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The Happy Learning Revolution: Building Joyful, Mindful, and Future-Ready Education

The Happy Learning Revolution:

Building Joyful, Mindful, and Future-Ready Education



Joyful



Mindful



Innovative



Future-Ready



Dr. Huma Naz
Dr. Mehwish Siddiqui

The Happy Learning Revolution: Building Joyful, Mindful, and Future-Ready Education

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Published by: - Book Rivers

Website: - <https://www.bookrivers.com>

Email: publish@bookrivers.com

First Print Edition - 2026

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**Title: The Happy Learning Revolution: Building Joyful, Mindful,
and Future-Ready Education**

Editors: Dr Huma Naz, Dr. Mehwish Siddiqui

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ISBN: 978-93-7837-312-1

MRP: 499 /-INR

(Printed in India)

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Chapter – 2

Joyful and Mindful Approaches to Drug Discovery Education: Future-Ready Skills

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Abstract

The pharmaceutical sciences are facing an important turning point. Innovation demands are rising while students are facing burnout and lack of interest. This chapter proposes a ‘happy learning’ outline for drug discovery and delivery education. It combines positive psychology, mindfulness and playful pedagogy with strong scientific training. Educational neuroscience, suggests that short reflective practices can improve the mental flexibility needed for molecular design. Gamified virtual laboratories and story-based or clinical case-based assignments can make complex subjects such as nanocarrier systems and AI-based drug design more engaging, creative and enjoyable. A future-ready model replaces high-stakes examinations with mastery-based micro-credentials, collaborative hackathons and interdisciplinary global health challenges. The learning environment, from the physical laboratory to the teacher’s mentoring role, supports psychological safety, inner motivation, and the confidence needed to discover the medicines of tomorrow. A joyful and mindful classroom is direct path to producing resilient, innovative and productive minds.

Keywords: Happy Learning, Drug Discovery Pedagogy, Cognitive Mindfulness, Gamification

1. Introduction

Recent surveys reveal that pharmacy students experience high levels of stress, leading mental health issues (Keith, 2025; McQuade, 2020). Holistic, mindful learning boosts pharmacy students well-being, engagement, and motivation when teachers, parents, and policymakers work together (Fitrianto, 2025). This chapter proposes strategies on mindfulness practices to mitigate student stress and enhance overall well-being in drug discovery education.

2. Mindfulness as Cognitive and Emotional Foundations

Mindfulness refers to the practice of training the mind to remain present, attentive and non-judgemental (Black, 2011). Mindfulness training has been shown, in a meta-analysis of 111 interventions, in digital programs and blended face-to-face plus smartphone approaches, to produce improvements in the executive attention, working memory, inhibition, task shifting, sustained focus and academic performance (Zainal & Newman, 2023; Liebherr et al., 2024; Bajestani et al., 2024; Galindo-Aldana, et al., 2025). Complementary electroencephalogram studies in university learners indicate that these cognitive benefits are accompanied by healthier theta-beta balance and frontal alpha-beta asymmetry.

Figure 1 illustrates mechanism through which mindfulness practices strengthen both cognitive and emotional capacities essential for drug discovery (Xie et al., 2022; Kotera et al., 2022).