www.together-uk.org*) revealed that 62% of people in Britain (71% of women and 52% of men) have had at least one time in their lives when they have found it difficult to cope mentally, and young people are particularly vulnerable in this respect (Warwick et al. 2008). Anxiety, low mood and depression together present huge problems for health services around the world; they are immensely time-consuming and costly. More importantly – for individual sufferers, carers, their families and society as whole – depression causes untold misery, despair, not infrequently in chronic cases, suicide or premature accidental death (Solomon 2001). None of us is immune to what Dr Johnson and later Sir Winston Churchill called the 'black dog'; it can affect anyone at any stage of life as ordinary low mood or dissatisfaction transmutes into, what the distinguished embryologist and Professor of Medical Biology, and sufferer from depression, Lewis Wolpert, called 'malignant sadness', an extreme state which 'bears only a tangential resemblance to normal emotion' (1999, p. 1). For those lucky enough never to have experienced depression of any sort, it must be difficult to imagine the depths to which the human spirit and psyche can sink. As Wittgenstein puts it: 'The world of the happy man is a different one from that of the unhappy man' (1961 edn, p. 72). Shakespeare gives us a glimpse of

this mind-transforming mood of despondency in Hamlet's famous soliloquy delivered during his darkest night of the soul:

> I have of late – but wherefore I know not – lost all my mirth, foregone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapours (*Hamlet*, Act II, Sc ii).

Having dealt with the physical world, his doom-laden and deeply misanthropic vision is turned towards humans:

> what a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither… (Hamlet 1961; II, ii).

We can all count our blessings if we never have to experience even a half of the pain and despair that Hamlet obviously suffered in making that speech.

It is against the background of the immense problems posed by depressive illness that MBCT programmes have been effectively implemented as prevention, intervention and maintenance strategies for sufferers in America (Baer 2006), Britain (Government Office for Science 2008) and more widely (Segal et al. 2002; Garfinkel 2006). The primary aim of all such approaches to the problems in this sphere is, Crane explains (2009), to bring about a 'shift in the client's overall perspective in relationship to their thoughts and emotions'. She elaborates this point:

> Through a process of engagement with CBT the client comes to perceive that challenging thoughts and emotions are passing events in the mind that do not necessarily reflect reality and are not central components of the self…This altered 'de-centred' relationship or stance towards emotions or thoughts is significant. It is this that creates the person's ability to step out of the entanglement of ruminative thinking and the consequences of low mood cycles (p. 12).

Sadness is a natural part of the human condition; it is an inevitable part of being alive whereas persistent low mood and depression are not. The difference lies in the way in which we deal with sadness and associated feelings of anxiety, hopelessness or despair. Williams et al. (2007) express this in their observation that:

> The feelings by which we generally define depression are usually thought of as an end point. We're depressed; we feel sad, low, blue, miserable, despondent, desperate. But they're also a starting point: research has shown that the more we've been depressed in the past the more sad mood will also bring with it feelings of low self-esteem and self-blame (pp. 19–20).

There is a parallel here with the Buddhist notion of suffering discussed in Chap. 3. Suffering of some sort is a given; none of us can really avoid it. However, in our attempts to escape this condition – through materialist pursuits or sensuous pleasures – it is not difficult to exacerbate this state of affairs. We can easily become locked in habit-driven cycles of thoughts, feelings and actions. Indeed, the links between thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations mentioned in connection with mindfulness practice become crucial here. For anyone who has experienced depression already,

a low mood can become easier to trigger since – as automatic patterns of negativity are activated – the 'thoughts, feelings, body sensations, and behaviours that accompany it form stronger and stronger connections to each other' until eventually 'any one element can trigger depression by itself' (Williams et al. 2007, p. 29).

MBCT approaches attempt to break this vicious loop of thought and action by bringing the healing power of non-judgmental awareness to compulsive and habitual patterns. This is where the MB practices discussed earlier and in the last chapter come into their own. Through breath and walking meditation, and by means of the body scan, lessons and exercises developed on the 8 week courses, the idea is that people are enabled to recognise negative thought patterns and – keeping at bay the false attractions of rumination and experiential avoidance – respond creatively by acknowledging and naming painful feelings and simply being with them rather viewing them as a problem to be attacked. This is an authentically educational process since mindfulness courses help people to develop new skills of awareness and emotional resilience which, as work by Siegel (2007) has indicated, result in establishing alternative neural pathways in the brain.

How effective has MBCT/MBSR been in helping people with anxiety and depression?[2] Kabat-Zinn (1990) has recorded decades of evidence relating to the efficacy of MBT strategies in dealing with a wide range of physical and mental health issues and, during the last decade or so, clinical trials using MBCT/MBSR approaches have supplemented this anecdotal evidence. The first clinical trial of MBCT in Britain was conducted by Teasdale et al. (2000). Based on three treatment centres and involving 145 patients currently in remission from depression, the study involved randomly allocating the subjects to either MBCT or 'Treatment as Usual' (TAU, mainly pharmacological treatments). The primary finding was that, for patients who had suffered three or more episodes of depression, MBCT treatment roughly halved the rate of relapse over the year following the treatment compared with the TAU control group (66% relapse rate in the control group and 37% in the MBCT group).

In a follow-up study with 75 patients, Ma and Teasdale (2004) replicated these results which demonstrated a 36% relapse rate for MBCT participants compared with 78% relapse for TAU people. The UK's National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence officially recommends MBCT treatment for people who are 'currently well but have experienced three or more previous episodes of depression, because this may significantly reduce the likelihood of future relapse'' (NICE 2004, p. 76). Similar recommendations regarding MBCT and mindfulness meditation in general were, as mentioned in other chapters, highlighted in the British government report *Mental Capital and Well-being* (Government Office for Science 2008).

Using acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT), based on MBT techniques, Roemer et al. (2006) demonstrated its overall effectiveness with patients suffering

[2] For a compelling and intensely personal account of how mindfulness meditation transformed the health and well-being of the novelist Tim Parks – initially a total sceptic about alternative health treatments and anything resembling New Age therapies – see his recently published account of the long journey (Parks 2010).

from generalised anxiety disorder, and Dahl and Lundgren (2006) successfully used ACT with chronic pain sufferers. Similarly Siegel's (1999, 2006) experimental work in the field has already been mentioned on several occasions; his general conclusion is that MBT enhances the 'process of neural integration' and thus 'promotes coherence of mind, empathy in relationships, and overall resilience in our lives' (Siegel 2007, p. 215).

The central place of *learning* in these practices is brought out fully in recent work on the use of MB strategies with people suffering from addictive behaviours, particularly alcohol and cigarette addiction. As the researchers Bowen et al. (2011) observe in explaining the efficacy of the approach:

> Mindfulness provides a state of metacognitive awareness in which one can see more of the "big picture" instead of giving into one's usual conditioned, habitual behaviour. This awareness provides a greater sense of freedom and choice (p. ix).

Such 'metacognitive awareness' is exactly what Siegel (2007) is seeking to describe in terms of the concept of 'mindsight'. Its educational significance in promoting that process of reflection which Siegel calls the 'fourth R of education' (p. 259) cannot be stressed too much.

5.4 The Third Age

Until fairly recently people over 50 were typically considered to be a marginalised group representing problems to be solved rather than promise and opportunities to be realised. Cole and Winkler (2004) observe that:

> Between the 16th century and the third quarter of the 20th century…old age was removed from its place as a way station along life's spiritual journey and redefined as a problem to be solved by science and medicine…Older people were removed to society's margins (p. 3).

However, although such attitudes are still with us depending on socio-economic status and culture, in general terms perspectives on old age began to change in the late twentieth century. People were living much longer and, typically, enjoying higher standards in retirement and, as the tide turned, there were 'growing cultural impulses to explore the experiences of aging, to move towards something as one grows older – a unity of understanding; loving relation with others; the return of wonder; acceptance of morality…' (Cole and Winkler 2004, p. 4).

The burgeoning numbers of older people in all industrialised nations – brought about by increased longevity and changing patterns of work and retirement – has highlighted the urgent need to address educational issues surrounding the 'Third Age' (Withnall 2000; McKie 2000). The theme of inter-generational awareness, acknowledgement and recognition found expression both in the 1993 *European Year of Older People and Solidarity Between Generations* and in the 1999 United Nations *Year of Older People* which was inspired by the slogan 'towards a society for all ages' (Withnall 2000, p. 293). The principal educational task in relation to the

Third Age of lifelong learning has been centred on the concept of 'generativity'. Withnall (2000) explains this in terms of the:

> major developmental crisis said to occur in early and middle adulthood and involving the attainment of generativity – a concern with others beyond the immediate family, with future generations and the nature of the world in which these descendants will live. People who are successful in resolving this crisis are said to be able to establish clear guidelines for their lives and generally to age in a happy and productive way. Failure to achieve generativity results in stagnation in which people become preoccupied with personal needs, comforts and concerns (p. 293).

Work done by the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) and the *Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning* have demonstrated how involvement in education and training – of any type and at any age and level – has demonstrably positive implications for all aspects of individuals' social lives and interaction with the communities in which they live. People who continue learning tend, on the whole, to have more involvement with community and charity projects, call on medical services less and are generally better integrated into all spheres of social life (McNair 2007; Norman and Hyland 2003). Most notably, the positive correlation between mental health and adult learning has been well documented and its impact is now widely acknowledged (Clancy 2007). There are also direct links between lifelong learning and active citizenship and democratic participation (Aspin 2007) clearly demonstrating the scope and power of the concept of generativity, a perspective which informs the ongoing European Union project designed to foreground the value of older learners and tutors in the lifelong learning and vocational education and training sectors (VOTEALL 2008).

MB approaches – already shown to be effective in other areas – seemed to offer much of potential value to workers in this field and, indeed, the use of these approaches was recommended in the UK government report *Mental Capital and Wellbeing* (Government Office for Science 2008). In recent years a number of researchers have pioneered applications of MBCT/MBSR working with older who had histories of anxiety/depression (McBee 2003). Vulnerability to such forms of illness has a tendency to be magnified in older people as existing pre-dispositions are linked with other factors such as declining health, loss of loved ones and the impact of ageism in society (Blazer 1997).

Many of Kabat-Zinn's (1990) participants were elderly though the positive effects of MBT strategies were not separated out for these sub-groups. Ross (2004) used modified MBCT strategies with older participants at a mental health inpatient centre and found 90% positive results with his sample of 45 patients. Similarly Smith (2006) working with older people in England who had experienced some form of anxiety/depression found that MBT approaches were thought to be generally beneficial by participants. The study involved pre- and post-course interviews with members of three MBCT programmes (38 in total). Two weeks after the course, 48% of the participants reported the experience as 'extremely useful' and this figure has risen to 62% in interviews 1 year later (p. 199), an interesting finding in terms of what Kabat-Zinn and others claim about the long-term impact of the practice. Smith (2006) noted that 'most participants reported continuing to practice mindfulness regularly, both at 2 weeks post-course and at 1 year follow-up' (Smith 2006, p. 199).

In her independent studies of the impact of mindfulness, Langer (1989) has had a long-standing interest in working with older people. As mentioned in Chap. 3, Langer works outside both the contemplative and mainstream therapeutic traditions in identifying valuable features of mindfulness, though her general approach has much in common with both. She identifies three key qualities of mind distinctive of what she calls a 'mindful state of being' (pp. 62ff):

Creation of new categories – if mindlessness involves the automatic and rigid reliance on old ways of working, the mindful state requires the continual creation of new ones. This implies a constant re-evaluating and re-categorising of experience, and this means paying attention and noting in an active and dynamic way. For children, this is a perfectly natural state but we tend to lose the beginner's mind as we get older.

Openness to new information – as a corollary of this creative state of mind, we need to be receptive and welcoming to change and development in all spheres of experience. 'Mindful listening or watching, from an expanding, increasingly differentiated information base, is…likely to be more effective' (Langer 1989, p. 67).

Awareness of more than one perspective – as well as openness to new information, mindfulness requires openness to different or novel standpoints or aspects of experience. Awareness that there are perspectives other than our own can be extremely liberating and opens up choice and opportunity. The non-judgmental present-moment attention cultivated by practice is an ideal way of achieving such a state. Flexibility of thought and action in terms of different perspectives is crucial for Langer. As she observes:

> First, we gain more choices in how to respond. A single-minded label produces an automatic reaction, which reduces our options. Also to understand that other people may not be so different allows us empathy and enlarges our range of responses. We are less likely to feel locked into a polarized struggle. Second, when we apply this open-minded attitude to our own behaviour, change becomes more possible (p. 71).

Langer and colleagues have studied the impact of 'creative uncertainty' and expanding awareness through mindful practices on children and adults in a range of settings, and she has taken a special interest in the elderly. Using experimental and control groups of residents in a nursing home, Langer and Rodin (1976) varied choices and activities for each group. Members of the experimental group were encouraged to make decisions for themselves – whether to see visitors in their rooms, what movies to watch, and so on – and were also each given a houseplant to care for. The control group were given a houseplant as well but were told the nursing home staff would look after it, and that the staff were responsible for all aspects of visiting.

Various emotional and behavioural evaluations were undertaken prior to the experiment, and the same measures were taken 3 weeks and then 18 months after the project ended. Measures of behaviour, reports by the residents and ratings by the staff all 'showed clear and dramatic improvement for the group that had been given more responsibility' (Langer 1989, p. 83). Moreover, the general health of the experimental group had improved (based on their medical records) and only '7 of the 47 subjects in the experimental group had died during the 18 month period, whereas 13 of the 44 subjects in the comparison group had died' (Langer 1989, p. 84).

Similar impacts on well-being, activity and longevity were noted in Studies by Perlmuter and Langer (1979) in which retirees and nursing home residents were encouraged to monitor the choices they made each day about such things as choice of meals and drinks. Different levels of independence of choice were given to different sub-groups within the population. The conclusions demonstrated clearly that 'the more decisions and control required of the subjects, the more likely they were to become (1) less depressed; (2) more independent and confident; and (3) more alert and differentiated in their choices' (Langer 1989, p. 86). Subsequent work by Langer et al. (1984) indicated clear links between such mindfulness practice and increased intellectual functioning and the reversal of memory loss. Her recent work (2005) has demonstrated that people who view life from multiple perspectives are less reactive, and those who make fewer social comparisons are less likely to blame and experience envy.

Langer's research is – not only fascinating in its own right – but illuminates how mindful awareness can break habitual cycles of thought and action, remove one-dimensional mindsets, and open up new perspectives and possibilities for creative choice and positive development. Her observation on stereotypes of old age is interesting and fertile in this respect. After noting how rarely the term 'development' is used in relation to the later stages of life, she remarks that:

> Despite current emphasis on a lifespan perspective, change in later years is still typically described as aging. In the same way, although the word day can refer to the twenty-four-hour span, we normally us it to refer only to the brighter hours. Aging has come to refer to the darker side of growing older. To make changes in later life one must fight against all sorts of popular mindsets (Langer 1989, p. 96).

As the later chapters of this book will emphasise, the challenge of mindfulness can be fruitfully extended to all aspects of learning and development, to all age groups at all levels of education.

5.5 Social Action and Community Engagement

The mythology of the inward-looking and subjective overtones of mindfulness was dispelled in earlier chapters. In the first chapter I criticised the claim that therapeutic activity marginalises social action in observing that before we can change the world we have to change ourselves. The other-regarding, compassionate outcome of mindfulness is commonly referred to in all traditions. Moreover, as mentioned earlier, work in neuroscience and psychotherapy has provided sound evidence for the efficacy of the compassionate mind in promoting general physical and mental health (Goleman 2003).

Fostering kindness and compassion in ourselves and for others, argues Gilbert (2009), is the 'way to develop feelings of contentment and well-being' (p. 180); compassion 'begins in our own hearts as we refocus our attention, thoughts, feelings and behaviours on it' (p. 437). Mindfulness training cannot but include the cultivation of compassionate qualities. Feldman's (2005) extensive work in this field expresses this with precision and gusto. Once again we see the opening of the heart

and mind by close attention to the mental habits that enslave us in perpetual cycles of reaction to the suffering of the world. The acceptance and letting go developed through practice is crucial in this process. As Feldman observes:

> The acute awareness of change, of appearance and disappearance, can terrify you into retreating into control and anxiety. It can lead you to curb your willingness to love, for fear of loss and heartache…You can love with grace and wisdom, in the full understanding that love is also letting go. Liberating your heart from the fear of disappearance and from the insistence that nothing should change in a deep way also liberates all the people in your life (p. 111).

Impermanence, change, birth and death are, as already noted, core elements in Buddhist perspectives on the way human consciousness is conditioned by suffering. Batchelor (1998) echoes these sentiments in reflecting on the notion that much of our life appears to be 'in ceaseless mutation: emerging, modifying, disappearing'. We come to realise that:

> The relative constancy of still, centred attention is simply a steady adjustment to the flux of what is observed. Nothing can be relied upon for security. As soon as you grasp something, it's gone. Anguish emerges from craving for life to be other than it is. It is *the* symptom of flight from birth to death, from the pulse of the present (p. 25).

Hanh (1993) offers guided breath meditation exercises focused specifically on the human tendency to run away from the anguish identified by Batchelor. In *Looking Deeply, Healing* (p. 67) we find the instruction:

> Knowing I will get old, I breathe in,
> Knowing I can't escape old age,
> I breathe out.
> Knowing I will get sick, I breathe in,
> Knowing I can't escape sickness,
> I breathe out.
> Knowing I will die, I breathe in,
> Knowing I can't escape death,
> I breathe out.

Of course, it is one thing to know – to acknowledge the impermanent nature of existence intellectually – quite another to feel this with all our being. Connecting this to the cultivation of compassion, Feldman (2005) expresses it beautifully in observing:

> Resistance to loss can…make your heart wither. Fear makes you self-centred and self-preoccupied. You retreat into a separate self, fearing the invasion of reality and change…Fear has created an abyss, a separation between self and other that feels uncrossable…The power of compassion lies in its capacity to dissolve the separation between you and me. It is no longer your suffering or my suffering but just suffering. It is no longer your fear or my fear, but a fear of groundlessness that is universal (p. 113).

Salzberg and Goldstein (2001) refer to this perspective in dealing with the question, 'How does my meditation help others?'. The answer lies in the:

> Personal transformation that always come with sincere and continuous meditation practice…The only place peace, compassion, generosity, and love can begin is, in fact, with ourselves. The less selfish and judgmental we are, the more loving and accepting the world becomes. The world isn't something 'out there'; it's made up of individuals like ourselves. We begin changing the world by cleaning up our little corner of it (pp. 41–42).

This is what Hanh (1999) means in referring to the 'interbeing' (pp. 97ff) of all mindfulness practice – right mindfulness leads to right thoughts, right speech, right action, right livelihood, and so on – and this in turn results in the insight of the interbeing of everything in the universe. We can return to the Buddhist notion of non-self here. Brazier (2003) explains how the 'teaching of non-self is a teaching of liberation'; this is because:

> Self is a defensive prison of habit-energy that we construct around ourselves, and the teaching of non-self invites us to step beyond this prison into vibrant relationship with life…The Buddhist paradigm does not lock us into self, but offers encounter with that which is other. It is a joyous meeting with the universe in all its radiance and diversity (p. 145).

As discussed in Chap. 3, the egotistic self-creation driven by the attempt to escape pain and suffering transmutes easily into a constructed and reified conception of 'me' which comes to be viciously counter-productive. Not only does the escape mechanism fail to work, the prison walls get higher and our sentence more difficult to serve.

Batchelor (1998) expresses this powerfully in the observation:

> The closer you look, the more you might discover how every candidate for self dissolves into something else. Instead of a fixed nugget of 'me', you find yourself experiencing a medley of sensations, moods, perceptions, and intentions, working together like the crew of a boat, steered by the skipper of attention. But how easily this vision of fluctuating, interactive processes switches back into the habitual image of an isolated ego. How natural it seems for confusion to burst in again and for the drudgery of an anguished existence to resume (p. 71).

Writing of similar themes in their discussion of therapy and education, Smeyers et al. (2007) refer to Deleuze's concept of the 'fractured self'. Education may repair the damage through a 'turning of attention away from the self – at least, away from the self as understood in any global sense…through a focus on the objects of study' (pp. 65–66).

Rather than objects of study, Siegel (2007) recommends the cultivation of reflective thinking – what he calls the 'fourth R of education' (p. 259) – as a way of addressing the practical implications of his investigation of the mindful brain. He explains that 'reflection is the skill that embeds self-knowing and empathy in the curriculum' by reinforcing the overlap between 'social, emotional, cognitive, and attentional mechanisms'. He goes on to state that:

> In neural terms, the fourth 'R' of reflection would essentially be an education that develops the prefrontal cortex. This is our 'cortex humanitas', the neural hub of our humanity… Interpersonal attunement in adult-child relationships promotes the development of prefrontal functions. The proposed teaching of mindful awareness would harness these same processes that emerge with prefrontal neural integration and promote a reflective mind, an adaptive, resilient brain, and empathic relationships (pp. 261–262).

How this reflective capacity – and, indeed, all the other practices and applications of mindfulness – may be implemented and incorporated into learning, teaching and the curriculum will be discussed in subsequent chapters. At this point the focus is on how the compassion and other-regarding qualities developed through mindfulness can be seen to impact upon the social world.

If mindfulness is effective in developing a compassionate mind – and the neuroscientific studies provide evidence of this – we might reasonably expect to see the influence of this on action and behaviour. 'Evidence' in this sphere must inevitably be drawn from many disparate sources. Carrithers' (1996) research on all aspects of Buddhism included field work with meditating forest monks in contemporary Sri Lanka. After noting the core principle that the human constitution 'could be laid bare to fruitful investigation through insight meditation and decisively transformed through the Buddhist training', he states that 'our ultimate assent must be founded in experience, in empirical evidence' (p. 76). The fact that many of the monks were healthy, content, 'radiant and without remorse' impressed Carrithers but he sought more than this and concluded that there were 'three traits of the monks which did seem directly pursuant upon the Buddhist training'. These were summarised as:

> The first was an interested, indeed fascinated, absorption in what they called their 'work'… study, careful eating, hygiene, meditation, exercise…second, some did nevertheless pour tremendous energy and years of their lives into long-term projects, such as the founding of forest hermitages…They were both remarkably successful and remarkably uninterested in success…(p. 77).

All of this was deeply impressive and moving for the observer, but he goes on to remark that:

> It was the third trait, however, which most persuaded me of the discipline's effectiveness, and that was the monks' courage in the face of wild forest animals. On two occasions while on foot in the jungle there stood between me and a surprised and threatening animal…only the slight body and unmoving equanimity of a monk. On both occasions the monk took a firm but unaggressive stance and spoke calmly to the animal, which crashed off into the underbrush. No behaviour could be further from ordinary expectations… (Carrithers' 1996, p. 78).

In terms of more all-embracing connections between Buddhist practice and engagement with the world, the life of Thich Nhat Hanh is rich in evidence. In the preface to Hanh's book *Power* (2007, p. ixff), Pritam Singh offers us a brief biographical sketch of Thay's achievements. After being exiled from his native Vietnam for peace activities, he took his campaign to America and in 1967 was nominated for the Nobel Peace prize by Martin Luther King. He led the Buddhist Peace Delegation to the Paris Peace Talks organised to negotiate an end to the Vietnam war in 1973, and has continued to be involved with peace and social justice movements around the world, speaking out on issues from AIDS, to global warming, world poverty and the Iraq war. Thay has been active in peace and reconciliation efforts wherever these were needed around the world – most notably in relation to the Arab-Israeli conflicts – and, from his base in Plum Village, France, organises retreats for politicians, professionals, artists, scientists, psychotherapists, environmentalists and, of course, individuals, families and children (www.plumvillage.org).

What has become known as the 'socially engaged' dimension of contemporary Buddhism stems largely from Hanh's work. Although it has been argued that Buddhism is by definition engaged in the sense that commitment to the core values of non-harm, compassion and lovingkindness necessarily leads to a stance in

relation to the world (Kraft 2000), the work of Thay from the 1960s onwards is acknowledged as the beginning of a new phase in this respect. When asked in interview about the origins of the new movement and how he became involved in 'compassion-based social change', Hanh replied that:

> Engaged Buddhism is just *Buddhism*. When bombs begin to fall on people you cannot stay in the meditation hall all the time. Meditation is about what is going on – not just in your body or feelings – but all around you (Malkin 2003, p. 1).

Since then the movement has gathered pace and now reaches into just about every sphere of human activity. The Dharmanet International Learning Resource Site on 'engaged practice' includes a wide range of articles and news about groups and meetings on topics as diverse as consumerism, the environment, race and gender, globalisation, work in prisons and hospices, in addition to peace-making in every part of the world (www.dharmanet.org/lcengaged.htm). The first world symposium on socially engaged Buddhism organised by Zen Peacemakers took place in Montague, Massachussets in August 2010 (www.zenpeacemakers.org/zps/).

Acknowledging Hanh's pioneering work in this area, Garfinkel (2006) set out to travel the world in search of socially engaged practice. From a Zen Hospice project in San Francisco (pp. 2–3), a 'bearing witness' group remembering the Jewish holocaust at Auschwitz (pp. 46ff), organisations challenging caste in equalities in India (pp. 96ff) to NGOs fighting urban poverty in contemporary Japan (pp. 221ff), Garfinkel demonstrates how engaged Buddhism is constantly striving to make a difference to the way the world is. As Garfinkel notes, 'right livelihood' (p. 6) would be a most appropriate label for the modern applications of mindfulness he observed throughout his world tour in the footsteps of the Buddha.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has described how the practice of mindfulness outlined in Chap. 4 has been applied in a wide variety of contexts, from formal MBCT/MBSR courses aimed at treating stress, anxiety and general mental illness to work with older people and, more informally, with socially engaged projects concerned with peace and social justice. All of these applications involve learning of one kind or another, and the ways in which mindful learning may be incorporated into formal and informal educational activity will be the subject of later chapters. In the next chapter, I will examine the key area of the education of the emotions as a preliminary to my survey of the affective domain of education.

Chapter 6
The Education of the Emotions

6.1 What Are Emotions?

Emotions are central to the affective domain which plays a principal role in the thesis advocated throughout this book. Various aspects of the emotions were alluded to briefly in the first two chapters, but this investigation now needs to be deepened and widened as a preliminary to discussing the role of mindfulness in affective education and the ways in which changes in this sphere may enhance learning and teaching.

The *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary* defines emotion as 'Agitation of mind; strong mental feeling; Any of the natural instinctive affections of the mind (e.g. love, horror, pity) which come and go according to one's personality, experiences, and bodily state; a mental feeling. Also mental feeling as distinguished from knowledge and from will'. Goleman (1996) has observed that 'all emotions are, in essence, impulses to act, the instant plans for handling life that evolution has instilled in us'. He goes on to explain that:

> The very root of the word *emotion* is *motere*, the Latin verb "to move", plus the prefix '"e-" to connote "move away" suggesting that a tendency to act is implicit in every emotion. That emotions lead to actions is most obvious in watching animals or children; it is only in "civilized" adults we so often find the great anomaly in the animal kingdom, emotions – root impulses to act – divorced from obvious reaction (p. 6).

However, Goleman is also careful to point out that these evolutionary propensities to act in certain ways are also shaped by 'our life experience and our culture' (Goleman 1996, p. 7) and, of course, it is the 'nurture' origins of emotions rather than their roots in 'nature' that is of the first importance in any thesis about the possibility of educating the emotions.

Accounts differ as to both the number and range of human emotions. In his *Ethics*, Spinoza (1970 edn) – unusually amongst rationalist philosophers – devoted much time and space to a discussion of the 'origin and nature of emotions'. Declaring that by 'emotion (affectus) I understand the modifications of the body by which power of action in

T. Hyland, *Mindfulness and Learning: Celebrating the Affective Dimension of Education*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 17, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1911-8_6,

the body is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, and at the same time the ideas of these modifications' (pp. 84–85), Spinoza went on to list and define no less than 48 different emotions (Spinoza 1970, pp. 128–140), all of which derive from the 'primary affections' of 'pleasure, pain and desire'. Although many of the labels and definitions used – notable examples, would be emulation, drunkenness and luxury – appear strangely misapplied as names for emotions to contemporary ears, Hampshire (1951) argues that Spinoza's account was one of the earliest and most philosophically serious and painstaking attempts to map and understand this sphere of human experience.

Hampshire explains how Spinoza's account was so originally different from those offered by his philosophical contemporaries, and how it anticipated a number of modern theories of emotion. He argues that 'Spinoza, in his detached and impersonal style, notices the twists and perversities of human feeling and behaviour more closely than most of the philosopher-psychologists of his age' (Hampshire 1951, p. 139). Spinoza made the distinction between 'active' and 'passive' emotions, the former – based on 'adequate ideas', that is, being understood and controlled by reason, and the latter, based on 'inadequate ideas', arising from 'mutilated and confused' notions – means that the mind 'necessarily suffers certain things' (Hampshire 1951, p. 85). This distinction between reason and passion (denied by Pascal in the quotation at the beginning of the book), the rational and irrational in the realm of emotion is characteristic of much philosophical and psychological debate (see Chappell 2005) and will figure prominently in the discussion of education in the field.

Hampshire (1951) explains how Spinoza's elaborate distinctions anticipated much contemporary thought on the subject. He comments:

> The transition from the normal life of passive emotion and confused ideas to the free man's life of active emotion and adequate ideas must be achieved, if at all, by a method in some respects not unlike the methods of modern psychology…There is an evident parallel between Freud's conception of *libido* and Spinoza's *conatus*; the importance of the parallel… is that both philosophers conceive emotional life based on a universal unconscious drive or tendency to self-preservation; both maintain that any frustration of this drive must manifest itself in our conscious life as some painful disturbance (p. 141).

If there is a natural tendency to think that Spinoza's identification of 48 emotions was, perhaps, rather over-ambitious, Goleman (1996) brings us back to earth with a more economical taxonomy. Although he claims that there are 'hundreds of emotions, along with their blends, variations, mutations and nuances', a review of the relevant literature helps him to select eight main or primary ones (Goleman 1996, pp. 289–290):

Anger: fury, outrage, resentment, wrath, etc.
Sadness: grief, sorrow, cheerlessness, gloom, etc.
Fear: anxiety, apprehension, nervousness, concern, etc.
Enjoyment: happiness, joy, relief, contentment, etc.
Love: acceptance, friendliness, trust, kindness, etc.
Surprise: shock, astonishment, amazement, wonder
Disgust: contempt, disdain, scorn, abhorrence, etc.
Shame: guilt, embarrassment, chagrin, remorse, etc.

Goleman is at pains to point out, however, that 'this list does not resolve every question about how to categorise emotion' and stresses that 'the scientific debate on how to classify emotions continues' (Goleman 1996, p. 290). For the moment we can move from science to philosophy in the search for further clarification.

6.2 Reason and Passion

In spite of the generally pessimistic thrust of Spinoza's account of the emotions – particularly in relation to the force of *conatus*, the basic instincts, in humans – scope was left for the power of reason to influence emotions. This differs sharply from what Bedford (1967) called the 'traditional theory of the emotions' according to which 'an emotion is a feeling, or at least an experience of a special type which involves a feeling' and 'logically, this amounts to regarding emotion words as the names of feelings' (p. 77).

Hume's famous treatment of the emotions – which he preferred to call 'passions' or 'sentiments' in *A Treatise of Human Nature* (Hume 1966 edn, Vol. 2) – succeeded, according to Winch and Gingell (1999), in overturning 'nearly 2000 years of philosophical speculation concerning morality'. They go on to explain:

> It was a direct attack on the Platonic and Christian idea of morality as a battle between (angelic) reason and (animal) passion where being good is a question of reason resisting the promptings of desire; whilst Hume's analysis, if accepted, shows the fundamental importance of the emotions to morality (pp. 78–79).

The place of the emotions in relation to the ethical foundations of education (see Bailey 2010; Cuypers & Martin 2009) will be examined in later chapters. At this stage, it is necessary to acknowledge that Hume's view of emotions, as passions, seems to present serious obstacles to education in this sphere.

In the *Treatise*, he makes a distinction between direct and indirect passions. The former are 'those which arise from good and evil most naturally, and with the least preparation'; these are the:

> direct passions of desire and aversion, grief and joy, hope and fear, along with volition. The mind, by an original instinct, tends to unite itself with the good and to avoid the evil (1966 edn, Vol. 2, p. 148).

Indirect passions arise as secondary reflections on these basic instincts in 'conjunction with other qualities' and produce such passions as 'pride, humility, ambition, vanity, love, hatred, envy, pity, malice, generosity'. A further distinction is between 'calm' passions such as the 'sense of beauty and deformity in action, composition, and external objects', and the 'violent passions of love and hatred, grief and joy, pride and humility'(Hume 1966, p. 4).

Thus far, Hume's account does not differ greatly from that of Spinoza. Where they part company, however, is over the role of reason or rationality in the sphere of emotion. Spinoza allows for some impact of rationality on the emotions, whereas Hume seems to rule this out. When Hume makes the apparently outrageous assertion

that 'it is not contrary to reason to prefer the destruction of the whole world to the scratching of my finger' (Hume 1966 edn, Vol. 2. p. 117), this is not a declaration of nihilistic amorality but a claim that reason has little influence in a moral domain controlled mainly by the passions and sentiments. The explanation is that:

> Since morals, therefore, have an influence on the actions and affections, it follows that they cannot be derived from reason…Morals excite passions, and produce or prevent actions. Reason of itself is utterly impotent in this matter…Reason is the discovery of truth and falsehood. Truth or falsehood consists in an agreement or disagreement either to the real relations of ideas, or to real existence and matter of fact…Now, it is evident our passions, volitions and actions are not susceptible to any such agreement or disagreement…It is impossible, therefore, they can be pronounced either true or false, and be either contrary or conformable to reason (Hume 1966, pp. 167–168).

Although in his later essays, Hume did arrive at the view that, even though the passions or sentiments are not matters of reason, it is likely that 'reason and sentiment concur in almost all moral determinations and conclusions' (Hume 1901 edn., p. 410), the marginalisation of rationality in the sphere of emotions in such accounts leaves little room for educational activity in this field.

What is required is an extended account of the emotional realm which goes beyond the traditional theory of emotions as, essentially, natural or instinctive feelings or sensations. Bedford (1967) offers such an account based on a painstaking critique of the traditional perspectives. Accounts such as those offered by James (1981 edn) identify emotions with feelings or somatic sensations; the theory is that 'the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion' (p. 449). Bedford argues that this 'involves a fundamental mistake: the logical mistake of treating emotion words as names, which leads in turn to a misconception of their function'. He goes on to ask:

> What evidence is there for the existence of a multitude of feelings corresponding to the extensive and subtle linguistic differentiation of our vocabulary for discussing emotions? This assumption gains no support from experience. Indignation and annoyance are two different emotions; but, to judge from my own case, the feelings that accompany indignation appear to differ little, if at all, from those that accompany annoyance (pp. 78–79).

Similarly, we can make fine, nuanced distinctions between envy – wanting something that another possesses – and jealousy – the same desire but with the addition that we feel that we have a right or entitlement to what another possesses – and *understand* the differences fully without having different *feelings* or sensations which accompany envy or jealousy. For Bedford, 'emotion words form part of the vocabulary of appraisal and criticism, and a number of them belong to the more specific language of moral criticism' (James 1981 edn, p. 89).

The idea that emotion words – linked to motives and actions – are ways of describing, explaining or accounting for human behaviour functioned as a core element in the 'emotive theory of ethics'. Stemming from the logical positivist position that only empirical statements of fact or analytic statements expressing necessary truths were meaningful, emotivist ethics sought to make sense of the moral statements which seemed to be rendered meaningless by positivism. According to the theory, moral statements such as 'Lying is wrong' 'Giving to charity is good'

are basically expressions of approval or disapproval, with the addition of persuasive elements designed to win the agreement of others. As Stevenson (1976), one of the foremost proponents of emotivism, put the case, '"X is bad" becomes, by this pattern, "I disapprove of X", together with emotive meaning that acts to make the hearer disapprove in the same way' (p. 97). However, as Hudson (1970, pp. 132ff) argues, although no doubt moral language does possess some of these emotive/persuasive features, morality is not simply propaganda. We also need to look at the content of moral statements – what morality is about – as well as their form, and this leads us to consider the rationality or correctness of moral judgments.

What was, arguably, a positive by-product of emotivism, however, was the notion that emotions and emotive language play such a central role in human relationships. Bedford (1967) summarises this position succinctly:

> Emotion concepts, I have argued, are not purely psychological; they presuppose concepts of social relationships and institutions; and concepts belonging to systems of judgment, moral, aesthetic and legal. In using emotion words, we are able, therefore, to relate behaviour to the complex background in which it is enacted, and so to make human actions intelligible (p. 98).

6.3 Emotions, Minds and Biology

Before looking at the educational implications of the account of emotions thus arrived at, it would be useful to examine their role in relation to evolutionary biology and the data of neuroscience.

The part of what eventually became the modern human brain of *Homo sapiens* to emerge first in our earliest ancestors was that which controlled our emotional reactions to life. From this primitive foundation, the brainstem (often referred to as the reptilian brain), emerged as the emotional nerve centre. As Goleman (1996) explains:

> The most ancient root of our emotional life is in the sense of smell, or more precisely, in the olfactory lobe, the cells that take in an analyse smell. Every living entity, be it nutritious, poisonous, sexual partner, predator or prey, has a distinctive molecule signature that can be carried in the wind. In those primitive times smell commended itself as a paramount sense for survival (p. 10).

With the development of the limbic system in the early mammals this 'new neural territory added emotions proper to the brain's repertoire' (Goleman 1996, p. 10). Siegel (2007) describes how the:

> Limbic zones evolved when reptiles developed into mammals. Limbic zones are involved in attachment…memory…the appraisal of meaning and the creation of affect, and our inner sensations of emotion. The limbic regions also contain the master hormone regulator, the hypothalamus, enabling direct influences to the body proper (p. 34).

