



ORIGINAL PAPER

Improving Academic Outcomes and Behaviours through SEL (Social and Emotional Learning)

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All learning has an emotional base.
Platon

Abstract:

It is said that social and demonstrative skills are indicators of how well a person adapts to the social setting, acclimates and changes, and ultimately the success she/he will have in lifespan. In fact, basic developmental skills such as meticulousness, emotional stability, openness, and the ability to be pleasant may be even more important than cognitive intelligence in determining future employability. Despite the fact that these skills are linked to central life outcomes, it can be challenging for teachers to find operative ways to rank, teach, and evaluate social and emotional skills. The expansion of these indispensable life skills through social and emotional learning (SEL) is critical for students' progress, as it is directly related to their success and contentment as adults. For many future students, school is the only place where any deficiency in these skills can be spoken before they become adherents of society. Combining these skills with academic development creates high-quality learning experiences and versatile education environments, (Stoian, 2019a; Stoian, 2019b) that empower students today to be more effective contributors in their lecture rooms and, tomorrow, in their workplaces or groups. The development of these skills has shown several positive results, including better academic outcomes, enhanced attitudes, behaviours and relationships with peers, as well as a deeper linking to faculty, fewer acts of misbehaviour and also less emotional distress (students with depression), unease, pressure or social withdrawal.

Keywords: *social and emotional learning (SEL), academic performance, job and life satisfaction, learning environment, future employability.*

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Introduction

The model of emotional intelligence has been proposed for the first time in Peter Salovey and John D. Mayer - *Emotional Intelligence* and has become an essential area of research in the domain of human resources, management, education and psychology. Daniel Goleman, the author of *Emotional Intelligence* assures that the improvement of students' affective skills is as critical as the evolution of their cognitive qualities, so IE is as essential idea as the more well-known IQ. Daniel Goleman's magnificent study from the borders of psychological science and neurobiology offers surprisingly fresh perception into our two minds -the lucid and the affective or emotional mind, and how they intertwine to configure our fate. Furthermore, drafting on innovative brain and behavioural inquiry, Goleman displays the constituents at work when students of advanced IQ struggle later in life as opposed to those of moderate IQ but possessing the emotional quotient do astonishingly well. (Goleman, 2000). These components, which consider consciousness, self-control, and sympathy in close connection to being somehow smart aren't determined at birth but are shaped by childhood experiences and can be fostered and reinforced throughout the adult life with visible results and performances regarding not only our health, but also our relationships and work. Emotional memories -the way students feel during an educational circumstance- can intensify long-term memory (LTM) retention as opposed to non-emotional memories because constructive feelings and emotions related to an issue can assist students to be active in the learning process for an extended period of time, in the proximity of motivation, and can also determine a psychological emotional impact on their affective state towards the educational content that is being delivered. (Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020). The applicability of these abilities on the far side of the seminar room can be characterized as having a good, optimistic moral because the impact of SEL on young people brings affective steadiness and this seems to be the most important skill that corresponds with life contentment, and along with the carefulness and cognition to be forthcoming, displaying its connectedness to job and later, life gratification. (Bușu, 2020).

Moreover, with new aggregation mirroring the latest inquiry, the most prolific definition regarding emotional intelligence is given by Salovey & Mayer: “form of intelligence that involves the ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings, emotions, facilitate discrimination between them, and use information to control certain situations or actions” (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). It is the cognition to place and efficaciously manage their feelings in relation to private goals whether these are referring to job, social relationships or educational activity, the destination being to accomplish goals, with a minimal of inter and intra-personal struggle.

The theory of multiple intelligences

If cognitive ability is the capacity to acquire new things, to think and reason, to apply cognition and to figure out difficulties, the power to accommodate to new circumstances and life situations, furthermore, emotional intelligence is the capacity of the human being to motivate himself, to persevere in front of the frustrations, to manage his impulses and postpone the gratifications, to adjust his inner moods and to prevent the troubles and tribulations to darken his mind, to be persistent and to hope. (Goleman, 2000). This type of ability should not be mixed-up with the substance that constitutes knowledge, the ability to generate new content from active information for the intention of adjustment, through rational motive (uncovering of the intellect), comprises intelligence or IQ, which is a study that started about one hundred years ago with

