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Krathwohl's Taxonomy of the affective domain transposed



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The present paper sets out to refer education practitioners to an elaborate taxonomy of the affective system of the learner. It is meant to transpose the taxonomy from its first intricate philosophical conception and wording to a simplified version far more amenable to professionals. The taxonomy is taken up right since the rationale that underlies it and is tracked through the way it pursues learner affect as it unfolds progressively in reaction to the stimuli which constitute the learning experience. The outcome is a streamlined version of the original taxonomy that is far more intelligible and more practicable.

Key words: learner affect, affective system, taxonomy, simplified version, education.

1. Introduction

Prior to the advent of humanistic psychology in education, it was long believed that the success of any learning activity is determined only by cognitive factors and that scrupulous consideration of the mental processes taking place in the mind of the learner is, on its own, enough to ensure optimal learning. However, it has been found out that that conviction is obsolete and that its day is done. Evidence has aroused the importance of considering the emotional side of the learner just as the cognitive has always relished such high consideration.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the advent of wellknown humanistic psychologists who contend with sound evidence that the purely cognitive conceptualization of learning falls short to ensure successful learning on its own and that a humanistic considerations which attend to affectivity must be incorporated in education. This conviction spawned an urgent need to attend to the learner's affectivity, for it evinced

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crucial to apprehend its very nature, constituents, and roles in the learning process so as to integrate it effectively in the educational operation.

With the aim of investigating and deploying humanistic views in language education, educational psychologists tracked affect all along the learning process and found out that it is actually an integral pattern in learning. It has been evidenced that affect accompanies and, to a great extent, conditions learning. It either helps it, or thwarts it. psychologists' efforts culminated in the elaboration of an important promotional work on learner affect that has had considerable repercussions on language education, a work that consists in an insightful taxonomy realized by Krathwhole.

2. Krathwohl's Taxonomy of the affective domain

One of the earliest contributions of educational psychologists to the promotion of learner affect as an issue worth of consideration and implementation in the field of language learning is Krathwohl's Taxonomy of the affective components of the individual. The taxonomy was developed as a response to an urgent need raised by educationalists from different regions of the world, to a common terminology for defining, describing, classifying and evaluating the desired affective outcomes of education in the learner's. For it showed plain that the changes in learner affect due to a teaching activity are too evident to be overlooked.

Educationalists commonly believe that the skilful manipulation of an instruction process that is deliberately meant for achieving cognitive objectives ineluctably spawns affective reactions of various kinds in the learner's. Krathwohl says, "...there still persists an implicit belief that if cognitive objectives are developed, there will be a corresponding development of appropriate behaviours." (Krathwohl, 1971:20)

Evidence shows that different kinds of behaviour develop in the learner's after a teaching activity. Some of these behaviours crop up in learning experiences where the learner feels comforted, esteemed, and rewarded. Thus they are positive and much wanted simply because they are likely to involve the learner and keep him rapt in the course of learning. Other types of behaviour; however, form in learning situations where the learner feels insecure, marginalized and refuted. They are negative and much unwanted for they impede the learner's involvement in the learning experience. Therefore, educationists believe that the positive affective learner's responses are themselves to be set as objectives to be worked for.

In 1948, a group of educational psychologists from different regions met in the American Psychological Association in Boston with the intent to bring to light the affective domain and give it the merited consideration in the field of education. A subcommittee, chaired by Krathwohl, was then assigned the mission of working on the different aspects of the learner affect. The members set themselves the task of depicting the different types of learner affective behaviours, defining them in the most rigorous terms possible, categorizing them and, then, ordering them up to a logical continuum in a taxonomy that is likely to allow for the clear understanding, the gradual development, the easy attainment and the methodical evaluation of the desired affective behaviours. The committee's resolve to ensure accuracy in the statement of affective objectives made it obsolete to adopt in the taxonomy terms such as interest, attitude, value, appreciation and adjustment that used to be used in common parlance to refer to learner's affective responses. Each term was found to encompass a wide range of meanings, and its complexity, thus, makes it impossible to figure in a system of classification that seeks to abstract every affective objective into its simplest and most basic essence. Instead, each concept of those has been analysed into its ultimate constituents.

