



Developing Emotional Competence in Learners

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ABSTRACT

By true education, we meant an overall development of students in all the dimensions, physically, mentally, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually. Unfortunately, our education system is meant in such a way that it suffices only to the fulfillment of academic expertise in students that too at a minimal level. There is a meager chance of developing other faculties. Today is the new world, full of immense opportunities yet in-numerous challenges. The role of education has been increased manifold here, our education system has completely overhauled itself to cater to the other needs of our students in general and emotional needs in particular. As this is the era of the greatest emotional disturbances for our students due to two reasons. First of all, students of higher education are by nature passing through the developmental stage of identity crisis and emotional turmoil, and secondly, this CORONA pandemic has left us all emotionally disturbed. Hence it is the call of the hour to develop emotional competence in our learners so that they may better prepare for their academic life and beyond the academics in their day-to-day life.

Keywords: emotional needs, developmental stage, identity crisis, emotional disturbance, emotional competence

Introduction:

Humanity and emotions are complementary to each other. There is no human without emotional sensitivity. But there are myths in society that boys cannot be emotional. Girls are overloaded with emotions. It is wrong to showcase our emotions and the same. No doubt, family is the first institution where we learn the fundamentals of our life but family too has outsourced the function of educating our children to the educational system. Hence it is the first and foremost responsibility of our education to make our young ones emotionally intelligent and to develop emotional competence in our learners. To start this discussion we have to develop our understanding of emotions, emotional intelligence, and emotional competence and then the strategies to develop emotional competence in new-age learners to make them emotionally competent.

Emotions:

What do we understand by emotions? In psychology, according to Encyclopedia Britannica, “emotions can be defined as, a complex experience of consciousness, sensation, and behavior reflecting the personal significance of a thing, event, or state of affairs”.

Don Hockenbury and Sandra E. Hockenbury have defined emotions in their book, named, “Discovering Psychology” “Emotion is a complex psychological state and it has made up of subjective experience, a physiological response, and a behavioral or expressive response. These three are the unique components of any emotion we feel and express.

This can be understood that emotion is not just a reaction or mental state but it has three components, which are responsible for our emotional reaction. Emotions have also many types and psychologists have researched and then found several basic emotions in humans. *Paul Ekman, a famous psychologist* has identified six basic emotions: anger, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, and surprise. In this series, *Robert Plutchik* has identified eight emotions, which are called, “wheels of emotions” which he grouped into four pillars of opposites (joy-sadness, anger-fear, trust-distrust, and surprise-anticipation). These are polar opposites means at each pole there are opposites, such as joy on one pole and sadness on another like that. The emotions have originated in the same way throughout the globe and people are quite right at judging the facial expressions of people from different cultures because they are basically the same, irrespective of any geography or race. This means that being a teacher we have to know about the theory of emotions, its types, and believe in its normalcy, then only we can think of emotional intelligence which paved the way for emotional competence. Now we have to know about the most popular concept of psychology in the recent past, i.e. emotional intelligence.

Emotional Intelligence:

Prior to the emergence and popularization of this very concept, it was thought that academic intelligence or IQ is the only predictor of success for individuals. But thanks to those psychologists who have come to the point that emotional intelligence plays a much greater role in success not only at school but throughout life. We have generally heard the news that rich, popular, and famous personalities have committed suicide. Students of IITs and IIMs cannot cope with the pressure of academics and peer groups and give up their courses or committed suicide. These all

incidents have pointed toward the lacking capacity of individuals to handle stressful situations and manage their emotions. Here comes the role of emotional intelligence. We have to look quickly at the emergence of this concept and its propagators. **Peter Salovey and John Mayer** published an article, “*Emotional Intelligence*” in a journal, “Imagination, Cognition, and Personality” in 1990 which is regarded as the first pioneer work in this field. However, the concept became popularized after the publication of **Daniel Goleman’s** publication, “**Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ?**” in 1995. **Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990)** were the first psychologists who have developed a psychological theory of emotional intelligence and introduced EQ (emotional quotient) as a, “set of skills hypothesized to contribute to the accurate appraisal and expression of emotion in oneself and others, the effective regulation of emotion in self and others, and the use of feelings to motivate, plan and achieve in one’s life.” Hence it can be said that **Emotional Intelligence (EI)** is the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions of oneself as well as of others. No, doubt it is important to express and control emotions in the right manner at the right time, but that too is the ability to understand, interpret and respond to the emotions of others is equally essential. Emotional intelligence is the capacity for the perfect blending of thinking and feeling to make the best decisions that can be made.

Components of Emotional Intelligence: Daniel Goleman has stated about 5 components of emotional intelligence, which are:

- **Self-awareness:** Being aware of one’s self is the first and the most important skill to climb up the ladder of emotional intelligence and eventually emotional competence.
- **Self-regulation:** It is the ability to regulate and manage one’s emotions. Self-regulation is all about expressing one’s emotions appropriately, in the right manner at right time.
- **Social Skills:** One has to have a set of social skills to interact well with others, much needed for being emotionally intelligent.
- **Empathy:** Empathy is one step ahead of sympathy. It involves the capacity to think and feel at the same level as the concerned person feels, no difference must be there and is a main component of EI.
- **Motivation:** Motivation is important but not extrinsic, intrinsic motivation is another important emotional intelligence skill. Emotionally intelligent individuals are not motivated by, money, recognition, acclaim, etc. but they do good things for the satisfaction of their inner selves. This skill is very important for educators as we have to make our students driven by internal motivation drives.

It means that being emotionally intelligent, we must have the capability to perceive, manage and regulate one’s as well as others’ emotions. This must be the prime responsibility of teachers so that firstly they become emotionally intelligent and then create such conditions in the classroom so that its components can be infused into the minds of students. We have already kept in mind that emotional intelligence is the foundation stone over which one can build the framework of emotional competence.