'From these foundations the brain developed and expanded considerably, from the early humanoids labelled *Homo habilis* appearing on earth two million years ago with a brain size of 600–700 cc who, according to Gilbert (2009), walked

upright, lived in family groups, developed simple tool use, followed a hunter-gatherer way of life and may have built shelters' (p. 29). He continues the story

> After *Homo habilis*, evolution came up with *Homo erectus,* Neanderthals and *Homo Sapiens* (us), and today our brain capacity is around 1,500 cc. So in just two million years the expansion of the brain, and especially the *cortex*, the outer, convoluted layer, has been rapid and dramatic. The ration of cortex to total brain size is estimated to be 67% in monkeys, 75% in apes and 80% in humans…Big brains and the competencies they support need energy and are costly to run, so there must have been some important pay-offs to evolving them. There are: they are what make us intelligent (p. 29).

The most recent additions to the brain, the neocortex regions, have been described as the 'seat of thought' in that they 'contain the centres that put together and comprehend what the senses perceive' (Goleman 1996, p. 11). The neocortex:

> adds to a feeling what we think about it – and allows us to have feelings about ideas, art, symbols, imaginings. In evolution the neocortex allowed a judicious fine-tuning that no doubt has made enormous advantages in an organism's ability to survive adversity…The survival edge is due to the neocortex's talent for strategizing, long-term planning, and other mental wiles. Beyond that, the triumphs of art, of civilization and culture, are all fruits of the neocortex (Goleman 1996, p. 11).

This evolutionary account of the development of the brain has suggested a division between the 'old brain/mind (based mainly on the limbic system) and the 'new brain/mind' (incorporating the sub-cortex and neocortex regions). As Gilbert (2009) puts it:

> The old brain/mind that reaches back over many tens of millions of years operates through fast-acting brain networks linked to our emotions and desires. Our feelings are automatic and effortless…they alert us to threats, activate emotions and guide us to important life goals…By contrast, our two-million-year-old new brain/mind is slow and reflective, can use symbols, can conceptualise and understand how things work, is creative and ever improving (p. 35).

Gilbert is careful, however, to steer us away from the old misconceived dichotomies of reason and passion, theory and practice, and instinct and reflection, in his explanation of how the compassionate mind develops from an interaction and integration of all these elements. It is these old, rigid dichotomies which – as observed in earlier chapters – have led to a cognitive/affective imbalance in our educational systems. It is the lingering remnant of such mistaken perspectives on human experience that, arguably fuel the arguments of critics of the therapeutic turn. As we saw in Chap. 1, such critics have failed to notice how the emotional and moral impoverishment of educational systems in recent years through performativity demands and economistic skills and competencies requires the foregrounding of affective teaching rather than its opposite.

If constructive and purposive connections and interactions between our old and new brains – between reflective reason and instinctive emotion – were not possible, the projects of education and mindfulness based interventions would be doomed to failure. Fortunately, almost all the developments in psychology, science and neuroscience in recent years – especially the recent work involving the neuroplasticity of mental functions referred to in Chap. 4 – indicate that such integrative links are, not just possible, but allow for highly positive and dynamic developments in mental functioning and well-being.

In his account of the development of the emotions from the standpoint of evolutionary biology, Pinker (1997) begins by dispelling the myths associated with the so-called Triune Brain which resulted in the romantic theory which assigned the emotions and the intellect to different realms of existence. The emotions belong to nature and to the body whereas, for the romantics, the intellect is associated with civilisation and the mind. The Triune Brain model conceives the human cerebrum in terms of three evolutionary layers. As Pinker describes it:

> At the bottom are the basal ganglia or Reptilian Brain, the seat of the primitive and selfish emotions driving the "Four Fs": feeding, fighting, fleeing and sexual behaviour. Grafted onto it is the limbic system or Primitive Mammalian Brain which is dedicated to the kinder, gentler, social emotions, like those of parenting. Wrapped around that is the Modern Mammalian Brain, the neocortex that grew wild in human evolution and that houses the intellect (p. 371).

A consequence of this theory is that the emotions come to be regarded, quite inappropriately, as animal legacies or primitive throwbacks. However, this compartmentalised picture of the brain and its operations is highly misleading. As indicated in Chap. 4, it is more correct to think of the mental activity of mind and consciousness as integrated with all our bodily functions and operations. This is what Siegel (2007) is expressing in his statement that the 'brain originates at the interface of the inner and outer worlds of our bodily defined selves', and his advice that 'whenever we see the word brain, it is important to keep this embodied nature as part of our perspective' (p. 29).

As a consequence of this brain/mind/body integration, the notion of neuroplasticity, the idea that through experience and training brains can change themselves and their mental operations (Doidge 2007) has come to influence the whole field of neuroscience in recent years. There are clear implications here for the discussion of educating the emotions. The idea that the emotions – owing their origins to our primitive reptilian ancestors – ought be to curbed, controlled or denied as irrational and not susceptible to reason is well and truly refuted by all the available scientific evidence. Pinker (1997) explains this in asking the question:

> Might the software for the emotions be burned so deeply into the brain that organisms are condemned to feel as their remote ancestors did? The evidence says no; the emotions are easy to reprogram…the human cerebral cortex does not ride piggyback on an ancient limbic system…The systems work in tandem, integrated by many two-way connections. The amygdala, an almond-shaped organ buried in each temporal lobe, houses the main circuits that colour our experiences with emotions. It receives not just simple signals (such as loud noises) from the lower stations of the brain, but abstract, complex information from the brain's highest centres. The amygdala in turn sends signals to virtually every other part of the brain, including the decision-making circuitry of the frontal lobes (pp. 371–372).

As mentioned already in reference to the notion of cognitive emotions, thoughts and feelings are inextricably connected, and it is this which gives us an immediate and general justification of educating the emotions. The 'connections between the amygdala (and related limbic structures) and the neocortex', Goleman (1996) reminds us, 'are the hub of the battles or cooperative treaties struck between head and heart, thought and feeling. This circuitry explains why emotion is so crucial to effective thought, both in

making wise decisions and in simply allowing us to think clearly' (p. 27). This notion is reinforced by Pinker's assertion that the 'emotions are mechanisms that set the brain's highest level goals…no sharp line divides thinking from feeling' (1997, p. 373).

6.4 Education, Emotion and Rationality

All the data of neuroscience point to the consummate educability of the emotional elements of human nature. It is inappropriate and dangerously misguided to try to separate head and heart, thought and feeling, and empirical research around the brain's neuroplasticity has demonstrated that experience changes the brain's structures and pathways. Education – whether this is conceived in terms of Peters' specific normative concept of education or the more general notions of upbringing or schooling examined in Chap. 2 – is an especially dynamic aspect of this life experience (Weare 2010). Moreover, the value we attach to it is revealed in the years we assign to compulsory schooling and the considerable amount of money spent on it by contemporary states. As Brighouse (2006) comments:

> Schools are increasingly expected to make up for the failures of other social institutions. For the first time in history, we expect schools to educate everyone, not only those whose parents were educated themselves…We expect them to deal with the emotional consequences of fractured – and ever more complex – family arrangements (p. 1).

Given the dominance of cognitive goals (and within this domain, fairly narrow employability outcomes) in modern curricula, proposals for educating the emotions need to provide justificatory bases for redressing the balance. The dominance of economic over social capital – not just in lifelong learning policy and practice (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Avis et al. 2009) – but in educational developments from school to university has characterised trends over two decades. It is difficult to break the hold of these utilitarian conceptions and, as already observed, what brief forays there have been into the affective domain run the risk of being misunderstood and challenged. Yet, at the same time, very few people would disagree with the Dalai Lama that:

> Much human suffering stems from our destructive emotions, as hatred breeds violence or craving fuels addiction. One of our most basic responsibilities as caring people is to alleviate the human costs of such out-of-control emotions (Goleman 2003, p. xiii).

The opening words of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities* (Dickens 1970 edn) – and metaphor for the background to the novel about events at the time of the French Revolution – are as relevant today as they were in the nineteenth century. Dickens observes:

> It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us…(p. 1).

Such sentiments could be legitimately voiced about any period of human history. Alongside the wondrous human achievements in science, art and culture, alongside the joy and beauty of the world, we have the spectacle of war, poverty, ignorance,

racism, the pollution of the earth and destruction of plants and animals, and immense cruelty, despair and misery which seems to know no bounds. Alongside the life and work of Gandhi and Martin Luther King we have the experience of the Nazi concentration camps described by Levi (1988a) in such horrific detail. The immense power of the internet stands as a contemporary reminder of this schizophrenia. Its potential for expanding knowledge, cementing relationships, publicising and assisting charitable causes and generally creating positive networks of global communication is limitless. Yet the experience is that something over 90% of the internet is used negatively and in grotesque ways: to sell pornography, to spread fundamentalist political and religious propaganda and to further the interests of selfish capitalism.

All the evidence suggests that these dark and negative sides of the human condition are to be located in the activity of the destructive emotions or 'mental afflictions' (Goleman 2003, p. 102) such as attachment or craving, anger, hatred, hostility, pride, ignorance and delusion. How can education address these problems? It will be suggested that the MBT practices mentioned in Chaps. 4 and 5 can be effectively utilised in 'training emotional balance' (Siegel 2007, p. 212). At this stage, however, it would be useful to examine what philosophy of education has to teach us about education is this sphere.

Critiques of the false dualism of reason and passion were outlined earlier. As Pitcher (1972) argues, the traditional view of the emotions – viewing them as simple sensations – was unable to account for the mechanism by which a mere sensation could have an object. After all, my fear of a situation may indeed produce the sensation of tightness in the abdomen or shortness of breath, but how is all this linked to the object of something which is seen as threatening or dangerous to me? However, even if, as it has to be, the traditional view is modified to include acts of cognition, it is still necessary to show how an emotion can be reasonable or unreasonable. Hume's commitment to the view that emotions were really subject to the passions or affections led him to a limited view of the role of rationality in this sphere. As he observed:

> Tis only in two senses, that any affection can be call'd unreasonable. First, when a passion, such as hope or fear…is founded on the supposition of the existence of objects, which really do not exist. Secondly, when in exerting any passion in action, we chuse means insufficient for the design'd end, and deceive ourselves in our judgment of causes and effects (Hume 1966 edn, Vol. II, p. 416).

Pitcher, however, suggests that the application of reason stretches far wider than this; we can, for example, imagine all kinds of unreasonable fears – neurotic, superstitious, baseless, excessive and so on – in addition to Hume's examples. What is required is to see the cognitions in emotion states as forms of 'positive and negative evaluations' (Pitcher 1972, p. 375) which need to be viewed within the complete framework within which emotions are situated. Instead of searching in vain for some essential essence of emotions as the traditional view does, Pitcher argues that:

> If we look at the total situations in which emotion words are applicable, the characteristic features of these situations show with abundant clarity how emotions can have objects and how they can be reasonable or unreasonable (p. 387).

Griffiths (1984) similarly argues that 'feelings and perceptions depend on each other', moreover since

> feelings and emotions are necessarily involved in being rational, being dispassionate does not entail an absence of passion, or being unemotional an absence of human feelings or emotions (p. 226).

Applying the rationalist-cognitive conception of emotions to education, Peters (1972), establishes the theoretical foundations by arguing that what is distinctive about our standard selection of emotion states is 'the connexion between emotions and the class of cognitions that are conveniently called appraisals'. Such appraisals, like Pitcher's 'evaluations', are 'constituted by seeing situations under aspects which are agreeable or disagreeable, beneficial or harmful in a variety of dimensions' (p. 467). Thus, for instance, pride incorporates the idea that we are responsible for achieving something of merit, jealousy that we perceive an item we desire and do not possess, shame the awareness that we have fallen short of some evaluative or moral standard, and so on.

A further interesting feature noticed by Peters – and also present in Goleman's account of the origin of emotions referred to at the beginning of the chapter – is that there is an overlap between the concepts of 'motive' and 'emotion'. Motives are then linked with actions, overt behaviour, and emotions with passivity, the undergoing of certain subjective experiences. The same concept, say jealousy, might be either motivational or passive. This idea is elaborated with the observation that:

> If a person's motive for making damaging remarks about a colleague is jealousy, then he must see him as achieving, or likely to achieve, something to which he thinks he has a right, and he must act in the light of this view of his behaviour. We talk about jealousy as an emotion, on the other hand, when a person is subject to feelings that come over him when he views his colleague's behaviour in a certain light (p. 469).

Hatred, anger, and fear, therefore, can be connected with motives – such as attacking, retaliating, running way – or with the more passive experience of being perturbed, upset, excited, distressed, drained, and so on. The apparent passivity of emotions – as, for example, when we speak of being overcome by jealousy, in the throes of anger, ecstatic in love – does not imply, however, that such states cannot function as motivators or spurs to action. After all, when we are inspired by compassion or benevolence we tend to pursue certain courses of action which are radically different from behaviour stemming from greed, anger and hatred. This is what White (1984) is getting at in observing that 'emotions and motives do not fall under two mutually exclusive categories' and 'emotions can be and often are motives' (p. 235). Connections between feelings and actions are crucial in considering learning in this sphere, and central to the notion of tackling destructive emotions through mindfulness training.

Almost all populist accounts of Buddhist philosophy and practice deal, at some stage, with the impact of the emotions on the human condition. This is, after all, at the core of the Buddhist theory of mind, particularly our constant struggle to escape suffering by means of sensory diversion. Such a quest, as observed in Chap. 3, inevitably leads to various forms of emotional turmoil, culminating in the vicious cycle whereby our 'valences of attachment' – known as the three poisons of 'greed, hate

and delusion' (Brazier 2003) – come to dominate our relationship to the world and others. The mindful practices described in Chap. 4 are designed to help us out of this quagmire and, as part of the process, the primary emotions have pride of place.

The links between mindful practices and mindful living have already been examined. As Salzberg and Goldstein (2001) note, the 'different emotions that arise in sitting practice, in walking meditation, in the eating meditation – we want to bring mindful awareness to all of these and…to the emotions we experience in the world every day' (p. 134). The process involves recognition (noting and labelling of emotions as they arise), acceptance (not avoiding or withdrawing from the feelings) and non-identification which involves de-coupling from them via non-reactive reflection which impersonally observes the coming and going, arising and passing away of all our mental states. Hahn (2001) offers a forceful method for dealing with powerful and often stressful emotions such as anger using the analogy of parenting. As he observes:

> Anger is like a howling baby, suffering and crying. The baby needs his mother to embrace him. You are the mother for your baby, your anger. The moment you begin to practice breathing mindfully in and out, you have the energy of a mother to cradle and embrace the baby. Just be embracing your anger, just breathing in and breathing out, that is good enough. The baby will feel relief right away (p. 28).

Hanh – in a novel and persuasively poetic way – is reminding us that the cardinal Buddhist virtues of kindness and compassion need to be an integral part of the mindful reflection on our emotions.

Taking the rational-cognitive perspective, however, the process seems to be far less important than the content of an education of the emotions, and the analysis of this dominates and informs all the recommendations for practice. Peters talks about the 'development of appropriate appraisals' (Peters 1972, pp. 474–478) in this sphere which involves:

> *The justification of appraisals* – this can take the form of moral justification – do the appraisals satisfy the criteria of respect for persons and the needs and interests of others – or epistemological justification in terms of whether judgments satisfy standard tests for truth and objectivity.
>
> *Conceptual pre-requisites* – there is much groundwork to be done here in introducing people to the language and concepts of emotion, and this itself presupposes learning about the range and diversity of human feelings.
>
> *False or irrelevant beliefs* – many emotional judgments presuppose ordinary empirical ones, and these are subject to standard public scrutiny. For instance, emotional responses of a racist or sexist nature are often based on false beliefs; these can be mediated by attention to psychological and sociological data.
>
> *Recognition of emotions* – the ability to discern and understand our own and others' emotional states is not innate; it needs to be learned and a range of material from history, art and literature can be used to stimulate this imaginative capacity.
>
> *Emotional sincerity* – a concern for truth and respect for others should lead us to an openness and honesty about emotions; again the cultivation of such dispositions is a legitimate goal of educators.

All of this is directed mainly towards the active, motivational aspect of emotions; in Spinoza's terms, liberating the mind from 'confused passions' to bring about the

active states based upon 'adequate ideas'. But what of the passivity of states, our tendencies to be overtaken by emotions? In this area, Peters talks about the 'control and canalization of passivity' and recommends a number of ways in which we may try to help students to avoid 'primitive and wild types of appraisal that warp and cloud perception and judgment and aid and abet self-deception and insincerity' (Peters 1972, p. 479). This involves developing 'settled dispositions to act in certain ways' which ensure that emotions are tempered by standards of truth and morality, and ensuring that the expression of emotions – the 'discharge of passivity' through speech and symbolic gesture – is neither excessive nor unduly circumscribed.

This rational-cognitive approach to the education of the emotions is a beginning, but it is by no means the last word on these issues. However, as Austin (1970) once remarked about the role of linguistic analysis in philosophy, it may not be the last word but it is the first word. Indeed, Peters decries the dearth of research in the field and is scathing about the fact that, as teachers, we are destined 'to continue in our abysmal ignorance, dealing with the minds of our children in a haphazard way that would not be tolerated by those who deal with their bodies' (Peters 1972, p. 482). This is a very important concession and leads me to turn to two particular gaps in the rational-cognitive accounts which need to be addressed.

First, there is the silence on methods. Much of the above concerned with appropriate emotional appraisals and the discharge of passivity is about the content of the curriculum in this field. Peters does mention the use of drama and literature – approaches also investigated in depth by Hepburn (1972), Valett (1974), Lang (1998), and Weare (2004) – but key questions need to be answered about how teachers can effectively plan, deliver and support learning in this important area. Kristjansson (2001) is highly critical of cognitive theories which outline the philosophical/theoretical aspects of educating the emotions without mentioning practice. It is, after all, as Aristotle says, actual practice that improves the states of people's souls rather than merely taking 'refuge in arguments, thinking that they are doing philosophy' (p. 14).

Kristjannsson goes on to explore a number of potentially valuable forms of practice – including different styles of upbringing, the notion of teachers as role models for the emotions and the value of Lipman's philosophy for children approach – and agrees with Goleman that, rather than being taught as a separate subject, it would be more effective to 'blend lessons on emotions with the subjects already taught' since emotions are, after all, an integral part of human pursuits, and to study life is, in many ways, to study people's emotions, including one's own (2001, p. 12).

Some of these approaches will be considered in more detail in the following chapter on the affective domain. For now it is worth noting the second weakness of the rational-cognitive approach – also a methodological matter – that is, its failure to discern and prescribe ways in which students can be helped to deal with powerful and destructive emotions (Hart 2007). It is one thing to talk about developing appropriate appraisals and canalising passivity in the emotions, quite another to determine practical ways of preventing students from becoming 'enslaved by passion' and subject to the 'destructive states' of 'anger, craving and delusion', the 'three poisons of the Buddhist tradition' (Goleman 2003, pp. 198, 215). The evidence suggests there are proven ways

of developing the 'compassionate mind' (Gilbert 2009), and the work of Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) in American schools and colleges has demonstrated the immense value of benefit to teachers and students of 'tapping into the potential of mindfulness' through learning 'to pay attention to the experience of paying attention' (p. xii).

6.5 Mindfulness, Emotion and Learning

How can mindfulness strategies contribute to the avoidance of destructive states and the enhancement of positive emotional learning? The first thing to say in answer to this question is that there is plenty of evidence that MB strategies are effective in this area, and that the data of neuroscience reinforce this finding. It is possible to build on the predominantly rational-cognitive approach outlined in the previous section by utilising some of the practices and applications described in Chaps. 4 and 5.

Davidson et al. (2003) have undertaken an intensive investigation of the impact of mindfulness on emotional regulation. This work makes use of the concept of 'affective style' to explain how mindfulness training can change neural functioning in ways which help us to be more open, flexible and non-reactive in our responses to events and situations which trigger emotions. Davidson (2000) defines affective style as the:

> consistent individual responses to emotional reactivity and regulation…It is a phrase that is meant to capture a broad array of processes that either singly or in combination modulate an individual's response to emotional challenges, dispositional mood, and affect-relevant cognitive processes (p. 1196).

Non-reactivity is cultivated through the non-judgmental bare attention which is the core of mindfulness practice. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the idea is to break free from both the rumination on difficult or painful mental experiences and/or the withdrawal from or avoidance of such experience. Instead, we turn towards whatever thoughts or feelings we have with openness, curiosity and compassion. Another way of expressing this is to say that we need to switch off the automatic pilot and exercise careful manual control of our mental life if we wish to regulate emotions.

In terms of brain functioning, Siegel (2007) observes that we create non-reactivity by 'developing the circuits in the brain that enable the lower affect-generating circuits to be regulated by the higher modulating ones…Mindful awareness may directly influence non-reactivity by altering the connections between prefrontal cortex and limbic zones' (pp. 211–212). Another key feature of mindfulness training is to reinforce all these positive effects to produce long-term 'resilience' of emotional states. Davidson (2000) states that:

> One of the key components of affective style is the capacity to regulate negative emotion and specifically to decrease the duration of negative affect once it arises…We have defined resilience as the maintenance of high levels of positive affect and well-being in the face of adversity (pp. 1198, 1207).

Siegel's (2007) work has shown that such 'resilience can be learned through experience' (p. 215), and he picks out the key features of MBT strategies – approaching rather than avoiding difficult states, replacing rumination with observation based on curiosity and kindness, and the reflection on thoughts and feelings using notation and labelling (Siegel 2007, pp. 216–225) – as ways of establishing calm and stability by integrating left and right hemispheres of the brain. It was mentioned at the end of Chap. 4 that brain scans of meditators demonstrated movement towards the left prefrontal lobe (associated with positive affective states and approach behaviour) and away from the right (which is thought to mediate distress and uncomfortable emotions).

Given that left brain is connected with language and logic and right brain with emotion modulation, Siegel's (2007) work attempts to show how reflective thinking in mindfulness could produce the desired neural integration and coherence. A crucial element seemed to be in the use of labels to describe internal emotional states in mindful practice; the left-right zones seemed to be homologous such that activation in one linked with inhibition in another. The idea is that 'language use in the left might dampen emotional arousal in the right'; the practical point is that 'non-reactivity and emotional balance go hand-in-hand with the facet of labelling and describing internal states'. His conclusion is that:

> These experiences of mental notation teach us the skill of labeling to help balance our minds, not constrain them with top-down prisons. We learn that what before felt like an unchangeable and distressful feeling can now be observed and noted and we can come back to equilibrium more readily. This is the essence of a resilient affective style (pp. 226–227).

Although all of this may seem a long way from the rational-cognitive approach to educating the emotions there are many overlaps between the philosophical and neurological approaches. Both are concerned with cultivating emotional balance, stability and our resilience in dealing with afflictive states, and both stress the importance of active learning in this process. In fact, with education specifically in mind Siegel brings all the current findings together and goes on to discuss what he calls 'the fourth R' (Siegel 2007, pp. 259ff), the use of reflective thinking in developing emotional wisdom. This, along with some of the other perspectives explored, will inform the discussion of the affective domain in the next chapter.

6.6 Conclusion

This chapter has explored philosophical accounts of the nature of the emotions, investigating the limitations of traditional views in which reason is opposed to passion. Perspectives from evolutionary biology were utilised to throw additional light on the origin and function of emotions. The rational-cognitive perspective highlights the role of appraisals and judgments in the emotions and picks out ways in which emotional states can be deemed to be reasonable or unreasonable. Such a

perspective allows for the role of learning in the sphere of emotions, and accounts of the possible content of such an educational programme offered by philosophers of education were subjected to critical analysis. Finally, all this was linked to mindfulness practice and the findings of neuroscience. The key themes that emerged from this examination will guide the discussion of the affective domain of education in the next chapter.

Chapter 7
The Affective Domain of Education

7.1 Perspectives on Affective Education

In *The Principles of Psychology* written in 1890, William James observed that:

> The faculty of voluntarily bringing back a wandering attention, over and over again, is the very root of judgment, character and will…An education which should improve this faculty would be the education par excellence. But it is easier to define this ideal than to give practical directions for bringing it about (1981 edn, p. 401).

James' message is especially pertinent to discussions of the affective domain since, first, it reminds us that education is not just about knowledge and facts but also about general mental abilities and, second, that for any process to satisfy the criteria of education it should include the cultivation of qualities and processes other than intellectual ones. What James called 'judgment, character, and will' might now be taken to include the attention to emotions, values and interests which comes under general umbrella of affective education.

Affective education is defined by Lang (1998) as a:

> significant dimension of the educational process which is concerned with the feelings, beliefs, attitudes and emotions of students, with their interpersonal relationships and social skills. This dimension is likely to involve a concern for their moral, spiritual and values development (p. 4)

This is an all-encompassing perspective which extends somewhat beyond my main concern with the application of mindfulness to the education of the emotions. However, a concern with emotions – with what Palmer (1998) describes as a movement away from objectivism of the intellect towards attention to the subjective and intuitive aspects of teaching and learning – necessarily brings with it the moral, social and spiritual features mentioned by Lang. Similar connections with attitudes, beliefs and values were noted in the investigation of the affective domain by Valett (1974) and Weare (2004, 2010).

Lang's comprehensive survey of affective education in 16 European countries provided a wealth of valuable material for practitioners in the field. Two other key

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elements are worth noting. First, it is important to see the affective dimension operating at all levels – the individual student, the group or cohort and the institution – in order to ensure consistency and coherence of application. Concern for the emotional stability of students at the level of individual classes would be of little use in a school or college characterised by an authoritarian ethos which did not value student autonomy and self-worth. Secondly, a proper concern with affective education 'involves both the provision of support and guidance for students' in addition to a recognition 'that the affective and cognitive dimensions of education are interrelated' (Lang 1998, p. 5).

What is the current state of affective education? Historically, no doubt partly a result of the fact that Western society 'has traditionally been frightened of emotion' (Weare 2004, p.ix), it seems always to have had a sort of 'Cinderella' status very similar to that occupied by vocational education and training (VET). The role of schools and colleges in preparing students for the world of work has always, at least on the surface, been accorded the highest priority, yet in reality vocational studies have perennially occupied a second-class position, inferior in terms of funding and public esteem, to its academic counterpart (Ainley 1999; Hyland 1999, 2002a). The second-class status of VET remains the case in Britain today in spite of two decades of reform and innovation in a period when the economic aims of education have had pride of place (Hyland and Winch 2007).

The uneven and differential positions of vocational/academic pursuits have striking parallels in the generally undervalued and neglected role accorded to affective as against cognitive or mainstream academic/intellectual pursuits. Moreover, the origins of this differential status can be discerned in the very same developments – the Greek conception of liberal education which informed the establishment of compulsory education systems in Britain and, to a lesser extent, in Europe (Green 1990) – responsible for the so-called vocational/academic divide.

Schofield (1972) locates the original source of these divisions in the emergence of the idea of a liberal education in Ancient Greece. This form of education came to be associated with 'freeing the mind from error' in Plato's distinction between 'genuine' knowledge (based on the rational reflection of logic and mathematics) and mere 'opinion', that is, applied knowledge used for specific purposes (pp. 151–152).

The former conception, disinterested and objective knowledge, came to be thought of as superior and intrinsically valuable, whereas the latter, instrumental or applied knowledge, came to be associated with more practical and less valued vocational pursuits (Lewis 1991).

Moreover, such hierarchical divisions were from the outset inextricably linked to social class stratification and an axiology of relative values about educational activities. In the *Republic*, the relative value accorded to the 'Forms' of knowledge by Plato are fully realised in the various kinds of education provided for rulers, guardians and workers in the ideal state (in addition to the distinctions between 'banausic' knowledge, suited to slaves, and knowledge worthy of free citizens). The 'foundation myth' of the ideal state suggests that God 'added gold to the composition of those of you who are qualified to be rulers…he put silver in the auxiliaries, and iron and bronze in the farmers and the rest' (1965 edn, p. 160). Similarly, in

The Politics Aristotle (1962 edn) offers an account of rival educational aims and purposes – essentially valuing disinterested theory above applied practice – which is uncannily similar to the vocational/academic (technical/liberal) discourse which has characterised educational debates since the establishment of state schooling in Britain in the nineteenth century.

Once such hierarchical and normative distinctions had been made by thinkers it was almost inevitable that they should come to be connected – through formal systems of education – to social stratification and political power. As Schofield (1972) explains:

> The passing of time merely emphasised the distinctions which Plato made. Studies which were valuable in themselves, especially the Classics, became associated with the privileged class or elite in society. They were directly related to the concept of a courtier, a gentleman, a man of affairs, and later the public schools. Liberal education always carried with it a suggestion of privilege and privileged position, of not needing to work for one's living (pp. 151–2).

The linking of such ideals to classical studies and the public school/university elite in nineteenth century Britain (which produced the politically powerful who were to define mass compulsory schooling after 1870) served to bring about a class-dominated, bifurcated curriculum – in which vocational studies were always subordinate to academic pursuits – which bedevils British education to this day. Educational debate at the time was distorted by such irrational prejudice which, as Skilbeck et al. (1994) put it, was 'compounded by anti-democratic sentiments and Arcadian ideals' (p. 160) which, throughout the twentieth century, were to stand in the way of the development of a national, unified system of education in which vocational studies and the preparation for working life had its rightful and proper place.

What seems to underpin the hierarchical divisions in this sphere is not so much the *nature* of knowledge in terms of arts, sciences or disciplines but whether it is described and viewed as intellectual or theoretical as opposed to being applied or productive. Now, although such epistemological distinctions are challenged by critics who seek to break down the general/vocational studies dichotomy, there can be little doubt that their centrality in Ancient Greek philosophy had played a major part in reinforcing such dualisms in educational systems. In Plato's scheme of education outlined in the *Republic*, 'dialectic' (philosophy) is the 'crown of the educational process' (Nettleship 1935, p. 133) since it leads us to a knowledge of the 'Forms' which represent the one source of unchanging, eternal truths. Similarly, for Aristotle, practical knowledge was inferior to theoretical knowledge because it involved 'choice among relative goods' whereas theoretical knowledge was linked to 'certainty' (Hickman 1990, pp. 107–108); productive knowledge was even more inferior because it was linked to the 'making of things out of contingent matter' (Hickman 1990, p. 108).

The contingency of the values underpinning relationships between knowledge and production may be elaborated and explained in terms of more fundamental connections between educational values and genetic/biological traits identified in Pinker's (1997) work in cognitive psychology. He begins by making the interesting observation that the 'more biologically frivolous and vain the activity, the more

people exalt it. Art, literature, music, wit, religion and philosophy are thought to be not just pleasurable but noble'. Pinker then goes on (clearly mischievously) to ask 'Why do we pursue the trivial and futile and experience them as sublime?' (p. 521). There is an open admission that such a question may be 'horribly philistine' and Pinker is well aware that there are ways of assigning values to activities outside the perspective of evolutionary biology.

However, although it is always necessary to distinguish biology from culture, there are considerable insights to be derived from considering Pinker's challenging arguments. Many of the activities which humans consider to be so intrinsically valuable and profound are, in biological terms, 'non-adaptive by-products' of the consequences of having a mind which, in turn, is the result of the impact of natural selection upon DNA molecules. Our most prized possessions – art, music and philosophy – can thus, as Dawkins (1991) puts it, be explained in terms of the 'blind watchmaker' of natural selection which has 'no purpose in mind…no vision, no foresight, no sight at all' (p. 5). Although the mind, on Pinker's account, is primarily 'driven by goal states that served biological fitness in ancestral environments, such as food, sex, safety, parenthood, friendship, status and knowledge. That toolbox can be used to assemble Sunday afternoon projects of dubious adaptive value'. This perspective is explained in terms of the fact that:

> Some parts of the mind register the attainment of increments of fitness by giving us a sensation of pleasure. Other parts use a knowledge of cause and effect to bring about goals. Put them together and you get a mind that rises to a biologically pointless challenge: figuring out how to get at the pleasure circuits of the brain and deliver little jolts of enjoyment without the inconvenience of wringing bona fide fitness increments from the harsh world (Pinker 1997, p. 524).

Of course, once the mind has created cultural and scientific objects these come to have a life of their own, and Pinker would not deny that their existence and justification can then be found outside of human biology. What this perspective does, however, is provide us with an alternative explanation of why certain educational pursuits (typically thought of as liberal or academic) come to be prized more highly than others (labelled vocational studies) connected with work and survival.

Applying all this to the current state of affective education we can see the old divisions and dichotomies at work. Dewey (1966 edn) codified and constantly challenged this curriculum divide in his attempts to break down the 'antithesis of vocational and cultural education' based in the false oppositions of 'labour and leisure, theory and practice, body and mind' (p. 306). Affective education, with its links to the subjective 'soft' sphere of emotions, feelings and values, has, arguably, always been considered inferior to the 'hard' objective domain of intellectual/academic activity. Best (1998) acknowledges this in his observation that the pervasive influence of Enlightenment culture combined with the rise of science and technology has led to a 'relative neglect of the emotions in the mainstream of UK schooling' (p. 80). Moreover, such a neglect characterises much of schooling in recent times in both the United States (Valett 1974; Hart 2007) and Europe. Best (1998) is astonished by this lack of attention to the affective, especially 'given that our motivations to act are so

often (always?) in the realm of feelings, sentiments or passions rather than in the cold, clinical exercise of the intellect' (p. 80).

It is this failure to understand the importance of the emotions in human affairs which lies behind, for instance, Ecclestone and Hayes' (2009) critique of an education designed to 'promote a life focussed on the self and self-fulfillment rather than with understanding and changing the world' (p. 164). As emphasised in earlier chapters, we cannot understand or change the world until we understand and change ourselves, and the inability to see the importance of emotions in human life can only lead to dangerously one-sided and unbalanced views of the educational task. If young people are to understand and change the world, they will need to be introduced to the role played by human instincts, needs, values and feelings, and this is the subject matter of the affective domain. Learning concerned only with cognitive/intellectual objectives will not produce either fully educated or well-balanced citizens (Brighouse 2006). In this respect, educators need to be guided by Pascal rather than Descartes when it comes to the relationship between reason and passion.

7.2 Taxonomy of Educational Domains

The concept of different domains of education emerged initially in the work of Bloom et al. (1956) and Krathwohl et al. (1964) in which a taxonomy of educational objectives was proposed in terms of three major domains: the cognitive, the affective and the psychomotor areas of development. Valett (1974) suggests that these domains can be traced back to the classical Grecian emphasis on viewing man (sic) as an integration of mental, physical and spiritual abilities and potentialities. Such a view has been largely substantiated by the findings of developmental psychology, and the formulation of psychomotor, cognitive and affective objectives of education has become widely accepted (p. 12).

He elaborates this point by initially offering summaries of each of these domains (Valett 1974, pp. 12–16):

Cognitive – Conceptual and Language Skills – Symbolic Development (thinking, verbal expression, conscious awareness). During this stage students learn to manipulate symbols to control the environment; reality comes to be represented through pictures, words and numbers.

Affective – Social and Personal Skills – Emotive Development (personal transcendence, self identification and expression, feeling and intuiting). This stage is characterised by the awareness of feelings and emotions and their expressions in ever refined interests, attitudes, beliefs and value orientations

Psychomotor – Perceptual, Sensory and Cross Motor Skills – Motor Development (concrete relationships, sensory exploration, unconscious stimulation). Characterised by the struggle to develop body movement and control of one's body in a given environment.

The taxonomies of objectives originally codified by Bloom et al. and Krathwohl et al. are founded on behaviourist assumptions underpinned by the 'major philosophical premise…that the goal of instruction is to maximise the efficiency with which all students achieve specified objectives' (Kibler et al. 1970, p. 2). This results in a 'criterion-referenced' system (Kibler et al. 1970, p. 25) of assessment in which student achievement is evaluated against pre-determined standards in particular areas of learning rather than a 'norm-referenced' system which measures student achievement against their peers (as, for instance, in literacy/numeracy tests and national examination scores).

In spite of the enduring popularity of this approach to learning and assessment (most recently in the global adoption of competence-based strategies; Hyland 1994, 2008), it has been subjected to widespread criticism, mainly on the grounds that it marginalises the process of learning and fails to account for differential abilities (Rowntree 1977; Curzon 2004). These key shortcomings will be discussed later but at this stage it would be useful to examine the domain descriptions originally specified by Bloom and Krathwohl. The majority of objectives in the field of education could, according to the curriculum designers, be incorporated into the cognitive domain, the main features of which were set out as follows (Bloom et al. 1956, pp. 186–193):

Cognitive domain

1. *Knowledge* – specifics, facts, terminology, conventions, categories, criteria, methodology, principles, theories, etc.
2. *Comprehension* – translation, interpretation, extrapolation, etc.
3. *Application* – general ideas, rules of procedure, abstraction, etc.
4. *Analysis* – elements, relationships, organising principles, forms, patterns, general techniques, etc.
5. *Synthesis* – production of communication, plans, classification of abstract relations, formulation of hypotheses, mathematical generalisations, etc.
6. *Evaluation* – judgments in terms of internal evidence, judgments in terms of external criteria, etc.

Turning to the psychomotor domain, the key elements are outlined by (Kibler et al. 1970, pp. 67–75) as follows:

Psychomotor domain

1. *Gross Bodily Movements* – throwing, catching, running, swimming, dancing, gymnastics, etc.
2. *Finely Coordinated Movements* – hand-finger movements, hand-eye coordination, hand-eye-foot movements, etc.
3. *Non-verbal Communication* – facial expressions, gestures, body language, etc.
4. *Speech Behaviours* – sound production, sound-word formation, sound projection, sound-gesture coordination, etc.

Finally the third domain, the affective domain 'contains behaviours and objectives which have some emotional overtone…likes and dislikes, attitudes, values and

beliefs' (Kibler et al. 1970, p. 56). The key elements are listed by (Krathwohl et al. 1964, pp. 176–185) as follows:

Affective domain

1. *Receiving (attending)* – awareness, willingness to receive, control and selection of attention, etc.
2. *Responding* – acquiescence of response, willingness, satisfaction in response, etc.
3. *Valuing* – acceptance of a value, preference for a value, commitment to a value, etc.
4. *Organisation* – conceptualisation of a value, organization of a value system, formulation of a philosophy of life, etc.
5. *Characterisation by a Value Set or Value Complex* – generalised set of internally consistent values, openness to revision of judgments, development of a value system which encompasses all aspects of life, etc.