Interest, as a complex of affective responses, for instance, has been dissected into an array of reactions that ranges from being merely aware of the presence of a stimulus to avidly seeking out that stimulus. Similarly, the analysis of attitude as a composite resulted in a fine spectrum of affective behaviours ranging from a positive or negative feeling towards something at its least degree, to commitment to it or abhorrence of it at its highest. In this vein, much the same can be said about the other concepts namely value, appreciation and adjustment.

Each of the affective behaviours above represents a cluster of far simpler behaviours so amenable to abstraction, classification and organization, and so was each one of them actually analysed into its simplest constituents that were themselves abstracted into their purest meanings. These constituents will figure somewhere later in some details. The next challenge the taxonomers had to stand to, was to find a pertinent principle that would allow for a logical ordering of the abstracted affective aspects.

2.1 Arrangement Principle of the Taxonomy

The wanted principle was one that would order those aspects in a sequence where each one assumes achievement of the other below it. The trial of several principles such as 'from simple to complex' or 'from concrete to abstract' and others alike loomed not so promising as definite principles that would meet the quest once and for all. All of the principles tried out proved inadequate for finding any continuum among the affective responses.

The taxonomers, then, got more convinced than any time before that the wanted key lies within the affective behaviours themselves and nowhere else, so they decided to review those behaviours thoroughly and proceed in a subtler way. They started observing and examining the affective reactions of the learner towards an experience that they had contrived, right since his first exposure to it. To their astonishment and triumph, the learner affective responses unfolded one after the other in an extraordinary sequence. At last, the organizational taxonomy was materializing and the continuum it was to be based on would be ultimately be found. The continuum cropped up as the taxonomers tracked the learner affect as it altered from a state to another one that is deeper and more intricate.

The continuum starts with the first sight the learner has of the material, event or phenomenon within his perceptual field, then continues with a bit more complicated mental reaction to it, then a further appreciation of it and so on. All this evidences a very subtle process through which the perceived material, event or phenomenon goes through, since its exposure to the external senses of the learner, on through a mental interaction it instigates, to a value the learner finally attaches to it. It seems that this process has an inward direction that makes evidence of an active sequential set of responses, on the part of the learner, to the stimulus. This is the process that the taxonomers call internalization, the focus the following section.

2.1.1 Internalization

Internalization, in a psychological perspective, is a term that sums up a series of affective reactions the learner may manifest towards a particular experience he finds himself exposed to. Internalization is a process in which changes in behaviour pile up sequentially. This is justified in a clearer way by Kelman (1958)

Internalization can be said to occur when an individual accepts to be influenced because the content of the induced behaviour-- the ideas and actions of which it composed is intrinsically rewarding. He adopts the induced behaviour because it is congruent with his value system. (Kelman,1958: 53)

Internalization, in Krathwohl's view, is a process that is triggered off by the very first perception of the material, event or phenomenon, and that goes on through a series of changes to end in an everlasting value system. This system piles up in the memory to serve the individual as a means to judge any experience he may encounter in his daily life.

The taxonomers found in internalization the fittest principle for their cause because of the various advantages it presented them with. It seems to have served them in several ways. First, it helped them develop clear-cut definitions of the affective behaviours as they succeed one another in a fine sequence where the achievement of a behaviour signals the beginning of the following one leaving no room for any intersection that would cause ambiguity. Second, internalization helped the taxonomers set the affective behaviours in order. Each behaviour evinces a particular stage of interaction between the learner and the experience that shows up in a conspicuous reaction. Those stages are sequential and form a very fine continuum that makes the construction of a taxonomy a feasible task.

The third way the principle of internalization benefitted the taxonomers is that it proved so enlightening for teachers. It redressed their attention towards another type of objectives they have to set for their teaching activities besides the cognitive assimilation of the content of the material they present to learners. This time, they had to incorporate in their teaching plans the affective behaviours they aspire to develop in their learners', and design their teaching stratagems in ways that are likely to lead them to the desired end.

Internalization is, thus, the backbone of the taxonomy of the affective domain. It is only upon this principle that Krathwohl and his fellow taxonomers could build the organizational scheme of the taxonomy in a logical and smooth way. Moreover, the principle of internalization makes it possible and even simple for any teaching practitioner to track learner affect since his first exposure to the learning experience to its final storage in the value system. Now, shall we explore this process.

