

A NOTE ON THE TERM 'ASOCIAL'

Perhaps I should point out that an asocial approach to encouraging learning and the development of understanding in no way implies the suppression of social or linguistic proclivities. Quite the reverse in fact for, paradoxical as it might seem, social and linguistic abilities have their foundation and structures in fundamental non-social learning.

Other concerns sometimes expressed are that the emphasis on general understanding is somehow 'all cognition and neglectful of the emotions', and that working in an asocial manner with children will not only fail to exercise their emotions but might also interfere with the development of normal human relationships.

The first of these is a matter of misunderstanding: in the underlying theory of learning and understanding there is no division between cognitive and affective functioning. It is traditional psychology which has sometimes sought to study these aspects as if they were not only separate but somehow in competition.

As for the other worry, the closeness realised by individuals under asocial, anxiety-free conditions leads to confidence and a capacity for trusting, born of the ability to rely on the ordinary overall consistent behaviours of another, and of an improved understanding of the behaviours of others.

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