

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

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Abstract: *Emotional intelligence refers to the abilities based on which a person may discriminate and monitor his/her own emotions and other's emotions, as well as to his/her capacity to use the information held in order to guide his/her own thinking and action (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Another definition, a more recent one, was given by Daniel Goleman (1995). According to him, the emotional intelligence represents a capacity of control and self-control over stress and negative emotions; a meta-ability, which determines and influences the manner and efficiency with which we can use the other capacities and abilities which we hold, including the educational intelligence.*

Keywords: *emotions, emotional intelligence, empathy, social intelligence, conflict solving, cooperation, interpersonal relations, social responsibilities*

In the '80s, Howard Gardner identified, in the *Theory of Multiple Intelligences*, the interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, which, combined, represent what is being known today under the name of emotional intelligence.

The emotional intelligence is a person's ability to recognize, identify, become aware, express and control his/her emotions or, more detailed, the ability to recognize his/her own emotions, feelings, but also the ones of the persons around us, as well as to identify them in various persons, objects, art, stories, music or other stimuli.

Emotions result from cerebral processes and they are necessary for the adjustment and organization of the human behavior. Emotions are complex reactions described through three major components: a specific state, a physiological change and the impulse to act.

Scientific research shows that **emotions** are formed since birth and until adolescence. And after they have been formed, another necessary stage occurs, which is their *identification, their understanding, their acceptance, their association* with current actions. This is expressed and it may be best educated in school.

Within the emotional repertoire, each emotion plays a unique role. Emotions prepare the body for a different reaction. Our emotions have their own mind, one which supports points of view independent by our rationale mind. „*Will is required in order for the emotion to be controlled by reason.*” (Th. Lickona).

The following have been emphasized as components of emotional

intelligence:

- **the intrapersonal aspect:** being aware of our his/her emotions, optimism, affirmative, respect for his/her own person, self-accomplishment, independence;
- **the interpersonal aspect:** empathy, interpersonal relations, social responsibility;
- **adaptability:** solving problems, testing reality, flexibility;
- **stress control:** tolerance to stress, impulse control;
- **general state:** happiness, optimism.

Emotions are important, as they ensure:

- **survival-** emotions represent an internal guidance system, they draw our attention when the natural impulse is absent;
- **taking decisions** - our feelings and emotions represent a valuable information source, they help us to take decisions;
- **establishing limits-** with regard to persons who disturb us; ensuring physical and psychical health;
- **communication-** we can establish relations with the others verbally and non-verbally, and we can be more receptive to the others' emotional problems;
- **unity** - feelings of empathy, compassion, cooperation, forgiveness (for instance) have the potential to unify us.

In conclusion, emotions harmonize us with the environment and with ourselves (M. Roco).

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- **the interpersonal aspect:** empathy, receptivity to the other person's feelings, interpersonal relations, social responsibility;
- **adaptability:** solving problems, managing and negotiating conflicts, testing reality, flexibility;
- **stress control:** tolerance to stress, emotional impulse control;
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Social and emotional education. The consequences of introducing the education of emotions in school.

Why do some teenagers become adults who are accomplished from the professional and social relations point of view, while others, having an efficient and competent educational background and similar school results do not manage to develop social relations, they are not satisfied with their carriers and they suffer from depressions?

Research shows that pupils' emotional development is decisive for their scholar success and for the success in life.

A big number of teachers recognizes the fact that pupils and students who benefit exclusively from scholar training can be "unequipped" for future

challenges, both as individuals, and also as members of society – feeding the mind is not enough.

In order to have teenagers with an intelligent behavior from the emotional and social point of view, it is decisive to be very attentive at what we work and how we work with them in school. Introducing strategies for the development of emotional intelligence in school and of multiple cognitive abilities seems to generate a radical change!

The fact that school would be resistant to change is a prejudice which has been many times invalidated, at least in the Romanian school. But opening to innovation is a characteristic of the Romanian teachers.