2.2 The taxonomy

The taxonomy unfolds gradually as you follow the learner's emotional reactions to the learning material. These reactions constitute a series of changes that develop into a fine continuum in which each stage of change is deeper and more important than the preceding.

2.2.1 Receiving

The stage of receiving is the first in the internalization continuum. It refers to the stage of encounter of the individual learner with the learning experience. In this stage, the learning item is put within the learner's field of perception, but this does not make sure the learner will attend to it. One or more peripheral items may capture his attention and lead him astray. It becomes imperative on the teacher, then to sensitize him to the existence of the item and goad him on intelligently to pay heed to it and to receive it.

Receiving is the first rung on the ladder of internalization, and it is unconceivable that the learner could go any step further without accomplishing it. The achievement of any stage in the continuum determines achievement at the next higher one. Thus it falls on the teacher to draw the learner's attention to the learning item, to optimize his receiving of it and even his acceptance to deal with it, for "people learn about the things they attend to and do not learn much about the things they do not attend to." (Schmidt, 2001: 30)

Simply put, receiving refers to the learner's willingness to attend to a situation, an event, a phenomenon, an idea, or a material that constitute a component of the learning experience. This receiving takes the shape of a sub-continuum that ranges from a mere awareness of the existence of the situation, the event, the phenomenon, the material, or the idea to a selected attention to it. This follows in detail.

2.2.1.1 Awareness in receiving

At this very first level of receiving, the learner is simply made conscious of the existence of the target learning item without any further details. The teacher at this level is to establish a mere connection between any of the learner's senses just by throwing the item into field of perception. The expected result is that the latter notices the item but without any interest.

What puts awareness at the bottom rung of the ladder is that it is a bare notice on the part of the learner of the learning item. The learner could simply say in effect, **"I am aware of it, but I couldn't care less about it." (Krathwohl, 1971: 101)** At this stage, the learner is hardly aware of the existence of the item. Further care of the learning item leads the learner to the second step, that of willingness to receive.

2.2.1.2 Willingness to receive

Mere awareness of the stimulus does not necessarily run on into behaviour sought after. Awareness of the stimulus may develop into an acceptance of it, as it may develop into a rejection of it. At this very sensitive stage, it falls to the teacher to make the target item appeal to the learner. This depends on his artistry. The success of the teacher to instigate in the learner a first positive reaction is so necessary for the continuum to be kept on. All the teacher has to do right now, is to mock the learning item up and represent it in its most attractive form just to ensure the learner conceives a willing to tolerate it and to not avoid it. Such a subtle decision is so important for the next step: selected attention.

2.2.1.3 Controlled or selected attention

The learner's willingness to receive the target stimulus, which is the last stage we went through, suggests that the learner has a strong intention to take up this activity. To attend to it consciously is to mind it and mark it off from other possible distracting stimuli in the same surrounding.

This stage is marked by the learner's intent focus on the target learning item, yet this focus remains in its very low degrees. Certainly, it is exclusive on the predetermined object, but it is still too crude to enable the learner to describe the object technically and accurately. Wei et al, (2012) say in this vein, **"Because attention is the main gatekeeper to processing, storing, and retrieving information, learning cannot proceeding in its absence."** (In Rosegard E., Wilson, J. 2013: 2) **2.2.2 Responding**

The last stage o the continuum, willingness to receive, is hitherto the last reaction that the learner has been prompted to conceive and manifest. Albeit this has the nature of a reaction on the part of the learner to the suggested item, it remains stative and does not exceed that. The learner at this stage manifests a willingness to pay attention to an object that happened to belong within his field of perception.

A step further leads the learner to actively attend to the target item, to respond to it. In other words, he shows that he is somehow interested in it and even takes some initiative to do something about it. In short, the learner is actively responding to the phenomenon.

Responding itself has been to cover a whole scale of reactions ranging from a mere assent to respond to the item to actual satisfaction in dealing with it.

2.2.2.1 Acquiescence in responding

After the learner has paid attention to the stimulus, he may move on to manifest some compliance with the teacher's decision to deal with the learning item. All that can be expected from the learner at this stage, is that he yields to the teacher's suggestion. For **"(a)cquiescence involves giving in to the other side." (119)** The idea is that he has acquiesced to actively respond to the item just because he saw no need to avoid it. Being exposed to more persuasive alternative stimuli and feeling no pressure, the learner might well redress his concern towards one of these.

