



Emotional literacy in education

Mirza Mahefooz Baig

Assistant Professor Marathwada College of Education, Aurangabad, Maharashtra, India

Abstract

Emotion is a very complex phenomenon. Emotions not only influence our behavior but also control our living, Social adjustment and development of personality. The present article discusses an important and necessary component Emotional Literacy which is made up of 'the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and improves the quality of life around you. Emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community.

Keywords: Emotions, emotional intelligence, emotional literacy

Introduction

Emotion is a very complex phenomenon. Emotions not only influence our behavior but also control our living, Social adjustment and development of personality.

Emotions may be defined as a stirred up state of the organism. Arthur T Jerschild says "emotions" denotes a state being moved, stirred up or aroused in some way^[3].

Charles G Morris "Emotion is a complex affective experience that involves diffuse physiological changes and can be expressed in characteristic behavior pattern.

The analysis of above definition it can be said that Emotion is a state in which an individual is aroused or moved, it is a complex experience which is accompanied by physiological changes in the individual's body, and these emotions are expressed through individual's behavior. Moreover it involves many aspects viz. feelings, impulses and physiological reactions.

Emotions are important aspect of a human life. The process of maturation and learning plays effective role in the development of emotions in human being. As the child grows, he may acquire various positive and negative emotions through his environmental experiences and training. Emotions and emotional behavior are the learned and acquired pattern of behavior.

The individual from his childhood to adult attains maturity in terms of his physical and mental development; he also demonstrates adequate maturity in terms of his emotional development.

Emotional Maturity

Emotional Maturity is that characteristics of emotional behavior that is generally attained by an adult after expiry of his adolescence period.

Intelligence is one of the important factors in the life of individual. Alone intelligence is not enough to be successful in life. One's intelligence is innate as well as acquired intellectual potentials. Every Individual is born with some intellectual potentials and it grows and develops with the maturity and experiences. Emotional Intelligence, like general intelligence, is the product of one's heredity and interaction with his environmental force.

John D. Mayer and Peter Solovey "Emotional Intelligence may be defined as the capacity to reason with emotions in four areas: to perceive emotions, to integrate it in our thoughts, to understand it and to manage it."

Intelligence Quotient (IQ) was considered as the greatest predictors of success in all walks of life. But the researches conducted in 1990 onwards have revealed that a person's emotional intelligence measured through Emotional Quotient (EQ) may be a greater predictor of success than his or her IQ.

Emotional competence

Emotional competence refers to one's ability to express or release one's inner feelings (Emotions). It implies an ease around others and determines one's ability to effectively and successfully lead and express. It is described as the essential social skills to recognize, interpret, and respond constructively to emotions in yourself and others.

One should keep in mind that the concept of emotional competence is distinct from emotional intelligence which, while recognizing the importance of emotions, gives emphasis to controlling or manipulating them.

The other term related to above terms is Emotional literacy let us understand it?

Emotional literacy

The term emotional literacy has often been used in parallel to, and sometimes interchangeably with, the term "emotional intelligence". However, there are important differences between the two.

Emotional Literacy is a term that was used first by Steiner (1997) who says:

Emotional Literacy is made up of 'the ability to understand your emotions, the ability to listen to others and empathize with their emotions, and the ability to express emotions productively. To be emotionally literate is to be able to handle emotions in a way that improves your personal power and improves the quality of life around you. Emotional literacy improves relationships, creates loving possibilities between people, makes co-operative work possible, and facilitates the feeling of community.

He breaks emotional literacy into 5 parts

1. Knowing your feelings.
2. Having a sense of empathy.
3. Learning to manage our emotions.
4. Repairing emotional damage.
5. Putting it all together: emotional interactivity.

According to Steiner emotional literacy, is about understanding your feelings and those of others to facilitate relationships, including using dialogue and self-control to avoid negative arguments. The ability to be aware and read other people's feelings enables one to interact with them effectively so that powerful emotional situations can be handled in a skillful way. Steiner calls this "emotional interactivity".

According to weare emotional literacy is:

"The ability to understand ourselves and other people, and in particular to be aware of, understand, and use information about the emotional states of ourselves and others with competence. It includes the ability to understand, express and manage our own emotions, and respond to the emotions of others, in ways that are helpful to ourselves and others."

Similarly, the organization Antidote defined emotional literacy as:

"The practice of interacting with others in ways that build understanding of our own and others' emotions, then using this understanding to inform our actions."

According to Matthews, "emotional literacy is a social process that takes place in a social setting, is something that is never really achieved, and has to be seen in conjunction with others."

Matthews argues:

Emotional literacy involves factors such as people understanding their own and others' emotional states; learning to manage their emotions and to empathize with others. It also includes the recognition that emotional literacy is both an individual development and a collective activity and is both

about self-development and the building of community so that one's own sense of emotional well-being grows along with that of others, and not at their expense. Emotional literacy involves connections between people and working with their differences and similarities while being able to handle ambiguity and contradiction. It is a dynamic process through which the individual develops emotionally and involves culture and empowerment^[7].

Importance of emotional literacy

Emotional literacy can help individual to achieve success in life. While success might not look the same in every culture and every country, most people agree the point of education is to prepare a child to do two things: lead a fulfilling life and become a productive member of society.

Emotional literacy is developed to help people understand themselves, others and the power connections between them. Matthews links emotional literacy to equality and social justice. Emotional literacy is not just to be "nice", but also to know when to stand up for viewpoints and fight for a case. It is not about more control over people, but less.

Moreover society has increasingly been expressing concern over the social and emotional growth of children. This has even sometimes been said to be replacing the traditional emphasis placed on the cognitive and physical development of children. Psychological studies into behavioural disorders, learning difficulties and other aspects of normal development have shown Emotional Literacy to be important in promoting happiness and self-satisfaction.

Teaching emotional literacy

Emotional literacy is fast becoming a key element in many approaches to early education. Most preschools and kindergartens stress the quality of both peer-to-peer interaction and teacher-student interaction. The importance of social and emotional skill building is also gaining recognition as an important curriculum component in many schools of developed countries.

If emotional literacy skills aren't learned early, it's not too late. Parents and teachers interested in teaching teenagers the fundamentals of emotional and social literacy can find a wide variety of resources available online. The State of Ohio has a useful activity handbook that can help teach the fundamentals of emotional literacy to teenagers. Corporations such as Microsoft offer training programs for schools, parents, and teachers who wish to include social and emotional literacy into the overall education of their students or children.

All these developments are important steps toward recognizing that while the basics of reading, writing, and arithmetic are essential for the education and success of our children, they're not everything. The ultimate scaffold from which everything hangs is something else entirely. It's a mind-ful combination of emotional awareness, intelligence, and literacy.

Suggestions to enhance emotional literacy

It has been suggested that more educational and social care professionals should be trained in understanding and helping children develop Emotional Literacy through the use of activities which;

- Promote the child's co-operation with others;

- Create situations for children with positive social interactions with other children/people which helps to build the child's self esteem
- Model effective social behaviour; and which
- Using hypothetical situations to encourage children to discuss how other people might be feeling.

Benefits of emotional literacy

When educators learn and teach emotional literacy, classroom climate improves, students experience more positive teacher relationships, greater teacher-student engagement, better classroom focus, lower teacher burnout, and enhanced instructional practices.

When students learn Emotional Literacy they experience less anxiety and depression; have fewer attention, learning, and behavior problems; are better problem-solvers; display greater social and leadership skills; and perform better academically.

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