

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence

Second Edition

A step by step guide for higher
and further education professionals



Alan Mortiboys

ROUTLEDGE



Teaching with Emotional Intelligence

The way teachers shape and handle their own feelings and those of their learners is central to the success of learning. Now in its second edition, *Teaching with Emotional Intelligence* shows how to manage this influential yet neglected area of learning and teaching. This practical book looks at how lecturers and teachers can develop and use their emotional intelligence to enhance their teaching and their students' learning.

Taking the reader step-by-step through the learning process and looking at the relationship from the perspective of both the teacher and the learner, this book will help the reader to:

- plan the emotional environment;
- learn how to relate and listen to learners effectively;
- read and respond to the feelings of individuals and groups;
- handle and reveal their feelings as a teacher, as appropriate;
- develop self-awareness as a teacher;
- recognize their prejudices and preferences;
- improve non-verbal communication;
- plan for the physical experience of learners;
- deal with their learners' expectations, comments and questions.

This book contains a number of revised activities, checklists and points for deeper reflection as well as new chapters on teaching with emotional intelligence with international students, in online learning and in working one-to-one with students. It will help all teaching professionals encourage their learners to become more engaged, creative, positive and motivated.

Alan Mortiboys has over 20 years' experience working in Educational Development in Higher Education, most recently as Professor of Educational Development at Birmingham City University. He now works independently, providing staff and educational development for professionals in education and healthcare.

For Daniel

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence

A step by step guide for
higher and further education
professionals

Second edition

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Preface to the second edition

Teaching with Emotional Intelligence was first published in 2005. Since then, I have run workshops, given keynotes and contributed short sessions on the subject on over 100 occasions. Most of these sessions have been very interactive and I have heard many comments, suggestions, challenges and questions from participants. These have been invaluable in the revision and some expansion of existing chapters. There are also three new chapters in this edition, each of which begins to answer the question of to what extent the ideas in the original book can be applied in a particular context: working with a learner one-to-one, in online learning, and with international students. For these new chapters, I have sought to maintain a practical focus, referring back to activities in earlier chapters, as well as offering new suggestions specific to that context.

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Introduction

The emotional dimension of learning and teaching

I have run a number of workshops on teaching with emotional intelligence in which I have begun by asking participants to think of an occasion when they were a learner that aroused in them strong feelings. After everyone has had the chance to remember such an occasion and to briefly recount their experience to a partner, I ask individuals to state the word or phrase that captures the strong feeling they are recalling. These are examples of the words they use in their responses: anger, resentment, excitement, frustration, embarrassment, inadequacy, helplessness, fear, relief, outrage. The ratio of ‘negative’ to ‘positive’ feelings is usually the same as in this selection.

Participants in these workshops include teachers (from higher education, further education, adult education and schools) and healthcare professionals involved in teaching, who have been relatively successful in their experience of formal education. I gather these responses at the workshops for the same reason that I repeat them now. It is to set the scene, by acknowledging what we all know intuitively from our own experience: that emotions are bound up with learning. In Guy Claxton’s words: ‘Learning itself is an intrinsically emotional business’ (Claxton 1999: 15). The process of learning in any context can involve struggle, frustration, thrill or excitement. In the public and formal context of the classroom, with all of the dynamics between teacher and learner and among learners, and with the perception that there is the prospect of success or failure, the potential for strong feelings is heightened. Although the strong feelings that are recalled by participants in this exercise may not be typical of an everyday class, where there is learning there are likely to be emotions. In the words of Daniel Liston,

we have no choice but to recognize the emotional contours of teaching and learning. Ignoring those dimensions won’t make them go away. In learning and teaching, emotions are ever present. Ignoring or suppressing those emotions harms students and teachers alike.

(Liston 2003: 115–16)

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It appears that learners' emotions have an effect on their learning and also that the teacher has a significant role to play in shaping those emotions. Sarah Moore and Nyiel Kuol analysed the responses of past students at the University of Limerick who were asked to explain their nomination of a lecturer for a teaching award. They found that: 'students often refer to emotions, emotional states and emotionally satisfying experiences when providing descriptions of excellent teaching and generally seem to associate their own and their teachers' positive emotional states with good teaching and good learning' (Moore and Kuol 2007: 87).