Although the learner is supposed to actively manifest a response to what he is exposed to, passiveness still reigns over him. Any further conspicuous reaction would lead to a next step on the continuum.

2.2.2.2 Willingness to respond

Acquiescence in responding in responding is a vital step the teacher has to seek after. It is unavoidable in the continuum. Nonetheless, the attainment of the learner's acquiescence is not in itself enough to ensure his involvement in the stimulus. Mere acquiescence should, thus, be fostered into real willingness on the part of the learner to do something about the learning item. The term willingness carries the bulk of significance at this level. Willingness implies readiness to voluntarily take up the task of exploring the learning item. Conceiving a will to get involved in the learning task implies that the prompt that led him ie. the learner to reach such a stage has turned from the state of an extrinsic into an intrinsic one; "... it is a voluntary response from choice." (ibid:125) The latter is far stronger and is more likely to lead him further.

It is right at this stage that the learner starts to proceed from his own choice, and the ensuing initiative that he takes on the course of learning cannot be but promising. Therefore, the teacher should be concerned that the learner attain this point of the continuum, for the learner's resolute involvement is on its own likely to drive him the furthest possible and make surpass any obstacle.

2.2.2.3 Satisfaction in response

To sting this section to the previous one in terms of affectivity, one can notice that the willingness to respond to a stimulus, that the learner reaches at the end of the phase, evinces enthusiasm for exploring the learning item. Inquisitiveness on its own will serve him as an inner drive that urges him to satiate it through discoveries about the item. Discovery is in itself a reward to the effort that the learner spends on his activity.

Reward, at this stage, takes the form of a feeling of satisfaction, pleasure, zest and enjoyment. **"The very specification that satisfaction accompanies the response designates a reinforcement or a reward that tends to increase the frequency and strength of response."** (Krathwohl, 1971 :130)

The teacher who seeks to develop autonomous learners has to bank on such self-reinforcing behavior. Satisfaction in response will energize the learner and rouse him to more and more activity.

2.2.3 Valuing

Valuing simply means assessing the worth of a person, an object, a phenomenon, or a situation, which will result in a belief or an attitude that the learner will hold about or towards the object of his assessment, whether positive or negative. The learner's behaviour at this point of the continuum is very delicate, for **"the objectives classified here are the prime stuff from which the conscience of the individual is developed into active control of behavior." (ibid: 140)**

The individual learner's values that he acquires in the classroom will guide his behavior in and out of school. The different social situations will confront him to different individuals who themselves hold values. Thus, harmonious coexistence with others makes it compulsory on the learner to know and comply with the ideal values of the society.

There may be inconsistencies between the ideal desirable values that the teaching material carries and the values that the learner has already adapted from his peer group, his parents or the community. These already6acquired values can be so divergent from the ideals of the society and thus so pervert. In such instances, the task of the teacher becomes complicated and difficult, but possible. The breaking down of this category in sub-phases will help him break learner commitment to the wrong values and establish better ones in him.

2.2.3.1 Acceptance of a value

Krathwhol states that at this lowest level of valuing, we

"...go beyond mere satisfaction and pleasure in the response to those behaviours which can be taken as evidence of seeking or wanting an object because it has worth and is considered to be important in its own right." (ibid: 141)

We are rather concerned with ascribing a value to the stimulus, a value that stems from the belief of the learner about the stimulus and that regulates his attitudes towards it.

The value that the learner attaches to the person, object, phenomenon or situation gradually acquires consistency and gets internalized. This is detectable for the teacher through the deliberate interest that the learner conceives in one of the elements mentioned ahead and his inclination to explore it.

For sure, the value attributed to the learning object at this level of internalization, does have consistency; otherwise, it would not be internalized. However, the consistency of the value at this stage remains tentative, not so fixed. The degree of certainty with which the value is held remains in its lowest scale. This keeps the value amenable to reevaluation and change.

2.2.3.2 Preference for a value

What has been ensured at the end of the previous level is the learner's belief in the worth of the learning stimulus. Such belief, though internalized, remains prone to substitution. The competing stimuli in the same context, each of which has a value in the learner's whatever be it, remains eligible for consideration and focus, which keeps the consistency of the value of the first stimulus tentative. It is only when the value exceeds this stage to the next that stability of the consistency of the value can be ascertained.