In the U.S., in numerous districts, the social and emotional education is mandatory included in the curricula, being claimed that, as pupils must achieve a certain level of competence to mathematics or native language, the same they must hold these essential abilities for life. Strict teaching standards for social and emotional education were established, at the level of each classroom, from kindergarten to high school. That way, until the end of the primary school, through the lessons about empathy, pupils should be able to identify the nonverbal clues of another person's feelings.

Omitting emotional social programs addressed to pupils and students has consequences, many times deep ones, as follows: *„many of the problems of our schools are the result of the social and emotional difficulties which pupils suffer from and whose consequences continue to be shown.”* Pupils in the classroom are often “besieged” by numerous emotions and confuse/painful/damaging feelings, which prevents them from learning.

Emotional health dramatically is the positive predictable factor not only for academic achievements, scholar success, but especially for productive experiences, which bring satisfactions, integration on the labor market, development of a career, success in marriage and in relations with other persons, physical; state in general.

The understanding and management of emotions, together with the social abilities to actually have relations with the others, to negotiate, to creatively solve social problems, to effectively be leaders and collaborators, to be affirmative and responsible are, in researchers' opinion, social and emotional competences. These can be learned and developed at any age, but the sooner the involvement in programs for social and emotional development occurs, the bigger are the advantages.

Scientific research shows that emotions are mainly formed since birth and until adolescence. And after they have been formed, another necessary stage occurs, which is their identification, their understanding, their acceptance, their association with current actions. This is expressed and it may be best educated in school.

Emotional intelligence best predicts teenagers' future achievements for success, as compared with the traditional, cognitive intelligence and technical

abilities.

The dynamics of contemporary social changes require the individual's good capacity to adjust to environment, which may be accomplished only if we understand the extraordinary role which the intelligent use of emotions has. Modern theories about intelligence have developed by observing the fact that the human individual, during his/her lifetime, is in a permanent personal development which, in order to have success, should fulfill certain conditions. These conditions for achieving success in life depend on abilities which are being formed throughout the entire formal education or at least they should be followed up as objectives, besides being subject matters.

By observing what scientific people write about intelligence, one can notice the special interest granted to the **emotional and social intelligence**, which refers to the ability to understand yourself and to understand the others.

Through social and emotional training, the teenagers' emotional intelligence is developed, representing an enormous background for their personal and professional future.

It has been suggested that we firstly „name“ our emotions according to the manner in which we see them in other persons. But how precise are we in observing other persons' emotions? Of course, these are emotional experiences which have universal facial identifiable expressions...but, as human beings, we do not always show the facial expression which the others would expect from us. The recognition of emotions in other individuals is also facilitated by the voice pattern, especially by the height, timing and emphasize of sounds. For instance, the increase of the sound height shows fear or alarm; this seems to be a signal, while the others may have a cultural base. The evidence obtained from affected individuals show again that the right cerebral hemisphere has a bigger involvement than the left hemisphere. The neurological data suggests that there is a true window of opportunities for forming pupils' emotional habits.

Programs for education of character, prevention of violence and aggressiveness, prevention of drug consume and scholar discipline are issued. The purpose is not only to diminish this behavior among pupils, but also to improve the climate in schools and, eventually, to increase pupils' academic performances.

The social and emotional education leads to the improvement of the child's learning capacity and, simultaneously, it prevents problems such as violence.

In order to have chances for success in pupils' education we must follow a simple rule: if learning is associated with an emotion which is positively perceived, success will be facilitated, in the same way in which a negative perception of emotions attached to learning implies failure and poor results. This rule may be translated especially through the necessity to establish a proper, pleasant and motivating climate for learning- participative, open, creative, democratic, flexible. Instead of delivering a long line of data about a certain matter, we can involve the creation of images, stories, to affectively involve

pupils in activities and to transform the information in facts on life, in knowledge to be found in their experience. Practical activities in the study room do not represent a solution for pupils' involvement in what they learn, as long as these activities are not correlated with pupils' emotions and imagination, as long as they are not fascinating.