7.3 Domains of Education: A Critique

One of the main reasons for outlining the aforementioned domains is that – notwithstanding all the weaknesses and shortcomings – they represent one of the first attempts to map educational objectives, especially affective ones, in a systematic and detailed way. Moreover, in spite of the limitations and the fact that the systems have been around for such a long time, Bloom's classification framework is still consistently referred to in standard educational texts for teachers, students and trainees (e.g. Cotton 1995; Curzon 2004; Fawbert 2008). However, it needs to be noted that, once the three domains have been mentioned, the affective and psychomotor areas are quickly forgotten as the cognitive domain is typically accorded pride of place.

The appeal of such criterion-referenced techniques seems to be the superficial convenience of providing an apparently objective framework for planning and assessing educational objectives. This is certainly what was claimed by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ) in publicising the criterion-referenced 'standards' on which National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) were based. NVQs were introduced in the UK in the 1980s to provide a national uniform system of employment standards linked to job competences which would be independent of courses and training programmes (Jessup 1991). Although the system has had only a very limited success in its original home (Hyland 1997, 2008; Wolf Report 2011), the competence-based education and training (CBET) system on which it is based has been influential around the world (Arguelles and Gonczi 2000), thanks largely to its apparent objectivity in setting out assessment outcomes. Since the taxonomies of Bloom and Krathwohl are based on similar behaviourist foundations, it would be worth examining the weaknesses of this strategy before offering a more positive account of the affective domain.

The chief influences of behaviourist ideas on educational theory and practice have been in the use of behaviour modification techniques and in outcome-based curricula (as in the Bloom and Krathwohl classifications outlined earlier) which reformulate educational courses in terms of assessable and measurable behavioural objectives. Broad behavioural approaches have been effectively employed in the field of classroom management (Wheldall and Merrett 1984) and in the area of special educational needs (Galloway 1985). As long as such techniqiues are regarded, as Fontana (1984) suggests, as a 'useful tool' and not the 'total extent of knowledge' (p. 195) then such applications may be educationally justifiable, particularly in the case of the more recent 'cognitive behaviourist' formulations which attempt to provide a 'more coherent and humane analysis of behaviour' (Blackman 1984, p. 12). In this sense we can justify the strategies outlined in Chap. 5 which connect CBT and mindfulness for the specific purpose of encouraging new learning habits to enhance mental well-being.

However, problems may arise if behaviour modification neglects its limitations and strays too far from an educational role. In such cases there is a body of work within philosophy of education which points to the logical inconsistencies in behaviourist theory, primarily, the failure to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary action and a generally impoverished conception of human agency (Burwood and Brady 1984). Dearden (1984) provides perhaps the clearest account of these shortcomings and points to the 'absurd consequence of ignoring the understanding which accompanies and indeed importantly constitutes human behaviour' (p. 140). Human learning is unintelligible without reference to the context of learning and to the development of understanding, and this focuses attention on aspects of cognition and the nature of the learning process.

Dearden argues that 'what someone is doing and why he (sic) is doing it is unintelligible without reference to certain of his beliefs, desires, intentions, experiences, imaginings, sentiments, or in general his understanding'. In so far as behaviourism is silent on these aspects of thought, feeling and understanding it is, therefore, inadequate as an educational theory and, thus, a 'theory of cognitive learning' (Dearden 1984, p. 142) is required for processes to be genuinely educational. Summarising recent philosophical critiques in this field, Chappell (2005) concludes that 'behaviourism has been fairly thoroughly refuted, and fairly widely abandoned' (p. 237).

Another serious failing of the sort of behaviourism which informs both CBET and the taxonomies is the misleading perspective on knowledge and understanding which it engenders. Gribble (1969) has criticised all such attempts to subdivide knowledge in this way and, in particular, has expressed serious doubts about Bloom's postulated hierarchical progression from 'knowledge of facts' to 'knowledge of principles'. For Gribble, 'knowing something involves judging that something is so, and judgment is a complex mental operation' (p. 58). Genuine knowledge cannot be equated with the passive storing of facts or information; even a knowledge of simple propositions involves an awareness of differences between truth and falsehood, facts and values, and appeals to evidential criteria. Thus, knowing that London is the capital of England is not reducible to the performance of saying "London" whenever the question "What is the capital of England?" is asked, but involves an array of interdependent and auxiliary items of knowledge, understanding and conceptual

structures (Gribble 1969, p. 57). Wilson (1972a, b) offers a similar comment in criticising those behaviourist educators who seem to be 'bewitched with the common idea that knowledge is like a physical object which can be broken down or built up into a hierarchy of component parts' (p. 106).

7.4 Outlines for an Affective Education

Although we can learn something from the early attempts by Bloom and Krathwohl to map the affective domain, it seems that the behaviourist foundations are incompatible with the aims of affective education. In terms of curriculum models, Bloom's taxonomy would be ideally realised through the instrumentalist output model originally designed by Tyler (1949). As Kelly's (2004) comprehensive review of curriculum models concludes, such behaviourist-inspired objectives approaches to planning and delivery may be criticised 'as being based not only on an adequate and unacceptable model of humanity and human learning but also on an equally unsatisfactory concept of education' (p. 65). Those who advocate such strategies:

> regard education as a matter of changing behaviour but they do not accept responsibility for questions about what kinds of behaviour education should be concerned to promote…Thus this approach deliberately sidesteps the most difficult and intractable problem that faces curriculum planners – that of deciding what kinds of activity shall be deemed to be educational (Kelly 2004, p. 66).

If we are concerned with defining educational practice in terms of the basic values linked with the concept of education (whether generalist or specifically evaluative) discussed in Chap. 2, we will need to look beyond instrumentalist models to a 'process and development' perspective which is informed by the idea that:

> our educational purposes should be framed in terms of the processes we regard education as able, and concerned, to promote…it recognises the necessity of setting out one's basic ideological position from the outset…the approach begins from a view of society as democratic, of human beings as individuals entitled within such a society to freedom and equality of education as to be designed and planned in such a way as to prepare and empower such individuals for active and productive life within a democratic social context (Kelly 2004, p. 77).

Educational and curriculum planning can never be value-free and it is misleading to – as the behavioural objectives models attempt to do – either assume a consensus on values or hide behind a spurious value neutrality by (as in the Bloom or CBET strategies) specifying disembodied objectives or competence outcomes. The values which underpin my thesis about the need to re-invigorate the affective dimension of education through mindfulness approaches have already been set out. More will be said about general educational aims and the justification of underpinning values in the final chapter. At this stage, I intend to establish the general outlines of an affective education which can embody the basic values whilst satisfying the need for clarity and coherence of planning, teaching/learning and assessment requirements (methods and content will be examined in greater depth in the next chapter).

We can usefully establish the broad structure of the affective domain by considering the range of basic and fundamental human needs identified originally

by Maslow. In developing a theory of motivation, Maslow (1943) identified three categories of human needs (pp. 374–376):

Personal – Physiological (hunger, thirst), safety and security
Social – Love and belonging, self-esteem
Intellectual – Self-actualisation, understanding and knowledge

The idea is that human motivation can be explained in terms of the satisfaction of such basic needs. It is a hierarchical progression in the sense that the 'higher' needs involving human creativity and curiosity do not come into operation until the more basic organic needs for survival, safety and belonging are satisfied.

Valett (1974) makes use of the notion of human needs in developing the first stage of his five stage model of affective learning designed to track students from the earliest years through childhood, adolescence and maturity. The stages below make use of Valett's framework (pp. 47–51) but include my own modifications in the light of the foundations established in the earlier chapters:

Stage One: Understanding basic human needs
The guiding principle is to enable learners to understand our basic needs and the ways in which we attempt to satisfy them. Topics would cover:

Physical security – food, shelter, clothing, health
Love – attention, friendship, empathy, family life
Creative expression – exploration, music, art, dance
Knowledge – discovering, thinking, explaining
Social values – helping others, working and playing in harmony
Self-worth – independence, dignity and respect, confidence, personal strengths and weaknesses

Stage Two: Expressing human feelings
This stage would seek practical ways of achieving the education of the emotion elements discussed in the last chapter. This would cover:

Basic feelings – anger, hatred, fear, love, despair, joy, hope, etc.
Critical emotional concerns – birth, death, loneliness, war and peace, work and unemployment, suffering, sadness and happiness

Stage Three: Self-awareness and control
Discussions of personal identity and living with others in communities and society would form the subject matter of this stage. Ways of being together at home, in schools, colleges and workplaces would be topics for attention, along with the discussion of conflict, aggression, destructive emotions and disharmony in all spheres of life. Relevant topics would include:

Self-consciousness – personal identity, how do we know ourselves, sensory and cognitive awareness connected with self

Awareness of others – sensitivity to others' needs, competition and cooperation in life, work and community
Problems of selfhood – aggression, jealousy, fighting, dishonesty, cruelty, harming, kindness, awareness of our own and others' faults

Stage Four: Awareness of human values
The investigation of where values come from and what role they play in all aspects of life. Different value systems and ways of justifying social, moral and cultural values. Areas for consideration might include:

Social life – honesty, kindness, tolerance, respect, friendship (and their opposites)
Personal values – work, power, wealth, love, aesthetics, religion and spirituality
Political and Community Values – work, justice, democracy, freedom, civic order, community living

Stage Five: Developing social and personal maturity
This stage would seek to integrate all aspects of the foregoing stages to arrive at a developed and principled philosophy (a rationally grounded, universal value system as set out in Krathwohl's stage five of the affective domain) characterised by emotional maturity and the capacity to deal mindfully with all aspects of life. Topics covered would include:

Predicting personal consequences – self-awareness, acceptance of authority and social judgment, understanding of role of emotions in life
Adaptation to change – acceptance of inevitability of impermanence and change in the human condition, acknowledgement of fortune/misfortune in life events, ability to see and adapt to technological, occupational, political and personal family change and development
Social responsibility – awareness and acknowledgement of different social roles in family, work and community
Transcending self – appreciation of different roads to fulfillment and happiness, mindful awareness of different views and life paths of others, rational commitment to other-regarding ethical values

All the foregoing stages are designed to achieve what Valett calls 'humanistic education', a stance which is broadly in accord with the educational perspectives outlined in the earlier chapters. This is defined as being:

> Concerned with the development of the whole man (sic), including his affective, motor and cognitive abilities, but it stresses the primacy of affective and motor development over the cognitive and motor aspects of behaviour. The man who lives a joyous, humane, and meaningful life is a well-educated man. He has learned to deal with the harsh realities of his existence and to experience the joy and exhilaration of living in a demanding and ever changing world. He has learned to temper the harsh realities of existence with humane consideration and compassion for his fellow man and to confront the brutal aspects in self and society (Valett 1974, p. 4).

All of this finds an echo in Lang's outline of the commonalities in European affective education surrounding the aims of the 'personal and social dimension of the curriculum' (1998, p. 10). This would ideally enable learners to:

- Learn to respect and value themselves and others
- Appreciate the benefits of resolving conflict by non-violent means
- Learn to tell the difference between intention and action
- Learn tolerance and the need to take responsibility for their own behaviour

7.5 Content and Methods for Affective Education

Having sketched a general outline for an affective education for schools and colleges, the question of content and methods needs to be considered. Specific issues linked to learning, teaching, curriculum design and staff development will be examined in subsequent chapters. At this stage the focus will be on the choice of materials and techniques to achieve the general aims outlined in the preceding section.

In response to increasing rates of violence, anxiety, depression and general emotional malaise in contemporary society, particularly among young people, Goleman (1996) has outlined a programme for 'emotional literacy' (pp. 283–284) which covers such themes as emotional self-awareness, the management of emotion, handling and harnessing the emotions effectively and productively, and developing empathy to channel into healthy relationships with others.

The fostering of creative imagination also has a legitimate place in this sphere. In this context, Eisner (1998) refers to the imagination as the 'apotheosis of reason' (p. 1) in the sense of facilitating our ability to recreate our world through the balance between imagination and reason. Egan (2002) illustrates ways in which such imaginative understanding can be a powerful tool in all spheres of educational activity, including the teaching of literacy. All of these diverse elements are drawn upon in the extensive research and development work with teachers in schools by Weare (2004, 2010) who offers a comprehensive and detailed account of how 'emotional literacy' can be established through a 'whole school approach' which incorporates many of the elements described previously with highly practical recommendations for learning, teaching and curriculum.

How can we best develop such literacy? The power of narrative in education was acknowledged by Smeyers et al. (2007) in their investigation of the links between education and therapy, and the efficacy of literature and drama in the education of the emotions has been demonstrated by Hart (2007) and Hepburn (1972). In this field sources are plentiful – particularly if we include film, music, magazines, the internet and other areas of popular culture – and the educational uses of such approaches are well documented (Mebane et al. 2008). Valett (1974) suggests narrative materials for all the themes and objectives outlined earlier along with suggestions for use and lists of suitably probing and provocative questions and issues for discussion.

My discussion here is intended to cover both school and post-school settings since it is crucial to locate emotional and mental well-being within a lifelong

learning framework (Government Office for Science 2008). However, accepting the need for modification to adapt to context, I would want to advocate the sort of approach and resources incorporated in Lipman's (1988) *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) programme. Kristjansson (2001) recommends the Lipman approach as an appropriate medium for education of the emotions in general, and it does seem to be well suited to the key aims and objectives of the affective domain.

The P4C programme is founded on and motivated by the idea that – if we strip away the, often quite unnecessary, formidable terminology and neologisms from mainstream philosophy – what remains is a:

> wealth of ideas (which can be rephrased in children's own words) and the discipline of logic. Present the philosophy in the form of children's novels, and encourage classroom discussion of the ideas. Now what happens? (IAPC 1987, p. 4).

The answer which P4C proponents offer is that philosophy becomes a genuinely valuable school subject which incorporates a vast range of educational benefits including – apart from the intrinsic value of introducing youngsters to important philosophical ideas – such extrinsic merits as improving thinking and discussion skills, enhancing emotional and moral development, and fostering the capacity for reflection and general cognitive growth.

Through specially constructed narratives – described as 'philosophical novels' (Murris 1994, p. 80) – the principal goal of the programme is to get children 'thinking aloud with others' (Morehouse 1993, p. 10). Rather than using existing literature which was considered by Lipman and his co-workers to 'pre-empt the child's imagination' (1988, p. 35), the P4C programme utilises stories appropriate to the level and ability of students (*Pixie* for juniors, *Harry Stottlemeier* for the middle school and *Suki* for secondary pupils; IAPC 1987, pp. 8–11), and which are all 'about school children and the experiences they have' (Nicol 1990, p. 179). Each set of materials is accompanied by teachers' manuals which recommend organisational procedures and triggers for philosophical discussion.

The whole P4C strategy is underpinned by an assumption about young people's natural curiosity and an innate impulse to ask philosophical questions such as 'What is time?' and 'What's a mind?'. This is accompanied by the notion that – since such questions are often dismissed by parents, teachers and elders generally – the philosophically creative capacity is often stifled at any early age. In terms of the teacher's role in the programme, ideally this should be that of a facilitator who responds to the learner's responses to and discussions about the key issues and questions raised in the stories. As Nicol (1990) puts this:

> The students must be made to feel intellectually safe and given a sense of their own right to contribute to the learning process in which they are taking part. The teacher must then exercise personal and interpersonal skills in ensuring such an environment exists and that no individual is excluded because they feel inadequate to meet the demands of the lesson (p. 180).

It could be argued that such a climate is an ideal prerequisite of *any* sort of meaningful learning. However, in the Lipman programme the process elements – stimulating discussion and fostering a community of enquiry – become ends in themselves which serve to reinforce the other aims of enhancing systematic thinking skills and

fostering philosophical interest and wonder about the world. Murris (1994) expands upon this in observing that the 'community of enquiry' strategy at the core of the project:

> assumes a meeting of minds where pupils, aided by a facilitator, among other things: clarify and justify their beliefs, make connections, generalise, give example and counter-examples, look for assumptions and speculate (p. 80).

In addition to the intrinsic ends of introducing students to different methods of enquiry and the domain of philosophy, a number of important extrinsic educational goals are claimed to be achieved through the approach.

Large-scale experiments conducted by the Educational Testing Service in Newark, N.J., reported significant gains in mathematics and reasoning for students who had followed a P4C programme as against those not exposed, in addition to gains in reading levels by pupils taught by the Lipman strategy (IAPC 1987, p. 4). Whalley (1987, p. 279) summarises the case for introducing a P4C approach into British schools as follows:

- It would allow pupils to learn reasoning in its natural home – dialogue and enquiry
- It would give youngsters the opportunity to discuss important issues not covered in the mainstream curriculum
- It would foster in pupils the idea that there are serious problems and issues which are not susceptible to pat or glib solutions
- It would give young learners an idea of what can be achieved through the collaboration of minds and co-operative enquiry
- It would provide an antidote to the fragmentation of the standard curriculum by dealing with ideas and issues that are fundamental to learning in all forms and fields of knowledge

The affective domain is also centrally concerned with the moral development of students, and the links between values and emotions were explored in earlier chapters. Research on the cognitive-development aspects of moral learning identified by Piaget, Kohlberg and others (Duska and Whelan 1977) has been of immense value to educators and connects well with the general outline for affective education proposed here. Kohlberg's (1973) work on the moral development of children spanning over three decades resulted in a well-defined series of stages which people pass through in moving from moral ignorance or naivety to maturity. There are six principal stages – from pre-conventional, heteronomous morality, through conventional moral conformity to post-conventional, principled and universal morality – and an indication that moral progress consists in moving from lower to higher stages since the 'highest stages [universal ethical principles] are most able to handle moral complexity in a stable and consistent way' (Hersh et al. 1980, p. 123).

On this model, the teacher's task is to help students to move from one stage to the next by presenting them with problems and dilemmas which challenge the key features of their current stage of moral development and – through analysis and reflection – prompt pupils to move on to the next stage. A famous example used in

many standard texts in the field is *Heinz's Dilemma* – telling of a man who stole an expensive drug to save his wife's life after the druggist refused to sell him the medicine at a price he could afford (Hersh et al. 1980, pp. 122ff) – which challenges learners at the pre-conventional and conventional levels to weigh and balance different conceptions of honesty, loyalty, property rights and the value of human life. In a similar way the P4C programme (clearly influenced by the ideas of Piaget and Kohlberg) uses provocative stories designed to stimulate young people's thinking about friendship, fairness, truth, and other key moral concepts. Ethical enquiry of this sort becomes, for Lipman (1987), a form of 'ethical craft' and the students are 'apprentices in that craft' (p. 139).

Although the P4C materials are attractive and offer scope for fostering young people's imaginative faculties, the insistence on bespoke materials (linked to specifically accredited teachers 'trained' in the use of these) could pose a threat to the development of genuine autonomy and creativity in learners. Moreover, as Murris (1994) explains, the arguments of the P4C authors against the use of existing children's literature seem to rest on mistaken assumptions. She claims that the Lipman approach is ambiguous about the literal, symbolic and philosophical messages contained in narratives and, consequently, does not sufficiently allow for the important constructivist activity children and adolescents engage in when interpreting images of all kinds. This also results in a curious parochialism in the use of resources which overlooks the importance of utilising a broad and diverse range of media – advertising, the internet, television, drama, cartoons, documentaries and movies – to illustrate and foster reflection upon issues of concern to young people.

It is true that some existing literature – including recent popular philosophical writing allegedly for children such as Gaarder's *Sophie's World* (1997) – appears to be *about* children rather than *for* them. Simply including children in books about philosophy does not necessarily result in philosophy suitable for children, and it would be a mistake to artificially restrict the range of narrative and visual material available. So-called philosophical novels come in many guises, including ones which ostensibly have nothing much to do with philosophy. Thus, even though Iris Murdoch claimed to be 'opposed in principle to the enterprise of writing philosophical novels' (Herman 2001, p. 551), she actually produced some of the finest examples of the form – particularly *The Bell* and *Flight from the Enchanter* (see Levenson 2001) – published in the twentieth century. When we include material exhibiting aspects of mindfulness and the education of the emotions, as well as potential for philosophical insight, then it is as well to keep the range of sources for the affective curriculum as wide and varied as possible. Certainly, the traditional classics – Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (preferred as the *only* novel suitable for Rousseau's ideal pupil, *Emile* on the grounds that it was 'the best treatise on an education according to nature'; 1966 edn., p. 147) Dickens' *Oliver Twist* and *David Copperfield* – seem to satisfy the criteria in every respect, in addition to being perennial children's favourites. Drawing from contemporary sources, teachers might want to include the *Harry Potter* novels and recent science fiction and fantasy narratives and films. There is also a wealth of material and resources for teachers and students of all ages available through the *Association for Mindfulness in Education*

(AME, www.mindfuleducation.org/). In addition, Burnett (2009) suggests a wide range of useful ideas and materials, and the mindfulness handbook for schools put together by Cattley and Lavelle (2009) is a valuable teaching resource.

The P4C programme has enormous potential for the affective domain in general and mindfulness teaching/learning in particular, providing there is scope for the modification of methods and inclusion of broad and diverse sources mentioned earlier. Approached in a certain way, doing philosophy and being mindful may be regarded as two sides of the same coin. Further aspects of learning and teaching in relation to mindfulness are discussed in greater depth in the next chapter, and the question of the implementation of an affective curriculum for schools and colleges incorporating mindfulness objectives is the subject of Chap. 9. At this stage I intend to examine the foundational question of how mindfulness might be used to inform the affective domain of education.

7.6 Reflective Thinking, Mindsight and the Affective Domain

Having discussed the broad aims, content and methods of an affective education, I want to connect all this with the theory and practice of mindfulness outlined in earlier chapters. A useful starting-point here is Siegel's (2007) perspective on 'reflective thinking', what he calls the 'fourth R of education' (p. 259). He elaborates by suggesting that:

> At the heart of mindfulness is the teachable capacity for reflection. This learnable skill is just a breath away from being readily available as the fourth "R" of basic education to children throughout their development. We once saw reading and writing and 'rithmetic as luxuries for a selective few, but now these skills are considered the three basic R's of education. Wouldn't it make sense to teach children about the mind itself and make reflection become a fundamental part of basic education? (pp. 259–260).

One of the principal aims of this book is to suggest that it does make perfect sense to incorporate mindfulness into education at all levels.

The dangers of mindlessness identified by Langer (1989) and others have already been alluded to on a number of occasions. At the very least, they consist in apathy and unhappiness and, at worst, they reveal themselves in the destructive emotions, in the anger, self-loathing, aggression and depression described by Goleman (2003). We can guard against these dangers by ensuring that elements of the affective domain outlined earlier are incorporated into curricula at all levels.

What needs to be added to these themes, methods and content of an affective education is the range of mindfulness practices and applications described in earlier chapters. The ultimate aim here is the development of what Siegel (2010) has called 'mindsight' which is:

> a kind of focused attention that allows us to see the internal workings of our own minds. It helps us to be aware of our mental processes without being swept away by them, enables us to get ourselves off the autopilot of ingrained behaviours and habitual responses, and moves

> us beyond the reactive emotional loops we all have a tendency to get trapped in. It lets us "name and tame" the emotions we are experiencing, rather than being overwhelmed by them (pp.xi–xii).

This quality of mindsight – in a sense, the ultimate aim of all the various mindfulness practices utilised in contemplative, psychotherapeutic or educational contexts – can, indeed, be regarded as a basic skill. It is, as Siegel (2007) argues, nothing less than the 'capacity to sense the mind in ourselves and in others'. If we lack this capacity, our own internal mental states may remain confused and inchoate, and the minds of others may be understated or even missing from our perspectives on the world. Moreover, it is increasingly the case that the:

> absence of a focus on mindsight in education is bolstered by a technology-driven media that bombard children with stimuli devoid of elements that promote self-understanding and compassion. Absent self, missing mind, empty empathy (Siegel 2007, p. 261).

Mindful practices – non-judgmental, present-moment awareness of our mental states developed through stillness, breath meditation or focussed movement – can help to develop the reflective skills through which self-knowledge and empathy become embedded in the curriculum. More will be said about teaching/learning approaches and the organisation of content in the next chapter, but it is worth emphasising here that the reflective skill-building through which mindsight develops is crucially dependent upon the capacity of teachers to be mindfully present for their students. As Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) put it, this only begins 'when teachers and students learn to pay attention to the experience of paying attention' (p.xii).

As noted in earlier chapters, such attentive awareness may be developed by means of any of the techniques – the 3MBS, mindful walking or movement – but the *intention* to foster such qualities is primary. Teachers and students need to make conscious efforts to cultivate habits of mindful thought and speech: pausing before answering or asking questions, striving to bring about precious moments of calm (Burnett 2009), and ensuring that all communication is characterised by openness, kindness and respect. Kramer (2007) describes all such mindful communication as 'insight dialogue' and explains how – through constant practice of the basic techniques of non-judgmental present-moment awareness – we can foster that trust which is at the heart of all genuine communication. As he observes:

> Communication is an act of mutual gift giving. We offer each other the gift of presence, of the particular wisdom of the moment, and of the muscled and softly textured heart. We receive the spoken word with appreciation for this gift. We listen with the generosity of patience, unhurried by a personal agenda. We aspire to the type of generosity Thoreau suggested when he said: "The greatest compliment that was ever paid to me was when one asked me what I thought, and attended to my answer"…As the words of another touch us, the astonishing and mundane loop of communicative contact is closed (pp. 150–151).

In the busy and often hectic daily lives of teachers and students such communication may be a rare luxury, but it is an ideal worth striving for. It is at the heart of mindful teaching and learning and indispensable to a coherent, authentic and genuine affective education.

7.7 Conclusion

A general approach to the affective domain of education – involving a process curriculum, humanistic content and learning/teaching approaches aimed at developing mindsight – has been outlined and justified. Through the community of enquiry strategy exemplified in P4C programmes – informed by the goal of reflective self-awareness – a particular form of focused attention required for a mindfulness-based education of the emotions may be fostered. In the following chapter, issues surrounding learning teaching and curriculum in this sphere are investigated in more detail as a preliminary to the discussion of how all of this may be applied to education and training at different levels of provision.

Chapter 8
Learning, Teaching and Curriculum

In earlier chapters, the work of Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) was referred to in the context of their arguments about the interchangeability of education and mindfulness, and that 'When teachers are fully present, they teach better. When students are fully present, the quality of their learning is better' (p. xi). I have previously examined the role of mindfulness in relation to the affective domain and the education of the emotions. It has been argued that the rational–cognitive approach in this sphere needs to be supplemented by mindfulness practices if the goals of affective education – the diminution of destructive emotions and the enhancement of positive emotions through 'mindsight' (Siegel 2010) – is to be achieved. There is also the question of harmonising the cognitive and affective domains in order to enhance learning and education at all levels. As a way of illustrating the role of mindfulness in this process, this chapter will examine the key areas of learning, teaching and curriculum before discussing different levels and fields of practice in later chapters.

8.1 Learning

Linking the activity of learning with the business of survival in the context of evolutionary development, Curzon (2004) comments that the 'reception, interpretation, storing and retrieval of information are essential to operations in the process of control of the environment'. Given this, he goes on to argue that in general terms:

> the more adequately one is able to carry out these operations, the more precisely one is able to control, and therefore change, the environment according to one's wishes. The formal processes of instruction – teaching and learning – may be viewed therefore as being linked with humanity's continuing attempts to control, change or adapt to its environment so that its survival is the more assured … It is not hyperbole to suggest that the survival of our species is linked closely to education (p. 7).

T. Hyland, *Mindfulness and Learning: Celebrating the Affective Dimension of Education*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 17, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1911-8_8,

Although I would not wish to disagree with the importance of the evolutionary function, the nature, purpose and value of learning goes well beyond this function, particularly (as Curzon later elaborates) when learning is institutionalised in schools and colleges, and is connected with liberal arts, science and cultural studies. What also needs to be added is the perspective noted in the last chapter in which the subordinate status of both vocational and affective education was explained – with reference to Pinker's work – precisely in terms of its *relevance* to survival. Vocational skills and emotional intelligence, as we have already argued, have clear and self-evident survival value yet tend to be less valued than intellectual, cultural and purely academic pursuits (Marples 2010).

One of the main aims of this book is to reconcile these false and damaging divisions and a large part of the process is to suggest conceptions of learning and teaching which help in this respect. We can begin by examining some prominent conceptions of learning in educational discourse. Curzon (2004, pp. 11–12) provides a helpful list from which the following representative samples are selected:

1. Any activities which develop new knowledge and abilities in the individual who carries them out, or else cause old knowledge and abilities to acquire new qualities (Galperin 1965).
2. A change in human disposition or capability, which persists over a period of time, and which is not simply ascribable to the process of growth (Gagne 1983)
3. The active creation of knowledge structures from personal experience (Biehler 1993)
4. A process of reorganisation of sensory-feedback patterning which shifts the learner's level of control over his own behaviour in relation to the objects and events of the environment (Smith 1966)
5. The process by which an activity originates or is changed through reacting to an encountered situation (Bower and Higard 1981)
6. An enduring change in the mechanisms of behaviour involving specific stimuli and/or responses that results from prior experience with similar stimuli and responses (Domjan 1998).

If we examine these conceptions against the curriculum models introduced in the last chapter (and discussed at greater length below), it could be said, in broad terms, that the first three can be linked to 'process' models which view the learner as actively engaged in interpreting and understanding the world whereas (4), (5) and (6) focus on how human behaviour is changed by reacting and responding to the world in line with the 'product' approaches. Another way of interpreting such broad divisions is by saying that the first three tend be inspired by a cognitive/experiential view of learning and what is to be learned whereas the last three tend towards behaviouristic perspectives with learning seen as essentially in stimulus–response (S-R) terms.

Hamlyn (1973) proposes an interesting interpretation of the basic differences in approach by connecting them with the 'two great classical theories of knowledge – rationalism and empiricism' (p. 178). On this account, behaviourist theories stressing the centrality of (S-R) features of learning tend to be informed by empiricism

(knowledge derived mainly from experience) whereas rationalist theories (foregrounding the structure and activity of the mind in generating knowledge from what is given) have more in common with cognitive-development approaches associated with humanistic psychology and Gestalt theory. However, Hamlyn concludes by suggesting a strategy which seeks to reconcile the rationalist–empiricist perspectives. The upshot is a perspective by which:

> learning on the part of an individual is as much as anything his (sic) initiation into a framework over which there is wide agreement, even if there is also plenty of room for individual deviations from the norm. For this to be possible, there has to be, and is, a background of common interests, attitudes, feelings and, if I may put it in these terms, cognitive apparatus (Hamlyn 1973, p. 189).

The practical implications of this view for education is that 'there are a number of differing kinds of learning process which are more or less fitted to the different kinds of knowledge, competence, skill … that may be required of human beings' (Hamlyn 1973, p. 193).

Such an inclusive framework has many advantages since, self-evidently, learning often *is* difficult to describe in any one specific way, for example, whether it is experiential or innate, behavioural or epistemological, active or passive, not to mention the vast and diverse range of *objects* of learning. Jarvis (1990, p. 196) gives five meanings for the concept of learning:

- Any more or less permanent change in behaviour as a result of experience
- A relatively permanent change in behaviour which occurs as a result of practice
- The process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience
- The processes of transforming experience into knowledge, skills and attitudes
- Memorising information

The aggregation of all these definitions does seem to be able to cover anything we may want to call learning, though the prominence of the elements referring to the transformation of experience and the change in behaviour seem to function as seminal criteria for cases of learning.

Given what has already been established concerning mindfulness and the affective domain of education, the key question that arises is which particular forms of experiential and behavioural transformation are most conducive to the achievement of the key educational aims? Earlier chapters have indicated that activities which tend to foreclose or marginalise the autonomy and rationality of learners – such as overt behaviour modification or indoctrination – are incompatible and inappropriate in this respect. Returning to Schoeberlein and Sheth's comment at the beginning of the chapter, the question becomes one of determining which arrangement of the learning–teaching process is most in keeping with the idea of teachers and students being 'fully present' to all aspects of the educational encounter. This notion in turn leads naturally to the conclusion that – though clearly much human learning takes place outside formal teaching contexts – if we are considering mindfulness in *education* and the emotions as part of an affective *curriculum*, then learning needs to connected in some sense to the activity of teaching.

8.2 Teaching

In view of the interdependence and interconnectedness mentioned above, conceptions of the role of the teacher can be expected to be organised in terms of the different perspectives on learning identified. The following examples are a good indication of the range of conceptions of the teaching task:

- The arrangement and manipulation of a situation in which there are gaps or obstructions which an individual will seek to overcome and from which he (sic) will learn in the course of doing so (Brubacher 1939, p. 108).
- The natural, logical outcome of the struggle for personal freedom in education is that the teacher should improve his (sic) control of the student rather than abandon it (Skinner 1973, p. 4).
- Intimate contact between a more mature personality and a less mature one which is designed to further the education of the latter (Morrison 1934, p. 41).
- Teacher and pupil should teach each other and learn from each other, making use of each other's strengths and weaknesses in a joint collaboration (Armstrong 1973, p. 54).

It can be clearly discerned that the first two conceptions are linked to some form of behaviourist/product approach to education whereas the remaining two may be aligned with a cognitive/humanistic view of the process. These differing perspectives also suggest a division in terms of those who view educational activity as a 'teacher-centred' enterprise and those who emphasise 'student-centred' notions. Indeed, as already observed, such dichotomies abound in this sphere, as the following list compiled by Meighan (1981, p. 161) clearly demonstrates:

- teacher-centred v child-centred
- closed teaching v open teaching
- meaning making v meaning receiving
- authoritarian v democratic
- traditional v progressive
- transmission v interpretation
- dependent study v independent study

There seems to be something missing from such oppositional accounts of teaching and learning and just what this is becomes apparent as soon as we begin to ask questions such as 'open' or 'closed', 'teacher or student-centred', 'dependent or independent' in relation to *what*? The missing item is, of course, that which is to be taught or learned, and this is well illustrated in Hirst's (1974) admittedly rather austere and formal definition of a teaching activity. He suggests that:

> A teaching activity is the activity of a person A (the teacher), the intention of which is to bring about an activity (learning), by a person B (the student), the intention of which is to achieve some end-state (e.g. knowing, appreciating) whose object is X (e.g. a belief, attitude, skill). From this it follows that to understand what is involved in teaching, one must start at the other end of a logical chain of relations, with an understanding of the end achievements to which everything is being directed (p. 108).

Although I think the last part of Hirst's assertion is not quite correct – we can, for instance, think of many cases of informal teaching without closely prescribed ends such as illustrated in the 'process' and 'situational' models of curriculum discussed below – the basic triadic model of teaching does serve to concentrate the mind on essential elements and performs valuable heuristic purposes. It is useful, for example, in making sense of the general aims of the progressive education movement explored in Chap. 2. In terms of Hirst's three elements, progressivism involved an emphasis on B (the student) as against A (the teacher) or C (the curriculum), a shift from the left- to the right-hand side of Meighan's dichotomies listed above – though, often, this remained at a theoretical or ideological level rather than one of actual practice (Hyland 1979; Lowe 2007).

In a broadly similar way, ideological discourse about further (Hyland and Merrill 2003) and higher education (Ramsden 1992) in recent years reflects similar developments. There is a general movement away from the teacher's role to the activity of learning and, in this respect, it is interesting to note changes in terminology in official government documents. In further education (FE), for example, the Learning and Skills Sector (LSS) replaced the Further Education Funding Council in 2001 as the standards for FE teacher training tended to be concerned – not principally with teaching *per se* – but with the 'management and support of learning' (Hyland and Merrill 2003, p. 134). In the adult education sphere, the change of nomenclature for *lifelong education* to lifelong *learning* had significant implications for both direction and focus in the sector (Field and Leicester 2000; Aspin 2007).

Of course, some of this change remained at the level of policy and theory or else was severely mediated and tempered by funding and curriculum prescriptions. Student centredness loses much its force in underfunded and short-staffed schools, colleges and universities, and autonomous and independent learning means little if the curriculum and assessment regime is tightly controlled by outcomes defined as skills or competences (Hyland 1994). Moreover, it is important to analyse closely just what is actually happening in recommendations which couch the role of the teacher in terms of a resource person, facilitator or supporter of learning. Against the background of the three elements in Hirst's model, although it may appear that – in contemporary models of active, experiential, autonomous or, the now ubiquitous, online or computer-assisted learning – the A element of the triad is being displaced by B and/or X, this view might be over-simplistic and misleading. It is perhaps more accurate to say that the *activities* of A (the roles and priorities of teachers) have been changed so as to place more emphasis on the activities of learners so as to foster independence and self-development. B may be prominent but A and X have not suddenly disappeared altogether from the picture. The management and support of learning is still an important and valuable *teaching* activity performed more or less well or badly by teachers all over the world!

Moreover, the dangers of teachers abandoning wholesale their traditional roles are well illustrated in the adult education discourse about 'andragogy'. The basic concept has Greek origins, though, more recently, was resurrected first by Lindeman and then reconstructed by Knowles (Davenport 1993) to make a distinction between principles of learning and teaching in relation to children and adults. Defining andragogy as the

'art and science of helping adults to learn', Knowles (1970) identified a number of key features of adult learning – such as 'self-directedness', 'experiential techniques' and 'problem-solving' (pp. 43–44) – which were designed to 'progressively decrease the learner's dependency on the educator' (Mezirow 1983, p. 136). Although much of this thesis is appealing, a central error – later acknowledged by Knowles (1979) – lies in assuming that self-direction is a natural trait of adults and that the skills and capacities which underpin learning will develop without the support and guidance of others (whether these others are called teachers, facilitators or supporters of learning). Brookfield (1986) expresses this point well in his observation that:

> to act as a resource person to adults who are unaware of belief systems, bodies of knowledge, or behavioural possibilities other than those they have uncritically assimilated since childhood is to condemn such adults to remaining within existing paradigms of thought and action. It is misconceived to talk of the self-directedness of learners who are unaware of alternative ways of thinking, perceiving or behaving' (p. 124).

If this is true for adults, it is even more significant in the case of young people in schools and colleges. Thus, although the ultimate aim of the forms of mindfulness training and the education of the emotions outlined in earlier chapters would be to foster independence and self-directedness in learners, this is an end point not a starting point. In seeking to cultivate emotional maturity and the 'mindsight' discussed in Chap. 7, teachers also need to take account of the different needs, interests and development rates of learners. Active learning can only be fostered by active teaching, guidance and commitment to the support of learning in all domains.