As the term indicates, preference for a value intimates that choice has been made and that the decision is to focus on the attended stimulus to the exclusion of the others present in the context. Behavior at this stage may show in the learner's the want to seek the stimulus out and to pursue it.

The stage at hand marks the beginning of actual involvement on the part of the learner in the stimulus. The learner "... is sufficiently committed to the value to pursue it, to seek it out, to want it." (ibid:145) Here, the learner shows plainly his readiness to invest both time and energy in the learning item. He actually starts a learning activity which may take the form of an overt task or a great deal of reflection and speculation.

2.2.3.3 Commitment

The last point reached in the previous level is involvement that results from the individual's settled belief in the worth of the person, object, phenomenon or situation. Commitment is attained when certainty in the belief surpasses all doubt and takes the form of conviction in the importance of the value. This conviction is so firm that, affectively, the student seems to adhere to it based on nonrational grounds.

Adherence, at this level, evinces the student's strong feelings about the person, object, phenomenon or situation. The learner is so engrossed with the

learning item that he finds no reluctance in himself to display it to others. In fact, "it is as though the object has taken hold of the student and he, at the same time, has taken hold of the object." (ibid: 150)

The internalized affect towards the stimulus becomes a strong inner drive that pushes the student to seek it out and initiate action to explore it and learn it, action which, by its very nature, implies commitment. Therefore, the time and energy spent on the learning item are so significant in the determination of the learner's commitment.

2.2.4 Organization

The internalization of the values of the different persons, objects, phenomena and situations that the learner is exposed to in the different learning experiences certainly result in heaps of values in the mind of the learner. Such a state of affairs entails confusion unless those values are arranged some way. This is what actually happens since the learner manifests orderliness when treating two items at the same time.

Organization represents the category of behaviours that follows once the value is internalized. The process consists in arranging the values into a neat system that makes retrieval of the value spontaneous at the encounter of the same stimulus any time later. Besides, organization entails the determination of the relationships among values, which any task of comparison feasible. Last, it includes the assessment of the strength of the values to decide which values are dominant, pervasive and which are just recessive.

The building up of the value system is gradual for two reasons. First, learning is a never ending process and the learner never ceases to internalize new values he happens to ascribe to the objects of learning. Second, no value is unchangeable. Every value remains liable to modification and even to substitution. This happens when a value of strong evidence is incorporated in the value system and encounters another, already established, one that contravenes it. The newly incorporated value takes it over the old one.

Organization as the fourth level in the internalization continuum is done in two phases: the conceptualization of the value and the organization of the value system.

2.2.4.1 Conceptualization of a value

As mentioned ahead, the development of a value system is intended to serve the learner in comparing objects through the values he ascribes to each one of them, establishing relationships between the values and generalizing a value to the objects members of the same set or class. Objects, however, do bear ostensible differences that may delude evaluation. Thus, the reduction of the object to its ultimate genuine meaning becomes indispensable for proper evaluation and clarification.

Conceptualization, in this sense, comprises two procedures: abstraction and generalization. Through abstraction, the object to value is divested of all surface transitory features and left in its deep characteristics; through generalization, the value is applied to all the objects sharing the deep characteristics and, thus, forming a class of similar members.

Once conceptualization is done, a new value is added to the system. The learner's encounter of a new object of the same category in the learning experience instigates the retrieval of the value stored in the system for a comparative evaluation. This comparative evaluation is needed to determine the value of the newly perceived object as well as the spot where it will be stored in the system, a step so necessary for the organization of a value system.

2.2.4.2 Organization of a value system

Values, both cognate and disparate, are internalized during the different learning experiences. The ultimate goal behind such internalization is to build a value system that enables the learner to observe, evaluate and take a stance vis-à-vis the stimuli he would be exposed to. Logical observation, informed evaluation and right stance, the three tasks imply that the learner draws on a system already stored in his mind, a system of much arrangement and harmony.

The organization of a value system consists in "bring(ing) together a complex of values, possibly disparate values, and to bring these into an ordered relationship with one another." (ibid: 159) The result of this is presumably the formation of a consistent view of the world around. The relationships of the values are ordered in harmonious and consistent patterns. Such harmony and consistency vary from an individual to another. This is why Krathwhol calls it 'dynamic equilibrium' which keeps changing in accordance with the salient elements of the learning environment.