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research applied on cohorts of people. There is a discrepancy about the natural or non-inheritable characteristics of affective intelligence, but it is however well thought out that, unlike the level of cognitive intelligence (which remains continual throughout life), emotional intelligence and its elements, may be, partially, educated. Thus, the grade of emotional intelligence can be augmented through educational activity and effort, although some elements of emotional intelligence are treated as personality attributes, which are more hard to change. There are well-known instances of many intelligent students whose educational performance during instruction fundamentally exceeds the achievement of their peers, but who then disappoint and fail to recognize their potential, flunking both professionally due to lack of applicable skills and socially, within their family life, due to the lack of socio-emotional skills negatively enhanced in the Covid pandemic situation. (Paraschivu, M., Cotuna, 2021). There is also the reverse of this situation, namely, people who, although modestly endowed intellectually, prove a good social adaptation to a wide variety of contexts, being considered successful people. (Vaillant, 1998). The two environments that people perform in - the educational and social environment, display problems that are qualitatively antithetical: the educational environment confronts us with problem solving situations as a matter of priority, well-defined difficulties, problems for which, as a rule, there is only one accurate response. Inquiry results have shown that students' emotional development is critical not only to their academic outcomes but also to a flourishing life, for example, researchers have shown that students who have a unfluctuating affective system, starting at the age of four, accomplish tasks much better on the different forthcoming examinations for educational institution entrance. In fact, the quality to acknowledge and deal with your own emotions, to master them, leads to greater performance at within the educational institution, at job, and in social relationships. (Goleman, 2000).

Howard Gardner, a psychologist at Harvard School of Education, the theorist of multiple intelligences, and the leading man behind the Spectrum Project, coined the terms interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence, forms of multiple intelligences that permit an individual to adjust to a social surrounding. The variety of multiple intelligences discovered by Gardner are seven in number: communicative/lingual, logical-mathematical, spatial, kinaesthetic, auditory, intrapersonal, interpersonal and realistic and, later, Gardner also enclosed one more intelligence, the kind of existentialist one. Furthermore, " an intelligence entails the ability to solve problems or fashion products that are of consequence in a particular cultural setting or community. The problem solving skill allows one to approach a situation in which a goal is to be obtained and to locate the appropriate route to that goal. The creation of a cultural product allows one to capture and transmit knowledge or to express one's conclusions, beliefs, or feelings." (Gardner, 2008).

The hypothesis of multiple intelligences asserts that intelligence should not be conceptualized as an unidimensional thought, but as a series of multiple intelligences that allows the individual to surface the changes and alteration of idiosyncratic conceptualization and to revive features of their personal experiences. Gardner argued, in his book, *Frames of Mind*, that in most learning and ethical systems, only communicative and logical-mathematical intelligence were given value, while the other concepts of multiple intelligence were totally neglected. He entrusts giving the incumbent care to students who display inclinations towards creative, naturalistic fields, thus provoking a major shift of the education system: so teachers and educators, just like journalists addressing their public (Scorțan, 2019) require to be competent to teach and

display lessons in a interdisciplinarity, transdisciplinarity mixture, using arts, music, theatre, drama, multimedia systems, cooperation, self-contemplation, excursions, new ideas and materials and to explore novel teaching methods to match the changeling needs of their students (Stoian, 2019a, Stoian, 2019b).

The importance of emotional intelligence

The key word when working with intelligences in schools and universities should be multiple, a model that Gardner coined which goes beyond the limiting IQ concept as being the only invariable benchmark. The concept of multiple intelligences motivates teachers to formulate a pattern of working in which each student has the possibility to acquire knowledge that concord with his/her unparalleled way of reasoning. There is no flawless way of teaching and learning, but it is essential that the partners in the educational system and the ESP students- English for specific purposes- find the right education line suitable for them. (Buşu, 2018). The hypothesis of multiple intelligences or collaborative intelligences (Chirişescu, IM, Păunescu, 2021) has powerful implications in the acquisition and the adults' evolution process, giving them a new orientation through which to examine their way of existence, vocation and passions. Also, through personal improvement programs, they can detect or rediscover their suppressed inclinations that they had as children by a conventional manner of reasoning and basic cognitive process.

The basic definition of emotional intelligence that both Salovey and Gardner agreed upon comprises of the cognisance of one's feelings - the power to acknowledge one's emotions, represents the key stone of emotional intelligence, since it means that a person is able to detect a feeling when it appears. This is of uttermost importance because without it, we cannot observe and recognize our true feelings and we often give into them. The interpersonal aspect is considered unique in the real world, there is no other intelligence more important than this one because it is the capacity of understanding others, it presupposes empathy - the ability to be alert, to interpret and acknowledge the feelings of others.

Emotional intelligence versus educational intelligence

In a largely accepted sense, the idea of intelligence can be represented as a broad cognition, mostly hereditary, to change pre-existing information into new concepts and skills. More often than not, emotional intelligence researchers consider that educational intelligence and emotional intelligence are two well-defined forms of intelligence with certain things in common. (Chirişescu, IM, Păunescu, 2021). Both forms of intelligence function with asserting and existent knowledge and both utilize this cognition in a bendable demeanour, thus asserting knowledge points at the apprehension of the nature of special situations, while procedural knowledge refers to what genuinely needs to be done in particularised situations. Being pliable in using assertive and procedural cognition means to have discernment of what is occurring in a new and unacquainted state of affairs and, respectively, acknowledging what needs to be done in such situations. But what expressly distinguishes the two forms of intelligence is given by the circumstances and means in which they proceed and employ knowledge. Thus, educational intelligence is commonly concerned with finding distinct problems, for example, those for which the first steps and the final ones, and the steps to proceed from the initial state to the concluding state can be amply specified. For these difficulties, there is always a resolution that can be well thought out as the best. By opposition,

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emotional intelligence is implicated in solving effortless problems, that is, those that can be understood in various ways and for which there is no optimum neutral outcome, nevertheless, assorted conceptualization may lead to the coveted effect. Most of the problems we face are of a social nature and it is unanimously accepted that emotional intelligence has a much stronger predictive value for social success than that conferred by educational intelligence. Research has shown that young people who display disorders of social behaviour such as aggression or criminal deviance lack the skills to monitor and interpret the emotions of others. They are not able, for example, to give a correct interpretation of the social expressions of the social partners, which proves the absence of emotional intelligence. In fact, although emotional intelligence is a conception restricted by the broader model of intelligence, research data show a much closer link between emotional intelligence and personality attribute than between emotional and educational intelligence.

SEL in education- not another trend but a missing component

In teaching, the interpersonal intelligence is the ability to set up and keep mutually affirmative interpersonal relationships with the students in front of you. Moreover, "emotional intelligence has a great contribution to cognitive processes. Cognition is commonly defined as the mental action or process of acquiring knowledge and understanding through, experience and senses. It refers to a series of particularities of intellectual functions and processes such as attention, forming of knowledge, memory, judgement, evaluation, reasoning, problem solving, decision making, comprehension and production of language. Cognitive processes use information already acquired and creating new knowledge." (Buşu, 2020). Emotions thrust attention which eases the learning process and activates long term memory thus having a huge impact on mental representation, critical thinking and motivation. The social responsibility and the environment impact the learning process extremely because it is the ability to exhibit your own cooperation as a contributive and formative component part of the social class to which you dwell or have settled. Students who account to have warm interactions with their peers and teachers also have the inclination to show better academic self drive and engagement than students who lack this reciprocal affect. (Bărbuceanu, 2019). The first also tend to be more adaptive at problem solving - the ability to be cognizant of difficulties and to specify them in order to employ possible solutions. When students are in the vicinity of such high values of acquisition and academic expectations, they take up these orientations, because they experience a sense of a reality testing - the ability to constitute and measure the compatibility between what an experience means and what the existing verifiable are. Presently, there is dissension as to whether emotional intelligence is more of a natural potential or whether it is a set of conditioned skills or competencies.