However, the move away from teaching towards learning – even if it remains primarily theoretical or ideological – is interesting and welcome as far as the aims of my thesis are concerned. As Sotto (2001) notes in his advocacy of theory and practice which collapse teaching into learning, anything which heralds a return to the personal, the intuitive and the emotional in educational activity is to be welcomed. Palmer (1998) expresses similar sentiments in arguing for the importance of integrity and identity in relation to the 'inner life' (p. 6) of teachers and students. As a way of understanding more deeply what this entails for strategies and theories of teaching and learning, it is well worth looking at Scheffler's (1973) philosophical analysis of three influential models.

The 'impression' model (Scheffler 1973, pp. 68–70), associated with Locke's philosophy, pictures the mind of the learner as a tabula rasa upon which is to be imprinted the knowledge and experience deemed desirable by the cultural conditions of society. On this account, teaching is primarily concerned with exercising the mental powers engaged in receiving and processing incoming ideas. Whereas the impression model supposes the teacher to be conveying ideas to be stored by students, the 'insight' model – which Scheffler associates with Plato and St. Augustine (Scheffler 1973, pp. 71–75) – rejects the notion that knowledge can be acquired in this mechanistic fashion. The mind is not a passive storage room of ideas; it needs to be prompted into extracting order and meaning from the experiences it has to make sense of. Finally, what Scheffler calls the 'rule' model of teaching – attributed to the influence of Kant (Scheffler 1973, pp. 76–79) – emphasises the idea that knowledge, experience and insight need to be interpreted and understood against a background

of organising concepts, principles and reasons. The interaction between learners and teachers is thus mediated by general principles of rationality and public criteria which determine and guide the development of human knowledge in all spheres.

The impression model reflects the growth of knowledge in its historical and public sense. One aim of teaching would be to preserve and extend this growth; however, this cannot be achieved simply by storing it piecemeal within learners. We may preserve it – as the insight model suggests – by transmitting the live spark which enables students to make sense of experience on their own terms and to confront it with the reality of their own experience, values and feelings. Finally, the Kantian-inspired rule model reminds us that such confrontation involves deliberation and judgment which presupposes a foundation of public criteria connected with knowledge, rationality and values.

Given what has been said in earlier chapters about the importance of reflection, authenticity of experience and mindful awareness in learners, it could be argued that the insight model is the most appropriate one for a mindful education of the emotions programme. Certainly, this connects ideally with the reflective and enquiry methods recommended in the last chapter. According to this model, learning is, in the main, an active and dynamic process and this seems to be fully in accordance with the application of mindful practices and the ways in which the neuroscientific evidence suggest that such activities shape the brain and, thus, impact on the emotions.

Burnett's (2009) work on mindfulness in schools provides a range of interesting perspectives in this respect. In Chap. 3, the main differences between *samadhi* (similar to what Burnett calls *samatha*), calm meditation, and *vipassana*, insight meditation were outlined. Both are used widely in the secular therapeutic applications of mindfulness, though insight meditation is seen as most effective in MBSR/MBCT strategies aimed at tackling specific problems. Burnett rightly notes that both calm and insight are two sides of the same coin; calm provides the necessary clarity and concentration for insight to be achieved. As he goes on to suggest:

> Calm gives us stability, joy and motivation, but to uproot suffering, we really need to *understand* how the mind works by observing it and paying attention to its habitual twists and turns. What is prompting these painfully depressive downturns? Why do I find solace in food? How do I break the repetitive chain of habitual thinking that reinforces my condition? Calm provides a stable environment for Insight to patiently and persistently observe what is happening; slowly but surely the knots in our mind begin to untangle (p. 17).

However, even though such mindsight may be our ultimate aim as teachers of mindfulness, Burnett makes the important point that – for younger children in schools – it may be more practical to begin with *samatha* practices. Unlike adults on mindfulness courses, children have not, after all, chosen to be in our classes and it is important to engage their interests in an immediate way. He gives the following reasons for adopting an initial approach aimed at developing calm and tranquillity in younger pupils (Burnett 2009, p. 19):

- They can *direct* their attention. When they are asked to place their attention in their feet, or in their hands, or onto their breath, not only can they usually do it, but it *interests* them that they can do it.

- They can *sustain* their attention in this place, even if only for very short periods of time, say between 30 s and a minute. This holds their interest and extends their curiosity.
- They acknowledge these exercises as being of value. They understand that a mind which is usually very scattered can be more 'collected' and concentrated and it is something they savour.

These seem to be excellent guidelines for teachers in primary schools and the early years of secondary schooling. Pupils at these levels will clearly need more guidance than adolescents and adults and – since there are techniques and principles to be taught in this sphere, particularly when mindful reflection is employed in an affective curriculum – elements of the transmission and rule models of teaching can be employed to develop the mindsight, the reflective insight, which is at the heart of mindfulness.

8.3 Curriculum

In the previous chapter, it was suggested that a 'process' rather than a 'product' model was one which was most conducive to a mindful education of the emotions. Such a curriculum can now be identified in greater depth and precision, and I intend to use such a model to elaborate further some points already made about learning, teaching and educational activity in general in this sphere.

A paradigm process curriculum model is that developed by Stenhouse (1975) who suggested that it was more rational to design curricula by specifying content and principles of procedure rather than by pre-specifying the anticipated outcomes in terms of objectives. The key argument is that:

It is quite possible to evolve principles for the selection of content in the curriculum in terms of criteria which are not dependent on the existence of a specification of objectives, and which are sufficiently specific to give real guidance and to expose the principles to criticism (Stenhouse 1975, p. 86).

Stenhouse advocates Raths (1971) criteria for the selection of worthwhile principles which include such qualities as permitting pupils to make informed choices, assigning active roles to learners, asking students to engage in inquiry into ideas and problems, sharing the planning of activities with their peers, taking risks in learning and inviting them to constantly practice and rehearse activities to gain mastery in all the various forms and fields of knowledge.

This leads to a model which contains the following major elements (Taylor and Richards 1985, p. 62):

- Aims and Goals
- Selection of Learning Experiences
- Selection of Content
- Organisation and Integration of Learning Experiences and Content
- Evaluation

The idea is that evaluation will provide feedback to aims and goals and, thus, lead to the continuous revision of the whole curriculum in the light of the experience of learners and teachers. This form of curriculum planning model was applied successfully in the Humanities Curriculum Project (Stenhouse 1970) – concerned with developing broad social, cultural and moral understanding in pupils, particularly in relation to controversial issues in the UK in the 1960s and 1970s, and many of the elements have been emulated in citizenship and Personal Social and Health Education (PSHE) programmes in recent years.

Taylor and Richards (1985) describe an all-encompassing form of process model called the 'situational' model which has much to recommend it in terms of the principal aims and procedures of an affective curriculum. With its roots in cultural analysis, the situational model – advocated by educators such as Skilbeck (1976) and Lawton (1983) – is not an alternative to the process and objectives approaches but, rather, a more holistic framework which might encompass either depending upon which aspects of the curriculum are being emphasised. Taylor and Richards (1985, p. 70) provide an informative summary of the five main elements of this strategy:

1. *Situational analysis* – this involves a review of all interacting elements which could be relevant to a curriculum. External factors would include parental and community expectations, broad social and cultural trends, and the changing nature of forms and fields of knowledge. Internal factors might refer to the interests and needs of teachers and pupils, school ethos, political climate, availability of resources and perceived issues which need to be addressed.
2. *Goal formulation* – the statement of goals would embrace teacher and pupils actions and derive from the situational analysis in the sense that they represent decisions to modify the situation in certain respects.
3. *Programme building* – which comprises the selection of subject matter, for learning, materials and resources and design of teaching/learning activities.
4. *Interpretation and implementation* – as the curriculum is developed, scope is allowed for revision and modification in the light of perceived practical issues and problems.
5. *Monitoring, assessment, feedback, and reconstruction* – this involves a much wider concept of evaluation than determining to what extent a curriculum meets its objectives. Tasks in this area include providing on-going assessment of progress in the light of student learning experiences, and the assessment of a wide range of goals, including pupil attitudes, teacher responses and the impact on the learning institution as a whole

Since this curriculum has been utilised to foster an understanding of such broad themes as 'structure and function', 'world views' and 'technology', it seems to lend itself to the development of an affective curriculum. As Taylor and Richards note, it has been used widely in junior science projects where the aim was, not specifying specific objectives, but in 'developing principles of procedure which would capture pupils' interests and involvement, and promote their development through careful observation, recording, classification, hypothesis formation and experimentation'

(Taylor and Richards 1985, p. 80). As important as all this is that such comprehensive model 'forces those involved in curriculum development to consider systematically their particular context, and it links their decisions to wider cultural and social considerations' (Taylor and Richards 1985, p. 71).

As a general foundation – and other things being equal in an ideal world – such an all-encompassing model would have much to offer for curriculum developers interested in affective education. However, other things are not equal and the contemporary educational scene is far from ideal. As will be noted in the next chapter, there seems to be a preoccupation – from school to university education – with cognitive objectives, pre-specified outcomes and measurable skills. Yet there are interesting projects involving both mindfulness and the affective domain being developed on the periphery and in the interstices of mainstream education (www.mindfulnessinschools.org). As a preface to the discussion of these in more detail in the following chapter, it would be useful to summarise some of the key factors discussed in this chapter under the five main headings of the process model referred to earlier.

8.4 A Mindfulness-Based Affective Curriculum

8.4.1 Aims and Goals

The general aims and goals of a curriculum aimed at developing mindsight have been referred to already in several chapters. It would be useful to aggregate these into an operational summary in order to identify and clarify the principal themes and categories. Similar components were noted in the accounts of Valett (1974), Lang (1998 and Weare (2010) which supplemented the rational–cognitive accounts linked to Siegel's (2007) notion of reflective mindsight and Goleman's (1996) ideas on emotional intelligence. Rietti (2008) provides a neat distillation of the main elements; she suggests that emotional intelligence as a capacity has 'four main branches' (pp. 634–635):

1. Perceiving emotion (in self and others).
2. Facilitating thinking through emotions (using affective states to promote good reasoning).
3. Understanding emotional meaning (communicative and behavioural implications of emotions, and the ways in which emotions blend into each other and change over time).
4. Managing emotions in self and others so as to promote own/others'/joint goals.

These might be seen as objectives derived from the general aim of serving to foster emotional health and, thus, general individual and social well-being. Given what has been said in earlier chapters about the power of destructive emotions, I would want to add mindfulness goals which would complement the four general aims. These goals can be codified as seeking to develop mindsight, that reflective

insight which allows us to understand the workings of our own minds and, thus, to enhance mental and physical health for all of us.

8.4.2 Selection of Learning Experiences

An insight model of teaching – with the teacher as guide and facilitator – would be favoured though the transmission and rule models outlined by Scheffler (1973) might also be utilised in terms of teaching techniques and principles. A broad-based philosophy for children (P4C) strategy – suitably adapted for students of different ages – is recommended as a way of developing the ethos of a 'community of enquiry' in which all participants learn together. Not only is this suitably in keeping with the neuroscientific findings that 'learning is social … we have social brains' (Goswami 2008, p. 391), such an environment aids in the achievement of other mindfulness goals linked to the benevolent respect for persons, loving-kindness and compassion.

8.4.3 Selection of Content

In the light of what was said about P4C materials in the last chapter, resources in this area are wide and diverse: literature, films, plays, music and Internet media all offer valuable learning and teaching material. The importance of fostering creative imagination in this sphere is emphasised by Egan (2002) and, in this respect, Yoffee's (2010) work with children and young people from nursery to adolescence demonstrated the power of expressive arts – particularly the use of colour linked to present moment awareness – in fostering social and emotional educational goals. Moral education materials developed by Kohlberg (1973) – and the extensions to moral development theory through the feminist perspectives advanced by Gilligan (1982) – would also provide useful vehicles.

In terms of ready-made materials, there is a comprehensive teaching/learning package – *Mindfulness for Schools* published by Goodwill Art Service (www.mindfulnessforschools.org) – which covers all the key issues discussed above. The AME (www.minduleducation.org) is also a useful source of materials in this sphere and the handbook by Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) contains a wealth of useful materials and suggestions for practice. They recommend mindfulness as part of a social and emotional learning programme (pp. 37ff.) which functions as a dimension which runs throughout all the schools' learning activities. Discussing techniques ranging from mindful seeing, mindful memory, mindful eating, body awareness and kindness in connections with others, Schoberlein and Sheth suggest the many different ways in which mindfulness can be incorporated into the school curriculum. There is also the key emphasis that this dimension of learning applies to both teachers and students. As they note, 'modelling is a powerful teaching strategy'

(p. 37), and mindfulness will not flourish without the commitment, enthusiasm and example given by teachers.

8.4.4 Organisation and Integration of Learning Experiences and Content

In this sphere, we have to consider how mindfulness could be incorporated into teaching/learning programmes, whether this is in schools or in colleges and adult education centres. Realism is required here since, as already mentioned, the school timetable is already overcrowded and the cognitive objectives linked to assessment tests and examinations are dominant.

Burnett (2009) illustrates nicely how pragmatic realism can be combined with inventiveness and imagination. As he rightly notes:

> In a schools context, the available contact time with pupils is arguably *the* key issue in determining what shape the teaching of mindfulness takes. If you teach mindfulness to adolescents 'off-timetable', perhaps to smaller groups with conditions analogous to those treated in MBSR/MBCT, you may be able to reach levels of contact time approaching the above. However, my assumption is that there is value in the more challenging task of teaching mindfulness as a well-being initiative *in timetabled lessons.* (p. 12, original italics)

The suggestion, therefore, is that mindfulness could be incorporated into PSHE or religious education periods. There is also the possibility of incorporating some of the key components of the MBSR/ MBCT programmes – such as breath meditation, body scan, or mindful movement – into more general lessons in a suitably modified form (obviously distilled versions such as the 3MBS or mindful movement in a physical education period). In addition, if teachers and pupils are motivated enough, end of day/week or weekend sessions are ideal ways of reinforcing the principal ideas and strategies.

Of course, there will be a need to find a justification for all this, particularly in terms of the concerns and demands of parents, staff, and other stakeholders in the system. Given the, as yet, tentative movements away from standards and cognitive outcomes and a greater concern with social and emotional matters (BBC 2010b), this becomes a matter of emphasising the place of mindfulness and related themes in recent government policy documents. In earlier chapters, I referred to the position given to the idea of mindfulness and mental health in *Mental Capital and Wellbeing* (Government Office for Science 2008). This document sets out clearly the role that learning has – whether this is in schools, further education, colleges or adult education and training centres – in promoting mental health through activities which parallel exactly those found in MBSR/MBCT strategies.

Burnett (2009) suggests also how mindfulness approaches can be directly connected with the key objectives of the *Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning* (SEAL) programme established as a National Strategy of the government's Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF, now, in 2010, reverted to its original title of the Department for Education) and also links up well with the previous government's

Every Child Matters (ECM) national strategy (http://nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/secondary/behaviourattendanceandseal/secondaryseal; 'Be Healthy' is the first aim of the government's Every Child Matters (ECM) programme: http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk; see also http://nationalstrategies.standards on how SEAL supports the ECM agenda). Although the SEAL initiative has had some success in a number of English regions, the recent DFE evaluation by Humphrey et al. (2010) concluded that within the programme as a whole, there was a 'lack of clear impact' (p.4). The researchers identified a number of key features necessary for the success of such programmes including the need for 'a high level of structure and consistency in programme delivery', careful monitoring 'to ensure that they are delivered as intended by their developers' (Humphrey et al. 2010) and the need for adequate human and financial resourcing.

In addition to all this of course, there are always possibilities and opportunities within general health education and religious education contexts. The handbook for schools designed by Cattley and Lavelle (2009) covers most of the practices and applications examined earlier in Chaps. 4 and 5, and suggests ways in which these may be introduced in schools as either a dimension of other lessons, or as a free-standing aspect of the school curriculum.

For enthusiastic practitioners, pragmatism is the order of the day here and the exploitation of every opportunity for mindfulness-based affective education (MBAE) is to be commended. I would just add one caveat to this. Apart from its incorporation into timetabled periods, it does seem important to ensure that MBAE does become a dimension of learning which helps to foster a cognitive-affective balance across all curricula. The affective domain is so often defined as an art and literature 'soft' perspective in many areas, thus marginalising its value and keeping its influence out of 'hard' spheres such as maths and science.

The rational–cognitive approach has many positive advantages in terms of the aims, teaching/learning strategies and curriculum content advocated for a mindfulness-based education of the emotions programme and, indeed, holds a central position in P4C, Kohlberg moral development strategies, MBCT and process curriculum approaches. However, it is as well to remember that some versions of cognitivism can be as far away from these aims as behaviourist theories of learning and education. Sotto (2001) points to the more extreme versions of this tendency in observing that in 'behaviourism feelings were mostly ignored' whereas in 'cognitivism feelings have almost entirely disappeared' (p. 65). He continues:

> As a result, everything we most associate with being human and alive, things like joy, worry, hope, shame and fear, tend to have no place in the cognitive scheme of things. And the things which most often give rise to our feelings – other people; relationships have little part in the electronic switchboard model of humans which is currently fashionable in much cognitive psychology (Sotto 2001, p. 65).

Although Sotto was commenting on an educational scene dominated by competence theories and behaviourist outcome targets which were obtained a decade or so ago, his warnings are as relevant today as they were then. There is still a persistent tendency to either downplay the role of emotions in education (as critics of the therapeutic turn do)

or stress only cognitive outcomes linked to intellectual goals or employability skills (as much current school and post-school policy tends to). In the light of these prominent tendencies, the goal of achieving cognitive-affective balance and harmony must remain paramount in educational theory and practice, and in curriculum development.

8.4.5 Evaluation

Given that it is a process curriculum model which is being discussed here, evaluation techniques would ideally complement and enhance the general aims. Again the mindfulness in education websites mentioned above contains many helpful suggestions for evaluating and assessing learning. The primary emphasis will be on *formative* assessment – 'diagnostic appraisal directed towards developing the student and contributing to his (sic) growth' (Rowntree 1977, p. 7) – rather than the summative assessment associated with traditional tests and exams.

Most of the ongoing assessment in mindfulness courses will follow from and be incorporated within the nature of the learning experiences. For instance, the handbook designed by Cattley and Lavelle (2009) contains many of the practices outlined in Chap. 4 with modifications and adaptations for use in schools. Thus the body scan can be shortened as it is introduced into the classroom (pp. 12–13) and children can be asked to either write or speak to the group about their experiences. For walking and breath meditation – as with mindful movement of all kinds – the actual practice and assessment become one as pupils progress and deepen their experience and understanding. As I have illustrated throughout, poetry is extensively and effectively utilised in all mindfulness approaches, and this presents many practical opportunities for combining learning with ongoing assessment (Cattley and Lavelle 2009, pp. 39–45).

The practical guidelines for mindfulness teaching by Schoberlein and Sheth (2009) again demonstrate clearly how learning and development go hand in hand. As students develop a clearer and more nuanced awareness of themselves, their thoughts, their actions and those of others around them, the consequences are plain to see. This can be followed up by asking students to keep a list of their development in all these areas, and the mindfulness teachers are very keen to encourage the use of journals by students to record as much as possible of their practices. As they observe:

> With mindfulness, journaling is about the experience of writing and awareness of recollection rather than narrative or analysis … Unlike keeping a diary, mindful journaling avoids a comprehensive accounting of your time or a discourse on the meaning of your past experiences. Mindful journaling works best if you write in the present tense … You are part of the action in mindful journaling, whereas you write about the action in a conventional diary (pp. 132–133).

In a similar vein, journals may be used for the recording of pleasant/unpleasant thoughts (as in the MBSR/MBCT courses) and to take note of any changes in mindful seeing, eating or body awareness (pp. 134ff.).

8.5 Mindfulness and the Long Slide to Happiness

The key aims and purposes of mindfulness and affective education programmes have been defined and justified in the preceding sections. There is, however, a tendency to conflate these aims and purposes with other strategies which seek to develop self-esteem, confidence, positive feeling and, yes, even happiness in students. These have been criticised by Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) and were discussed in Chap. 2 and I will return to them in later chapters. There are other – perhaps rather more complex, analytic and technical – challenges to some of these tendencies emerging within the philosophy of education discourse. I intend to address these within the framework of explaining how mindfulness/affective education courses are different in kind from the ones challenged.

Informed by Layard's (2005) work which was said to have influenced some of the UK government's mental health policies mentioned earlier, there has been much populist talk about happiness lessons in schools and the idea of the 'science of happiness' informing the curriculum (Suissa 2008). As Suissa points out, much of this talk was ill-informed, misguided and, sometimes, willfully perverse. Happiness is difficult to understand or define, let alone measure. Moreover, as Aristotle (1966 edn) pointed out, it is not something to be aimed at, an end product, but a by-product of living our lives in certain ways. As Suissa (2008) goes on to note, there is no simple formula here since questions of happiness inevitably bring us to consider values and the ethical life. Of course, there would be little popular interest in schools providing moral education as opposed to happiness lessons! Suissa declares that:

> I would be the first to agree that well-being can be at least partly influenced by factors within our control, and I have nothing against meditation or therapy. More importantly, I certainly think that we should acknowledge that there are objective factors, such as having enough to eat, having a decent job and being able to form meaningful relationships that are pretty basic conditions for any meaningful sense of well-being (Suissa 2008, pp. 588–589).

She is quite right to qualify this by concluding that the contemplation of the 'full wonder, horror and richness' of the complexity of being alive 'may be more truly educational than trying to overcome it by means of dubiously conceived and simplistic packages of skills' (Suissa 2008, p. 589).

In a similar vein, Miller (2008) offers a cogent critique of the 'positive psychology' movement influencing education, culture and social life in both the USA and the UK, and Cigman (2008) argues that concepts such as self-esteem and confidence are hopelessly confused in the literature on enhancing pupils' experiences. Such complex psychological/emotional qualities are defined simplistically and an assumption made that they can be 'reliably measured by "tick behaviour", as though it has never occurred to anyone to attribute ambivalent or complex motives to human actions' (p. 555).

Smith (2008), who I have to thank for the Larkin quote which headed this section, makes similar telling points about the so-called 'science of happiness'. There can be no such science because – in addition to the mistake of thinking happiness is a single quality which can be standardised and measured – there is also the undeniable

fact that 'we value a great variety of conditions other than happiness' (p. 566). Commenting on the notion that, apart from helping students to pass exams, schools might also teach them to appreciate 'life in all its fullness', Smith suggests:

> This resonant phrase 'life in all its fullness' captures much of what I have been urging here about the diversity of value. The problem is that the siren-call of 'happiness' lures us towards a false and one-sided vision of this fullness (Smith 2008, p. 571).

Clearly, the simplistic accounts being criticised here may be quite correctly labelled as misguided, misinformed and, at times, arrant nonsense. As Marples (2010) observes, although the aims of education must be in some sense linked to the satisfaction of our desires, from an educational point of view we must look 'beyond desire-satisfaction' to ideals such as 'personal autonomy and the caring citizen' (p. 44). Dearden's (1972) arguments in this area were referred to in Chap. 2 in the context of discussions about progressive education. After outlining the myriad ways in which happiness as a state of mind (never an end product) may be conceived, Dearden concludes that:

> the aim of education cannot simply be quite happiness without qualification. In education, as in life, there is a number of final ends constitutive of the good of man (sic), and on some occasions we may judge some of them properly and rightly to overrule personal happiness, even if for a time the result is that we are less pleased with ourselves or with our lives (p. 111).

In the course of making such a cogent case, Dearden alludes to Schopenhauer, arguably the most pessimistic philosopher in the Western tradition, as way of taking the edge off simplistic claims about the pursuit of happiness. Indeed, it may just be that it is Schopenhauer rather than Layard , the positive psychologists, or educational advocates of 'self esteem' lessons who has more to offer teachers interested in mindfulness and affective education. Neither mindfulness nor affective education can be simply about happiness, self-esteem or confidence-building, though, naturally, all of these qualities (if we could ever define them) might be by-products of MBAE strategies. This point needs to be elaborated.

Buddhist notions of mindfulness are concerned with recognising the roots of suffering and working to eliminate or reduce them in ourselves and others. The ultimate goal of nirvana is defined technically and precisely by Hanh (1999) as the 'complete silencing of concepts' (p. 136), and this would include the concept of happiness since it would be rendered redundant once this goal had been attained. Mindful living is revealed in the extent to which it is informed by compassion, lovingkindness and respect for all creatures; these are not ends to be achieved but supreme qualities (what Aristotle might have called moral virtues) which may become interwoven into the fabric of everything we feel, think or do.

Similarly, the goals of secular, therapeutic mindfulness are concerned – not with producing any particular state of mind, happy or otherwise – but with providing us with the means of inspecting and influencing our own consciousness so as to promote mental health and well-being (not quite the same as happiness but, obviously, not ruling this out). Indeed, many of the techniques of MBSR/MBCT

courses are explicitly concerned with helping people to deal with difficult emotions by simply being with them rather than avoiding them in the pursuit of transitory pleasure. As mentioned in Chap 4, when it comes to difficult or unpleasant states of mind, the advice is to move from a 'doing mode' – trying to solve them as if they were intellectual obstacles – to a 'being mode' in which we observe difficult emotions as clearly as we can, label them and accept them. Transformation may thus occur through the escape from the vicious cycles of rumination and experiential avoidance.

None of this so far seems to have much to do with any simplistic notion of happiness. On the contrary, returning to the reference to Schopenhauer above, it could be said that what needs to be incorporated as a necessary component into affective education, PSHE or moral education programmes are references to the sources of unhappiness and suffering in life: the roots and consequences of the misery, pain and suffering in the world, and the universal stages of life to be seen in sickness, ageing and death. Schopenhauer (1969 edn, Vol. 1) came to the conclusion that 'all life is suffering' (p. 310) on the basis of his analysis of the all-powerful and blindly striving will in humankind which seemed never capable of rest or contentment. So convinced was he that he had provided a definitive account of the lot of humankind that he suggested a rewriting of world history to purge it of that optimism which 'is not only a false but also a pernicious doctrine, for it presents life as a desirable state and man's happiness as its aim and object' (1969 edn, Vol. 2, p. 584). Turning Larkin's lines on their head, we are here being presented with the long slide to unhappiness (a notion which would have appealed greatly to Larkin's own character and perspective on life!).

Now I would not want to present too much of such a relentlessly pessimistic and misanthropic view of life to learners at any level, though for older students some such alternative perspectives might be used as valuable antidotes to the shallow, hedonistic and materialistic culture that most of us have to deal with and make sense of on a daily basis (some of these issues are discussed in greater detail in the final chapter). In fact, Schopenhauer did offer us a few glimmers of hope after his pessimistic rewriting of Western culture, and his ideas bear a striking resemblance to some of the issues discussed in the context of mindfulness and the emotions.

Schopenhauer proposed three main ways in which we can offer a response to the predicament he describes: through the engagement in aesthetic pursuits and the contemplation of works of art, by developing intellectual and philosophical knowledge and understanding and, of particular relevance to my current arguments, through the asceticism of Eastern religious practices (Hyland 1985). From his reading of the *Upanishads* and other Hindu and Buddhist texts, Schopenhauer developed a philosophy of asceticism which was similar in many important respects to the practical ethics of the Greek Stoics and Cynics. Since the will is the source and cause of all pain and suffering, it is argued, the remedy lies in the total rejection and denial of the will in all its various manifestations. As he puts it:

> My ethics … candidly confesses the reprehensible mature of the world and points to the denial of the will as the road to redemption from it. (1970 edn, p. 63).

However, given the terrible power of the human will which is such that it is 'always in command of the field' (1969 edn, Vol. 2, p. 137), how can we hope to achieve that mastery over the will which is a prerequisite of the ascetic life? Our intellects are imperfect insofar as we are capable only of subjective consciousness, a level at which we simply respond to the dictates of the will. However, the more we are able to approximate to 'clearness of consciousness of the external world, the objectivity of perception', the more our intellects approach that perfection of knowledge which – as illustrated especially in the instances of genius so much admired by Schopenhauer – is the state of 'wholly will-less knowledge' (Hyland 1985, p. 291).

This is clearly an eccentric and radically idiosyncratic view of human nature but does offer some useful insights for educators. All three escapes routes from the thrall of the will can be said to depend directly on educational activity: through the development of knowledge and understanding of the world, ourselves and others. Schopenhauer's conception of the blind, striving will is the second noble truth of Buddhism about craving as the root of suffering and, in secular mindfulness, becomes anxiety, stress or mental ill-health. Of course, Schopenhauer's solution of pursuing objective knowledge as a remedy for these ills would be couched in rather different ways in both Buddhist and secular traditions. The understanding gained through mindfulness is of how our own consciousness operates, and how in applying this knowledge through the various practices, we may transform our mental life in beneficial ways (Hanson 2009).

Perspectives on life such as those found in Schopenhauer's philosophy may provide useful counter-balances to the simplistic notions of positive psychology. Writing about these issues 25 years ago in the context of a revival of interest in the education of the emotions within philosophy of education, I observed that in most accounts there seemed to be a systematic avoidance of the negative aspects of everyday life; a determination to stay clear of the pain, adversity and strife which are characteristically part of every human life (Hyland 1985). I regret to say that little has changed in the last quarter of a century. Certain issues – particularly those connected with sickness, ageing , dying, loss and grief – are not given the attention they deserve. Offering an existential reinterpretation of traditional Buddhist philosophy, Batchelor (1983) offers some powerful insights on death which are well worth including in the sort of curriculum I am proposing. He writes:

> Life relentlessly moves towards death, towards that moment, perhaps today, perhaps in many years hence, when everything in this world will conclusively stop for us. Moreover, we face our death in utmost solitude. In the moments when this overwhelming possibility vibrates through us, we become acutely and uneasily conscious of our aloneness, insignificance and helplessness. It is no use dismissing such thinking as morbid or pessimistic: the fact of death is ineluctably present, and it has to be taken into full account in any view of man (pp. 60–61).

Of course, an affective education curriculum would also concern itself with joy, love, pride, courage, generosity, kindness and compassion. The important point is to take account of all experiences in life: positive and negative, pleasant and unpleasant, life-affirming and life-denying, beautiful and ugly. The final verses of Thich Nhat

Hanh's poem *Please Call Me By My True Names* might provide an apposite motto or mission statement for this aspect of a mindfulness-based approach to the education of the emotions. Hanh concludes his poem about the polarities of human life with the lines:

> My joy is like Spring, so warm
> it makes flowers bloom all over the Earth.
> My pain is like a river of tears
> so vast it fills the four oceans.
> Please call me by my true names,
> so I can hear all my cries and laughter at once,
> so I can see that my joy and pain are one.
> Please call me by my true names,
> so I can wake up
> and the door of my heart
> could be left open,
> the door of compassion.
>
> (Hanh 2001, p. 198)

8.6 Conclusion

Aspects of learning, teaching and curriculum have been discussed in terms of designing and developing a mindfulness-based affective education programme. A process model of curriculum combined with an insight learning/teaching strategy was recommended as an effective means of developing such a curriculum for schools and colleges. An MBAE component might be introduced as a cross-curricular dimension or (perhaps more realistically) incorporated into existing PSHE, moral/religious education or citizenship programmes. Ideas for strategies, materials and resources – including suggestions for various methods of formative assessment – are to be found in the existing programmes for mindfulness in schools, mindfulness in education networks and in MBSR/MBCT courses. Finally, it is argued that the curriculum recommended should not be confused with ad hoc experiments concerned with promoting happiness, confidence or self-esteem in students. These desirable qualities may be by-products of an MBAE course but they are not primary aims. The primary aims are – through the development of mindsight or reflective present moment awareness – to foster an understanding of our own and others' emotions so as to promote the mental health and well-being of all. This process – rather than being obsessed with happiness – will involve an exploration of the destructive role that emotions may have, in addition to a consideration of issues which are often avoided such as the sources of unhappiness, and our attitudes to sickness, ageing and death. The next chapter explores how an MBAE curriculum of this kind could have a beneficial effect on learners in schools, FE colleges and in higher and adult education.

Chapter 9
From School to Lifelong Learning

In the previous chapter, a mindfulness-based programme for affective education was outlined along with some suggestions for introducing such a curriculum into schools and colleges. In this chapter, I intend to examine key policy trends from school to lifelong learning to demonstrate the necessity of an affective component in schools and colleges. Within this context, I will return to the arguments of Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) which I criticised initially in the early chapters. In this way, the central themes and arguments will be further elaborated and justified.

9.1 Schools

The main policy trends at both primary and secondary levels of UK schooling (and, to some extent, in schools in many developed nations) over the last few decades or so can be described as a centralisation of control over the curriculum, assessment and management of education combined with a corresponding reduction of professional autonomy on the part of teachers (Fielding 2001). The 1980s had seen the introduction of a national curriculum and prescriptive standardised tests and examinations for schools backed up by a rigorous inspection and accountability regime as a means of monitoring the new framework (Aldrich 2002). When New Labour came to power in 1997, the new agenda extended this framework by strengthening the classification and framing of knowledge through state control with the aim of building a world-class education service. Ball (2001) summarises these policy developments in observing that:

> One of the key elements of the policy panopticon is the use of highly prescriptive systems of accountability – performance indicators, inspections, league tables, achievement targets. Schools are rated and compared in terms of student 'achievement' measured by tests and examinations, for which students are carefully prepared. Institutional and national increases in tests scores are then taken to be indicators of rising standards and improvements in schooling (p. 53).

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In more recent years, compulsory literacy and numeracy hours for primary schools were introduced and there was an overriding concern with evidence-based practice and school effectiveness (Elliott 2007). Jones (2003) has described the 'highly pressured region of schooling post-1997' and has observed that this is directly 'at odds with the discursive space of childhood' (p. 173) such as the entitlements listed in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Commonalities between contemporary education systems spanning Europe, Australasia and the USA were noted in earlier chapters. At the school level – in addition to the ubiquitous economic competitiveness and employability factors – the emphasis on cross-national comparisons of standards has itself resulted in uniformities of practice in terms of curricula (especially in numeracy and literacy), teacher education and educational research priorities (Hayden et al. 2007). In this respect, Baker and Wiseman (2005) make the interesting point that the 'institutionalisation of internationalised education policy' (p. 5) has been accelerated by the very process of comparative policy analysis. The more comparative data – on standards, curricula, assessment, research and teacher education – become readily available, the greater the tendency towards internationalisation.

It was noted in Chap. 2 that this preoccupation with standards, targets and outcomes in UK provision was gradually being challenged by educators, and there seemed to be welcome moves to rebalance the system in the interest of providing an education which catered for all aspects of the development of pupils and students. The recent Cambridge Primary Review (UCET 2010) provides a useful illustration of the changing climate of opinion in the sector. The following extracts offer a flavour of the newly emerging professional consensus (pp. 7–8):

- it was essential to consider the fundamental aims and values of the primary school
- the curriculum had to be seen as an entitlement to a broad and balanced education not needlessly compromised by a standards agenda which combines high stakes testing and the national strategies' focus on literacy and numeracy. The most conspicuous casualties are the arts, the humanities and those kinds of learning in all subjects which require time for talking, problem-solving and the extended exploration of ideas

Fundamental to the Cambridge Review is a deep belief in principles such as 'children's entitlement to "breadth, depth and balance" in the curriculum' combined with a 'pedagogy grounded in professional judgment not prescription' alongside the idea that 'teachers and their communities should decide what to teach, not central government' (p. 15).

Such trends – particularly the demand for more teacher control of the curriculum and assessment system – are also emerging in the secondary school sector alongside the broadening of learning experiences for pupils in the light of the introduction of new vocational programmes and the reorganisation of 14–19 education (Bristow 2005). Secondary schooling in the UK has been especially impoverished by the obsession with targets, standards and efficiency measures, along with the privatisation and marketisation of education against the background of an increasingly powerful centralist state (Lingard and Ozga 2007).

Within this general framework, Allen and Ainley (2007) demonstrate forcefully the dangers of the 2006 Education Act which represented further attempts to privatise the state system whilst at the same time establishing strict centralist control over what happens in schools. Describing the end product of recent secondary reforms as the establishment of a 'Gradgrind curriculum for target-driven times' (p. 83), they go on to show how the former Labour administration was able to disguise the privatisation of the secondary sector and the centralisation of control over teaching and learning as the 'modernisation' of the system (Allen and Ainley 2007). They conclude their forceful critique of policy in recent times by arguing that:

> Under New Labour the pursuit of academic qualifications has intensified and in some ways the issue of educational success has been given a new dimension. For example, the government has continued to emphasise the importance of education in terms of promoting individual social mobility, but also, in the absence of any more general redistributive policies, as a new way of securing social justice. Elsewhere, New Labour have continued with or even extended the internal market and encouraged the privatisation of educational provision. Above all, they have continued to depend on a highly directive centralized state (p. 71).

These policy developments continue seamlessly as the current Conservative–Liberal coalition in Britain (White 2010) established in May 2010 pushes ahead with an almost identical modernising reform agenda (Department for Education 2010, http://www.education.gov.uk/academies/act). It is against this background that the more recent developments concerned with introducing non-cognitive curriculum elements, formative assessment and more caring and student-friendly strategies need to be placed.

In describing the influence of what they call the 'therapeutic turn' in schools, Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) make use of mission statements, government policy documents and extracts from the popular press and psychotherapeutic writings about self-esteem and happiness of the kind which I was at pains to criticise at the end of the last chapter. The following will provide a flavour of the general thrust of the argument:

Primary schools

- The use of circle time discussions to calm children down
- Nurturing the learning power of pupils
- Using psychodrama to help children adjust to change
- Introducing P4C notions into the classroom
- Assessing children's emotional literacy
  (pp. 27–42)

Secondary schools

- Personalisation of the learner voice
- Learning to learn for lifelong learning
- De-stigmatising mental illness
- Developing citizenship values
- Capturing social, emotional and moral performance
  (pp. 47–61)

The first thing to say about all these recent interventions is that most of them are broadly in line with the sort of affective education I am advocating. Not all of them demonstrate the full and systematic approach of the MBAE outlined in the previous chapter. For instance, some of the techniques for establishing calm in classrooms described by Burnett (2009), and some of the modified MBCT mindful breathing and movement strategies advocated by Cattley and Lavelle (2009) – along with information about the place of emotion in evolutionary psychology (pp. 32–33) – could be usefully added to the current rather piecemeal affective curriculum. However, most of these recent initiatives are generally in accordance with the aim of rebalancing cognitive and affective perspectives in schools.