John Dirkx writes that participants on his teaching courses,

in recalling incidents of memorable learning ... typically describe experiences in which there was a strong, positive, emotional or affective dimension, such as a supportive climate, a caring teacher who listens to us as individuals, a teacher who respects us as persons, or a teacher who involves the whole person in the learning experience.

(Dirkx 2001: 67)

Debra Meyer and Julianne Turner discuss how, in their many studies of motivation and learning, emotion has emerged as an 'integral part of the interpersonal processes that create classroom contexts' (Meyer and Turner 2002: 107). They observe that 'cognitive support is necessary but not sufficient for learning experiences to evoke student involvement' (ibid.: 111). It is the teacher's demonstration of positive emotions and motivation as learners that correlates with student reports of positive affect and motivation to learn (ibid.: 112).

It follows that if the goal of a teacher is to help their learners to learn, a teacher needs to be able to recognize the emotional dimension of learning and to work with it. This includes acknowledging that there are things within the control of the individual teacher that can affect how learners feel (whilst recognizing of course that the teacher is not the only influence on learners' feelings).

Emotional intelligence

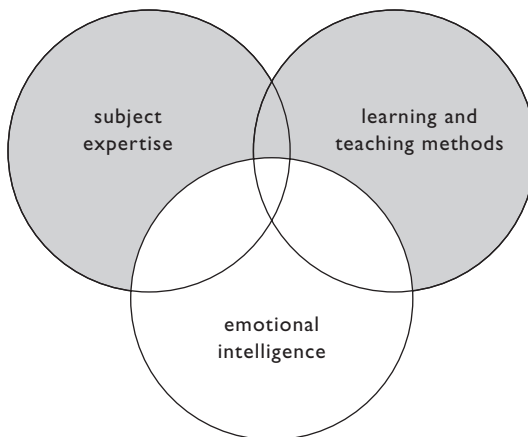
So, given the power and inevitability of emotions in learning and teaching and the influence on learners' feelings that can be exerted by the teacher, it is essential to ask what it is that the teacher needs to have and to develop in order to maximize the potential for emotions to support rather than hinder learning. 'Emotional intelligence' is a useful term to use to encapsulate this.

The term emotional intelligence was popularized by the success of Daniel Goleman's book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, which appeared in 1995 (1996 in the UK). Goleman defined emotional intelligence or 'EQ' as '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' (Goleman 1998: 317). The term 'emotional intelligence' was coined in 1990 by Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey. By 1997, they stated that emotional intelligence involves:

- the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion;
 - the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought;
 - the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge;
 - the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth.
- (Salovey and Mayer 1997: 10)

Goleman's book created a great deal of interest in the concept of 'emotional intelligence'. Businesses asked, 'How can we develop emotional intelligence at work so that the company can be more successful?' and 'How do we measure emotional intelligence in prospective employees?' Parents and schoolteachers asked, 'How can we develop emotional intelligence in our children to enable them to lead happier and more successful lives?' What I believe has been overlooked in the interest generated by Goleman's book is the vital role that the use of emotional intelligence can play in teaching.

Conventionally, a teacher brings two things to the classroom that are of value to the learners. One is expertise in the subject, derived from study, research or professional experience. The other is knowledge of learning and teaching methods – a teacher's pedagogy, such as how to structure the content being presented, how to encourage participation by learners, use of materials and so on. I suggest that emotional intelligence is the unrecognized third component of what a teacher should be able to offer to learners. I believe that, as teachers, we should develop and employ emotional intelligence to complement the subject expertise and pedagogical skills that we already offer to learners. When you are with a group of learners, you have the chance to connect with them beyond the transmission and discussion of ideas and facts, and thereby to transform the experience both for you and for them. If you do not use emotional intelligence in your teaching, the value of both your knowledge of your subject and your learning and teaching methods can be seriously diminished. This is represented in the diagram below.