Emotional Competence:

After understanding the concepts of emotion and emotional intelligence, now this is the turn of another important component unexplored, i.e., emotional competence. As the name suggests it is the competence of an individual in handling and expressing emotions. Emotional intelligence is the ability to perceive, manage, and control one’s emotions as well as that of others, while emotional competence is the capacity of expertise of expressing emotions in the right amount

at the right place. It is one step ahead with emotional intelligence. Let us understand the emotional competence framework given by Daniel Goleman to comprehend this concept in a better way.

Emotional Competence Framework: Emotional competence is made up of personal competence and social competence. In other words, if an individual has the competence of dealing with personal emotions and their regulation as well as the emotions of others, i.e. capability of social competence s/he becomes emotionally competent. This is in consonance with the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence of Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences.

Personal competence: It has made up of three components

1. **Self-Awareness:** Self-awareness means, the first and foremost component of being emotionally competent is one has to be aware of self. If one is not becoming aware of our own self then how can one be aware of others' self and emotions is the crux of this very concept.
2. **Self-Regulation:** After being aware of one's emotions, the next task is to learn the regulation of emotions. It consists of attributes like self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, and innovativeness.
3. **Self-Motivation:** Intrinsic motivation is the key to being good at handling and expressing emotions. It consists of achievement drive, commitment, initiative, and optimism.

Social Competence: Merely being aware of and regulating one's emotions cannot suffice the requirement of being emotionally competent. One has to be socially competent too, which means having the capability to manage, perceive, handle and understand of emotions of others too as one cannot live in a vacuum. It has two main components

1. **Social Awareness:** it is a broad component and consists of several skills such as empathy, service orientation, developing others, leveraging diversity, and political awareness. We have to be socially aware too in addition to the self-awareness to be emotionally competent. Being a teacher one has to be constantly trying to make our students aware and sensitive enough to the societal condition and problems.
2. **Social Skills:** These set of skills are thought to be the most important and crucial skills to be emotionally intelligent and competent too. Some such skills are conflict management, leadership, and communication skills.

Emotional Competence Skills: If we want to develop emotional competence in our students, then we must know about the emotional competence skills so that we can inculcate them in our students. Carolyn Saarni in her book, "The Development of Emotional Competence" stated about emotional competence in detail and explored its development as well. She has discussed eight emotional competence skills:

- **Awareness of one's own emotions:** Repeatedly it has been discussed that the most important and foundational skill for being emotionally efficient is to be aware of one's emotions then only any individual will be in that mental state to understand the emotional state of others and act accordingly.
- **Ability to discern and understand others' emotions:** This is a world full of emotional stress, each one of us has to hide our pain and stress and try to showcase that everything is normal. For a short while, this situation can be bearable but for a long, it can create serious mental problems. Hence for being emotionally competent, one has the ability to read the discrepancy between actions and statements of an individual.

- **Ability to use the vocabulary of emotion and expression:** Emotions have their own world. Nowadays there is talk of emotional literacy, there is the vocabulary of emotion and expression. Teachers must have knowledge about it and teach their students about the same.
- **Capacity for empathic involvement:** Intrinsic motivation is the key to emotional competence and that too the empathy factor is most important. The capacity for empathic involvement is the most important skill to be learned and practiced.
- **Ability to differentiate the subjective emotional experience from the external emotional expression:** All emotions begin with a subjective experience. But for being capable of handling emotions at right time in the right manner, one has to learn the ability to differentiate the subjective emotional experience from the external expression of emotions by the individual.
- **Adaptive coping with aversive emotions and distressing circumstances:** Emotional competence does not mean only showing the right emotions at the right time but also not showing the wrong emotions at inappropriate time. One has to learn coping skills too to deal with difficult situations and how to react in such situations.
- **Awareness of emotional communication within relationships:** Emotional awareness is the capacity for being aware about others' expression of emotions in the right manner. When we have the ability to understand the emotional state of others then definitely we can communicate well. Better communication results in good relationships which are the building blocks of emotionally intelligent people.
- **Capacity for emotional self-efficacy:** Emotional self-efficacy is the capacity to deal with emotions internally rather than externally. Children don't have this capacity, whatever is in their mind they act accordingly. But in adolescence generally, students learn how to deal with their emotions internally. They learn how to console themselves if something does not happen in accordance with their emotional state. They know how to treat their emotions at an internal level and showcase only the appropriate emotions.

Importance of Emotional Competence for Learners: if we have only knowledge and not the wisdom on how to use it. It is good for nothing. If we are not sensitive enough to the feelings of others, how can we understand them and provide them help if they are in need? If we do not have the capacity for the perception, regulation, management, and the expression of right emotions in the right place, we cannot be said to humans. And for students, it is the most promising skill to be successful and to enjoy their success. Every single role of life, be it student, teacher, husband, wife, parents, guardian, or friend. The success and longevity of the relationships will depend upon the degree of emotional competence possessed by the individuals involved.

Conclusion: It became clear now that merely being intelligent is not a big deal, one has to be emotionally intelligent first and eventually become emotionally competent to be fit in this stressful world. So educational institutions must overhaul themselves so that they can turn into places where training in emotional competence can be provided. Such students play smarter in accordance with the emotional setup of themselves as well as others. They can become the best leaders, managers, teachers, policymakers, sportsmen, celebrities, and any profession in this world. Eventually, we are human beings, being emotional is our very nature and we are social animals too, we have to be surrounded by other emotional individuals, so we have to be skilled in this very basic skill to be successful in our life in true sense.

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