Pupils who are able to control their feelings/emotions and have enough patience (the „lollipop“ test - W. Mische) prove to be capable not only from an emotional perspective, but also more competent in school and in the everyday life. If pupils are educated to manage their anger - by controlling their feelings, by being aware of their physical sensations, they will also learn to control themselves.

Pupils' emotional development is decisive for their success in life and not only for their scholar results.

As in case of a company, we may say that Emotional intelligence is usually involved in solving poorly defined problems, meaning those problems which may be interpreted in various manners and for which there is no optimal objective solution, while the *educational intelligence* is usually involved in solving well defined problems, meaning those problems for which the initial status, the final status, as well as the steps to be followed in order to proceed from the initial status to the final status can be fully specified.

Throughout development, emotions change both due to getting mature, as well as due to socialization.

Emotional intelligence in school – steps possible to be accomplished

- Integration of certain activities which have as specific objectives the development of emotional abilities during the daily scholar program.
- Including in the didactic strategies of certain specific activities of taking decisions, solving problems, creative solving of conflicts.
- Organizing working meetings with colleagues from the teachers' room in order to discuss the positive and negative aspects of using this type of formative endeavor.
 - Using the personal attitude as model for the pupils' behavior.
 - Continuous professional development through participation at meetings, conferences, meetings with specialists, discussions on the internet on the matter of special and emotional development.
- Promoting group activities in the classroom, in pairs and individually, in order to develop social and emotional abilities (intra and interpersonal intelligence).
- Valorizing pupils' social and emotional intelligence, as being as important as their cognitive development.
- The individual information over the existing resources on the theme of social and emotional development represents an aspect of the continuous professional development process.

The openness and tolerance are attitudes without which the emotional intelligence, respectively the social intelligence cannot be developed. *Be open and tolerant in the moments when you notice the change of status and mood, the conflicts, acts of concern towards the others, respect, attention!*

What other emotional abilities should be educated in school?

Here there are a few suggestions: empathy, communication, cooperation and conflict solving.

- **Empathy** - Knowing your own limit, the limit of others and of the situation, acting adequately, having a certain perspective over these distances, is extremely important. The identification of your own feelings with the situation to be solved easily leads to conflicting areas.

- **Communication** - Cultivating quality relations has a positive effect on the environment. Enthusiasm and optimism are as contagious as pessimism and negativity. Expressing personal concerns with no anger or passivity represents a key-ability.

- **Cooperation** - To know when to take up the leadership and when to follow others. An efficient leadership is not based on domination, but on the art to help people to work together towards common goals. To recognize the value of other people's contribution and to encourage their participation may generate much better results than to give orders and to complain. Also, it is necessary to undertake responsibilities and the consequences of your decisions and actions.

- **Conflict solving** - In order to solve conflicts, you must firstly understand the mechanisms which have been activated. The spiral of conflict is one which does not allow visibility over the source of the conflict. The emotional abilities mentioned above are very helpful in conflict solving.

In conclusion, if we help pupils and students to improve their self awareness and self esteem, to control their emotions and annoying impulses and to develop their empathy, their retribution will not be represented only by an improved behavior, but also by quantifiable academic performances.

As a reputable psychiatrist was saying, Dr. David Hamburg "*the kindergarten / school is a crucial and defining experience which will substantially influence the teenage and adult period. The sense of self value at children substantially depends on their capacity to manage in school. A child who does not succeed in school will regard himself/herself as defeated and he/she will react as such, which represents a heavy perspective over his/her entire life.*"

If the *Emotional Intelligence* were as spread as the I.Q., and as rooted in society as the latter, as measure of human quality, then our families, schools, jobs and communities in which we live will all be more human and more stimulating.

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