Not only do I welcome such an alleged therapeutic turn, I would want to say that such approaches are nowhere near as widespread and systematic as they ought to be if affective objectives are to be given the attention they deserve. As I noted in the first chapter, not only do Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) grossly exaggerate the extent of these therapeutic influences on the curriculum, they completely fail to present the aridity, shallowness and impoverishment of schooling over the last few decades to which such developments are a necessary response. It is impossible to discern even a hint here of that technicist obsession with standards – a 'devaluation of value' as Blake et al. (2000, p. xi) describe it – or the 'debilitation' of the whole system of education described by Smeyers et al. (2007, p. 4). As is the case with the other sectors of education discussed below, it is only by examining the centralising, de-professionalising and, in many respects, anti-educational features of recent policy developments – characterised, as Hudson (2005) argues, by the notion of education as a 'consumption good' (p. 21) – that we can make sense of the incipient and faltering attempts to redress the balance by turning to the affective dimension of education.

Cigman (2008), for example, argues that programmes such as SEAL (DfES 2005) and the Children's Plan (DCSF 2007) designed to 'enhance children and young people's well-being' (p. 19), are direct consequences of the recent policies which have been preoccupied with overall standards, school effectiveness and league tables. As was noted in Chap. 1, Cigman (2008) suggested that there were clear and direct links between the centralised imposition of the 'standards' agenda and the concerns which led to the growth of a 'supplementary agenda focusing on so-called non-cognitive traits…' (p. 540). In a similar vein, Suissa (2008) argues that the 'attention to pupils' well-being is surely to be applauded' in the light of the growing realisation among teachers that 'the obsession with testing and assessing children has had detrimental effects on children's emotional and mental health' (p. 576).

In the light of all this, there is a clear need and justification for what Cigman called a 'supplementary agenda' linked to non-cognitive traits to be introduced into the school curriculum. Moreover, as was argued in Chaps. 6 and 7 about the crucial and overriding importance of the emotional in all aspects of learning, such an agenda is supported by a wealth of evidence drawn from evolutionary psychology and neuroscience. Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) are simply mistaken in thinking that social and emotional learning is an optional extra to the standard curriculum, and the

mistake clearly rests on a failure to appreciate the crucial importance of emotions in educational development. The use of psychodrama, nurture groups and discussions about the role of emotions in all our lives (all criticised by Ecclestone and Hayes) are exactly those affective elements which have been sadly missing from mainstream education for decades. Fortunately, in recent years educators have tried to remedy such shortcomings. Weare's (2004) work on emotional literacy in schools, for example, demonstrates how a 'whole school approach' (pp. 53–58) can enhance learning, improve pupil behaviour and change the general school ethos and well-being in immensely positive and constructive ways.

Mindfulness practices can do much to enhance this affective dimension, whether this takes place during circle time in primary school or perhaps in PSHE, moral/religious education or citizenship lessons at secondary level. However, to have any real impact on deep-seated ways of thinking and behaving – to reduce the frequency of living on automatic pilot and provide more scope for the being rather than the doing mode – key mindfulness strategies need to be constantly reinforced. With this in mind, I would endorse some of the practices advocated by Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) and Burnett (2009) which seek to embed mindfulness in the everyday activities of schools. Beginning and ending each day with a short breathing meditation, for example, and encouraging occasional pauses and moments of stillness by ringing a bell (long associated with invitations to stillness and silence in contemplative traditions) would serve to underscore the value and force of present-moment attention and awareness.

As mentioned in earlier chapters in reference to the notion of cognitive emotions, thoughts and feelings are inextricably connected, and it is this which gives us an immediate and general justification for an affective curriculum. The 'connections between the amygdala (and related limbic structures) and the neocortex', Goleman (1996) reminds us, 'are the hub of the battles or cooperative treaties struck between head and heart, thought and feeling. This circuitry explains why emotion is so crucial to effective thought, both in making wise decisions and in simply allowing us to think clearly' (p. 27). This notion is reinforced by Pinker's (1997) observation that the 'emotions are mechanisms that set the brain's highest level goals…no sharp line divides thinking from feeling' (p. 373).

Thus, taking account of the affective dimension of learning genuinely enriches all educational activity. Clearly, in their worries about coaching pupils to have 'appropriate' responses and feelings about respecting other people's views, violence, aggression, and so on', Ecclestone and Hayes (2009, pp. 42–43) display, at best, a lack of understanding of these important cognitive-affective connections or, at worst, a disdain for the emotional aspect of being. Can we not, after all, understand the damage done by destructive emotions such as hatred, greed, anger and envy in respect of ourselves and others, and seek to bring the discussion of such important issues into schools and colleges? Such a task is particularly urgent in the light of ongoing research undertaken by the Office for National Statistics in the UK showing the alarming prevalence of emotional disorders in children and young people (Parry-Langdon 2007). To seek to educate the emotions – along the lines described by Peters, Valett, Lang, Weare and others discussed

in Chaps. 6 and 7 – is as legitimate as education in any of the other spheres of knowledge.

Just as there are appropriate/inappropriate moral responses to issues and events, so there are appropriate/inappropriate emotional responses. As Harris (2006) suggests in discussing these issues:

> Without denying that happiness has many requisites…we can hypothesize that whatever a person's current level of happiness is, his (sic) condition will generally be improved by his becoming yet more loving and compassionate, and hence more ethical (p. 191).

Dennett (2006) illustrates clearly how certain fundamental moral principles – truth-telling, trust and cooperation – are a part of human evolution and progress, and require no further explanation and justification beyond those which can be supplied by science. This is the point at which Harris' robust secularism comes into its own in terms of the enterprise of conceptualising and justifying morality. In recent work, Harris (2010) takes on the task of reconciling human values with scientific endeavour. The central thesis is that:

> questions about values – about meaning, morality and life's larger purpose – are really questions about the well-being of conscious creatures. Values, therefore, translate into facts about what can be scientifically understood: regarding positive and negative social emotions, retributive impulses, the effects of specific laws and social institutions on human relationships, the neurophysiology of happiness and suffering, etc....The more we understand ourselves at the level of the brain, the more we will see that there are right and wrong answers to questions of human values (pp. 2–3).

Conceptualised in this way, morality becomes an area within which science can contribute to an understanding and promotion of human flourishing in the same way that health is (Hyland 2011). Just as we value health whilst accepting that it is a broad and mutable concept, so we can promote human flourishing or well-being without being able to define it specifically once and for all. In any case, we clearly have sufficient knowledge about what causes ill health (and how to avoid it) and what tends to foster or frustrate our well-being without having to refer to anything but our experience and knowledge of the world. Moreover, Harris (2010) cites the neuroscientific research on belief which demonstrates its 'content-independence' and thus 'challenges the fact/value distinction' directly. As he observes:

> for if, from the point of view of the brain, believing that the "sun is a star" is importantly similar to believing that "cruelty is wrong", how can we say that scientific and ethical judgments have nothing in common? (Harris 2010, p. 122).

Similar neuroscientific data concerning 'mirror neurons' which, as Grayling (2010) explains, 'activate in sympathy with what their possessor perceives in the activity and experience of others' (p. 8), can be considered to underpin and support the idea of altruistic moral behaviour as part of evolved human behaviour. As Grayling puts it:

> The essential point is that mirror neurons underwrite the ability to recognize what pleases or distresses others, what they suffer and enjoy…and this means that the ultimate basis for moral judgement is hard-wired – and therefore universal. So even when customs differ, fundamental morality does not (Grayling 2010, p. 9).

Causing unnecessary and avoidable suffering to others just is morally wrong and, similarly, hatred, anger and greed are potentially destructive emotions whereas kindness, compassion and generosity are potentially beneficial. Rawls (1972), for example, argues that anyone lacking those values and traits linked to a 'sense of justice' also 'lacks certain fundamental attitudes and capacities included under the notion of humanity' (p. 488). Similar arguments (discussed in more detail in connection with social engagement in the final chapter) are put forward by Warnock (1967), O'Hear (1984) and Trusted (1987).

It is not, after all, as if we were *causing* anyone to either have moral/immoral sentiments or experience this or that emotion. The moral views and emotions are *already there;* a necessary and unavoidable part of being alive. What an affective education would seek to do is help children and young people to understand and manage their emotions/values in the light of all that we have learned from human history and civilisation. The Buddhist roots of mindfulness – using analogy and poetic language – provide us with graphic illustrations of the process. As Hanh (2001) reminds us, the seeds of all emotions – wholesome ones such as kindness, compassion, love and generosity as well as unwholesome ones such as anger, greed and hatred – are in all of us. Mindfulness helps us to water the wholesome seeds to promote flourishing and allow the unwholesome ones to wither way or, at least, to remain dormant and less powerful in our lives. Moreover, it is here where the cognitive–affective links can be effectively emphasised and reinforced. In showing how all our knowledge and understanding is inextricably connected with human values and emotions – especially when this is done within the community of enquiry spirit of P4C and using materials which engage children's interest and attention – it is possible to work towards that ideal of the education of the whole person.

If we add to this general picture the findings of neuroscience in relation to the impact of mindfulness practice in helping to curb destructive emotions and actually working to create new neural pathways to facilitate learning (Siegel 2007; Doidge 2007), then the case for the supplementary agenda outlined above becomes even stronger. The formidable power of what Siegel called 'mindsight' – reflective self-awareness in all its forms – in general educational development merits the full attention of educators and policy makers. Many of the school activities selected for criticism by Ecclestone and Hayes above – particularly P4C, the SEAL objectives and general attention to pupils' emotional experiences – are precisely those which can make an important contribution to the fostering of mindsight and to providing harmony between the cognitive and affective domains of schooling. Their tentative introduction is to be warmly welcomed and their systematic expansion would be fully justified.

9.2 Further Education Colleges

Further education (FE) colleges – now part of the overarching Learning and Skills Sector (LSS) in Britain which incorporates all post-compulsory education and training (PCET) outside higher education (HE) – have arguably witnessed more radical change

and development over the last few decades than any other sphere of educational provision (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Avis et al. 2009). The post-compulsory sector as a whole has had a history of neglect and marginalisation; the FE sector in particular has been called 'just the bit between school and higher education' (Baker 1989, p. 3) and the 'neglected middle child between universities and schools' (Foster 2005, p. 58).

Over the last few decades, the 'bit between school and higher education' has been changed out of all recognition with the growing realisation that the FE sector – both in the UK and internationally (Baker and Wiseman 2005) – had a crucial role to play in terms of education and training for 16–19 year olds (particularly those who had underachieved in schools) and in vocational education and training (VET), more generally, as the whole system was subordinated to the goals of employability and economic competitiveness (Allen and Ainley 2007).

In terms of international developments in the post-compulsory sector, similar policy drivers have served to shape provision in many industrialised nations. Technical and Further Education (TAFE) colleges in Australia have undergone a similar repositioning in the light of global political, economic and employment factors and – as in the UK and elsewhere (Arguelles and Gonczi 2000) – have seen the introduction of CBET systems and the emphasis on outcomes defined as skills and competences (this is referred to again in the next chapter on VET). In addition, the divisions between FE and HE have become eroded as – in Australia (Sommerlad et al. 1998), in Britain (Hyland and Winch) and across Europe (Hayden et al. 2007) – as post-school institutions are increasingly collaborating with universities to deliver franchised or validated programmes.

UK colleges were incorporated in 1993 and taken out of local government control, effectively becoming centrally funded but independent institutions competing for students in a quasi-market within which FE was now meant to cater for an increasingly heterogeneous community of 'customers' including, as Green and Lucas (1999) note:

> 16–19 year olds, both academic and vocational, adult returners, access students, HE students, those with special needs, the socially excluded and those not involved elsewhere. As part of the growing ethic of lifelong learning, if you are not in a school sixth form, at work or at university, then you should be involved with the local college (p. 35).

Funding and inspection regimes were stringent and operated within a strict 'managerialist' context with maximum accountability to centralised quangos mediated by a culture of 'performativity' (Avis 2009). In addition, staff contracts and working conditions were ruthlessly rewritten (often resulting in increased working hours, fewer holidays, industrial unrest and deteriorating morale) and the curriculum was strictly prescriptive and circumscribed, consisting mainly of vocational qualifications linked to narrowly predefined outcomes concerned with employability skills and competences (Ainley and Bailey 1997; Bryan 2005).

Ecclestone and Hayes' description of what they call the 'therapeutic further education college' (2009, pp. 65ff.) begins with an acknowledgement of the traumatic and turbulent nature of this radical restructuring of the sector. They observe that the 'FE sector has experienced more restructurings and resulting turmoil than any other sector, with profound effects on clarity of purpose, resourcing and conditions of

service' (p. 65). Against this background, they go on to 'explore the shift in FE colleges towards a strong caring and nurturing ethos'. This ethos is said to inform the management of transitions to college life for school leavers, the introduction of a 'therapeutic pedagogy' for those young people regarded as 'diminished', and courses which prepare people for 'emotional work in various contexts' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009).

In responding to the critique of the alleged therapeutic turn in schools, I suggested that Ecclestone and Hayes had underplayed the transformation of schooling through the standardising and effectiveness agenda and overstated the movement towards the affective. In the case of the FE sector, I would characterise their arguments in rather a different way. As already noted, there is an acknowledgement of the radical restructuring in the colleges but this is not sufficiently taken into account in the discussion of the teaching and learning support mechanisms for young people pursuing FE courses. In particular, no attention is given to the mechanistic and tedious drudgery of the many programmes transformed by the competence-based outcomes movement (Hyland 2008) and, consequently, there is a complete failure to see how this would inevitably call for the addition of supplementary humanistic elements of the kind discussed in Chaps. 6 and 7. All this results in a distorted view of the affective elements of college programmes – especially new vocational ones – and, again, suggests a wilful disregard for the role of the emotions in education and training.

Ecclestone and Hayes criticise the notion of 'engaging and assessing young people' in the context of 'risky transitions' from school to college' and the provision of 'extra support for those deemed to be at risk' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 67). I have to say that I can see absolutely nothing wrong with the procedures and support mechanisms employed here by college tutors. Is it not the case that such transitions just are 'risky' for many of us and, indeed, is there not an understandable 'vulnerability' which any of us might feel when exposed to such new experiences?

There is plenty of research on FE students (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007) which indicates the considerable hardships and difficulties experienced by young people who had been failed by the school system only to find themselves shunted into large FE colleges to be faced with an overwhelming array of new challenges. In addition to the perennial problems associated with young adulthood, there is the growing problem of youth unemployment in the wake of the post-2008 recession (ILO 2010). Moreover, the increase in mental health problems for young adults (Mental Health Foundation 2005; Parry-Langdon 2007; Warwick et al. 2008) is disturbing and more than justifies special attention from educators working in this sector. For such students – and their numbers are increasing as a result of massive social and economic change in recent times – personalised and caring advice and support mechanisms are exactly what is required.

Moreover, the idea of providing students with emotional support and teaching which is sensitive to the voice of the learner and the need to engage with students' needs and interests (all criticised by Ecclestone and Hayes) is as important for older learners as it is for younger ones. Many adults return to learning through the FE route, and it would be unforgivable for colleges to fail these 'second chance'

students as, for many of them, the school system did (Hyland and Merrill 2003). In the case of all such learners, a so-called 'therapeutic pedagogy' which allows for active participation on their part and includes the exploration of their own feelings and identities in relation to their newly found 'studentship' is fully justified and genuinely educational. As Bloomer and Hodkinson's (1997) study of FE students demonstrated, support and guidance systems must acknowledge how 'needs, wants and intentions…change over time', and hence require a form of 'studentship' to accommodate a 'variety of ways in which students can exert influence over the curriculum in the creation and confirmation of their own personal learning careers' (p. 140).

It is also worth noting here that much of post-school learning in FE contexts tends to be influenced by factors linked to earlier educational experiences. Obviously, family, social and economic factors are important in determining educational achievement but recent research has emphasised the crucial significance of the age at which young people leave school in the UK. For those who leave at 16, some 28% participate in further education, compared with 53% for those leaving at 17 and 18, and 61% for those who stay in the system until the age of 21 (Hillage et al. 2000, p. 55). Similarly, work on lifelong learning 'trajectories' done for the Learning Society project in Britain demonstrated the persistent power of characteristics such as family background and initial schooling in determining, quite precisely, individual learning identities and biographies (Rees et al. 2000).

Since many young people who enter FE tend to display just those features associated with underachievement, the colleges have a special role to play in providing second chances and access to learning and job opportunities to such students. It is not a question, as suggested by Ecclestone and Hayes, of labelling such learners as 'vulnerable' or 'diminished', it is more a question of attending to their specific needs and aspirations and providing the support for them that we would wish for our own sons and daughters or, indeed, for *any* young person.

The concept of studentship outlined above is an effective means of providing such support, and attention to the affective dimension of learning is a crucial aspect of such provision. As Cattley and Lavelle (2009) suggest, it is at this adolescent stage in particular that the role of emotion in all aspects of life needs to be addressed. The reflective self-awareness of mindsight – aimed at fostering a calm, non-judgmental naming and being with states of mind – is immensely beneficial in developing emotional stability and facilitating learning of all kinds. Many of the simple techniques – particularly the 3MBS, the pause and reflection, the shift from doing to being of mindfulness approaches – could be usefully incorporated into standard academic and vocational courses in the FE sector.

The value of stillness as an aid to mindful reflection was highlighted by Burnett (2009) in relation to learning/teaching in schools, but its significance applies to all educational activity. Olin (2009) has pointed to the importance of 'silent pedagogy' in the formal learning environments of the post-school sector. Noting some of the typically negative connotations of silence in teaching contexts – for example, teachers' use of silence as a mechanism of control, and the equation of student silence with non-interaction or avoidance of work – Olin's research in FE colleges with

lecturers working in vocational and academic areas demonstrated the 'multimodial' nature of silence which highlighted perspectives strikingly similar to mindfulness-based practices.

Teachers in the field of performing arts used silence 'as a means of building awareness and sensitivity through observation of self, others and the surrounding environment', occupational therapy teachers used it to show 'students how to use silence as a tool for communication', and yoga tutors used silent awareness techniques with the 'purpose of enabling learners to move beyond that awareness towards a deeper focus and concentration which centred the students on their own physical and emotional experience' (Olin 2009, p. 59). Olin concluded her research by recommending:

> A consideration of the classroom as a silent space in which vocalisation could increase sensitivity to how talk and silence are used and give the teacher some pause for thought before the "noise" of their voice intruded on the learner's or a learning group's productive silence. The development of communicative repertoires which included awareness of the potential of the use of different types of silence and which encouraged the development of a language of meta-silence would also be of use in this context (Olin 2009, p. 64).

Such recommendations are fully in line with the pauses, breathing spaces and deep listening/talking features of mindfulness-based strategies and provide ideal vehicles for enhancing the affective dimension of practice in colleges (similar ideas on silence and calmness in the school context are advocated by Weare 2004, pp. 126–127).

Ecclestone and Hayes eschew the emotional aspects of teaching in the post-school sector and argue that:

> Teachers in FE are trapped between relentless targets, auditing, repeated restructuring and growing numbers of students who do not want to be in education but have no alternative… teachers in FE have to expend more emotional labour because students increasingly come to expect this…and perhaps because paying attention to feelings is easier than teaching and learning difficult subjects and crafts. Therapeutic education does not require subject specialists (op.cit., p. 84).

What is described here as emotional labour is as fundamental to teaching at any level as intellectual or cognitive labour, and only those with distorted or minimalist views of the role of the emotions in human behaviour could think otherwise. I trust that the investigation of the emotions in Chaps. 6 and 7 has been sufficient to dispel the notion that paying attention to emotions is 'easy'. It is not easy; it is immensely and often painfully difficult, and I would offer this as a general justification for the mindfulness practices recommended throughout this book. Therapeutic education, indeed, does not require subject specialists; it is education *per se* which requires teachers to have a solid understanding of the nature of emotions and the crucial importance of their place in all forms of learning. The MB approaches outlined in earlier chapters could be usefully incorporated into teacher education programmes as a means of countering the mechanistic and technicist nature of much current practice, and as a way of preparing teachers to meet the task of helping students achieve that emotional well-being necessary and fundamental to all genuine learning (some of these issues are discussed in more detail in Chap. 11).

Ecclestone and Hayes assert that teachers in the FE sector 'face pressure to intensify emotional labour to maintain a professional integrity based on an ethos of care which

signals the distinctiveness of FE from other parts of the education system' (op.cit., p. 64). This statement is highly revealing in its implicit suggestion that an ethos of care has in some undefined way no place in the educational enterprise. My thesis throughout has been to demonstrate – with support from broad and diverse educational, philosophical and psychological perspectives – that precisely the opposite is the case: the ethos of care has a central place in teaching and learning at all levels, and is as important a factor in teacher professionalism as subject knowledge or classroom management skills.

Interestingly, the analytical survey of FE policy developments from 1944 to the late 1990s conducted by Cripps (2002) counterposes the traditional 'caring' ethos of colleges with the new 'competitive' ethos which developed after the incorporation of the sector and the marketisation of provision in 1993. The new agenda for the sector which emerged in the 1990s revealed a constant tension between what Cripps labelled the 'market coding and caring coding' (p. 263) operating in colleges. This resulted in a conflict between rival missions though the impact on staff was uneven, depending on the type of college and the prevailing management style. Themes and perspectives common to all the colleges researched by Cripps revealed some typical features: top-down strategic planning, mechanistic input/output provision and an obsession with financial targets and budgets. As one lecturer interviewed in the study put it:

> Money is what drives the institution; the government has shifted from seeing education as a public service to education as a product, and we have to keep our heads above water financially (Cripps 2002, p. 247).

In the face of all this, it is not surprising that many lecturers tried to reclaim an older tradition of professionalism which foregrounded the caring aspects of teaching in which pastoral care for students and personalised support systems (Avis 2007) are fully incorporated. As Cripps (2002) comments:

> The theme of efficiency as a measure of value in the 1980s is in stark contrast to the value of education in the 1960s and 1970s. Value in the earlier period included the notion of social responsibility, implying the existence of a society. Educating the masses thus had a wider remit, that of enabling the masses to contribute to society (p. 139).

> Her conclusion is that 'placing further education colleges in a competitive market appears to serve neither the individual, the employers nor national need' (Cripps 2002, p. 269).

Education as a public service has, of course, to ensure 'efficiency' of provision in which students achieve qualifications and skills for employment and adult life. However, if this provision does not involve those caring elements underpinned by due attention to the affective side of learning, then it ceases to become education and degenerates into a form of mechanistic and industrialised conditioning.

9.3 Lifelong Learning: Higher and Adult Education

Recent discussions of trends in lifelong learning (Field and Leicester 2000; Aspin 2007) have been concerned to mark the differences between an older tradition of adult/continuing education which was holistic, idealistic and all-embracing,

and newer perspectives which are narrower and more utilitarian (Hyland 1999). The differences are well brought out in the contrast between, for instance, the 1972 UNESCO report *Learning to Be* (Faure et al. 1972) influenced by Lindeman's notion that the purpose of education is 'to put meaning into the whole of life' (1989 edn, p. 5) and the 1998 Department for Education and Employment Report *The Learning Age* which saw learning as the 'key to prosperity' since 'investment in human capital will be the foundation of success in the knowledge-based global economy of the twenty-first century' (DFEE 1998, p. 7). The contrast is between a humanistic conception of lifelong learning which incorporates social, moral and aesthetic features of educational development and a predominantly economistic model in which education is concerned mainly with industry and employment.

The impact of these trends on the HE sector – though more gradual and covert than the influence on FE – has been significant, and exacerbated by the ideological and political reappraisal of the role of universities in social, economic and cultural life. Avirim (1992) has referred to the 'identity crisis' of the modern university which, externally, 'stems from growing pressures on the university to prove its pragmatic utility' and, internally, 'from a lack of firm and shared belief within the university concerning the nature of its educational mission' (p. 183). Similarly, 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 espistemologically, through relativistic and postmodernist 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' which:

> symbolizes quite clearly that we have entered a new era in which the information technology empowered by those who control capital determines the shape of the society's superstructure (p. 52).

Another crucial element of HE change was introduced in most Western states in the 1990s with the movement from elite to mass provision, in Britain with the granting of university status to the former polytechnics (Dearing 1997). Such 'massification' of HE – particularly when combined with a concentration on the student experience in the light as numbers entering HE institutions increased dramatically in line with an official widening participation agenda (Campbell and Norton 2004) – led to concerns about standards and the establishment of a professional framework to monitor all aspects of learning and teaching in this sector (www.heacademy.ac.uk/professionalstandards.htm). Given the 'supercomplexity' and 'uncertainty' (Barnett 2007) of the world in which the modern university has to operate – with growing numbers of students competing for vocational qualifications increasingly linked to employability and the economy – questions about the nature and quality of learning and teaching are foregrounded. How can universities seek to satisfy all the various demands made upon them and answer criticisms about 'dumbing down' and the claims that – in place of the 'learning society' which characterised educational policy from the late 1990s on – we may have produced a 'certified society' which

has resulted in 'closing down instead of opening up alternatives' (Allen and Ainley 2007, pp. 89ff) for students.

One way of addressing such problems is to direct attention to the student experience in HE as Barnett (2007) and Campbell and Norton (2004) have advocated. Voicing concerns about the impact that the move towards mass education has had in recent years, Haggis (2003) believes that there is often 'a lack of shared understanding between students and teachers regarding the nature of academic discourse' and that this can lead to difficulties with students who are unfamiliar with academic conventions. He argues that:

> Changing teaching methodologies and assessment tasks may alter the kinds of activities that students engage in, and possibly contribute to changes in the way they approach their study, but such changes do not in themselves necessarily make the details of academic practice any clearer to people who often come into university without any idea about what 'critique', 'argument' and 'structure' may mean (p. 100).

The new demands of mass HE have led to increased attention to methods of teaching and learning, and redefined the role of university tutors and support staff.

The theoretical foundations for this renewed emphasis on teaching and learning in HE are eclectic drawing on the ideas of Dewey on problem solving (Owens 2004), on the reflective practice tradition (Bold and Hutton 2004) and on the research on deep and surface learning undertaken by Gibbs (1992), Ramsden (1992) and Entwistle (1998). Ramsden (1992, p. 52) provides a precise summary of the key differences between deep and surface approaches to learning:

Deep learning: involves the intention to understand, with the student focusing on the underlying concepts and arguments in material, relating previous to new knowledge, distinguishing evidence from argument, and organising what is learnt into a coherent whole.

Surface learning: primarily involves the intention to complete specific tasks, focusing on unrelated parts of tasks, memorising information for assessment, and associating facts and concepts unreflectively with little structure or links to previous knowledge.

The advantages of fostering deep strategies have been demonstrated clearly in a wide range of empirical studies. Deep learning has been linked with:

- More effective study habits and management of tasks (Biggs 1987)
- Superiority of understanding and grasp of underlying principles (Prosser and Millar 1989; Ramsden 1992)
- Improved essay and assignment writing (Hounsell 1985)
- Higher final exam grades (Ramsden et al. 1986; Biggs 1987)

Gibbs (1992) offers some useful recommendations for HE tutors who wish to encourage deep learning, which include boosting motivation by allowing student input to course content and assessment, encouraging active approaches which link new learning with existing experience, facilitating group and collaborative work, and utilising 'interdisciplinary approaches' which contribute to a 'well-structured knowledge base' (pp. 155–156). It is also crucial for teachers to 'clarify assessment

criteria' so that 'students are in no doubt that mere memorization will not be rewarded' (Gibbs 1992, p. 163). In terms of linking deep learning with reflective practice and connections with work and the community, a number of research projects have explored work placements to enhance knowledge, understanding and the development of values and skills in the context of degree programmes (Rossin and Hyland 2003; Campbell and Norton 2004).

Many of these new approaches to university teaching and learning are echoed in the 'studentship' model for FE outlined earlier, particularly in their emphasis on learning support mechanisms and making connections between all aspects of the student experience. In this sense, the recommendations for FE in terms of reasserting the affective aspects of learning are equally applicable to the HE context. Moreover, the key features of deep learning have much in common with the non-judgmental present-moment awareness of mindfulness strategies, and are on all fours with the attitudinal foundations of mindfulness – openness to all aspects of our mental lives, patience, trust, and the ability to greet new experience with a beginner's mind – outlined by Kabat Zinn (1990) and others.

As the work of Siegel (2007), Crane (2009), Burnett (2009) and Hanson (2009) shows, the emphasis on the interdependence of thinking, feeling and doing which mindfulness fosters can enhance learning at all levels and in any sphere. Moreover, as Schoberlein and Sheth (2009) remind us, most teachers will already have experienced moments of mindfulness without necessarily noting or recognising them as such. They ask us to consider the following examples:

- You're teaching a class when you notice – as if you were witnessing the situation while living it – your students and you are totally focused on the experience of learning
- You're listening to someone when you realise you're totally tuned in to the experience of listening – and you're not thinking about what to say next
- You consciously hear your tone of voice while speaking and notice how sounds can communicate – without automatically focusing on the meanings of words (Schoberlein and Sheth 2009, p. 6)

Similarly, teachers may be aware – usually after the event – of mindless actions which may have hampered learning or had a negative impact on students. The fostering of this quality of 'paying attention to the experience of paying attention' (Schoberlein and Sheth 2009, p.xii) involves an awareness of how thoughts, emotions and bodily sensations combine to define our relationship with ourselves, with others and with the world.

Rather than attending to the radical changes in the nature and work of universities outlined above, critics of the 'therapeutic turn' are at pains to portray a picture of something called the 'therapeutic university' which is concerned with the 'emotional and social problems of students' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 86). The critics are especially troubled by support and counselling services which are said to 'infantilise' students, and are scathing about certain HE academics who, it is claimed, lend support to the therapeutic activities which diminish learning. The work of Barnett which was referred to above, for instance, on the new challenges to

the academy in the face of the advances of corporatism and postmodernist relativism is singled out for criticism on the grounds that:

> Barnett and his epigones are providing us with an account of what would be better called the 'therapeutic university'. The therapeutic university has an ethical purpose, to make people feel safe and secure, and the pursuit of knowledge does not feature in it at all. This vision of the university is an articulate celebration of the loss of confidence in the academy (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 96).

Although I quoted Barnett with approval earlier, he is better placed than me to defend his position but it is worth noting that there is little attempt here on the part of Ecclestone & Hayes to engage seriously with Barnett's large body of writings – books and articles spanning the last two decades – which represent a painstaking and highly informed account of the changing nature of the contemporary academy. Thus, there is no engagement with the problems and challenges posed by corporatism and postmodernism here, and little indication of the profound philosophical issues underpinning the debate in this area (see, for instance, Barnett and Standish 2003). Moreover, I simply cannot see the connections between Barnett's conception of the changing nature of knowledge and the so-called therapeutic university, except to note that, once again, the obvious attachment of these critics to a view of knowledge in which the emotions have no place. However, an attachment to an intellectualist view of knowledge apparently does not protect against ironic self-contradiction as the therapeutic university is derided for its ethical purpose of making 'people feel safe and secure' (p. 96) on the page following the lambasting of academics such as Barnett who comment on the 'uncertainty' (p. 95) of contemporary university life!

The claims about the fragility and vulnerability of students recur in the description of the therapeutic university, and I can only repeat what was said about such claims in the schools and FE context. They display an antagonism towards feelings and a complete failure to understand the connections between learning and emotion. As a matter of fact, the pressures facing contemporary university students – many of whom are from families with no history of HE attendance (Lea et al. 2003; Allen and Ainley 2007; Campbell and Norton 2004) – in a mass system obsessed by targets, outcomes and employability skills just *is different* from the student experience in former times and, arguably, actually does call for appropriate support and guidance services alongside new learning/teaching strategies.

Ecclestone and Hayes make no allowances for these changes, nor are they prepared to accept any view about university learning and teaching which mentions feelings or emotions. It is difficult to make sense of their criticism of Rowland (2006) for advocating 'intellectual love' as a philosophy of learning in HE (Rowland 2006, p. 96). I would have thought it was not too far removed from their own severely cognitive notions of knowledge. There is, after all, a long and respectable tradition within mainstream philosophy and the philosophy of education which supports the sort of views expressed by Rowland. Elliott (1974) sums this up well in arguing that:

> With regard to the intellectual life, 'love' may be used to describe a person's relation to his (sic) subject, or to the objects studied by his subject, or enquiry, or to truth…At least so far as the humanities, a *true* love for one's subject would involve a *true* love for its objects, for enquiry, and truth (p. 135, original italics).

Ecclestone & Hayes might just want to support such a position, particularly Elliott's later suggestion that a 'deterioration of values…conflict and uncertainty' in intellectual life might 'be redeemed by love of truth' (Elliott 1974, p. 152). On the other hand, the presence of the concept of 'love' (even when placed in inverted commas!) might be too close to ideas eschewed by critics of the therapeutic university. If not, I think that Elliott's concluding remarks might just represent a bridge too far in the eyes of such critics. He suggests that:

> Perhaps the sign of a healthy discipline in these conditions [of conflict and uncertainty of values and standards] would be acceptance of the existence here and now of a multiplicity of standards and values, affirmation of values nevertheless without sinking into despair, benevolent disputation without suppression, resolve for truth, gentleness, sustained intellectual vitality and an abundance of hope (pp. 152–153).

I would think that Elliott's statement – which provides a sort of perennial justification for university life and agrees in many respects the ideas of Barnett and Rowland (and also with the MBAE approach I am advocating) – might, conceivably, contain just a few too many emotion words for Ecclestone and Hayes' liking. Yet this conception of knowledge and education has a long pedigree within the liberal humanist tradition which – as mentioned in the discussion of the cognitive emotions in earlier chapters – sees no tension between the intellectual and emotional aspects of knowing, being and doing. The criticisms of Mortiboys (2005) by Ecclestone and Hayes for advocating the development of 'emotional literacy' among university lecturers display the misreadings and weaknesses referred to already. Their claim that an 'emphasis on the emotions in higher education is irrelevant, a time wasting activity' (op.cit., p. 97) is a gross mutation which flies in the face of a vast array of philosophical, psychological, biological and neuroscientific evidence demonstrating the inextricable interconnectedness of the cognitive and the affective, and demonstrable links between thinking, feeling and doing.

There is yet another ironic paradox in their criticism of Mortiboys' conclusion that '"I think therefore I am" should be replaced by "I feel therefore I am"' (Mortiboys 2005, p. 98) since, as mentioned in Chap. 1, they end their own book by declaring that education should be based on '*cogito ergo sum* not *sentio ergo sum*'. Both Mortiboys and Ecclestone and Hayes are mistaken; if taken up, their unbalanced and one-sided recommendations would produce the diminished, fragile and vulnerable learners that the therapeutic turn critics make so much of. The education of the whole person requires a constant harmony between the cognitive and the affective if such distorted and malformed conceptions are to be avoided. In this respect (as mentioned in other chapters), both Descartes and Rousseau got it wrong about the respective roles of the head and the heart in human activity, and Pascal was nearer the truth. Descartes gave too much prominence to the head, Rousseau to the heart, whereas Pascal rightly saw the need for both spheres of activity and experience to operate in tandem.

The adult education sector has suffered many of the vicissitudes of schools, FE and HE over the last few decades: centralisation of control over funding and curricula, an obsession with economistic outcomes, and a replacement of learning for interest and personal development by severely utilitarian educational values

(Field and Leicester 2000; Aspin 2007). Such changes are incorporated in the differences between older and newer conceptions of lifelong learning referred to at the beginning of the chapter. Ecclestone and Hayes don't address this sector of education specifically though the criticisms of the state of learning and education from school to university would logically apply to adult education also. Since I have already sought to answer such criticisms – including the specific concerns of Thompson (2007) about the loss of the social and political dimension of work in this field which was addressed in Chap. 1 (and referred to again in the next chapter concerned with VET) – it seems most useful to let these arguments stand and present some positive recommendations for the adult education sector in the light of my central thesis.

Adult education has traditionally been concerned with all aspects of the development of learners, giving emphasis to affective objectives covering personal, moral and emotional spheres as well as cognitive aims, but (as in the school and PCET sectors) there is an urgent need for an enhancement of the affective function in adult learning to create a greater cognitive–affective balance (Hyland 2010). Although recent trends in lifelong learning seemed to pay rather too much attention to economic rather than social capital, there are signs of a return to the more traditional aims of educating the whole person in government policy documents on mental health and well-being. As mentioned in Chap. 1, in the report sponsored by the Department for Business Innovation & Skills, *Mental Capital and Wellbeing* (Government Office for Science 2008), a primary role was envisaged for adult educators in promoting the mental and emotional resources which can contribute to mental health and the attendant consequences for individuals and society. The role of mindfulness and mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) strategies were highlighted in the report and, in view of this emphasis, it is worth considering how such approaches might be implemented in the sector.

As the manual for mindful teaching produced by Schoerberlein and Sheth (2009) observes, the foundation of mindfulness is in 'noticing what you're doing as you're doing it' (p. 17) and this includes all practical activities as well as thoughts and emotions. The process is nicely described by Williams et al. (2007) as 'turning off the autopilot' so as to achieve an 'implicit, intuitive, non-conceptual, direct knowing of what is unfolding as it is unfolding' (pp. 61–2). This is exactly the spirit of the 'five ways to mental well-being' outlined in *Mental Capital and Wellbeing* in which, among other things, people are advised to 'take notice…Be curious…Savour the moment, whether you are walking to work, eating lunch or talking to friends. Be aware of the world around you and what you are feeling' (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 23). Moreover, the emphasis in the report on working with older adults – especially in view of the exponential growth of people over 65 (Government Office for Science 2008, p. 33) – raises urgent issues about the maintenance of the general and mental health and well-being of this 'third age' group of people.

