

Emotions in the Teaching/Learning Process

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Emotions play a great role in our daily life, as well as in the teaching process which is closely connected with the emotional sphere of life since teaching is an emotional practice involving emotional understanding, as well as emotional labor. Being in the centre of the teaching process, emotions should be paid due attention to in the language classroom since they lead to a better understanding of classroom interactions and more satisfying educational experiences for both language teachers and students.¹

The paper explores the role and significance of students' and teachers' emotions in language teaching and learning, as well as the emotional factors that influence the teaching/learning process.

It would be reasonable to first turn to the issue of emotional intelligence (EI), which refers to the ability to perceive, control and evaluate emotions. Some researchers suggest that emotional intelligence can be learned and strengthened, while others claim it is an inborn characteristic. Since 1990, Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer have been the leading researchers on emotional intelligence. In their influential article "Emotional Intelligence" (1990), they defined emotional intelligence as "the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions."

Salovey and Mayer proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence:

1. **Perceiving Emotions:** The first step in understanding emotions is to accurately perceive them. In many cases, this might involve understanding nonverbal signals such as body language and facial expressions.
2. **Reasoning with Emotions:** The next step involves using emotions to promote thinking and cognitive activity. Emotions help prioritize what we pay attention and react to; we respond emotionally to things that pay our attention.
3. **Understanding Emotions:** The emotions that we perceive can carry a wide variety of meanings. If someone is expressing angry emotions, the observer must interpret the cause of their anger and what it might mean.
4. **Managing Emotions:** The ability to manage emotions effectively is a key part of emotional intelligence. Regulating emotions, responding appropriately and responding to the emotions of others are all important aspects of emotional management.

According to Salovey and Mayer, the above mentioned four branches of the model are "arranged from more basic psychological processes to higher, more psychologically integrated processes."

"Your EQ is the level of your ability to understand other people, what motivates them

and how to work cooperatively with them,” says Howard Gardner (2007), the influential Harvard theorist. For most people, emotional intelligence (EQ) is more important than the common intelligence (IQ) in attaining success in their lives and careers. As individuals our own success and the success of the profession today depend on our ability to read other people’s signals and react appropriately to them. Therefore, each one of us must develop the emotional intelligence skills required to better understand, empathize and negotiate with other people. Otherwise, success will elude us in our lives and careers.

Salovey and Mayer proposed a model that identified four different factors of emotional intelligence (Salovey, Mayer 1990):

1. **Self-awareness.** The ability to recognize an emotion as it “happens” is the key to the EQ. Developing self-awareness requires tuning in to true feelings. If emotions are evaluated, they can be managed. The major elements of self-awareness are:
 - Emotional awareness, i.e. the ability to recognize one’s own emotions and their effects.
 - Self-confidence, i.e. the sureness about one’s self-worth and capabilities.
2. **Self-regulation.** People often have little control over themselves when they experience emotions. They can, however, have some say in how long an emotion will last by using a number of techniques to alleviate negative emotions such as anger, anxiety or depression. A few of these techniques include recasting a situation in a more positive light, taking a long walk and meditation or prayer. Self-regulation involves:
 - Self-control: managing disruptive impulses.
 - Trustworthiness: maintaining standards of honesty and integrity.
 - Conscientiousness: taking responsibility for your own performance.
 - Adaptability: handling change with flexibility.
 - Innovation: being open to new ideas.
3. **Motivation.** Motivation for any achievement requires clear goals and a positive attitude. Although one may have a predisposition to either a positive or a negative attitude, he/she can with effort and practice learn to think more positively. If one catches negative thoughts as they occur, he/she can reframe them in more positive terms—which will help to achieve one’s goals. Motivation is made up of the following components:
 - Achievement drive: the constant striving to improve or to meet a standard of excellence.
 - Commitment: aligning with the goals of the group or organization.
 - Initiative: being ready to act on opportunities.
 - Optimism: pursuing goals persistently despite obstacles and setbacks.
4. **Empathy.** The more skillful one is at discerning the feelings behind others’ signal, the better he/she can control the signals he/she sends. An empathetic person excels at:
 - Developing themselves: sensing progress and bolstering the abilities.
 - Leveraging diversity: cultivating opportunities through diverse people.
 - Reading a group’s emotional currents and power relationships.
 - Understanding others: discerning the feelings behind the needs and wants of others.
5. **Social skills.** The development of good interpersonal skills is tantamount to success in life and career. In today’s cyberculture all professionals can have immediate access

to technical knowledge via computers. Thus, skills are even more important now because one must possess a high EQ to better understand, empathize and negotiate with others. Among the most useful skills are:

- Influence: achieving effective persuasion tactics.
- Communication: sending clear messages.
- Leadership: inspiring and guiding groups and people.
- Initiating or managing change.
- Understanding, negotiating and resolving disagreements.
- Collaboration and cooperation: working with others toward shared goals.

The EQ theory suggests that success in education requires both academic ability and equivalent social skills. In education it applies to the institution, teachers and students through promoting academic success while reducing anxiety and negative feelings during the learning process. Thus, emotional intelligence should be dealt with from three perspectives: the teacher's, the learner's and that of the educational institution. At an institutional level, the emphasis is on creating an environment conducive to raising students' EQ, much of which involves creating a sense of identity, safety and value. In this way, institutions and teachers are responsible for fostering students' attachment to the educational establishment, facilitating the formation of friendships, reducing stress, creating a free-and-easy learning environment, and so on. In a communicative language teaching classroom support and co-operation between learners is essential. Despite this, language learners are often reluctant to co-operate, as a result of repressed fear, anxiety and anger rather than linguistic inability, and are unlikely to learn much in a student-centered classroom.

