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The Heart of Education: Exploring the Affective Domain of Learning

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Abstract

This research investigates the affective domain of learning, often the least explicitly addressed yet among the most influential in student development. We explore how Technology Education at secondary level can serve as a model for embedding affective learning across the curriculum. Situated within Ireland's Junior Cycle Framework (DES, 2013) and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) Wellbeing programme (NCCA, 2017), this study examines how technology subjects naturally foster emotional intelligence, motivation, collaboration, and resilience; core components of adolescent psychosocial growth (Erikson, 1968) and wellbeing (NCCA, 2017).

Through an extensive review of literature (Buckley et al., 2018; Jones, 2023; Kimbell, Stables & Green, 1996) and curriculum analysis, the research highlights how Technology Education provides tangible opportunities to develop the "Head, Hand, and Heart" dimensions of learning. Its emphasis on design, problem-solving, and creative practice enables explicit engagement with the affective domain alongside cognitive and psychomotor learning. The findings suggest that these pedagogical approaches can inform wider educational practice, offering a transferable framework for integrating affective learning into other subjects.

A key implication concerns teacher education and professional learning. Building teachers' capacity for affective literacy (Biesta, 2017) is essential for embedding wellbeing within curriculum design and classroom practice. By positioning Technology Education as a living example of affective pedagogy in action, this research contributes to reimagining holistic, student-centred education that nurtures both competence and character.

Keywords: Holistic Education; Wellbeing; Student-Centred; Technology Education; Motivation.