Chapters 4 and 5 discussed the many practical applications of mindfulness – from the enhancement of learning in schools and colleges, the treatment of depression and addiction on MBCT programmes, the central role in stress reduction through MBSR strategies, to the promotion of mental well-being for people of all ages – and there is now a large body of valuable research and practice which adult

educators can utilise in their work. There are two main ways in which mindfulness-based strategies can play a role in adult education: through the MBSR/MBCT programmes which are being introduced nationally, and through the inclusion of MB strategies in general post-compulsory provision in ways discussed above for further and higher education.

The MBSR and MBCT courses discussed in detail in Chap. 5 have become an established part of adult education provision in the UK. Based on the theory and practice originally developed by Kabat-Zinn (1990) and associates at the University of Massachusetts Medical School (www.umassmed.edu/cfm), the standard 8-week programmes were introduced in Britain by Williams and Teasdale now both working at Oxford University (see Williams et al. 2007). There are a number of well-established centres for the research and teaching in mindfulness-based approaches: the Centre for Mindfulness Research and Practice at the University of Wales, Bangor (www.bangor.ac.uk/mindfulness), the Oxford Cognitive Therapy Centre (www.octc.co.uk), and the University of Exeter (www.exeter.ac.uk). All these centres conduct research and teaching on MB interventions – from basic introductory programmes to master's and Ph.D. level – and are actively involved in training tutors to teach the mainstream MBSR and MBCT courses.

Such courses are now appearing in adult and community centres around Britain (Burnett 2009; Crane 2009) but I think that this formal provision – important though it is – needs to be supplemented by the more non-formal establishment of MB teaching and learning as a dimension of more general adult education courses. Langer's (1989, 2005) work with older adults, for example, which was examined in Chap. 5, provides an excellent example of good practice in the field. It is full of valuable and practical suggestions which have been shown to help in the promotion of mental alertness and well-being. Her research and practice provides an immensely valuable source of ideas about how to foster openness to new ideas and enhance the creative capacity to view life from different perspectives, all activities which tend to enhance mental health and well-being.

In addition, the standard MB practices of mindful breathing, walking and movement can be used to good effect – as they have been in schools and colleges – in just about any course or programme (a wide range of ideas and resources is available at www.mindfuleducation.org/). Of course, the success of any of this will be crucially dependent upon the flexibility of the system and the interest and commitment of teachers (teacher education is examined in greater depth in Chap. 11).

9.4 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the main policy and practice developments which have shaped the UK education system – and other countries in which provision has been influenced by broadly similar forces (Baker and Wiseman 2005) – from school to university over the last few decades. It has been argued that some of the central deficiencies and limitations of education at all levels – over-prescriptive curricula,

narrowly defined competence and skill outcomes which encourage surface learning and, most of all, an almost total neglect of affective components – may be remedied by adopting the sort of MBAE approaches described in earlier chapters.

The mantra about fragile, vulnerable and diminished learners repeated *ad nauseam* by the critics of the therapeutic turn has been exposed as empty, misinformed and untenable. It has been argued that, on the contrary, the severely intellectualist and cognitivist educational views of Ecclestone and Hayes would, if implemented, produce precisely the vulnerable and diminished learners which the critics seem to be so concerned about. As Marples (2010) puts this in relation to fostering autonomy in learners:

> Discussions of autonomy in an educational context are all too frequently confined to intellectual autonomy and ignore the importance of emotional autonomy. After all, one's emotional reactions may well be stereotypical and unreflective just as one's beliefs and actions may be predictable and other-directed (p. 45).

Fortunately, there are some hopeful signs of a revival of interest in the affective domain and growing interest in MB strategies. If this trend is reinforced, it might just be possible to ensure that students are adequately prepared to face the emotional challenges of life as well as the intellectual ones. Although the new educational policy climate is less than promising or conducive to change in this respect, I have suggested that the benefits of adopting MBAE strategies are considerable and could enhance the experience of learners at all levels of the system. In the next chapter, I examine how these recommendations may be applied to the vitally important sphere of vocational education and training.

Chapter 10
Vocational Education and Training

10.1 The Impoverishment of VET

The roots of the so-called vocational/academic divide and the inferior status of vocational pursuits in Britain go back centuries and, as mentioned in Chap. 7, have cultural and philosophical origins in Ancient Greek thought. The historical legacy can be clearly discerned in the nineteenth century establishment of state schooling, and this has continued to influence policy and practice to the present day. Kenneth Richmond (1945) graphically illustrates the nineteenth century legacy in this sphere in observing that:

> The Victorian attitude to education was much the same as it was to all public services: it has its First-Class compartments, the Public Schools with the doors and windows locked against riff-raff; its Second-Class, the old Grammar Schools intended for the sons of the bourgeoisie, the professions; its Third-Class, the Elementary Schools for the 'lower orders', the artisans (p. 90).

This form of social stratification militated against the emergence of any form of 'common school' for all young people in Britain (this issues is taken up again in Chap. 12) and ensured that the 'perennial liberal versus utilitarian debate continued to be fought mainly on class lines' (Coffey 1992, p. 73). Moreover, the long-established British 'resistance to the provision of technical education at the secondary stage' (Lester Smith 1966, p. 209) meant that not even the nineteenth century conception of 'artisanship' could emerge to ensure that schooling might, as a basic minimum, incorporate some form of meaningful vocational studies.

The few technical schools established in the wake of the definitive 1944 Education Act were short-lived, partly because of the 'hostility of both parents and employers

T. Hyland, *Mindfulness and Learning: Celebrating the Affective Dimension of Education*, Lifelong Learning Book Series 17, DOI 10.1007/978-94-007-1911-8_10,

of labour' (Dent 1968, p. 36) and partly because of the persistent vocational/academic divisions in this sector. In summarising developments in this area, Coffey (1992) concluded that although:

> it emerged that it was regarded as an important part of the school's business to prepare pupils for the world of work…a vocational bias in the curriculum and explicit skill training for occupations appeared…only in less prestigious secondary schools…Vocational and practical subjects in general had not attained the importance of the more prestigious 'academic' or 'pure' subjects (p. 153).

This second-class status of vocational pursuits – accompanied by its marginalisation during the massive expansion of schooling and comprehensive movement following the 1945 settlement – effectively prevented either the bridging of divisions or the upgrading of the vocational aspect of education. As McCulloch (1986) noted, the 'technical and vocational end of education somehow got lost' in the 'drives towards comprehensives' (p. 129), a loss described by Halsey et al. (1980) as 'one of the tragedies of British education after the second war' (p. 214).

The history of vocational studies over the last half century has been amply recorded by a number of commentators (Evans 1992; Ainley 1999; Hyland 1999; Winch 2000), and can be characterised as a series of tragic narratives – mostly short-lived and inept tinkerings with stale and recycled ideas – which have all failed to solve the central problems of VET provision in Britain (Richardson 2007).

Writing in 1999, Green observed that:

> VET in England and Wales is generally seen as one of the weakest areas of the education system, traditionally suffering from a lack of prestige and coherent planning and organization (p. 13).

In spite of what Keep (2006) has described as a 'permanent revolution' (p. 47) in policy initiatives in recent times, the central problems are still with us, no doubt partly because of the strong centralist control of VET in Britain which, as Keep contends, effectively prevents the development of alternative planning and funding systems such as the ones operating in the state partnership models of Continental Europe. From the short-term youth training schemes designed to combat massive youth unemployment in the 1980s, to the new vocationalism based directly on employment needs in the 1990s, to the competence-based programmes and obsession with skills training in more recent times (Ainley 1990, 1999; Allen and Ainley 2007; Hyland and Winch 2007), VET has been in a state of perpetual change fuelled by vain attempts to grapple with the persistence of fundamental flaws in the system.

The recycling continues as the current economic recession and rising levels of youth unemployment result in a return to the welfare to work training schemes introduced as part of the Labour Government's New Deal policies in the late 1990s (ILO 2010). In Continental Europe, the main trends still seem to be the harmonisation of skill standards (Hyland 2008) and comparisons of VET learning outcomes (CEDEFOP 2010) with little discussion about the fundamental aims, nature and purpose of education in this sphere.

In a recent major national review of all aspects of VET provision in England, the Wolf Report (2011) was highly critical of current provision – particularly for 16–19 year olds – declaring that 'at least 350,000 get little to no benefit from the post-16 education system' (p. 7). The result is that 'many of England's 14–19 year olds do not, at present, progress successfully into either secure employment or higher-level education and training' (Wolf Report 2011, p. 8). In particular, the research conducted as part of the review concluded that:

> low-level vocational qualifications, notably NVQs, have, on average, absolutely no significant economic value to the holders unless they are gained as part of a completed apprenticeship. This is especially true if they were gained on a government-financed scheme (Wolf Report 2011, p. 150).

Amongst the many proposals for the improvement of practice, the report recommended the delay of specialisation in terms of vocational/academic tracks until age 16, the enhancement of English and Mathematics teaching for 16–19 year olds and – in line with European systems of provision – the expansion of high-quality work experience and apprenticeships for young people (Wolf Report 2011, pp. 160–171).

The unfavourable comparisons between English and European systems made in the Wolf report – and indeed in many national reviews of VET in Britain since the Royal Commission on Technical Education reported in 1884 (Musgrave 1964) – point towards the low status of vocational pursuits (noted in Chap. 7 and referred to below) in the UK compared to that in Continental Europe and elsewhere (Hyland and Winch 2007). In the light of these cultural differences, it is unlikely that structural, funding or curriculum reforms alone will succeed in enhancing VET provision without corresponding changes in the value foundation of vocational studies (Hyland 2002a, 2011a). The reconstruction of VET requires a reorientation of its foundational values if the reforms proposed by Wolf and others are to have any chance of lasting success.

10.2 Reconstructing Vocational Education

Whitehead (1962 edn) argued that the 'antithesis between a technical and a liberal education is fallacious' and that there 'can be no adequate technical education which is not liberal, and no liberal education which in not technical' (p. 74). The false dichotomy between affective and cognitive education has been argued throughout and, in a similar way, a reconstructed vocationalism urgently requires ways of breaking down what Dewey (1966 edn) called the 'antithesis of vocational and cultural education' based on the false oppositions of 'labour and leisure, theory and practice, body and mind' (p. 301). Dewey is the philosopher *par excellence* of vocational education and his theories emphasise powerfully the value of 'education which acknowledges the full intellectual and social meaning of a vocation' (Dewey 1966 edn, p. 318). The idea of a vocation which 'signifies any form of continuous

activity which renders service to others and engages personal powers on behalf of the accomplishment of results' is a broad one and provides an ideal vehicle for reconstructing VET. Dewey's conception includes:

> the development of artistic capacity of any kind, of specific scientific ability, of effective citizenship, as well as professional and business occupations, to say nothing of mechanical labour or engagement in gainful pursuits (Dewey 1966 edn, p. 307).

In addition to this broad Deweyan perspective, a reconstructed programme of VET would ideally satisfy a number of important criteria advocated in earlier chapters. These would include the normative values implicit in all meaningful educational activity (Peters 1966; Pring 1995), the spirit of criticism characteristic of both rational enquiry and the self-reflective awareness of mindsight (Siegel 2010), and the moral principles and ethos of inclusive citizenship and social justice which have shaped contemporary approaches to lifelong learning (Ranson 1998; Aspin 2007). Employing a broadly similar framework, James (2010) has recently outlined proposals based on 15 principles of educational intervention derived from work in Australian VET contexts for developing vocationalised moral values in workplace settings. Adopting a wider perspective, I intend to describe the salient features of a proposed reconstructed conception of VET under the headings of ethical foundations, aesthetics and social–collective aspects of vocationalism.

10.2.1 Ethics, Morality and Vocationalism

Alongside the historical legacy of vocational education shaped by social stratification and subordination to academic studies, there has been a serious neglect of both the ethical (i.e. links with broader social values and networks of interests) and moral (i.e. values fundamental to human flourishing such as justice, trust and truth) foundations of VET. This is really quite surprising given the centrality of preparation for working life in all aspects of the education system from school to university. Jarrett (1991) argues that the 'single most important goal for a teacher to work towards has to do with the basic attitude towards work' (p. 206) and similar sentiments inspire Warnock's (1977) philosophy of education in which 'work is, and always must be an ingredient of the good life' such that a 'life without work would always be less good than a life which contained it' (p. 144).

The 'morally impoverished' (Fish 1993, p. 10) state of VET can, of course, be directly attributed to the perennial social class and value differences already mentioned in which the inferior status of vocational pursuits has meant that the moral high ground would almost always be occupied by academic education with its association with liberal and classical ideals, and with power and privilege. Vocational education, on the other hand, has generally been associated with less prestigious, workaday activities which, as a number of commentators have tellingly observed (Ainley 1990; Lewis 1991) always seem to be about 'other people's children'. However, as philosophers of education such as Warnock (1977), White (1997) and

Winch (2000) have argued, the prestigious, value-laden links are merely contingent and could just as easily be applied to the vocational side as, indeed, Dewey's pioneering work amply demonstrated. Pring (1995) sums up the position well in commenting:

> 'Liberal' is contrasted with 'vocational' as if the vocational, properly taught, cannot itself be liberating – a way into those forms of knowledge through which a person is freed from ignorance, and opened to new imaginings, new possibilities; the craftsman who finds aesthetic delight in the object of his craft, the technician who sees the science behind the artifact, the reflective teacher making theoretical sense of practice (p. 189).

What needs to be added to such reconciliation approaches is a more precise definition of vocational work and, more specifically, some account of the crucial differences initially noted and analysed by Arendt (1958) between work as creative endeavour and that linked with labour or toil (Higgins 2010, demonstrates the importance of Arendt's work to the analysis of teaching as a vocation and ethical profession). Building on Arendt's arguments, Herbst (1973) identified a number of educationally significant features of the distinction between work and labour. Although the activities have much in common – they both consume time and energy and can be undertaken more or less efficiently – work can be said to possess an element of intrinsic value (when it is integrally related to its end product) whereas labour has an essentially extrinsic or utilitarian worth (as it is typically done for purposes beyond itself) and can, therefore, be more properly described as toil. As he suggests: 'Labour is hardship…the price we pay for whatever advantages the rewards of labour will pay' (Herbst 1973, p. 59). Another way of putting this is that 'work, unlike labour, must have a point which the workman [*sic*] can endorse, and a purpose with which he can associate himself' (Herbst 1973, p. 61).

There are echoes here of Marx's 'philosophy of man' which 'proclaims man [sic] to be the presupposition and the end of all philosophy, all science and all human activity' (Kamenka 1969, p. 15). It is, consequently, the 'alienation' of people from that most basic and definitive of all human activities, work, which is so offensive to Marxist ethics founded on the philosophy of man. Kamenka (1969, pp. 19–20) outlines four main aspects of the alientation process said to be operating in capitalist states:

i. man is alienated from the things he produces and his own labour in producing them;
ii. man is alienated from other men through the competitive character of the economic system based on private property which forces everyone to live at someone else's expense;
iii. man is alienated from nature which does not confront him as a field for the creative exercise of his powers but as a source of difficulty and drudgery;
iv. man is alienated from society as the expression of social, collective power.

Kamenka neatly summarises the Marxist stance in this area in commenting that:

> Alienation, for Marx then, occurs when man falls into servitude to and dependence upon his own powers or the institutions and goods he has himself created; it is overcome when man makes all his activities free expressions of his nature and full satisfactions of his needs (Kamenka 1969, p. 19).

Rikowski (1999a) points to similar dehumanising tendencies in the idea of workers becoming 'trans-human' in the relentless pursuit – through striving to achieve the

multi-skilling and flexibility required by modern post-Fordist economies – of the means of existence. As he explains:

As the capitalisation of humanity deepens and strengthens, we become a life form which increasingly incorporates the contradictions of capital. Capital assumes a number of forms: value, money, commodity, state and other forms. The capitalisation of humanity implies that, as capital, these forms take on real existence within us and within our everyday lives as human capital (Kamenka 1969, p. 2).

White's (1997) philosophical analysis of these issues leads him to broadly similar – though somewhat less pessimistic – conclusions about the role or work in contemporary life. He begins by noting the difference between 'autonomous work', whose 'end product is chosen as a major goal of an autonomous agent', and 'heteronomous work' whose 'end product is not chosen as a major goal, but is in some way unavoidable or required of one' (pp. 5–6). Although there is said to be 'no sharp line' between heteronomous and autonomous work in practice, it is possible to conceive of a continuum of activities and gradations between the two. Having pointed out the value and benefit of autonomous work which is 'self-directed' and has an 'end-product… of great significance' in the personal lives of those undertaking it, White moved from idealistic to realistic mode in admitting that:

> Very few people in the history of the world or, indeed, alive today, have been able to engage in much, if any, autonomous work. Nearly all work has been heteronomous…Some heteronomous work, like all autonomous work, has been of personal significance to the agent… [but] even personally non-significant work, undertaken perhaps simply to earn a living, can be very enjoyable (White's 1997, p. 10).

Such caveats and qualifications are crucial in a field in which, clearly, discussions can never be free of cultural, emotional and moral prejudices and presuppositions. Indeed, to examine VET in the light of conceptions and perspectives about work in this rigorous fashion illustrates graphically the impossibility of divorcing the cognitive and affective domains in education. Preparation for work cannot but be of ethical and emotional significance for all stakeholders – learners, teachers, employers and society as a whole – and VET programmes would do well to acknowledge this by incorporating moral/affective elements into mainstream curricula (mindfulness strategies can do much to enhance this process, as argued below).

Work of some kind is the lot of most humans and the examination of the full implications of the perspectives outlined above should be a part of every person's education. Such discussions also serve to remind us of what Wringe (1991) has referred to as the 'morality of work' which consists in the recognition that:

> Work does not have to be sublime or spectacular…to be worthwhile. Many relatively mundane jobs can be challenging and varied, and involve standards of logic, efficiency, integrity, judgement and so on (p. 38).

In a similar vein, Green (1968) argues that the 'meaningfulness of a task lies not in the work but in the worker', and that 'some people may find even cosmic significance in a task that, to others, would seem mean and inconsequential' (p. 25). The present-moment attention fostered through mindfulness practice has much to offer in reconstructing values in this field, particularly in relation to the exercise of craft

skills and the ideals and aesthetics of artisanship (discussed in more detail below). The nature and complexity of craft skills and the work of artisans are highlighted in studies by Ainley (1993) and Sennett (2008) and, examining similar perspectives, Corson (1991) calls for a consideration of work as 'craft…pursued for its own ends…similar to recreational work in having value for its own sake' (p. 171). In order to realise such – essentially Deweyan – ideals in practice, Corson suggests a framework for learning incorporating notions of craftsmanship which would be designed to reinforce the 'values that students see in their work and the significance of that work for themselves and for their society' (Corson 1991, pp. 171–172).

The moral dimensions of VET follow logically from such considerations. Wringe (1991) has written of the 'morality of toil and the division of labour', a consequence of which is that, since 'toil, regular, serious toil cannot itself be a necessary part of the good life', the 'facts of human existence are such that the preparedness to undertake it may be regarded as a necessary part of a life that is just' (p. 40). Questions about justice and fairness in relation to work and society necessarily raise fundamental moral issues which are inseparable from the full-blooded reconstruction of VET being proposed. There are certain primary and basic moral principles – Trusted (1987) identifies these as 'trust and benevolence', and other moral philosophers prefer 'social justice' (Rawls 1972) or the 'equal consideration of interests' (Singer 1982) – which become the 'working principles of society' (Trusted 1987, p. 114) in that, without them, it is difficult to see how any society or community could function for long. Thus, a certain level of truth-telling, trust in others and consideration of others' needs and interests is indispensable to the operation of any organisation or social network, whether this is assembled for economic, cultural or any other purpose (MacIntrye 1981). Indeed, during the period of rampant individualism in the 1980s enterprise culture in the UK – when the short-lived 'new vocationalism' criticised above was tried and failed as a means of VET reform (Lee et al. 1990; Heelas and Morris 1992) – these basic moral facts had a tendency to be overlooked, ultimately to the detriment of all members of society.

The values of the enterprise culture – and the neo-liberal, so-called free market economics of Friedman and the Chicago School which almost destroyed many developing countries in the 1970s and 1980s, particularly in the South American cone (Klein 2007) and ultimately led to the global financial collapse and recession of recent times – was incredibly naïve in supposing that the 'history of Western civilisation is the history of free individuals engaged in intellectual thought' (Shirley 1991, p. 154). The idea of the 'unencumbered self' (Sandel 1992) is largely fictitious since there is a sense in which all human agency has to be rooted in and realised through networks informed by the social values of trust, honesty, justice and cooperation. The Buddhist principles of 'non-self' and 'interbeing' which are said to flow naturally from mindfulness practice (Hanh 1999) are underpinned by the very same moral principles.

As Poole (1990) argues, the economic market system itself could not function without the existence of social and moral values which are themselves of a non-market form and certainly far from being individualistic. A market consisting of purely self-interested individuals could not – *contra* Friedman and the Chicago

School of economics – logically reproduce itself since, for such a reproduction of the system to take place:

> it would require that purely self-interested individuals enter into a relationship with each other in order to produce, nurture and care for other self-interested individuals just like themselves. To make sense of the apparent sacrifices of self-interest involved here we would at the very least have to assume the existence of goods of a quite different kind to those involved in ordinary market transactions (Poole 1990, pp. 49–50).

The operation of markets, therefore, is entirely dependent upon the inculcation of non-market values of a disinterested, other-regarding kind. In short, it requires the fostering of values which education systems around the world are typically asked to transmit, namely, such qualities as honesty, respect for persons, compassion, tolerance, empathy, cooperation and good citizenship. Such values – and their foundations in morality and the emotions – are as necessary to VET as they are to any other form of education.

10.2.2 VET and Aesthetics

Norman (1983) comes close to identifying the aesthetic dimension of work when, employing Marxian concepts, he refers to 'unalienated' work as 'meaningful, creative and self-expressive' which 'gives an individual a sense of his or her identity, recognised and confirmed by others' (p. 175). Warnock (1977) identifies cognate features of work in her notion that 'all work is effort to make or change things and reduce them to order, and all these efforts are worth making' (p. 145). Such aesthetic features are captured in the idea of the 'gift of art' – which we have, as Ondaatje (2007) reminds us in quoting Nietzsche, 'so that we shall not be destroyed by the truth' (p. 279) – which can lead to an 'inner transformation, or deepening of the sense of life through apprehending the work's meaning' (Papanoutsos 1978, p. 93). Schopenhauer knew this and, as discussed at the end of Chap. 8, saw aesthetic appreciation as a means of escaping the force of the blind and relentless striving of the human will. Many mindfulness teachers and affective educators also recognise the power of the expressive arts and literature as a vehicle for achieving their principal goals.

It often seems to be that it is in literature and poetry – rather than in texts on VET and work per se – where this aesthetic dimension of work and craft finds its fullest and most insightful expression and meaning (Hyland 2011a). Seamus Heaney's poems are wonderfully evocative in this respect; in *Follower* the poet recalls watching his father at work ploughing the fields:

> His shoulders globed like a full sail string
> Between the shafts and the furrow.
> The horses strained at his clicking tongue.
> An expert. He would set the wing
> And fit the bright steel-pointed sock.
> The sod rolled over without breaking.

> And again in *Thatcher* we have the following lines:
> Bespoke for weeks, he turned up some morning
> Unexpectedly, his bicycle slung
> With a light ladder and a bag of knives…
> He shaved and flushed the butts, stitched all together
> Into a shaped honeycomb, a stubble patch,
> And left them gaping at his Midas touch.
>
> (Heaney 1990, pp. 6, 10).

Of course, it is likely that much work – namely, that which is more properly described as labour or toil – will never possess such qualities, but the possibilities inherent in this aesthetic perspective for all kinds of work are well worth noting by vocational teachers. Speaking of the autonomous nature of some forms of work, White (1997) alludes to the Aristotelian idea of learning principles through habit and practice. For example, just as 'men become builders by building and lyre-players by playing the lyre…so we also become autonomous by doing autonomous acts' (p. 114). Aristotle also applied to same principles to learning to be virtuous and just and – in terms of the my own chief objectives – we might say that we can come to understand and skillfully manage our mental and emotional lives by mindfully noticing and fully absorbing and being with all our experiences in this sphere. In just the same way, we can learn to appreciate the aesthetic and craft like features of work by mindfully taking note of them and, following Dewey's recommendations, seeking to realise and enact them in all our everyday activities and occupations.

The sheer joy of careful, productive and socially useful work is nowhere better described than in Primo Levi's novel *The Wrench* (1988a, b) in which the central character, Faussone, relates stories about his work as a steel rigger on construction sites. One of Faussone's workmates reflects:

> We agreed then on the good things we had in common. On the advantage of being able to test yourself, not depending on others in the test, reflecting yourself in your work. On the pleasure of seeing your creature grow, beam after beam, bolt and after bolt, solid, necessary, symmetrical, suited to its purpose; and when it's finished you look at it and you think that perhaps it will live longer than you, and perhaps it will be of some use to someone you don't know, who doesn't know you (p. 53).

In a similar vein, Tressell in his novel *The Ragged Trousered Philanthropists* (1993 edn) describes the work of painters and decorators in the early years of the twentieth century who – in spite of constant hardship and fear of dismissal – struggled to give meaning to their work by doing the best possible job. One of the more politically engaged workmen, for example, forced along with his fellow workers to cut corners in order to maximise profits for their employer, found that he:

> could not scamp the work to the extent that he was ordered to; and so, almost by stealth, he was in the habit of doing it – not properly but as well as he dared. He even went to the length of occasionally buying a few sheets of glass paper with his own money (p. 162).

Even though we must take account of the realist view that, as Wringe (1991) observes, many kinds of work are 'not constitutive of the good life and are at best a necessary evil' (p. 37) and, furthermore, the ethnographic research that indicates young people are often acutely aware of these brute facts about working life (Willis 1977;

Shilling 1989), I would still want to argue that a VET programme which did not include the aesthetic dimension would be sadly incomplete. Along with the recent tentative movements in national policy in Britain towards a greater concern with the affective and creative aspects of education (Government Office for Science 2010) – not to mention perennial calls for citizenship education in schools (Marples 1998; Rooney 2005), a reconstructed vocationalism incorporating such elements has never been more necessary.

10.2.3 Work, VET and Social–Collective Values

The moral and aesthetic aspects of preparation for work can be seen to come together to inform the theory and practice of VET by connecting with the notions of studentship and learning careers referred to in the last chapter. Drawing on theories of social and humanistic learning which were recommended for the affective domain in Chap. 8, Bloomer (1997) – using case studies of learners in post-school education – elaborates upon the characteristics of teaching for studentship and learning careers by observing that this perspective:

> places studentship and personal development in a dynamic, mutually constitutive relationship…it also links, dynamically, the formation of personal identity and dispositions to the transformation of social, moral, economic and other conditions…It thus has the potential to yield not simply the knowledge that young people 'act upon' learning opportunities in the way that they do through studentship, but to generate an understanding of why they do (p. 154).

Such a conception places the learning of individuals fairly and squarely within the social contexts in which it occurs – including home, family, the workplace, and the wider society – and in this way ensures the foregrounding of networks of social interdependence and sense of community which are especially important in vocational preparation. Echoing mindfulness conceptions in this sphere, Ranson (1998) argues that:

> There is no solitary learning: we can only create our worlds together. The unfolding agency of the self always grows out of the interaction with others. It is *inescapably a social creation* (p. 20; original italics).

Unfortunately, the new vocationalism which prevailed during the enterprise phase of the 1980s and continued (tempered by lip service paid to social inclusion, Hyland 2002b) through the period of the Labour administration in Britain from 1997 to 2010 was underpinned by an individualist ethos which is still entrenched in educational discourse and practice to the present day. Many years ago, Hargreaves (1982) criticised the UK schooling system on the grounds that it was 'deeply imbued with a culture of individualism' (p. 87). He went on to identify the main fault as being 'not in the humanistic sentiments and ideals which it enshrines' but in the 'repudiation of the nineteenth-century concerns with the social functions of education'. For Hargreaves, the solution to the 'most pressing problems of our society' is to be found in the fostering of 'active community participation from its members' (Hargreaves 1982, p. 135). In a similar vein, Langford (1985) has challenged the

obsession 'with the difference which being educated makes to an individual' (p. 3) and recommended instead a greater concern with the social dimensions of education and schooling. For Langford, to 'become educated is to become a member of society and so to have learnt what it is to be and live as a member of that society' (Langford 1985, p. 181).

Such social–collective conceptions of the enterprise are ideally those which would undergird a reconstructed VET programme of the sort being proposed. However, the roots and seeds of individualism go deep – and, indeed, are currently being vigorously watered by the Conservative–Liberal Democrat administration which took office in Britain in May 2010 (White 2010) – and it is worth looking more closely at its origins in order to justify the principles I am advocating. The original formulation of individualism – along with an explanation of its perennial attraction as a general doctrine – were traced by Russell (1946, Chap.XII) to the Greek Stoics and Cynics, down through the medieval Christian tradition until the ideas found their fullest expression in the work of Descartes which itself provided a major foundation for the development of political and economic liberalism in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Within the liberal tradition, individualistic notions went hand in hand with the growth of capitalist mercantilism (the 'pure' nature of which was celebrated by Adam Smith and, in modern times, lauded by neo-liberals such as Hayek and Friedman) and, in political theory, the basic concepts date back to the philosophy of Hobbes and Locke. These notions are encapsulated in the idea of what Macpherson (1964) called 'possessive individualism' which asserts that the 'individual is essentially the proprietor of his own person and capacities, for which he owes nothing to society' (p. 263). The obvious appeal of such ideas – derived partly from the apparent commonsensical nature of their expression in simple terms – explains their enduring presence in moral, political, social, economic, political and educational theories.

Within educational discourse, individualism informs such notions as independent, autonomous and self-directed learning to which, on one level (that proposed and suitably delimited and qualified by me in Chap. 7), nobody would strongly wish to object. Once we begin to move beyond the superficial attractiveness of these rather nebulous and vague concepts of autonomy and independence, however, it can be seen that they have little meaning until they are located within a framework of social values. As Dearden (1972) has argued, by valuing freedom, autonomy and individual development in education, we do not thereby 'mark the eclipse of such other values as truth and morality' (p. 461). Similarly, Lawson (1998), in qualifying the extremism of 'andragogical practices' in adult education which result in misguided attempts to abolish teaching and guidance in favour of independent student learning, points to the weaknesses and dangers of 'deontological liberalism'. Eschewing all content in favour of process, such a philosophy is 'suited to a society which has no vision' and 'produces societies which no longer debate or seek the good' (p. 41).

In his investigation of autonomy within the framework of political and citizenship education, Smith (1997) observes how, particularly in developed industrial societies, 'autonomy typically works alongside notions of choice and the market, separating individual persons from their world and from their fellows, the better to

render them subject to control' (p. 128). Alluding to the dehumanising and alienating tendencies of capitalism referred to earlier, Smith argues that facile and simplistic conceptions of autonomy now threaten:

> in the name of freedom, to re-shape the emotional lives and identities of young people especially, alienating them from the aesthetic and reflective modes of being in favour of slick versions of evaluation…Thus autonomy has become a dangerous ally. Offering, like the goblin in the fairy-tale, to turn the straw of our determined, contingent world into the gold of pure freedom, it threatens in the end to come back and claim the children it promised to save (Smith 1997, p. 128).

Against such excesses, Smith, drawing on the work of Marcuse (1964) and MacIntyre (1981), highlights theories of politics, morality and education which foreground 'our increasing sense of the importance of involving others in all of life's transactions'. In conclusion, he proposes that:

> Autonomy, then, should not be thought of in terms of an essentially individualistic journey towards an abstract and indeterminate rationality, but as a process involving other people in which reasons are demanded and given in dialectic. And if autonomy means having a degree of control over our lives, then we have to help each other understand the ways in which power is taken from us and exercised over us (MacIntyre 1981, p. 134).

In recent discourse, the social–collective critique of individualism has been carried by the 'communitarian' movement which – stimulated by the work of Rawls (1972) and Sandel (1992) – seeks to describe the limits of political liberalism in modern states. Unfettered liberalism – that advocated in economics by Friedman and criticised in education by Langford, Lawson and Smith mentioned above – resulted in the view that individuals have the right to choose and pursue their own values and ends, and that the state merely provides a neutral framework which allows citizens to make such choices. Such conceptions directly parallel the 'possessive individualism' of the economic market which is based on the belief that 'all human behaviour is conditioned by the hedonistic aspirations of each individual wanting to maximise his/her productive capacities' (Shirley 1991, p. 154).

Alongside the arguments already adduced against unqualified individualism – not least the fact that economic individualism is parasitic upon non-individualistic, collective values – communitarians stress the social dimension of rights, duties, interests, values and all aspects of human agency. As Arthur (1998) puts it, whereas liberalism is the 'politics of rights…communitarianism is the politics of the common good' (p. 356). Inspired by the writings of Etzioni (1997) on 'popular communitarianism', Arthur advocates an agenda founded on the belief and principle that:

> Neither human existence nor individual liberty can be sustained for long outside the interdependent and overlapping communities to which we all belong. Nor can any community long survive unless its members dedicate some of their attention, energy and resources to shared projects. The exclusive pursuit of private interest erodes the network of social environments on which we all depend, and is destructive of our shared experiment in democratic self-government. For these reasons we hold that the right of individuals cannot long be preserved without a communitarian perspective [which]…recognises both individual human dignity and the social dimension of human existence (Etzioni 1997, pp. 358–359).

Such a communitarian philosophy – alongside the moral and aesthetic value framework outlined earlier – provides a solid foundation for the reconstructed model of VET required to solve the perennial problems in this sphere of education.

10.3 Mindfulness, Craft and VET

Mindfulness practice may contribute to the recommended reconstruction of VET by enhancing and reinforcing the aesthetic, artisanship and craftsmanship features of working life. Jarrett (1991) utilised related perspectives in his exploration of the moral character of dispositions and attitudes to work, and the general features of this perspective were illustrated earlier through literature and poetry. A particularly forceful expression of the links between mindfulness and craft is to be found in Pirsig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance* (1974) in which the writer connects ideas about work and engineering craft with aesthetic notions and Zen Buddhist principles. Whilst riding his motorcycle around the USA, Pirsig reflects on the means by which such a remarkable feat of engineering has come about. As he observes:

> Precision instruments are designed to achieve an idea; dimensional precision whose perfection is impossible. There is no perfectly shaped part of the motorcycle and never will be, but when you come as close as these instruments take you, remarkable things happen, and you go flying across the countryside under a power that would be called magic if it were not so completely rational…I look at the shapes of the steel now and I see *ideas*…I'm working on *concepts* (p. 102, original italics).

Granger (2006) makes use of Pirsig's ideas to illustrate the educational importance of Dewey's aesthetic ideas for both vocational and general education. Pirsig's description of the differences between a 'high-quality' and 'low-quality' motorcycle shop and the characteristics of a craftsman like mechanic are quoted by Granger. The 'high quality' mechanic has:

> Patience, care and attentiveness to what [he's] doing, but more than this, there's a kind of inner peace of mind…The craftsman isn't ever following a single line of interaction. He's making decisions as he goes along. For that reason he'll be absorbed and attentive to what he's doing even though he doesn't deliberately contrive this. His motions and the machine are in a kind of harmony (p. 117).

Granger argues that 'attending to things…means reaching out as complete beings to meet the world in a way that brings us closer to it as an equal partner in the full-lived situation, and in the concrete and particular here and now' (Granger 2006, p. 118).

Such a conception of craft like and careful work is on all fours with the non-judgmental present-moment awareness at the core of mindfulness, and Granger demonstrates forcefully the value of such notions to educational theory and practice. Such values are also incorporated in Sennett's (2008) comprehensive and painstaking analysis of the nature and significance of craftsmanship in human history. Craftsmen

are 'dedicated to good work for its own sake' and all 'craftsmanship is founded on skill developed to a high degree' (p. 20). Such work is inextricably linked to codes of ethics. As Sennett explains:

> Craftsmen take pride in skills that mature. This is why simple imitation is not a sustaining satisfaction: the skill has to evolve. The slowness of craft time serves as a source of satisfaction; practice beds in, making the skill one's own. Slow craft time enables the work of reflection and imagination – which the push for quick results cannot. Mature means long; one takes lasting ownership of the skill (Sennett 2008, p. 295).

Such a conception of work rules out the behaviourist, competence-based approach to VET (Hyland 2008), and also demonstrates the crucial importance of the traditional apprenticeship system. Although this system was far from perfect, Vickerstaff's (2007) research on young people who had qualified through this route indicated the valuable socialising and developmental nature of this form of vocational training. As she notes: it 'meant something to be an apprentice: it was an expected, respected and structured path to adulthood' (p. 342) in addition to providing the long-term fostering of vocational and craft knowledge and skill. It also required the collective effort of 'family help, community backing and intergenerational support' (Vickerstaff's 2007), factors which the shorter, modern apprenticeships of recent years (Rikowski 1999b) have not quite been able to achieve. The concept of apprenticeship – like the traditional idea of craft – brings together long-term knowledge and skill development, ethical practice and social–collective involvement, all factors which are vital to the regeneration of VET at a time when short-termist skill training holds centre stage in the contemporary 'training market' (Ainley 2007). In this respect, the recent Wolf report (2011) called for a major overhaul of the VET system in England and an increase in high-quality apprenticeships for young people.

The Buddhist conception of 'right livelihood', as already suggested at various points in the chapter, incorporates many of the core principles of craft and skill development advocated by Dewey, Pirsig, Sennett and others: precise and careful work, aesthetic and emotional appreciation, ethical procedures and links with the community. As Hanh (1999) reminds us 'To practice Right Livelihood means to practice Right Mindfulness' (p. 116). Applying the precepts of mindfulness specifically to working life, Hanh (1991) advises us to:

> keep your attention focused on the work, be alert and ready to handle ably and intelligently any situation which may arise – this is mindfulness. There is no reason why mindfulness should be different from focusing all one's attention on one's work, to be alert and to be using one's best judgment. During the moment one is consulting, resolving, and dealing with whatever arises, a calm heart and self-control are necessary if one is to obtain good results…If we are not in control of ourselves but instead let our impatience or anger interfere, then our work is no longer of any value. Mindfulness is the miracle by which we master and restore ourselves (Hanh 1991, p. 14).