Emotions are undoubtedly connected with good (professional) teaching, which involves positive emotions. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject perfectly, being efficient or learning all the techniques. Good teachers are emotional, passionate beings who connect with their students creatively, with great enjoyment and enthusiasm. The teaching process must be started with knowledge and feeling about the students, with understanding about what would be likely to excite them. Good teachers must have enthusiasm about ideas, topics, materials, methods used in the teaching process. The feeling of freedom and improvisation are also significant factors. Teachers must talk about their ideas, practice and experiences of planning with their colleagues.

Thus, the teacher needs to focus on areas of language used to express emotions, and on classroom techniques which will reduce tension and produce better group dynamics. Emotional intelligence can best be developed through some confidence-building activities promoting communication in the classroom:

- The variety of activities allows for different approaches and varied learning styles.
- Warm-up activities help students to get to know each other better.
- Discussion encourages the sharing of opinions and knowledge.
- Role-plays related to real-life situations help students reveal themselves.
- Group work activities promote cooperation among learners.
- Giving feedback to students' performance gives them an opportunity to change.
- Assessment allows the positive aspects of the students' performance to be assessed and rewarded.

Being “emotionally intelligent” is completely different from having a cheerful emotional character. Emotional Intelligence, if it is worth anything, does not point towards the world of pleasantness and success. It helps young people get ready to cope well with the full rainbow of emotions that inevitably accompany the vicissitudes of life. Furthering Emotional Intelligence is an honorable ambition for any lecturer, but a hard one to fulfill.

The most difficult task for the teacher in teaching the language of emotions is persuading learners to state their feelings directly. The language teacher should encourage learners to use the simple language of emotions in terms of functions. So the students should be taught expressions labeling feelings (*I feel, I am impatient/angry/frightened*), expressing empathy (*I understand/accept/realize*), suggestion (*I/you had better/could/might*), positive feelings (*I'd feel better if, I am delighted*), stating wants and needs (*I/you need/want/would like to*), etc.

There is also language to be avoided, mainly to do with the functions of giving commands and strong advice (*I/you should/ought to*), obligation (*I/you must/have to*) and blaming (*you're wrong/you're to blame*).

Being emotionally literate – able to talk fluently about emotions – is very different from being emotionally sensitive.

Helping young people develop their emotional vocabulary is a worthwhile thing to do but it may not contribute a great deal to their all-round Emotional Intelligence. By all means young people should be offered opportunities to explore their feelings. Many cultures do not see it as a good thing for a person to disclose the inner life, especially to people they do not know very well. Research shows that talking about emotions in a soulless way can do young people more harm than good. How you deal with your own emotions in front of a class, and how open you are about your emotional ups and downs, probably have greater impact (for good or ill) on students' development than set-piece discussions and activities. A lecturer who announces cheerfully *I'm in a bad mood today, so you'd better watch out...* and such models may be a better Emotional Intelligence educator than one who insists on an earnest discussion, packed with unacknowledged moralizing messages, about an earlier playground dispute.

As far as possible, teachers should respond to young people's emotions in a way that acknowledges them without being emotionally reactive, keeping in mind that everyone has their limits of tolerance.

According to Andy Hargreaves (1998), the main points how emotions are represented in teacher's relationship with their students are the following:

1. Teaching is an emotion practice,
2. Teaching and learning involve emotional understanding,
3. Teaching is a form of emotional labor,
4. Teacher's emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes.

The conclusion is: lecturers need to take care that conversations aimed at developing emotional literacy genuinely allow students to engage and express their emotions, not just talk about them. “Anyone can become angry, that is easy. But to be angry with the

right person to the right degree, at the right time for the right purpose and in the right way, that is not easy” (Aristotle).

Notes:

1. The Latin origin of the word *emotion* is *emovere*, meaning *to move out, to stir up*. When people are emotional they are moved by their feelings. In her paper “Positive Affect” Alice Isen (2000) claims that positive affect has a powerful and facilitating effect on thinking, creativity, decision making and risk taking. Positive emotions can bring about significant changes in behavior and thinking.

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Չգացմունքների դերը դասավանդման գործընթացում

Հոդվածում քննության է առնվում զգացմունքների դերն ու նշանակությունը դասավանդման գործընթացում: Լինելով ուսումնական գործընթացի բաղկացուցիչ մաս, հուզական գործոնները կարող են նպաստել կամ խոչընդոտել աշակերտների գիտելիքների ձեռքբերմանն ու զարգացմանը, ստեղծագործական մտածողության ձևավորմանը, ինչպես նաև լսարանային համագործակցության իրականացմանը: Ուստի, հարկ է, որ ուսուցիչներն ավելի մեծ ուշադրության արժանացնեն ինչպես իրենց սեփական, այնպես էլ իրենց աշակերտների զգացմունքների կառավարմանը: Հոդվածում առաջարկվում են որոշ մարտավարություններ, որոնք կնպաստեն դրական հույզերի խթանմանը: