

Emotional Intelligence: Why it matters in Teaching

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Abstract: *Emotional intelligence is the new yardstick which is increasingly applied to assess a person's well-being in life. It's a different way of being smart, the ability to recognize, manage, and use one's emotions in positive and constructive ways. It is also about recognizing the emotional states of others and engaging them in ways that feel good to all and create mutual safety, trust, and confidence. Teaching, as a profession also demands multiple skills in order to meet the challenges of everyday life. Emotional intelligence has become a vital component for success of any profession. Emotional intelligence is the 'skill' by which emotions are handled by the individual for coping with the pressure of the contemporary world and ensuring success in both personal and professional lives. Teaching too is one profession which demands a high level of emotional intelligence because it deals with people with whom constant interaction takes place.*

I. Introduction

Every profession demands certain specific skills and competence on the part of its practitioners. Teaching, as a profession also demands multiple skills in order to meet the challenges of everyday life. Emotional intelligence has become a vital component for human well being and success of any profession. Emotional intelligence is the 'skill' by which emotions are handled by the individual for coping with the pressure of the contemporary world and ensuring success in both personal and professional lives.

Different professions require different levels of emotional, intelligence. Professions which require interacting with people, working in teams etc require a high level of emotional intelligence. Teaching too is one profession which demands a high level of emotional intelligence because it deals with people with whom constant interaction takes place.

It is recommended that teachers be made aware of the importance of Emotional Intelligence. EI must be developed in them as they are responsible for setting the culture of each institution. When faculty begin to focus on improving their own EI competencies, staff may be motivated to develop their own emotional awareness and development. Goldsmith M. (2004) a leading executive coach, highlighted the importance of leading by example 'to help others develop, start with yourself'. If we work hard to improve ourselves, we might even encourage the people around us to do the same thing. While EI skills can be 'taught', they can also be 'caught' from faculty who are role models of high EI.

What is Emotional Intelligence?

Emotional intelligence is the new yardstick which is increasingly applied to assess a person's well-being in life. It is an important skill which has recently gained recognition and one that employers are seeking in individuals. It's a different way of being smart, the ability to recognize, manage, and use one's emotions in positive and constructive ways.

Salovey and Mayer (1990) Coined the term "Emotional Intelligence" and described it as a form of Social Intelligence-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 action'.

According to Daniel Goleman (1998) Emotional intelligence does not always mean "being nice". At Strategic moments it may demand not "being nice" but rather, for example, bluntly confronting someone with an uncomfortable but consequential truth they've been avoiding. Further, it does not mean giving free rein to feelings-"letting it all hang out". Rather, it means managing feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively, enabling people to work together smoothly toward their common goals.

Emotional Intelligence is a different way of being smart, the ability to handle oneself, to control anger, resolve conflicts, get along and motivate others and work together as a team etc. According to Goleman (1998) emotional intelligence is 'the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships. Emotional Intelligence consists of five parts viz

- (i) knowing our own emotions (self- awareness)
- (ii) Managing our emotions (self-regulation)
- (iii) Motivating ourselves (motivation)
- (iv) Recognizing the emotions of other (empathy) and

(v) Handling relationships (social skills)

Dalip Singh, (2003) "Emotional intelligence is the ability of an individual to appropriately and successfully respond to a vast variety of emotional stimuli being elicited from the inner self and immediate environment

Why EI Matters in Teaching?

A teacher has many roles to play in carrying out his/her duties as a communicator, a disciplinarian, a conveyor of information, a classroom manager, a counselor, a decision maker, a role model, and a surrogate parent. Each of these roles requires skills that are not taught in teacher preparation programs. Yate (1997) the profession of teaching has been rated in the top ten careers requiring a high level of EI for success and satisfaction.

Palmer (1998) writes, "if we faculty are to help form students in the image of truth, we must attend to our own re-formation" While EI skills can be 'taught', they can also be 'caught' from faculty who are role models of high EI. Therefore, it is important to develop EQ skills in teachers who will be effective role models and influence the EQ of their students.

Teachers have the greatest potential to influence students' behavior and education. So, when faculty begins to focus on improving their own EI competencies, students may be motivated to develop their own emotional awareness and development. Goldsmith M. (2004) a leading executive coach, highlighted the importance of leading by example 'to help others develop, start with yourself'. If we work hard to improve ourselves, we might even encourage the people around us to do the same thing. While EI skills can be 'taught', they can also be 'caught' from faculty who are role models of high EI.

Emotional intelligence assists teachers in better planning and helps in making decisions with certainty and assurance. It contributes to personality of an individual; grooming them to be leaders in every field of human endeavor. Further, emotional intelligence motivates oneself and others to work long and hard on a task, remaining enthusiastic and optimistic about the final outcome.

Promoting emotional intelligence in teachers is important and can be taken as an investment in the future. It is never too late to foster emotional intelligence. To Goleman (1998) our level of EI is not fixed genetically nor does it develop only in early childhood. Unlike IQ which changes little after our teens, emotional intelligence is largely learned and it continues to develop as we go through life and learn from our experiences. Research suggests that it is possible to raise one's level of EI, at any age through emotional learning activities.

II. Conclusion

It can be concluded that emotional intelligence is very relevant today. Knowledge of work or subject matter alone will not bring success unless there is co-ordination and good relations between teacher, taught and staff. An emotionally intelligent teacher will acknowledge and understand the emotions and feelings of his students, influence them and ensure that it is expressed appropriately and effectively. Handling people with emotional intelligence will help in creating an enthusiastic work environment as well as efficient administration

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