The role of emotions in the learning process

Understanding the role of emotions in the learning process is one of the first rule to implement SEL at any level, although it is preferred to start at kindergarten along with implementing and maintaining positive seminar room environment. (Scorţan, 2014). SEL in education has positive effects on student flexibility that is the ability to align one's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, to alter one's position and circumstance. SEL also modulates stress control and stress tolerance - the ability to elude troubled events without staggering, as well as the ability to deal with them easily and in a positive manner, controlling the negative feelings and impulses in order to defy or postpone impulsivity and to drive away the desire to haste. SEL is also associated with the

reduction of the degree of anxiousness, better judgement production, fewer ingestion of drugs, teenage beverage and discipline problems, better social relationships and less aggression by controlling emotions with useful schemes. A useful scheme might be boosting the general disposition in seminar rooms, such as warm display and the mindfulness to feel contented with one's own life, to feel good unaccompanied or/and in the company of one's peers, and to have the power to see the fair side of the existence. Hope plays an important role in the quality to fend for what is good and the accessibility of one's thoughts, beliefs, feelings, but not in a annihilating demeanour. SEL takes up the role of the mentor, that is so needed in schools and universities and it gives the student the self esteem he needs - the power to respect and evaluate what is good, in substance, in the seminar room, enhancing thus effectiveness and retention. (Bărbuceanu, 2019). When SEL penetrates educational institutions and imbues seminar rooms, corridors, canteens and playgrounds everything about the manner in which instructors, peers, teachers parents and students act is remarkably changed. One cultivates self-fulfilment - the ability to recognize your own latent abilities, the cognition to become active in the hunting for goals that have a definite significance for you and cultivates independence - the ability to be straightforward and contain yourself in your own world of inner thoughts and external actions, the ability to set one free from affective addictions. The concepts that summarise this sort of intelligence are: consciousness, assurance, self-discipline, the ongoing tendency for verity, adaptability, social skills-influence, connectedness, fight management, building relationships and ultimately, teamwork. Moreover, "social relationships are especially important in the process of learning a foreign language, as they provide us with images and essential information about attitudes, values and the social behaviours that we need to know when we are in a position to interact with a native speaker."(Lăpădat, Lăpădat, 2020). There is the need in the educational activity to call for the ceaseless observation of the student performance, which ensures a broad representation to detect and evidence the emotional changes. Furthermore, "the first suggestion is to have specialised teachers actually integrate suggestions originating from students as a way of performing a full diagnosis of the entire educational milieu. The writing of questionnaires and the interpretation of the data can provide very important information that can help teachers filter through their system of knowledge and choose the exact informational packages that can generate a tailor-made experience when it comes to teaching." (Chirițescu, IM, Păunescu, 2022). It has also been shown that appraise of social ability (a true-hearted indicant of emotional intelligence) from parents, professionals, educators, friends and teachers are much better prognosticators of social successfulness than scores of educational intelligence. Based on such findings, (Sternberg, 1985), it is arrogated that emotional intelligence would be able to anticipate the changeability of social success much more accurately than personality attributes. Furthermore, "because we had asked people not only about intelligence in general but also about academic intelligence and everyday intelligence, we also factor-analysed the behaviours that had been rated as highly characteristic of these intelligence as composed of verbal ability, problem solving abilities and social competence. The factors that emerged for everyday intelligence we called practical problem-solving ability, social competence character and interest in learning and culture. These, too, overlapped with those for intelligence in general, but less so, and had more of an everyday slant."(Sternberg, 1985).

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Conclusion

Different from the level of intelligence, which stays the same throughout life, competences based on affective intelligence are erudite skills, in other words, any individual can increase his own degree of emotional intelligence through instruction, but some constituents of emotional intelligence, regarded as personality attributes, could not be modified during the life of an individual. To win in life, each of us should acquire and exercise the chief dimensions of emotional intelligence: empathy, consciousness, feeling control, personal drive, utilization of emotions fruitfully. Emotional cognition must be formed so that the constant of emotionalism succeeds to emergence above ordinary thus leading to the conclusion that emotional abilities will be very facilitative in the upbringing and education of children. Partners of the instruction, namely parents and educators will be competent to boost their emotional and social prospective by teaching them to choose and germinate the features of emotional intelligence: to determine their personal feelings and distinguish them, to learn much more about how and where they can exteriorize sensitiveness, to develop empathy and to possess the ability to harmonise feelings with others, learn to listen, learn to be creative, to interpret body language and other gestural and para-verbal issues.

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