Using emotional intelligence has the potential to affect for the better many aspects of your work as a teacher. For example, many problems with ‘discipline’ can be attributed to how teachers respond to (or ignore) learners’ feelings (see Chapter 9); learners may be less likely to drop out from courses if they have better relationships with teachers (see chapters 2 and 6); and for effective reflective learning to occur, the use of emotional intelligence is a prerequisite (see Chapter 18). Above all, the teacher who pays attention to the emotional dimension of the classroom experience is more likely to develop a state in their learners which is conducive to learning (see Chapter 3), with an increased likelihood of learners being engaged, motivated, confident, constructive, ready to collaborate, creative and resilient.

How emotions are overlooked in learning and teaching

Currently, however, many teachers are unlikely even to recognize the emotional dimension of their work. This has been made very apparent to me in the course of carrying out teaching observations in a range of contexts in post-16 learning. I have frequently seen teachers who were very competent in their teaching skills but who simply did not pay attention to the emotional dimension of the learning–teaching exchange. For example, they might not address any student by name, even though the group was small enough for them to know the name of each learner. Or they never explicitly acknowledged the look of boredom or confusion on the faces of some group members. Opportunities were lost for promoting a positive emotional environment and for responding to the feelings of learners, in order to enhance the experience both for the teacher and for their learners.

Emotions still appear to be marginalized in further and higher education. John Heron suggests one reason for this:

if a disease model or treatment model of working on feelings is adopted, then professional helpers of all kinds – from teachers to doctors – exempt themselves from personal work on feelings on the grounds that they are normal, not ill.

(Heron 1982: 36)

If emotions only merit attention, and then in the form of treatment, when they are perceived as a problem, it will not be possible to acknowledge and engage with their everyday presence in learning and teaching. In this view, emotions are pathologized.

Another cause of the continued neglect of this vital component of learning and teaching is the perception that emotions are an obstacle to reason. This can be attributed to the enduring influence of the writings of René Descartes. In the seventeenth century Descartes wrote, ‘I think therefore I am.’ He stated that each

of us has a ‘mental’ realm within us which is uncontaminated by the sensual nature of the body. This separate realm of the mind was seen as ‘higher’ than the faculties of the body, which was closer to animal nature. This model continues to influence much of education today, as the intellect is seen as the location of rational thought and, therefore, more trustworthy than the emotions. As Anne Brockbank and Ian McGill note, ‘[Descartes’] dualism . . . has survived in almost all aspects of learning and development, as can be seen in the preoccupation with “thinking skills” to the exclusion of material factors like affect (emotion) and action’ (Brockbank and McGill 1998: 21). If learning is seen as purely a cognitive process, it is legitimate for the teacher to confine their energies to asking the right questions, providing information and ideas, demonstrating skills, orchestrating learner discussion and so on. In his book *Descartes’ Error*, Antonio Damasio has shown that, from a neuroscientist’s perspective, Descartes was wrong. He demonstrates the central role of emotions in decision-making and asserts that ‘certain aspects of the process of emotion and feelings are indispensable for rationality’ (Damasio 1996: xv).

Both of these views, seeing emotions as pathological and as anti-reason, still attract support, as evidenced, for instance, in Katherine Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes’s recent book, *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (2009). However, it is time to recognize the central role that emotions play in learning and to ensure that using emotional intelligence is part of every teacher’s development. This is particularly needed in higher education. As Patricia Owen-Smith warns, it does not mean ‘over-romanticising the emotional and reducing the material of our courses and our disciplines to secondary stature’ (Owen-Smith 2008: 2). It does not necessitate sacrificing a higher education which values and fosters coherent critical argument, independence of thought and academic rigour but, rather, recognizing that these aspects can be enriched by infusing them with humanity. The university is indeed the ‘home of reason’, but reason is bound up with emotion, not distinct from it. It is possible to respect the feelings of learners at the same time as vigorously challenging their ideas. The use of emotional intelligence by teachers is not a threat to, but more an essential component of, university education.