Expressing similar sentiments, Sennett (2008) suggests that the history of craftsmanship holds clues to the thrust of human history in general. Echoing many of Dewey's criticisms of education referred to earlier, he observes:

> History has drawn fault lines dividing practice and theory, technique and expression, craftsman and artist, maker and user; modern society suffers from this historical inheritance.

> But the past life of craft and craftsmen also suggests ways of using tools, organizing bodily movements, thinking about materials that remain alternative, viable proposals about how to conduct life with skill (Sennett 2008, p. 11).

Mindfulness is also about conducting life with skill – indeed, the notion of 'skilful means' (Keown 2005, pp. 18ff) has a special place in Buddhist ethics and practice – and the development of the central quality of present-moment awareness can assist both in enhancing vocational preparation and in connecting this to all aspects of life in society (Hyland 2011a).

10.4 Conclusion

A reconstructed programme for VET – foregrounding moral aesthetic and social–collective values underpinned by mindfulness practice – has been proposed as a way of remedying some of the persistent flaws and problems of provision in this sphere. How would all this sit with critics of the therapeutic turn? Hayes (2003) has argued that alongside the 'triumph of vocationalism' (presumably meaning, not that VET is now much improved, but that education at all levels is dominated by employability concerns rather than personal or social development), there has been a 'triumph of therapeutic education', a 'form of prescription 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…students are being trained in personal and social skills as well as in relationships, this is training in emotional labour…[which] requires and receives a personal and wholehearted commitment to workplace values (Hayes 2003)

I am not sure exactly what Hayes means by 'workplace values' but I would have to say that such an account of the emotional and aesthetic aspects of vocational preparation is distorted, misguided and far too pessimistic. As argued above, it is just these features of working life which need to be enhanced and systematically implemented in VET programmes so as to combat the narrow reductionism and instrumentalism which has characterised this field for so long. If we interpret the reference to 'workplace values' as providing students which a critical and realistic account of the nature and purpose of work in contemporary society – along with some experience of the different values operating in this sphere and the importance of the emotions in shaping working relationships – then I suggest that discussions of such workplace values are an essential ingredient of vocational preparation.

Ecclestone and Hayes (2009) write about 'diminished workers and diminished managers' in the contemporary workplace but – although they go to some lengths to describe the 'inexorable rise of concerns with "stress" and "bullying" in the workplace over the last decade' (p. 110) – they fail to sympathise with the growth of counselling services provided by trades unions to combat this worrying increase in work-related stress and ill health. This seems irrational and illogical and can only be explained in terms of what I have already noted on several occasions about the

systematic avoidance of and disdain for emotions and feelings in criticisms of the so-called therapeutic turn in education. Moreover, there is no attempt to link these claims about the diminishment of workers with the impoverishment of VET described earlier or the dominance of individualistic, neo-liberal values which have wreaked havoc in certain spheres of employment. And where are the suggested solutions to these problems in terms of, perhaps, alternative social–collective ways of organising VET and work arrangements?

After claiming that staff development and appraisal are sometimes used for therapeutic purposes in workplaces – and criticising the Trades Union Congress for being overly concerned with the millions of vulnerable workers who are in 'unsafe, low paid, insecure employment' (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 120) – Ecclestone and Hayes conclude by asserting that:

> Workers will not spontaneously arise from the therapy couch that they, together with their unions and managers, have created. Unless there is a challenge to the construction of the idea of human beings as vulnerable and diminished that is being strengthened through therapeutic education, it will be impossible for workers to confront and resist the therapeutic workplace (Ecclestone and Hayes 2009, p. 121).

At the risk of repeating what has already been said about vulnerability and diminishment, many people in all walks of life at times might feel vulnerable and stressed as a result of the emotional trauma and impoverishment associated with overwork, under-resourcing and lack of appreciation shown by others. Would it not be perfectly natural and reasonable, after all, to feel vulnerable in the face of management bullying or the threat of redundancy as has been the case in many spheres of work in recent years, including work in the new post-school sector discussed in the previous chapter? However, staff and unions in schools, colleges, and universities – and indeed many workers in other public service sectors and in private industry – would find the charge that they are in some sense diminished both insulting and morally offensive. Critics who use such labels – particularly amidst such *emotive* (yes, that which excites and incenses feelings) language as that urging them to get up from the therapy couch – should perhaps think a bit more carefully before assigning them to people with such casual and apparently blithe generality.

As I have argued in the reconstructed VET programme proposed, feelings and emotions – including stress, alienation, loneliness, and fear, helplessness and depression in the face of insensitive management demands and changing conditions of service – are a natural and perhaps unavoidable part of working life, and we will achieve nothing by denying this. People in all fields of work will only be able to mount the challenge urged upon them by Ecclestone & Hayes when they come to acknowledge, understand, be with and ultimately transform destructive and negative emotions and channel them into constructive and effective engagement with efforts to enhance conditions of service and all aspects of working life.

To underline what was said at the end of the last chapter (and alluded to in other places), it is often necessary to change ourselves before we can change the world. The sort of political engagement which Ecclestone and Hayes seem to be calling for (and, in a more general context, Thompson (2007) also advocates such activism) cannot but be a highly emotional business. It is not simply a rational matter of *seeing*

certain flaws and problems in aspects of working life; it is a matter of *feeling* what it is like to work under those conditions and being *motivated* (as argued in Chaps. 5 and 6, closely allied to emotion) to try to change them. To undertake such a task either for ourselves or (as members of professional associations or trades unions) on behalf of others, we ideally need to *feel passionate* about what we are doing.

Social and political action of this or any other kind is almost never a matter of pure rationality or cognition. Thinking and feeling are inextricably connected in political and social reform as, indeed, they undeniably are in forms of creative expression such as drama, literature and music. Earlier discussion of the historical and philosophical aspects of human emotion noted the close links between reason and passion in certain accounts and theories. Reddy (2000), for instance, describes how the prime players in the French Revolution – although steeped in the Enlightenment thought of Rousseau and Condorcet – valued emotional intensity as much as intellect. In his study of the Terror during the Revolution, Andress (2005) observes that:

> Many educated people in eighteenth-century France believed that a frankly melodramatic acting out of emotional experiences was 'authentic', and the mark of an honest and virtuous character…A radically open-hearted approach to life was widely asserted to be both wholesomely natural and socially desirable. Whole-hearted emotional commitment was quickly translated into revolutionary political commitment (p. 128).

It could be added that full-blooded engagement in and commitment to any cause – whether political, social, moral or pragmatic – will always be helped by this conjunction of reason and passion. Commitment to making donations to overseas charities, for example, is not simply a matter of intellectual reasoning alone. As Singer (2009) graphically demonstrates, motivation to give requires that our perceptions of poverty and injustice need to be allied with feelings of compassion, empathy and generosity.

It is such connections between thinking, feeling and doing (Hanson 2009) which highlight the importance of the reconstructed model of VET which has been proposed. Such an approach foregrounds affective and mindfulness components and places preparation for work fairly and squarely within a framework of social–collective values. Such values – and the moral principles which give them meaning – should be part of every young person's education, especially that concerned with the crucial task of preparing people for the world of work.

Chapter 11
Professionalism, Research and Teaching

11.1 Changing Conceptions of Teacher Professionalism

Standard analyses of the notion of professionalism in public service occupations such as teaching, the health service and social work have stressed the central importance of specialist knowledge and expertise, ethical codes of practice, and carefully monitored procedures for initial training, induction and continuing professional development (Larson 1977; Langford 1978; Eraut 1994; Higgins 2010).

When commentators refer to de-professionalising trends in public service occupations in recent times they are generally concerned with the commodification of professional knowledge and the marketisation of the service culture. In education such trends have been a natural corollary of the impact of the neo-liberal project on schools, colleges and universities noted in Chap. 9, and have gone hand in hand with changes in assessment, inspection, teacher education and research. Moreover, as noted in earlier chapters, such developments have had an impact on systems of provision in North America (Brighouse 2006), Europe (Hayden et al. 2007) and Australasia (Baker and Wiseman 2005). Referring to the rise to prominence of competence and outcome-based strategies at all levels of the system (a truly global phenomenon as Arguelles and Gonczi 2000 observed), Elliott (1993) har argued that they represent a 'production technology for commodifying professional learning for consumption' and also operate as an 'ideological device for eliminate value issues from the domain of professional practice and thereby subordinating them to political forms of control' (pp. 23, 68).

In addition to the systematic de-skilling of teaching through technicist outcome-based approaches, there has been a widespread erosion of professional autonomy in education as a result of a number of centralising and mutually supporting initiatives over the last decade or so (Barton et al. 1994; Whitty et al. 1998; Allen and Ainley 2007). The key developments have been located within the traditional dimensions of professionalism identified by Hoyle and John (1995): knowledge, responsibility and autonomy.

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Knowledge: Professionals were traditionally thought to have access to a corpus of knowledge validated by research findings in the various disciplines linked to education: psychology, sociology, history and philosophy. In recent times, this foundation has been weakened by, on the one hand, the post-modernist attack on the legitimacy of all rationalist, objective knowledge and, on the other, by the questioning of whether any form of theoretically based knowledge can provide a sufficient guide to practice. This has led to the commodification of professional knowledge described by Elliott, what has been labelled the 'McDonaldisation' (Hyland 1996) process which reduces professional knowledge to standardised and simplistic units and outcomes. Applied to university teaching, Barnett (2000) calls this technicist approach a kind of 'performativity' by which knowledge only has value if it can be used to generate 'income, economic regeneration, making friends and influencing people, and securing one's public status and professional security' (p. 40). The emphasis on knowledge as performance has served to downgrade teacher professionalism by questioning the foundational bases of practice.

Responsibility and autonomy: These two dimensions are inter-related in that professionals are typically said to be working in complex and unpredictable situations in which the exercise of responsibility over aspects of work requires and necessitates a degree of autonomy. As Hoyle and John (1995) put it:

> As professionals work in uncertain situations in which judgment is more important than routine, it is essential to effective practice that they should be sufficiently free from bureaucratic and political constraint to act on judgments made in the best interests (as they see them) of the clients (p. 77).

However, political trends over recent years have conspired to erode this autonomy in a number of spheres (Whitty et al. 1998; Hyland 2000). First, there has been the imposition of a market culture to replace the traditional service ethos of teaching and, secondly, there has been a centralisation of control over all aspects of work:

- *Curriculum* – National Curriculum, literacy/numeracy requirements in schools; prescriptive NVQs, employment led qualifications in qualifications in FE; prescribed credit-bearing programmes in adult education and employability skills in HE degrees
- Assessment – Standard Attainment Tests, Ofsted inspections, league tables and standards agenda in schools; competence-based outcomes and LSC audits in FE; Quality Assurance Agency control of the HE curriculum
- *Conditions of service* – imposed by employers in a government-controlled 'quasi-market' regulated by centralist funding regimes, leagues tables of schools, colleges and universities and interventionist inspection procedures
- *Initial training and staff development* – tightly controlled and regulated by quangos such as Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) and its partner standards body Standards Verification UK (SVUK) in which 'standards' tend to be behaviouristic, competence- and outcome-based

All these trends and developments have resulted in what a number of educational critics have referred to as the 'crisis in professionalism' (Bottery 1998; Furlong 2000)

and professional associations such as the General Teaching Council for England are now calling for a 'more rounded conception of education' and moves to 'aims-led innovation of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment' (GTCE 2010, pp. 12–13).

11.2 Re-professionalising Teaching

In response to the increasingly centralised control over education over the last few decades, a number of distinctive re-professionalising strategies have emerged in both professional practitioner debate and practice and in theory and research more generally.

11.2.1 Reflective Practice and Research

Inspired by Schon's work (1987) on the way professionals learn and modify practice through reflection, there have been various attempts to reconstruct professional knowledge – not in terms of the standard theoretical or discipline-based perspectives – but as derived from the everyday judgments and experiences of practitioners (Furlong and Maynard 1995; Hillier 2010). Linked to this reflective practice model, the 'teacher-as-researcher' movement inspired by Stenhouse's (1975) pioneering work has proved to be a valuable tool in the task of re-gaining professional autonomy.

In response to the increasingly top-down or centre-periphery implementation of educational policy (Keep 2006; Lingard and Ozga 2007), research by teachers on their own and their colleagues' practices may help to enhance professionalism in ways which benefit – not only teachers – but also students, employers and other community stakeholders. On this account, teaching and research can be regarded as two sides of the same coin. As Rowland (2000) puts it:

> The ability to inquire, to engage others in one's enquiries and to learn from them are the characteristics of the good teacher, the good researcher and the good student…Teaching, research and learning are not different activities…Academics talking about their investigations to colleagues at a conference are engaged in research activity. Giving the same talk to students is thought of as teaching. In both cases, the academic is teaching the audience, and they are (hopefully) learning (p. 28).

Discussing university teaching, Barnett (2000) argues that – in an age of 'supercomplexity' in all spheres of life – we might interpret 'research' as the 'expansion of uncertainty' and 'teaching' as the 'inculcation of the capacity to understand and cope effectively with uncertainty' (p. 70).

11.2.2 New Rationalism and Critical Theory

Following Hirst's later work on forms of knowledge in relation to the evolution of educational theory, this perspective stresses practical rather than theoretical reason

and insists that this is generated largely through public, professional collaboration in all its diverse forms (Hyland 1996), and through the critical analysis of developments in all the forms of knowledge having a bearing upon professional practice. As Hirst (1996) explains:

> We have yet to learn effectively two linked truths: that rational practice for the achievement of our good must in all areas be practically not theoretically developed but also that, if our efforts are not to be constantly thwarted, they must be illuminated by all the insights fundamental theoretical critique can provide (op.cit., p. 172).

Hirst's call here for the foregrounding of the Aristotelian concept of phronesis or practical wisdom in professional studies is echoed in recent educational policy studies of responses to the forces of globalisation and the emergence of the 'knowledge economy' as a dominant influence on theory and practice (Symes and MacIntyre 2000). The development of work-based learning strategies becomes central in such accounts of professional knowledge (Hyland 1996; Rossin and Hyland 2003).

Although critical theorists such as Carr and Kemmis (1986) would endorse the practical and critical elements of new rationalism, proponents in this field would also wish to point out the limitations of such accounts – particularly their dependence upon forms of rationalism – and also the problems inherent in reflective practice resulting from its heavy reliance upon the personal and subjective. There is a clear Habermasian influence at work here which is aptly summed up by Furlong (2000) in his conclusion that:

> True professionalism depends on a continued commitment to hold up knowledge, from wherever it comes, to public, collaborative scrutiny. It also depends on the commitment to create and maintain those spaces within professional life…where critical discourse can flourish. For it is only through this form of discourse can professional knowledge can be freed from its tendency to deteriorate either into subjectivism or into technicism (p. 109).

This last point about the need to guard against technicism is especially worth stressing since there is a tendency for many re-conceptualisations of the teacher's task, alongside the behaviourist and outcomes-based trends in learning and assessment to overlook certain key features of human relationships: the emotional and the ethical. Many of the approaches to teaching criticised above – especially those which foreground skills and competences in their obsession with performance standards – demonstrate, to a greater or lesser extent, an attachment to some form of Cartesian dualism (already criticised in my response to arguments about the therapeutic turn) which separates mind and body and privileges the intellect over the emotions and the ethical dimension of working life. Like certain theories of moral reasoning which present a picture of human conduct that concentrates on deciding and judging to the neglect of feeling and willing (Trusted 1987), there is a tendency for the rationalist and reflective practice models of teaching to overlook the affective, moral and conative features of professional work. Palmer (1998) expresses similar sentiments in his suggestion that:

> The mode of knowing that dominates education creates disconnections between teachers, their subjects and their students because it is rooted in fear. This mode, called objectivism, portrays truth as something we can achieve only by disconnecting ourselves, physically and emotionally, from the thing we want to know (p. 51).

Hargreaves (1995) expresses similar sentiments concisely in his observation that:

> While reflection is central to teacher development, the mirror of reflection does not capture all there is to see in a teacher. It tends to miss what lies deep inside teachers, what motivates them most about their work. However conscientiously it is done, the reflective glance can never quite get to the emotional heart of teaching (p. 21).

Just as 'most teacher development initiatives, even the most innovative ones, neglect the emotions of teaching' (Hargreaves 1995), so there is a similar tendency for professionalisation discourses to be 'devoid of talk about the moral nature of teaching…as if the moral dimensions of teaching were lost, forgotten about…or simply taken for granted' (Fenstermacher 1990, p. 132). It is well worth noting that, as Carr (1996) has argued, 'education and teaching are inherently moral enterprises' (p. 2). Thus, although reflection, analysis and the critical evaluation of practice are crucially important elements in the work of teachers, it could be argued that many fundamental problems which teachers have to address 'call for a moral rather than a technical response' and, consequently, it may be that the essential and definitive features of teaching and learning are 'virtues rather than skills' (Carr 1994, p. 47).

11.3 Metaphors of Teaching: Artistry and Intuition

Tensions between all the different elements included under the umbrella of the teacher's task – the cognitive and the affective, the moral and the technical, the intellectual and the conative, theory and practice, mental and physical – can be understood in terms of the diversity and complexity of the criteria that have to be satisfied for the successful completion of any task, activity or performance, particularly those demanding knowledge, judgement, experience and expertise. Drawing on the sociological work of Jamous and Peloille (1970), Delamont (1995) examines teaching in terms of its 'location in a two-dimensional space of indeterminacy and technicality' (p. 7).

Different perspectives on teaching – for example, whether it is conceived of as an art (as educators such as Pestalozzi or Montessori might hold) or as a science (as behaviourists such as Skinner, Bloom or contemporary competence-based and 'evidence-based' proponents would argue (Davies 1999) – are, according to Delamont (1995), 'closely related to debates about the appropriate styles of educational research'. If 'teaching is an art rather than a science', she goes on to observe, then 'teaching should be researched by aesthetic critics rather than scientific investigators' (p. 6).

However, although the currently dominant scientific model may need to be enriched by more intuitive and spontaneous approaches (Smeyers et al. 2007), it is still important to stress that – in spite of the tensions between technicality (planning mode) and indeterminacy (creative mode) in occupational practice – *both* should be included in theory, practice and research on teaching.

As Delamont (1995) explains:

> When educational writers say that teachers must be artists, what they actually mean is that the job of teaching has both technical and indeterminate aspects: educational research that loses sight of this is bound to fail (Delamont 1995, p. 8).

Consequently, although it is tempting to conclude on this account that scientific conceptions stress the technical and artistic ones the indeterminate aspects of teaching, Delamont clearly wants us to keep both of these elements in the picture. Gage (1978), in the aptly titled book *The Scientific Basis of the Art of Teaching* recommends a similar strategy in asserting that:

> As a practical art, teaching must be recognised as a process that calls for intuition, creativity, improvisation and expressiveness – a process that leaves room for departures from what is implied by rules, formulas and algorithms (p. 15).

Although, in highlighting the affective and ethical aspects of teaching, I would wish to argue for a re-affirmation of the artistic and intuitive aspects of the task to temper the current scientific, technical emphases, it is difficult to disagree with Delamont's (1995) point that the 'invocation of teaching as artistry is a vague one' and that:

> Those who use the metaphor rarely specify what kind of performer or creator they have in mind. Is the teacher an actor, a painter, a sculptor, a poet, a ballet dancer, a musician, a composer, a chef, a playwright, a novelist, a choreographer, a quiltmaker, a fashion designer, or a singer? (p. 7).

Teachers, conceivably, could be any or all of these, especially if the broad and diverse range of forms and fields of knowledge in schools, further education colleges and universities is taken into account. This is not, however, to deny the importance of the particular metaphors chosen to describe the art or science of teaching. Metaphors are important as Higgins (2010) demonstrates in his comprehensive survey of philosophical perspectives on the ethics of teaching, and the notion (in the tradition of Arendt, Peters, Oakeshott and others) of 'education as the drama of cultural renewal' (pp. 402–407). Peters (1966), for instance, graphically illustrates the vast difference between the sort of philosophical role that follows from the ancient Greek conception of the 'spectator of all time and existence' and that resulting from Locke's more modest 'underlabourer in the garden of knowledge' (p. 47ff.). Anderson (1995) argues that the 'metaphors used to describe teachers not only impact on how researchers and the public think about teachers, but how teachers think about themselves' (p. 3).

Drawing on Atkinson and Claxton's (2000) notion of the 'intuitive practitioner' and combining this with the metaphor of the teacher as 'jazz soloist', Humphreys and Hyland (2002) show how the capacity to improvise is indispensable to both teaching and jazz performances. Teaching is improvised in the sense that it involves qualities such as flexibility, spontaneity and creativity. However, just as jazz improvisation requires familiarity with musical norms and customs (Berliner 1994), effective teaching needs the prior absorption of knowledge, skills and conventions. As Crossan and Sorrenti (1997) make clear, 'good improvisation relies on the traditional technical skills gained through practice' (p. 165).

Teachers are required to improvise imaginatively in the face of unexpected events: late students, alienated learners, failed experiments, awkward questions, strange answers, apathy, hostility and diversity of levels of understanding within groups. Effective improvisation is crucially dependent upon forms of intuition which have been variously described as 'choices made without obviously formal analysis' (Behling and Eckel 1991, p. 47), 'an unconscious process based on distilled experience' (Crossan and Sorrenti 1997, p. 157), and 'analysis frozen into habit and into the capacity for rapid response through recognition' (Simon 1989, p. 38). Crossan and Sorrenti (1997, pp. 168–169) suggest that intuition facilitates improvisation in three critical ways:

1. It assists in the identification of a range of possible creative solutions to problems.
2. It helps in the selection of an appropriate solution from a range of possibilities.
3. Its role in the subconscious processing of ideas enables individuals to make extremely rapid responses.

The development of intuitive abilities and expertise may be a gradual one, arising from the experiences of teachers in different contexts but, as Humphreys and Hyland (2002) suggest, 'intuition is – for the teacher no less than the jazz player – a key link in the web of connection between music (subject), performer (teacher) and audience (class)' (p. 11). They go on to observe that:

> Excellent teaching, just like an effective jazz session, arises from an intuitive, improvisational, dynamic performance within a planned and mutually understood framework. The best teachers are not only well prepared but also practised and skilful improvisers' (Humphreys and Hyland 2002).

I would suggest that the metaphor of teacher as jazz performer combining practised experience with creative intuition provides powerful insights into the essential nature of the enterprise and serves to temper the current scientific models which hold sway in this sphere. The implications of this approach – and the ways in which it may be supported by mindfulness practice – are examined in more detail below in the context of the discussion of teacher education.

11.4 Teaching, Right Livelihood and Ethics

If the intuitive improviser provides a useful metaphor for the art and practice of teaching, then 'right livelihood' might do the same for the philosophical and ethical foundations of the work. In Chap. 3 it was noted that the Buddhist eightfold path has traditionally been represented as three divisions. Within this framework, right livelihood, along with right speech and right action, is placed under the morality strand (Keown 2005, p. 5), thus emphasising its connections with principles of fairness, justice, truth and trust. In addition, in line with the idea that all aspects of the path are inter-connected, the way in which people earn a living is also subsumed under

the general ethical principles of the tradition. There are slight variations between the Mahayana, Theravada and Zen schools, though the key precepts are brought together in Hanh's 14 principles which includes (at no.11) the injunction:'Do not live with a vocation that is harmful to humans or nature' (Keown 2005, p. 36).

Applied to teaching this might be aligned with the first line of the traditional Hippocratic oath which doctors used to take – First, do no harm – and it is also particularly apposite for teaching and other public service professions in which ethical procedures are paramount (Higgins 2010). However, doing no harm is a rather negative, basic minimum notion; for a more positive and productive set of guidelines, we need to look at what 'doing good' may mean in the context of teaching. Hanh (1999) suggests that:

> To practice Right Livelihood (*samyag ajiva*) you have to find a way to earn your living without transgressing your ideals of love and compassion. The way you support yourself can be an expression of your deepest self, or it can be a source of suffering for you and others (p. 113).

Although such advice may appear idealistic, it contains gems of practical wisdom. Of course, not all or even most teachers will conceive of their task in this way, but many will be able to identify with the idea of suffering here, both in terms of student disaffection and teacher stress and burnout (Allen and Ainley 2007). Viewing learning and teaching within a mindfulness framework we are, after all, pursuing ideals, considering what – in the light of professional commitments, ethics and, of course, institutional, systemic and other constraints – would be the very best practice for ourselves and our students. In this respect it is worth noting again the recommendations of the philosopher of education, R.S. Peters – in his time, considered to be a bastion of the conservative establishment (Barrow 2009) in his proposals for a traditional liberal education – about what it is to be an ethically committed teacher. Peters (1966) suggests that:

> the ability to form and maintain satisfactory personal relationships is almost a necessary condition of doing anything else that is not warped or stunted. If the need to love and be loved is not satisfied the individual will be prone to distortions of belief, ineffectiveness or lack of control in action, and unreliability in his allegiances. His attempt to learn things will also be hampered by his lack of trust and confidence. A firm basis of love and trust, together with a continuing education in personal relationships, is therefore, a crucial underpinning to any other more specific educational enterprise (p. 58).

Peters goes on to say that the 'teacher himself must obviously be an exemplar in this respect if he (sic) is to do his job effectively' (Peters 1966).

From the point of view of mindfulness – and, indeed, from any form of straightforwardly moral point of view – it is difficult to express this any better. The appeal to love and trust is echoed in Palmer's (1998) suggestion that:

> Good teaching is an act of hospitality toward the young, and hospitality is always an act that benefits the host even more than the guest…By offering hospitality, one participates in the endless reweaving of the social fabric on which all can depend – thus the gift of sustenance for the guest becomes a gift of hope for the host…the teacher's hospitality to the student results in a world more hospitable to the teacher (p. 50).

All this is pointing us towards the crucial centrality and significance of ethically grounded personal relationships in teaching in learning, and this is why – as was noted above in reference to Carr's account – it is not skills but virtues which are of paramount importance in teaching at all levels.

What, then, stands in the way of allowing such cardinal virtues – trust, compassion, kindness, respect for others – to inform school and post-school educational provision? Obviously the institutional flaws and constraints outlined above – centralised state control, prescriptive curricula, erosion of professional autonomy and an obsession with targets and outcomes – come to mind first, and they can never be gainsaid. Clearly, teachers have first of all to survive and, indeed, prosper professionally within the current system in order to achieve any of the broader goals linked to the education of the whole person. However, recent history in this field – for example, the way in which British teachers managed to modify the originally cumbersome and bureaucratic National Curriculum introduced in 1988 (Chitty and Simon 1993; Lingard and Ozga 2007) and the commitment of FE lecturers to active tutorial support in the face of behaviourist CBET programmes (Bloomer 1997; Cripps 2002) – provides sufficient grounds for an optimistic perspective about the power of professional commitment and solidarity in this respect (White 2010).

Institutional and systemic limitations and constraints aside, however, it is arguable that the chief obstacles in the way of achieving the conception of virtuous livelihood in teaching and learning are located in the very field which is central to the thesis of this book: the emotional life of humankind. Palmer (1998) refers to this domain in his comments on teachers' 'fearful heart' (pp. 47ff). This fear is fed both by 'objectivism' which is concerned only with the external world, and causes us to turn away from the 'subjectivism' of our inner selves, the 'identity and integrity' which teachers cannot help but bring to their classrooms. 'identity and integrity', for Palmer, have 'as much to do with our shadows and limits, our wounds and fears, as with our strengths and potentials' (Palmer 1998, p. 13). As he goes on to explain:

> By identity I mean an evolving nexus where all the forces that constitute my life converge on the mystery of self…By integrity I mean whatever wholeness I am able to find within the nexus as its vectors form and re-form the pattern of my life (Palmer 1998, p. 13).

The close affinity of such views to the goals of MB teaching strategies is clearly in evidence. This is illustrated powerfully in Palmer's recommendations for correcting the 'imbalances in the way we approach teaching'; these are summarised as:

> To correct our overemphasis on technique, I stressed the teacher's identity and integrity. To correct our obsession with objective knowledge, I stressed subjective engagement. To correct our excessive regard for the powers of the intellect, I stressed the power of the emotions to freeze, or free, the mind (Palmer 1998, p. 61).

Many of these qualities and virtues are present in the reconstructed models of teacher professionalism discussed above in terms of the ethically principled and intuitive practitioner, and they also connect with the models of student-centred, insight learning approaches advocated in Chap. 8. What Palmer adds to these is the emphasis on the teacher's inner emotional life which is a central feature of the MB models of teaching described by Burnett (2009) and Crane (2009). Scheoberlein

and Sheth (2009) illustrate this forcefully in their arguments about the importance for teachers of 'being present with and to your inner experience as well as your outer environment, including other people' (p. xi). In the manner of Schon's (1987) reflective practitioner referred to above, teachers are asked to practise the noticing of thoughts and actions as they arise during sessions. Just as in the strategies advocated for students, Schoeberlein and Sheth offer detailed instructions for cultivating the mindful reflection-in-action which Siegel (2010) describes as mindsight. The role of stillness, pausing, breathing, noticing and naming are- as in all other MBPs – central to the exercises. As the writers note:

> The time it takes to complete one cycle of inhalation and exhalation gives your thinking mind the chance to catch up with your feelings, and enables you to choose advisedly in what manner you want to respond…Practising mindfulness *when you're not swept away by emotion* is the precursor to applying mindfulness in the midst of real-life situations (Schoberlein and Sheth 2009, pp. 68–69, original italics).

These simple instructions take on considerable power and significance in the context of the frantic hurly-burly of classroom practice. Of course, it will not always be easy to practise such mindfulness, just as it is not always possible to allow for student autonomy or to treat all learners with the kindness and compassion that should be accorded to any learner. For these reasons it is important to stress the importance of professional collaboration and support in the pursuit of professional enhancement and development. As was emphasised in the recommendations for the reconstruction of VET in the last chapter, the moral dimension of a vocation – in addition to the aesthetic and craft elements – needs to be connected with social-collective values. As Hanh (1999) suggests, if we contemplate the 'interrelatedness of things', we will begin to realise that 'Right Livelihood is a collective matter' (p. 115). In the same manner Palmer (1998) insists that 'good teaching is essentially communal' (p. 115).

Such insights point towards the importance of the sharing of ideas through professional research and teaching associations in which strategic collaboration may serve to enhance learning and teaching (Hyland 1996; Ball 2007).

11.5 Mindfulness, Teacher Education and Research

As noted in Chap. 9, the insights gained through mindsight occur to most teachers some of the time but – given contemporary external pressures and constraints – are difficult to embed permanently in either teaching or teacher education. Evidence of an incipient trend to wards affective education can – as was noted in earlier chapters – be discerned in policy and practice for schools. The PCET sector is not quite as well placed in this respect given the de-professionalising of recent years linked to behaviourist employability outcomes. Lomas (2005) comments on the 'McDonaldisation of lecturer training' in FE and HE with the 'greater prescription of the content and delivery…firmly linked to students' achievement of explicit, demonstrable learning outcomes' (p. 177). Just as the courses for students in the PCET sector become 'increasingly aligned with the needs of capital' (Avis 2009a, b, p. 375),

so training for those who are to teach in the colleges is organised along similarly minimalistic and utilitarian lines which leaves .little scope for tutor autonomy or creative reflection on the nature and purpose of their role (see Ball 2007 for an international perspective on such developments).

Given such a bleak prospect what are the chances of MB or affective elements entering the post-school domain? At first blush, the picture appears less than optimistic. However, taking note of the achievements made by professional collaboration mentioned earlier perhaps there are glimmers of hope. There is now a well-established curriculum and group of providers for teachers of mindfulness in the UK (Crane et al. 2010) and, if we combine this with the increasing popularity of MBSR/MBCT programmes around the country which are now being acknowledged by government as a useful part of adult education provision, then possibilities and opportunities begin to emerge.

Ideally, this could result in the introduction of MBAE components into teacher training courses in much the same way that core skill elements of literacy and numeracy have been incorporated in recent years (Avis, Fisher and Simmons 2009). In the absence of such formal interventions, the informal work of committed teachers illustrated by the work of Burnett (2009) and Cattley and Lavelle (2009) can do much initiate constructive moves towards the desired ends. In this respect, the field of educational research becomes of crucial importance.

It was noted above that the educational research agenda in recent years has tended to mirror the dominant policy agenda of central government. This hegemony tends to be reinforced by the requirements of 'evidence-based research' – the search for 'what works' (Davies 1999) – which is often a mask for the implementation of central policy by means of a spurious government-endorsed research cohort (Luke 2007). On this model 'evidence' can come to mean anything which supports the policy advocated from the centre, a dubious process which tends to rule out the professionals' own conceptions of evidence which may quite differently focused – not on figures to justify policy or targets – but, for example, on the quality of classroom relationships or the improvement of learning support for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Evidence-based research – borrowed from the field of medical research where it has a more legitimate place – has an objective, scientific ring to it which has an obvious appeal to those looking for easy answers to immensely difficult and morally contested questions. Such positivistic approaches tend to gloss over the fact that even so-called hard, objective natural science has its subjective elements. Even a cursory reading of a philosophers of science such as Kuhn (1962) and Fayerabend (1987) would be enough to take the edge off any dogmatic attachment to the incorrigibility and objectivity of the physical sciences. In a similar way, Smolin (2006) offers a devastating account of the development of string theory in quantum physics – a branch of physics which is regarded as one of the most experimentally successful in all of the physical sciences – which describes the group of committed string theorists who propagate their ideas (which have a theoretical/mathematical justification but no experimental confirmation) – as being like religious zealots refusing to countenance any alternative views. This incredible state of affairs is described by Smolin

as monolithic 'Groupthink' which is characterised by a 'disregard and disinterest in the ideas, opinions, and work of experts who are not part of the group' and a tendency to 'believe exaggerated or incorrect statements of results, and to disregard the possibility that the theory might be wrong' (p. 284).

It is the mistaken attachment to positivism which causes Smeyers et al. (2007) to argue that much educational research is 'in need of therapy, and has to be cured of the tendency to scientism, of fantasies about science' (p. 187). They go on to suggest that to' replace scientism and doctrinaire empiricism with a more modest view of science is perhaps the first step towards wisdom' and indicate that 'narrative inquiry' (ibid, pp. 194–195) – the more qualitative attempt to make sense of the world of teaching and learning – may be more fruitful. There is a warning, however, that – whether the research is qualitative or quantitative – 'causal explanation does not help us to decide what to do'. The results of social scientific research can, on the other hand, can provide 'insights conducive to understanding in the sense of bringing clarity rather than leading directly to prescriptive conclusions (ibid, p. 198).

The sort of expansive research which is being advocated here – informed by the 'sensitive exercise of practical reason' (ibid, p. 123) – may be linked to what the critics refer to as 'narrative in therapy' earlier in their critique of contemporary educational trends. They go on to elaborate this as a project which:

> requires a focus on the self that is both incoherent and invites delusion. What it may also reveal is a the perhaps paradoxical importance, for the self and its growth, of a turning of attention away from the self – at least, away from the self as understood in any global sense, say, as capitalized. In education this might've achieved by a focus on the objects of study (ibid, p. 66).

This subtle and nuanced interpretation of inquiry – which has much in common with the 'non-self' aspects of both classical and modern notions of mindfulness – can lead to the sort of small-scale action research projects which are typical of the engaged reflective practitioner tradition inspired by the work of Stenhouse and Schon. Campbell et al. (2004) refer to the 'tacit knowledge' that is part of all teaching activities and argue that:

> Part of what it is to be a good practitioner is to be able to bring this tacit knowledge to the surface by a process called reflection-in-action, by thinking through one's actions as one is producing them in the thick of one's professional situation (p. 10).

Such 'reflection-in-action' is on all fours with the present-moment awareness, the mindsight gained through MB strategies and practice.

It is, therefore, highly appropriate – and fortuitously symmetrical – for research aimed at incorporating mindfulness and affective education into mainstream education to be inspired and guided by processes which are rooted in this very philosophy.

In Chap. 6 and elsewhere I have been concerned to refer to the well-established research base of MBT processes, with the work of by Langer (2005), Baer (2006), Siegel (2007) and Williams et al. (2007) providing a solid foundation for practice in a wide range of fields. Research in the applications of MBAs in education is not so

well developed, but there some excellent examples of pioneering work undertaken by interested practitioners. Burnett's (2009) case study work is a good example of such research and development as is the work of Cattley and Lavelle (2009), Yoffee (2010) and other small-scale projects available on the *Association for Mindfulness in Education* website (www.mindfuled.org).

Some more rigorous research on the impact of mindfulness in schools is now beginning to appear. The controlled trial conduct by Huppert and Johnson (2010), for example, with 173 secondary school pupils indicated a positive impact of MBAs on emotional stability and an increase of well-being. Other recently published examples of such research are studies by Peacock and Harrison (2009) and Palmer and Rodger (2009). Although most of the research and development undertaken in this field by Schoeberlein and Sheth (2009) is essentially anecdotal, it is built on the solid foundation of 15 years of practice (p. xvii), and the benefits of mindfulness for teachers and students are more than enough to encourage further research in the field. For teachers, there is an improvement in awareness, a reduction in stress, and an enhancement of classroom climate and, in terms of the impact of MBAs on students, there is a strengthening of attention, a promotion of self-reflection and self-calming, an enhancement of social and emotional learning, and the fostering of holistic well-being (Schoeberlein and Sheth 2009, p. 9). There is much here that interested teachers, teacher educators and practitioner researchers can build on to promote the advancement of mindfulness and affective education in all sectors.

11.6 Conclusion

The erosion of autonomy and the de-professionalisation of teaching, teacher education and research has been examined against the background of a number of national and global policy trends which have negatively influenced education systems around the world over the last few decades or so (Baker and Wiseman 2005; Ball 2007). Various ways of reconstructing professionalism and enhancing the models of learning and teaching advocated throughout this book (and examined in detail in Chap. 9) have been explored against the background of establishing interconnections between MB principles and practice and the reflective practitioner model of professionalism. In conclusion, it has been argued that emerging forms of research in the field of MB interventions in education can provide the means of reinforcing the incipient movements towards mindfulness and affective education goals in the UK and, indeed, in all countries shaped by the policies, values and processes discussed in this context.

Chapter 12
Mindfulness, Morals and the Aims of Education

12.1 The Aims of Education

I began the first chapter of the book by referring to Standish's observations about the tentative and incipient changes in the ebb and flow of central government policy on education. A caveat was entered here, however, to the effect that such developments were tentative and modest, and subsequent chapters have indicated the herculean nature of the task of reforming the system in the face of the overwhelming dominance of the intellectualist, academic, positivist, economistic and utilitarian conceptions of the nature and purpose of education. Such reflections naturally bring us face to face with alternative, contested and value-laden interpretations of just what is the most desirable form of education, and this cannot be separated from the central and fundamental questions concerning the good life for humankind. These are the questions which Plato sought to answer in the *Republic* and they have remained perennial in philosophy for the last 2,500 years. As Nettleship (1969 edn) observed:

> The subject of Education is treated by Plato in the *Republic* as an integral and vital part of the well-being of human society (p. 1).

In more recent times, Harkin et al. (2001) express much the same point in observing that:

> Education systems reflect the nature of the society in which they exist…a fundamental link between the nature of society and the nature of its education system is demonstrable. It is, important, therefore, to ask what sort of society would constitute a 'good' society? For in answering this question we cast light on what we would take to be a 'good' education (p. 139).

Of course, such observations give us only the questions, not the answers. What consequences follow, for instance, from the idea that the nature of education is a reflection of the society in which it is located or, indeed, that we can discern the nature of a society by looking at its education system (Marples 2010). It seems that we can only arrive at a symmetrical link between the two in certain sorts of

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society: ancient Sparta, for example, or perhaps certain modern totalitarian states in which systems of education are designed to serve the purposes of those in power (Castle 1967; Green 1990).

In societies in which the concept of 'goodness' (or what is the best way to live) is essentially contested, however, questions about the best system of education will always be the subject of debate and controversy. Consequently, on the account of education–society links offered above, it is not surprising that contemporary states committed to neo-liberal, free market economics should reflect these values in the structure and organisation of their education systems.

And indeed this is the case as many of the critical policy analyses of current educational trends have indicated (e.g. Brighouse 2006; Allen and Ainley 2007; Lingard and Ozga 2007; Avis et al. 2009). At the same time, this hegemony is not total since, clearly, it allows space for dissent, and this is where the importance of debate about fundamental value questions comes into its own and allows for the proposal of alternative visions.

Of course, it is always possible to attempt to offer some form of value-neutral specification of the aims of education. Whitehead (1966 edn), for example, claimed that there 'is only one subject-matter for education, and that is Life in all its manifestations' (p. 10). But this merely raises questions about what aspects of 'life' we want to cover in the curriculum (to be accurate, Whitehead's point was to recommend a holistic rather than a subject-centred curriculum). In a similar – though rather more explicit and detailed – way, O'Connor (1968 edn) observed that:

> The educational system of any society is a more or less elaborate social mechanism designed to bring about in the persons submitted to it certain skills and attitudes that are judged to be useful and desirable in that society. Ultimately, all the questions that can be asked about a given educational system can be reduced to two: (i) What is held to be valuable as an end? (ii) What means will effectively realize these ends? (p. 7).

This still leaves us with the same big unanswered questions, but O' Connor goes on to list the 'aims of education' as follows:

1. to provide men and women with a minimum of the skills necessary for them (a) to take their place in society and (b) to seek further knowledge;
2. to provide them with a vocational training that will enable them to be self-supporting;
3. to awaken an interest in and a taste for knowledge;
4. to make them critical
5. to put them in touch with and train them to appreciate the cultural and moral achievements of mankind (O'Connor 1968 edn, pp. 8–9).

Such a list is comprehensive and has an inclusive, common-sensical ring to it. I am sure most teachers would agree that education systems should seek to achieve all these aims and more. Yet, despite all appearances such a specification is not, and never could be, entirely value-neutral. We still need to ask, for instance, just what making people 'critical' actually means (can they criticise everything or just some things?) and, indeed, what mankind's 'cultural and moral achievements' are exactly (obviously the aesthetic realm is brought in, but does this also include the affective?).

Such questions certainly make it clearer why Peters (as I discussed in Chap. 2) thought it wise not to ask for a specification of the aims of education since education was essentially a 'normative' concept with values built into it. As Peters (1973a, b) expressed it:

> Education, then, like reform, has norms built into it which generate the aims which educators strive to develop or attain. But the norms in question are highly indeterminate; for what constitutes a person becoming better or having a desirable outlook? (p. 17).

Notwithstanding all this, Peters does go on to say a little more about what may constitute an 'educated man' (sic). He argues that:

> When educationalists proclaim that 'education is of the whole man' (sic) they are enunciating a conceptual truth: for 'education' rules out narrow specialism just as it rules out a purely instrumental approach to activities…This transforming quality of education is what makes the contrast drawn between life and education ridiculous; for it is by education that mere living is transformed into a quality of life. For how a man lives depends on what he sees and understands…There is no end to this process…To be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view (Peters 1973a, b, pp. 19–20).

Such a perspective – though clearly not providing a final settlement of the value questions surrounding education – does at least have the

virtue of closing down certain approaches – for example, the outcome-driven, economistic and instrumentalist dominance of skills and competences characteristic of much current policy – and does open up the possibilities of a genuinely transformative, lifelong learning conception of the educational task.

Recent critical appraisals of Peters' 'intrinsic worthwhileness' approach to educational activities were examined in Chap. 2 where it was noted that philosophers of education such as Barrow (2009) and Katz (2009) were at pains to emphasise the lasting legacy and continuing relevance of Peters' analyses. The rationalist perspective on education as the development of reason which infused the writings of both Peters and Hirst has, as White (2009) explains, been supplemented in recent years by alternative perspectives linked to wider and more practical, utilitarian justifications of the enterprise.

These alternatives have recently been examined by Marples (2010) who points to the relevance of 'education for work' and 'education for well-being' (pp. 39–44) as important supplements to rationalist account of the task. In this respect, Brighouse (2006) argues that the aim of 'creating good citizens' (pp. 62ff) also deserves a place amongst the aims of education concerned with fostering human flourishing. Such an approach is exactly in keeping with the key thesis of this book: namely that, although the fostering of knowledge and understanding must be a central feature of any educational activity, the development of the whole person needs to take into account wider notions of human flourishing which incorporate emotional health and mind-body equanimity. However, the work of Peters and Hirst has left the discussion of educational aims with some powerful and cogent foundational themes, strategies and conceptions to guide future theory and practice. In the education of teachers in particular, English (2009) highlights the importance of Peters' idea of the importance of learning/teaching process as 'critical and experimental', with the nature of the encounter characterised as one of 'transformation' (pp. 90–91) for both teachers and students.

12.2 Education in Destitute Times

In order to link what has been proposed in the foregoing chapters to the normative and transformative aspects of education, it would be useful to examine some of the principal critiques of recent policy and practice. Allen and Ainley (2007) provide an excellent starting-point in this respect in their comments made to elaborate the claim that recent UK education policy has produced 'not a learning but a certified society'. They argue that:

> In many ways humanity stands at a crossroads. According to the government's own Stern Review there may be as little as a decade to transform the rapacious capitalism that has been globalised to the whole planet before runaway and irreversible environmental changes set in. Certainly, the rising generations now at school, college and university face an uncertain future in the world that has been created for them. It is tragic that just at the point in human history when in the interest of human survival social control has to be asserted over the economy, the possibility of even attempting to do so has been abandoned by triumphalist free-market fundamentalism. Education at all levels has played large part in enabling and celebrating this new millenarianism while increasingly closing off any alternatives to it (p. 89).

Writing in the same period, Avis (2007) observed that:

> At the time of writing whilst the competitive settlement is firmly in place and managerialist forms well established, the negative consequences of neo-liberal economics are becoming increasingly apparent. Although the state remains wedded to performativity, the language of targets, performance indicators and so on, there are embryonic attempts to soften these and ameliorate the crasser effects of neo-liberal economic practices (p. 177).

What a difference a few years of economic and political history make! Although the neo-liberal project – since the global financial collapse of 2008 and the current economic recession – has quite justifiably lost its swaggering triumphalist edge, there are few signs of any fundamental changes in either education or social-economic policy. Indeed, as mentioned in earlier chapters, the establishment of a Conservative-Liberal coalition government in Britain in May 2010 seems to have led to business as usual. Unemployment, tax raises, cuts in welfare benefits and social services and the multi-billion pound bail-out of failed banks are firmly located in the public domain funded by taxpayers whilst free marketeering profits remain strictly private. Indeed, in education the privatising agenda established in the 1980s Conservative Thatcher period and further developed by New Labour from 1997 is now taken up again by the new coalition government which looks like extending this process to health, welfare and other public services (BBC News 2010c; DFE 2010; White 2010).

Such a state of affairs led the recently deceased social historian Tony Judt to choose the title *Ill Fares the Land* (2010) for his last book. He introduces the book with the following words:

> Something is profoundly wrong with the way we live today. For thirty years we have made a virtue of material self-interest: indeed, this very pursuit now constitutes whatever remains of our sense of collective purpose. We know what things cost but we have no idea what they are worth. We no longer ask of a judicial ruling or legislative act: is it good? Is it fair? Is it

> just? Is it right? Those used to be the political questions, even if they invited no easy answers. We must learn once again to pose them (pp. 1–2).

In response to the educational criticisms alluded to in earlier chapters, I have indicated how reconstructed models of teaching and learning informed by MB strategies linked to affective goals can contribute to educational reform. Should such reform be connected with the wider political and economic climate mentioned by Avis, Allen and Ainley, Brighouse and other educational policy analysts? I think the inextricable interconnections between education, politics and economy more than justify such a comprehensive approach. Not only do the broader principles underpinning mindfulness seem to demand such an approach, but the central questions of physical and mental well-being which the adoption of a MBAE programmes is designed to address cannot be separated from these wider issues.

12.3 Morals, Mindfulness and Social Engagement

The moral foundations of the Buddhist tradition of mindfulness are to be found in the eightfold path discussed in earlier chapters. As indicated therein, this path is traditionally separated into three strands as set out by Sumedho (1992, p. 51).

1. *Wisdom*

   Right Understanding (or View)
   Right Thought (or Aspiration)

2. Morality

   Right Speech
   Right Action
   Right Livelihood

3. Concentration

   Right Effort
   Right Mindfulness
   Right Concentration

Sumedho explains that the moral aspect of the eightfold path 'means taking responsibility for our speech and being careful about what we do with our bodies' (ibid, p. 59) but (as with Hanh (1993, 1999) and other teachers) he is careful to point out the inter-connectedness of all eight strands and the central place of mindfulness in the fostering and maintenance of these connections. In speaking of the three main divisions, he observes that:

> They work together: the wisdom from Right Understanding and Right Intention; then morality, which is Right Speech, Right Action and Right Livelihood; and Right Effort, Right Mindfulness and Right Concentration – the balanced equanimous mind, emotional serenity…there is perfect harmony between the intellect, the instincts and the emotions (Hanh 1999, p. 62).

The equanimous mind is one of the centrally desired outcomes of mindfulness practice and is connected with emotional stability, clarity of perception and moral practice. Salzberg and Goldstein (2001) define equanimity as 'a state of balance or poise…sometimes called radiant calm of mind or spacious stillness of heart' (p. 161). This quality is crucial to general well-being, and the links between the practice and applications of mindfulness and the development of such well-being were examined in depth in Chaps. 4 and 5. As Hanh (1999) explains, the naming of feelings during forms of mindful meditation plays an important role because:

> Our feelings are not separate from us or caused just by something outside of us. Our feelings *are* us and, for that moment, we *are* those feelings. We needn't be intoxicated or terrorized by them, nor do we need to reject them. The practice of not clinging to or rejecting our feelings is an important part of meditation. If we face our feelings with care, affection, and non-violence, we can transform them into a kind of energy that is healthy and nourishing (p. 72, original italics).

Within contemplative traditions the fostering of such energy through the cultivation of mindfulness leads naturally to the living of a moral life in accordance with the standard precepts – the universal values concerned with non-harm, compassion and kindness – which are espoused in such traditions. Referring to the inter-relationship of all the elements of Buddhist teaching, Brazier (2003) observes that they describe a life that:

> flows in the direction of purposeful action… One element flows from another. If we have the right vision, we think the right way. If we think the right way, we speak the right way; if we speak the right way, we act the right way. If we act the right way we employ ourselves ethically; if we employ ourselves ethically, we put in full effort. If we put in full effort, we become mindful, and if we are mindful we experience Samadhi. Samadhi, the state of clear, meditative mind, in turn brings us vision (p. 15).

Notwithstanding the different interpretations of aims and principles, there are clear and direct links between the older, contemplative traditions and contemporary therapeutic mindfulness approaches. Both are concerned with the promotion of well-being through emotional stability cultivated through mindfulness practice, and both share moral principles and perspectives on the moral life. Siegel (2010) explains how 'mindsight' combines 'insight and empathy' and enables us to

> Gain perception and knowledge of the regulation (mind), sharing (relationships), and mediating neural mechanisms (brain) at the heart of our lives…By viewing mind, brain and relationships as fundamentally three dimensions of one reality – of aspects of energy and information flow – we see our human experience with truly new eyes (pp. 57–58).

This perspective, as discussed in earlier chapters, connects with the idea of mindfulness practice leading to the reduction of our sense of separateness of the personal 'self' from other 'selves' and the external world. Aronson (2004) analyses this conception by means of the notions of classical and quantum physics as these may be applied to the role of ego in mainstream psychotherapy. In the classical, Newtonian world – the macro world of separate physical objects and persons – it seems natural to describe and work with processes concerned with self and ego development.

However, through mindfulness we may gain access to the inner, quantum world – the micro world of interbeing and interdependence – in which distinctions between self and others are loosened as we are freed from fixed images. Although both views of reality are valid in terms of explaining different aspects of experience (they describe different 'histories', as Hawking and Mlodinow 2010 would put it) – and, as with all subjective/objective distinctions, they exist in tandem as complementary perspectives – the quantum deepening of insight is immensely valuable in understanding the relationship between mind, others and the world. As Aronson (2004) expresses this in relation to therapy:

> Newtonian work in therapy helps people to find their voice and the capacity to articulate this in love and work. Developing compassion alongside insight (the quantum view) within Buddhist practice gives us a broader sense of how we are all worthy of care, and a deeper understanding of what is ultimately real, within which vision we may then use our voice (p. 86).

Siegel (2010) pursues a broadly similar line of reasoning in arguing that the role of mindfulness practice in helping us to see clearly breaks down our 'automatic constraints on our sense of self…as separate from one another'. He suggests that:

> Seeing the mind clearly not only catalyzes the various dimensions of integration as it promotes physical, psychological, and interpersonal well-being, it also helps to dissolve the optical delusion of our separateness. We develop more compassion for ourselves and our loved ones, but we also widen our circle of compassion to include other aspects of the world beyond our immediate concerns (p. 260).

This notion of the 'world beyond our immediate concerns' relates directly to the moral underpinnings of mindfulness – both ancient and modern traditions – which have been mentioned at various stages throughout the book. Kabat-Zinn (2005) explains this idea clearly in remarking that:

> The foundation for mindfulness practice, for all meditative inquiry and exploration, lies in ethics and morality, and above all, the motivation of non-harming. Why? Because you cannot possibly hope to know stillness and calmness within your own mind and body…if your actions are continually clouding, agitating, and destabilizing the very instrument through which you are looking, namely, your own mind (p. 102).

The links between inner clarity and the clear vision that Siegel calls mindsight are brought out in Kabat-Zinn's discussion of mindfulness and the moral life. As he suggests:

> Generosity, trustworthiness, kindness, empathy, compassion, gratitude, joy in the good fortune of others, inclusiveness, acceptance and equanimity are qualities of mind and heart that further the possibilities of well-being and clarity within oneself, to say nothing of the beneficial effects they have in the world. They form the foundation for an ethical and moral life (Kabat-Zinn 2005, p. 103).

Such qualities of mind – functioning as cardinal virtues – play a central role in all systems of morality whether the ultimate justifications are found in naturalistic, utilitarian (consequential) or deontological (duty) ethics (Hudson 1970). Keown (2005) classifies Buddhist ethics as 'virtue ethics' (p. 30) which – as in Aristotle's system – is essentially concerned with the development of character in certain

desirable and wholesome directions. However, he also points to the links between Buddhist moral principles and cognitive/naturalistic ethical theories which hold 'that moral truth can be discerned through reason, and that moral judgments are not merely subjective or a matter of personal taste' (Keown 2005, p. 31).

In explaining the key precepts concerned with non-harming, truth-telling and lovingkindness towards the earth and all living beings, Hanh (1993) points out that the precepts:

> are not prohibitions to restrict our freedom and they are not an authority which we have no choice but to follow. The precepts are the fruit of our mindfulness and experience. Because we are mindful, we can see that the precepts protect us and our happiness, as well as those with whom we live (p. 130).

The insights of Buddhism in relation the human psyche have been referred to in a number of places, and it is possible to discern the psychological origins of morality in certain basic facts of human existence. Singer (1983), for example, describes how altruism – a fundamental pre-requisite of moral practice – can be seen to have an evolutionary advantage in terms of the survival of group genes. In a similar vein, O'Hear (1984) comments that:

> Certain facts about human psychology and about human activities provide a basis for at least a limited application of such virtues as sympathy, justice, truthfulness and courage. If these facts were different, if human beings generally lacked moral feelings and if they never shared projects, it is possible that nothing we regard as morality would have any role in human life (p. 82).

Trusted (1987) brings together many of these notions in her observation that:

> Since morality is concerned with behaviour toward others what we seek must be a feature of human societies, and moreover of *all* human societies for we hope to find moral values that are universally accepted. I suggest that there are two universally accepted moral principles: keeping trust and benevolence. They are not to be taken as principles external to human nature, principles *imposed*, but as principles of behaviour that have developed from pragmatic rules to moral laws as human societies developed (p. 65, original italics).

Thus, the compassion and loving kindness of mindfulness traditions can be seen to dovetail with the moral foundations of human existence in general (Grayling 2010). What mindfulness adds to the moral tradition is, first, the clarity of vision and equanimous stability of mind and body which allow for the full expression of moral principles and practice and, secondly, the passionate motivation to engage with the world in the moral project of challenging injustice, poverty, inequality and all the other factors which stand in the way of human flourishing and well-being. It is for this reason that the socially engaged aspects of both ancient and modern mindfulness traditions have, as outlined in Chap. 5, encompassed a broad and diverse range of social movements including peace movements, environmental campaigns, projects to combat urban poverty around the world, work in prisons and hospices, and projects to temper the harmful effects of globalisation (see the *Dharmanet International Learning Resource Site* for information on the array of projects; www.dharmanet.org/ lcengaged.htm).

12.4 Inequality, Well-Being and Social Justice

Mindfulness practice is designed to promote well-being in ourselves and others or – in the language of the Buddhist noble truths – to work towards the reduction of suffering of all living beings. What stands in the way of achieving such objectives? Clearly, the key *internal* obstacles are located in the instincts and capriciousness of the emotions, and mindfulness can help in fostering the requisite control and, eventually, transforming these to promote equanimity. Once this is achieved, however, there is a host of *external* factors which clearly contribute to what Schopenhauer (1970 edn) called the 'suffering of the world' (p. 41) or, to express this in a less negative way, which militate against the promotion of human flourishing and well-being. Thus, the internal and external can be seen to come together in mindful engagement to bring about the desirable ends.

The links between illness, poverty, unemployment and the absence of well-being noted in reports and surveys have been referred to at several points in the foregoing chapters. James (2008), for example, demonstrated how mental health problems were linked with the most materialistic 'selfish capitalist' states, and the links between unemployment, poverty, low socio-economic status and mental health problems have been noted in a number of UK government surveys (Government Office for Science 2008; Together-UK 2010).

Many of these connections were aggregated and consolidated in the comprehensive world survey – *The Spirit Level* – conducted by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010). In painstaking research spanning 23 of the richest countries, the data on overall and relative inequality in nations was correlated with evidence on the following factors generally considered to be prime indicators of the health and well-being of societies: levels of trust, mental illness, life expectancy and infant mortality, obesity, children's educational performance, teenage births, homicides, imprisonment rates and social mobility (pp. 18–19). The findings were unequivocal and extremely disturbing. In addition to the confirmation of the fact that 'economic growth and increases in average incomes have ceased to contribute much to wellbeing in the rich countries', the researchers noted that 'within societies health and social problems remain strongly associated with incomes' (p. 15). Moreover, the survey pointed to the conclusion that 'almost all problems which are more common at the bottom of the social ladder are more common in more unequal societies' (p. 18).

Thus, it seems that – although absolute poverty is unproblematically linked to ill health and social exclusion – the level of *relative inequality within societies* is an equally prominent determinant of health and well-being. The data indicate that on all measured variables – mental illness, imprisonment rates, educational achievement, life expectancy, social mobility and so on – societies which have the largest gaps between high and low incomes fare worst. For example, the figures on mental illness (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010, pp. 66ff) indicate that the most unequal countries (USA, UK, Australia and Canada) have a 20% rate of reported mental health problems as against 10% in countries with a more equal distribution of incomes (Japan, Germany, Italy and Spain). Similarly, beyond a certain basic minimum level, it turns out that

'spending on health care and the availability of high-tech medical care are not related to population health' (ibid, p. 81), hence even in the richer countries life expectancy is related to inequality. As Wilkinson and Pickett report:

Inequality is associated with lower life expectancy, higher rates of infant mortality, shorter height, poor self-reported health, low birthweight, AIDS and depression (ibid, p. 81).

What needs to be added to this finding is that – whether we are referring to teenage births, levels of drug addiction, homicide rates or literacy and numeracy scores – the more unequal societies are the most dysfunctional. On the UNICEF index of children's general well-being, for example, all the Scandinavian countries, along with other low inequality nations such as Germany, Spain, Belgium and Austria, had higher ratings than the USA, UK, New Zealand, Australia and Portugal (ibid, pp. 21ff).

Of course, establishing causal links between such variables is fraught with difficulty but the researchers identify a number of factors which are directly linked to some of the well-being surveys discussed by James (2007, 2008) and, as mentioned above, recently undertaken in the UK. Some of the key issues linked to life in more unequal societies – feelings of shame, inadequacy, guilt and stress felt by those who occupy positions of lower social status – connect directly with the problems which MBSR and MBCT programmes are being increasingly called upon to address. As Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) put it, 'inequality gets under the skin' and – in those on the bottom rungs of the ladder – results in 'socially evaluative threats' and the experience of shame linked to a range of emotions to do with feeling foolish, stupid, ridiculous, inadequate, defective, incompetent, awkward, exposed, vulnerable and insecure. Shame and its opposite, pride, are rooted in the processes through which we internalize how we imagine others see us (p. 41).

The central conclusive statement of these researchers that 'reducing inequality leads to a very much better society' (ibid, p. 197) provides food for thought for all of us, particularly educators and policy-makers. Not only does it appear to accord with common sense, it also confirms and supports the bedrock moral principles – trust and benevolence – discussed earlier which are indispensable to any sort of stable society. Such a perspective is also in keeping with, arguably, one of the most celebrated theories of social justice – that offered by Rawls (1972) – to be proposed in recent times. We are asked to engage in a thought experiment in which we imagine that we can reconstruct society in any way that we choose, within the limits of logical feasibility and, of course not being able to do much about our essentially egocentric instincts. The important key restriction is that we are situated behind a 'veil of ignorance' (pp. 136–142) so that we cannot know *in advance* which position in society we will come to occupy. Rawls argues that it is logical and rational in such circumstances to opt for a society in which goods and services are fairly evenly distributed, and in which justice, freedom and inclusiveness prevail. As Trusted (1987) argues, Rawls' position of 'justice as fairness' rests on the idea that:

> Anyone would start from the position that equal distribution of goods was just but also any rational person would agree to inequalities provided that the worse off are still better off than they would be with complete inequality (p. 51).

Thus, inequalities and differences in income and status – levels of which will, realistically, always be with us in some degree – are to be tolerated only if they serve the interests of the most unequal members of society. Rawls (1972) thought that – not only did this sense of justice provide an adequate foundation for moral action – but that it was indispensable to the idea of being human. As he argues:

> a person who lacks a sense of justice, and who would never act as justice requires except as self-interest and expediency prompt, not only is without ties of friendship, affection and mutual trust, but is incapable of experiencing resentment and indignation. He (sic) lacks certain natural attitudes and moral feelings of a particularly elementary kind. Put another way, one who lacks a sense of justice lacks certain fundamental attitudes and capacities included under the notion of humanity (p. 488).

The 'fundamental attitudes and capacities' highlighted by Rawls are precisely those which underpin mindfulness practice and the moral life. (Hanson 2009). Thus, the internal and external aspects of mindfulness come together in perfect symmetry. Mindful practice (the internal) is informed by and designed to foster a way of life characterised by generosity, kindness, trust and social justice, and mindful social engagement (the external) extends this to the outside world by challenging injustice and inequality so as to promote the optimum conditions for human flourishing and well-being.

12.5 Education, Trust and the Common Good

Education – as a vehicle of personal and social transformation – has a primary role to play in assisting the moral project outlined above. Obviously, if everyone was moved to practise mindfulness and embrace the requisite virtues, the good and just society would follow in due course. However, as Rawls surely knew in the case of justice, not everyone would be either willing are able to engage in the rational project he described; the same would be true in the case of mindfulness. Thus, my commitment to introducing an MBAE component into schools and colleges is held realistically, in the knowledge that – given the current dominance of technicism and instrumentality in the UK and many other education systems – it would be difficult to envisage a mindfulness-based strategy for the education of the emotions having more than a peripheral position in contemporary curricula for schools and colleges.

Notwithstanding all this, the struggle and challenge represents a legitimate and worthwhile reform project, and the ethos and principles of mindfulness tend to inspire both motivational passion and optimistic hope and confidence. Critics of contemporary education such as Avis (2007) and Allen and Ainley (2007) referred to at the beginning of the chapter, are not content to rest with analysis and diagnosis, but offer prognosis and treatment recommendations in the form of proposals for reform. Allen and Ainley conclude their critique of the current educational scene by declaring:

> To prevent the social isolation of an 'underclass', to preserve critical space at all levels of learning and counter 'dumbing down', to reverse privatization of public service education and maintain free provision, so as to remain true to the Enlightenment ideal of understanding

> in order to control society and adapt to its natural environment, a new direction at all levels of education and training is required (Allen and Ainley 2007, p. 133).

Included in the 'new direction' are some of the proposals made in earlier chapters concerning the need to break down vocational/academic divisions, to encourage breadth and openness in curricula and to foster creativity and studentship at all levels of the system. Many of these notions are underpinned by ideas about the 'common school' which are currently receiving increasing attention and re-examination at a time when the idea of an all-embracing comprehensive system of education is being abandoned in the movement towards privatisation of services.

The principles underpinning the proposals for common schooling of the sort outlined above are, as Pring (2007) points out, essentially moral ones concerned with the fostering of the just society and the good life for all within such a society. It is here that we need to return to the basic moral principles as these inform the social values of justice and equality discussed above. Referring to the tradition of common (inclusive or comprehensive) schooling in the UK, Pring argues that:

> The fight for the common school was essentially a moral one in terms of achieving greater social justice and equality, respect for persons and preparation for citizenship within a democratic order (p. 504).

This is essentially the vision of Dewey who – as noted in earlier sections of the book – saw education as rooted in community and as having a primary social function. Pring acknowledges this Deweyan legacy in explaining that:

> The school is an extension of the group to which [young people] belong, enabling the kind of growth that the family and village are too limited to provide. It anticipates the wider community into which they are growing up, and enables the young person to contribute, to enrich and to shape that community (Pring 2007, p. 505).

McLaughlin (2003) defines a common school as 'one that is open to, and intended for, all students within a given society, regardless of their specific differentiating characteristics' (p. 122). According to Pring (2007), the common school would seek to do three things:

> First, to understand and respect the different cultural traditions that the young people bring with them into the school; second, to reconcile those cultural differences, which, if ignored, fragment the wider community so that it is no community at all; third, to connect those with the more universal cultural traditions and achievements of the arts, crafts, sciences and humanities…through which their own ways of thinking and doing might be illuminated (p. 510).

This is an idealistic vision which has inspired educators in the UK and elsewhere since state compulsory schooling was established in the nineteenth century (Simon 1994) and, as Brighouse (2007) suggests, is rooted as much in principles of justice as it is in notions of equal treatment and opportunity for students. This sense of justice leads to educational goals such as that:

> Education should prepare children to become autonomous, self-governing individuals… should equip children with the skills and knowledge necessary for them to be effective participants in the economy…should play a role in preparing children to be flourishing adults independently of their participation in the economy…should prepare children to be responsible and effective participants in political life – good citizens (p. 577).

For Brighouse, these goals inform the notion of justice in education, of which the 'distributive principle is…educational equality': The simple version is that every child should have an equally good education (Brighouse 2007). It is a powerful vision which, as Fielding (2007) shows, is rooted in the principles which inspired struggles for freedom and democracy such as those of the French Revolution. He declares that:

> Whether we continue to call it the common school, as I think we should, or whether we fight for commonality under another name, the need for an inclusive unity of recognition based on the mutually conditioning principles of the French Revolution remains the best hope we have for the future of democracy and humanity: *liberte, egalite, fraternite – ou la mort* (p. 555).

Fielding's invocation of the 'best hope' is most apposite since, as Allen and Ainley (2007) explain in graphic terms, the few comprehensive ideals remaining in the UK system of provision are being rapidly dismantled at all levels of the system. As explained earlier, the privatisation agenda at the root of many of the ills referred to by critics such as Avis (2007) and Allen and Ainley establishing new 'Academy' schools independent of local authorities (BBC 2010b) has been given renewed emphasis under the coalition government established in Britain in May 2010.

Yet, the struggle for common schooling – and the extension of such principles to further and higher education (Hyland and Merrill 2003; Avis 2007) – is fundamental to the reform programme designed to bring about the radical changes in education that have been proposed throughout this book. In addition to the educational justifications already offered, there are the arguments for the benefits of equality and links with societal health demonstrated by Wilkinson and Pickett (2010). The idea of the 'common good' underpins the educational arguments for reform just as it lies behind the social and economic reforms concerned with fairer taxation regimes, more equitable employment conditions, and co-operative ownership and democratic employee participation. All of these measures have been shown to be beneficial for employers, employees and the community; they are demonstrably conducive to the common good (pp. 257–260).

A key moral principle supporting the notion of the common good – that of fostering and maintaining *trust* between people – pervades all such models of organisation and social relationships in both public and private spheres of operation. Combined with benevolence, trust, as was observed above, can be considered to be a bedrock moral concept. As Trusted (1987) argues, the:

> principle of keeping trust is the fulfilling of obligations (explicit or implicit), doing one's duty; it also carries with it the principle of acting justly (fairly)….The *moral* force of an obligation rests on the moral principle of keeping trust (p. 66, original italics).

In recent years, the concept of trust re-engineered as 'social capital '– the total sum of people's involvement in community life – has been prominent in economic, political and educational debates, and featured significantly in the lifelong education policies of New Labour in the UK and in similar policies throughout Continental Europe and Australasia (Field and Leeicester 2000; Aspin 2007). It underpins many of the key features of social, community and work-based learning (Hyland and

Merrill 2003) and, as suggested in Chap. 10, is especially relevant in the VET field. Winch (2000) explains that social capital is:

> constituted through the social relationships that people have with each other, through the collective knowledge of a group, and the moral, cognitive and social supervision that the group exercises over its members…Social capital in this sense has a strongly moral dimension…often described in terms of the norms of trust prevalent within a society (p. 5).

Putnam (2000) has suggested that 'social capital and economic equality moved in tandem through most of the twentieth century' (p. 359) though declined rapidly in the last quarter in nations that introduced neo-liberal economic policies. Similarly, Rothstein and Ulsaner (2005) argue that there is 'no direct effect of trust on inequality; rather, the causal direction starts with inequality' (p. 45). Ulsaner (2002) is adamant that 'trust cannot thrive in an unequal world' and that income inequality is a 'prime mover' of trust, with a stronger impact than economic growth or employment rates (p. 27). In view of the crucial importance of trust or social capital to all aspects of the well-being of nations, the fact that – as Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) demonstrate – levels of trust have plummeted in the countries with most income inequality (pp. 52ff) is disturbing, and must be a cause of concern for educators and policy makers in the UK and the USA.

The fostering of trust and social capital was given equal prominence in New Labour's lifelong learning policy, though this turned out to be tokenistic as economic capital dominated legislation and practice (Hyland and Winch 2007; Avis 2007). This is a great pity since it is of such supreme importance in terms of fostering the common good generally and particularly significant in learning, teaching and educational provision at all levels. Avis (2007) argues, that the 'notion of social capital is particularly appealing as it provides a strategy to develop networks that can be used to reinvigorate relations of trust, thereby generating higher levels of social solidarity' (p. 178). Dealing with much the same ideas, Judt (2010) suggests that there has never been a more urgent 'case for reviving the state' since:

> We have entered an age of fear. Insecurity is once again an active ingredient of political life in Western democracies. Insecurity born of terrorism, of course; but also, and more insidiously, fear of the uncontrollable speed of change, fear of loss of employment, fear of losing ground to others in an increasingly unequal distribution of resources (p. 217).

Revitalised states based on social-democratic principles, according to Judt, provide genuine hope for the rebuilding of that trust which provides the moral glue which welds societies together in ways which may promote the solutions to the immense financial, social and environmental issues facing all modern nations.

In a similar vein, Whitfield (2010) has written of the 'predictable collapse of trust through a near lethal ideological mix of materialistic individualism and crass overregulation' (p. 41) in educational institutions at all levels in recent years. Seldon (2009) has voiced similar concerns and makes a number of recommendations to assist the re-building of trust in educational life. He comments that:

> Trust takes time to build….A more rested and reflective life is a more considered and meaningful one. The battle to live in a more trusting world begins with ourselves…Unless we detach ourselves from the noise of modern life, we will never be able to find time to give more trust, or to be fully trustworthy (pp. 66–67).

This forthright declaration about trust brings us full circle; the 'reflective life' mentioned by Seldon is – in all essential respects – the mindful life both underpinned by and conducive to the moral principles which are necessary to a trustworthy community. Trust, as discussed in Chaps. 3 and 4, is also one of the fundamental principles underpinning mindfulness practice. As Kabat-Zinn (1990) recommends: 'The more you cultivate this trust in your own being, the easier you will find it will be to trust other people more and to see their basic goodness as well' (p. 37). If all this is connected with the socially engaged thrust of contemporary mindfulness practice – the passionate commitment to challenging injustice and inequality in all spheres – we arrive at a cogent justification for mindfulness in education which facilitates and reinforces the key reform process advocated above.

12.6 Conclusion: Mindfulness and Educational Aims

From all that has been proposed in the foregoing chapters, it will come as no surprise that I would wish to add an MBAE element to the standard list of the aims of education. My proposals would also include the need to locate an MBAE strategy within an educational framework in which insight models of teaching, studentship approaches to learning, process-driven curricula and a foundation of common schooling were firmly established. Such a system would provide little problem for the broad conceptions offered by Whitehead and O'Connor, and are fully in accordance with the liberal humanist perspective offered by Dewey, Peters and like-minded philosophers of education referred to above in the discussion of common schooling. However, such proposals could not be accommodated so easily by those who see education only in cognitive/intellectual terms or as a means of providing employability skills or simply a mechanism of social control and the reproduction of the status quo.

As Wilkinson and Pickett (2010) conclude in their analysis of levels of inequality around the world, 'further improvements in the quality of life no longer depend on further economic growth: the issue is now community and how we relate to each other' (p. 254). The idea of education as the prime mover in the fostering of economic capital – always suspect as Dore (1976, 1997) so graphically illustrated – is now an empty and hollow slogan, particularly as countries around the world struggle with the consequences of the abject failure of neo-liberal economics. Yet, it is not only the economic consequences of Chicago school free marketeering ideas that have turned out to be disastrous but also their impact on the social fabric in glorifying selfish and materialistic possessive individualism. The selfish capitalism which James (2008) has criticised so forcefully has produced sickness – mental, physical and psychological – in all nations in which it has gone unchallenged by social-democratic and moral values concerned with societal well-being and the common good.

Along with most other public institutions, education has been debilitated and grossly mutated by this materialistic and instrumentalist culture over the last few decades but, as the critical commentators mentioned through have suggested, it is

still a lively and hopeful vehicle for change. Such change will not be brought about by purely intellectual and cognitive means but by giving equal attention to the *sentio*, the crucial sphere of human emotions. An education concerned only with the intellectual and cognitive domain seems destined to bring about the very diminishment of learning and learners that critics of the education of the emotions are earnestly warning us about. Moreover, thinking by itself, without feeling and the motivation to moral practice – resting on the 'radiant calm of mind and spacious stillness of heart' associated with mindfulness – could never produce any of the desirable changes outlined above. Passionate commitment to the values which inspire community well-being and trust require a rejuvenation of the affective domain of education.

Earlier chapters have sought to show how MB strategies can effectively enhance learning at all levels and – directed towards the education of the emotions – can bring about transformational brain changes conducive to greater stability and equanimity. Such qualities are vital to any form of education aimed at the development of the whole person, and are indispensable to the promotion of community trust and the common good. To return to the Peters' quotation mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, it is not so much an end point or destination we are seeking here but the transformational notion of education helping people to travel with a different view. The parallel transformational nature of mindfulness practice provides the most apposite confirmation of Schoeberlein and Sheth's (2009) argument that 'mindfulness and education are beautifully interwoven' (p. xi). The cultivation of that mindsight which provides us with knowledge and awareness of our own mental lives is a noble and worthwhile educational goal. Combined with the education of the emotions in the MBAE programme recommended, it has the potential to transform educational provision and community well-being. By way of conclusion it seems fitting to use the concluding words of Siegel's (2010) recent book which explores the immense power of fostering the 'inner knowing' that is mindsight. He ends by saying that:

> Cultivating mindsight in ourselves and in one another, we can nurture this inner knowing in our children and make it a way of being in the world. We can choose to advance the nature of the mind for the benefit of each of us now and for future generations who will walk this earth, breathe this air, and live the life we call being human (p. 261).

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