The orderly placement of values into a value system is not the end of the process of organization. The internalization of cognate values may engender a new value that is the result of the synthesis of the two values.

2.2.5 Characterization by a value or value complex

At this level of the continuum, the individual learner is supposed to have internalized enough values to build a value system and to have those values set in an integral and consistent pattern. Besides, what is expected is that the value system has actually been operated to control the learner's behavior sufficiently to make him used to reacting consistently to fortuitous stimuli. Consistency in spontaneous reaction to casual stimuli tends to mark the peculiarity of the individual learner's view of the world. This view accrues more and more by time and through experience. What goes for sure, however, is that formal education generally falls short to provide adequate time and experience for the formation of a mature view of life, thus, the process of the making of such view continues to years after the learner completes his formal education.

Steadiness in reaction to stimuli reflects stability of values in the individual's value system. His reactions are so steady that they characterize him. He will accordingly come to be identified by them. He will come to be known for his peculiar ideals, principles, and personal credo, which helps any acquaintance of his to predict his behavior. The sum of his principles, ideals and credo makes up his idiosyncratic view of the world, his personal philosophy, a set of pervasive controlling tendencies that have hold of his behaviour and characterize it. This characterization is formed through two steps, the following.

2.2.5.1 Generalized set

Simply put, the generalized set is the system of the internalized, consistent and well-set values, attitudes and beliefs that guides the individual's response to the phenomena around him. It is **"a consistent and persistent response to a family of related situations or objects." (Krathwohl 1971: 166)** It is referred to as an attitude cluster that determines the peculiar way the individual approaches a phenomenon and reacts to it. Thus, it is so characterizing for the individual.

The generalized set is so fixed in the learner's that it guides even his unconscious acts. It is, in this sense, a spontaneous predisposition to behave in a certain way to an element of a family of generalized phenomena at any moment. Once the individual's generalized set is unveiled to the world through his open attitudes, values and beliefs, any observer can comprehend and predict his behaviour. **2.2.5.2 Characterization**

At the level of characterization, the peak of the internalization process, the values that have been internalized since the beginning of the continuum develop into a consistent code that guides conduct. The values, beliefs and ideals that used to be attached to particular persons, objects, phenomena or situations have unified to form a whole character that addresses generalized phenomena. The most important factor that determines, largely, the integrity of character is consistency. Consistency in the inner value system is reflected through consistency in behaviour, which, in turn, is clearly discernible in the social and private roles that the individual assumes.

Objectives, at this level, are **"so encompassing that they tend to characterize the individual almost completely." (ibid: 171)** The integrity and consistency that these objectives tend to have, promote the individual to get known for a philosophy of life that shapes and pervades all his behaviours, and that guides and regulates his personal as well as his civic life. Accordingly, formal education curricula have to set as ultimate objectives the attainment of a student who develops his own philosophy of life and gains overarching maturity that will characterize his private and civic demeanour. This is clearly set by Harvard University Committee (1945).

Education must look to the whole man. It has been wisely said that education aims at the good man, the good citizen, and the useful man. By a good man is meant one who possesses an inner integration, poise, and firmness, which in the long run come from adequate philosophy of life. (In Krathwohl, 1971:172)

3. Conclusion

To sum up, Krathwohl's Taxonomy has proved of invaluable worth. It has set educationists' first steps on the shortest and least effort-demanding way to apprehend how learner affect is triggered at the first encounter of the situation, event, ideas, phenomenon or person, and then internalized and organized into a consistent system of personal conceptions, beliefs and values to become idiosyncratic and very decisive in one's choices and acts.

Evidence of the importance of Krathwhol's Taxonomy shows clear in the fact that it still constitutes the basis for almost all the works running in the same vein. Krathwhol's model of learner affect starts with reception, the first learner's sensory

contact with the external experience and so do others' works, then proceeds with an intricate process that takes place in the mind before the piece of knowledge learned from the experience reaches stability. Contemporary studies of learner affect proceed almost the same way. They focus on affect as an idiosyncratic phenomenon and shed concern on the way it affects, in some cases conditions, learning in its different stages and bears tightly on memory. Affect, learning and memory, and the way they bear on one another, are the focus of the following section.

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