Teaching with emotional intelligence in practice

The emphasis in this book is on using your emotional intelligence as a teacher to attend to the emotional dimension of learning and teaching. I suggest that as a teacher you should develop and use your emotional intelligence with two goals in mind.

- One is to be able to recognize and respond to the feelings of both yourself and your learners in the classroom, in order to make you both more effective in your respective roles.

- The second is to encourage an emotional state in the learners on your course that is conducive to learning. This can apply just as much to the two-hour workshop as to the course which runs for the whole year.

This book is concerned with what it means in practice to work towards these goals. Each of the many activities throughout the book is intended to help you achieve one or both of them.

Of course, when you look more closely at what is meant by the use of emotional intelligence in teaching you may say, ‘I do this anyway – this is just a name I can put to it.’ For many, the concept of emotional intelligence embodies a description of how they live their life, including their teaching, and they will be doing this as a matter of course. They will see that all people, including those in the role of learner, have feelings and that those feelings deserve to be acknowledged, valued, respected and handled with care. If you are one of those who already teach with emotional intelligence, I would say that there is still more to do:

- first, we can rescue emotional intelligence from being an extra quality that a minority of teachers offer to learners. Instead, it deserves to be recognized as an essential component of what all teachers should offer;
- secondly, rather than let the use of emotional intelligence be just intuitive, we should be more deliberate in using it, for example, in planning (see chapters 3–5);
- thirdly, we should give the use of emotional intelligence as much attention as we give to content and methods; we should give it a greater share of our energy.

This book is intended as a practical guide for teachers who wish to make more use of emotional intelligence in their teaching. Throughout, the emphasis is on helping you as a teacher to relate the detail of emotional intelligence to the context in which you work, and to assist you in developing your own emotional intelligence and your use of it with your learners.

Outline of the book

With the exception of chapters 1, 15, 16 and 17, each chapter takes a different aspect of teaching with emotional intelligence and is in three parts:

1. *What does it mean and why does it matter?*
Explores that chapter’s particular aspect of teaching with emotional intelligence, what it means for your practice and what effect its use can have.
2. *Investigating your practice*
Provides an opportunity for you to review your current use of this aspect of teaching with emotional intelligence.

3. *Developing your practice*

Provides suggestions on how you could introduce or further develop this aspect in your teaching.

The *Investigating your practice* and *Developing your practice* sections of each chapter consist primarily of a number of ‘activities’. The aims of these activities vary. They may be: for developing your skills in the use of, and/or your understanding of, teaching with emotional intelligence; for reviewing your practice; inviting you to make speculative plans for your teaching; offering suggestions for you to use in a session or for developing your self-awareness.

Chapter 1 explores further what is meant by the term ‘emotional intelligence’ in teaching. Chapter 2 invites you to investigate the nature of your relationship with learners. Chapters 3–5 are about planning for the use of emotional intelligence in your teaching whilst chapters 6–9 are about using emotional intelligence in your exchanges with learners in the classroom, which involves being alert to opportunities presented and making the most of them. Chapters 10–12 focus on developing your self-awareness as a teacher, chapters 13 and 14 are about shaping, handling and revealing your feelings, and Chapter 18 looks at how you can continue your development in teaching with emotional intelligence. Chapters 15, 16 and 17 are new to this second edition. They ask how far the ideas presented in earlier chapters can be applied:

- when working one-to-one with a learner;
- in online learning and teaching;
- when teaching international students.

It is possible to do all of the activities in this book by working alone. However, you would derive greater benefit from exploring them with one or more colleagues. The majority of them may be adapted as activities on courses and indeed many have been used in this way.

The book is intended to be of use to both new and experienced teachers. The activities and examples assume that you are working with learners aged 16 or over, although the principles behind the use of emotional intelligence can apply to teachers of all ages of learner. I have used the term ‘teacher’ throughout for the role that you may know as lecturer, tutor, teacher, trainer or facilitator. Equally, for the people whom you are teaching, whether you call them students, participants, delegates or even pupils, I am using the term ‘learners’ (except in Chapter 17, when discussing ‘international students’). The space in which you meet I am calling a ‘classroom’ and the time you spend with them, a ‘session’.