

Research Paper

The Art of Nurturing Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT

The Art of Nurturing Emotional Intelligence is action research and an exploratory study which aims to explore how daily interactions among teachers and students, along with increased self-awareness impact the development of emotional intelligence. In this study, emotional intelligence has been defined as the demonstrated ability of learners and teachers to recognize and understand their own emotions, perceive the emotions of others, and effectively regulate emotional responses to foster positive interpersonal relationships and self-awareness within the school environment. This study brings into light simple and practical strategies, facilitating daily interactions among teachers and learners to nurture emotional intelligence. This study also facilitates knowledge development with context to enable emotionally aware environments within the teaching and the learning community.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Wellbeing, Self-Awareness, Peer Relationships, Teacher-Learner Communication*

Nurturing Emotional Intelligence from the primary years of development is a significant factor which contributes to the development of a holistic human being. There is enough literature indicating the relationship between success in life and emotional intelligence but there is a prevailing gap which highlights the relevance of daily life classroom interactions and experiences which provide an opportunity to nurture emotional intelligence every day. In the light of the same, this study attempts to answer some questions relating to the impact of daily interactions within the teaching and learning community on emotional intelligence of both teachers and learners. Considering that existing literature explains diminished causation between teacher wellbeing and their daily interactions with learners, this study attempts to further explore the impact communication has on the development of emotional intelligence.

Laying a foundation by exploring day-day strategies relating to self-awareness, of learners, teacher-learner communication, and peer relationships, which are central to daily lives in learning in education, this study attempts to share what has worked to strengthen emotional

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intelligence apart from intentional social emotional learning. It is imperative to consider that much of learning is unconscious, and observational, particularly in early developmental years, hence research must give importance to simple day-day processes which are crucial in the development of the holistic individual life. Just as academic success, and development of intrapersonal relationships has been related with emotional intelligence, knowledge development must take place with context to exploring and studying phenomena that govern the art of nurturing emotional intelligence through practical and easy to use strategies and day-day experiences. To achieve this objective this study attempts to explore and study the impact of i) self-awareness of learners, ii) teacher-learner communication, and iii) peer relationships and their contribution in nurturing the art of emotional intelligence. To deeply study these domains this study concretely attempts to answer the following research questions through conscious strategies and interactions, observations, and activities with learners.

Research Questions

- How does teacher-learner communication impact EI of the learner?
- How does self-awareness impact EI of the learners?
- What is the impact of peer relationships on the learners?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence has been related to academic success, better interpersonal relationships, and professional competence in past studies. But there is less evidence in literature providing in-sights to develop emotional intelligence among teachers and learners, and explain the role of communication, self-awareness and peer relationships which constitute an integral part of daily life of both teachers and learners in education and developmental years of learners.

Relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success

In a study by Dimakos et al. and Chapin explored a strong positive relationship between emotional intelligence and academic success both with context to as an ability and a trait, it was found that learners with high EI performed academically better and were able to manage their daily life stressors effectively.

Early years of development crucial for development of emotional intelligence and prevailing gaps in literature

Existing literature does explore the relationship of EI with academic success in educational settings, veterinary, medical programs, but considering that early years of development are crucial for internalization of human values there is very little emphasis on early interventions to nurture emotional intelligence.

Significance of teacher wellbeing in nurturing emotional intelligence for learners and prevailing literature gaps with context to intervention methods to develop EI

Moreover, considering the nature of emotions teachers observe in educational settings directly impact the wellbeing and emotional health of learners, there is also less research evidence on the impact teacher wellbeing, and their communication with learners have in nurturing emotional intelligence of learners.

Intriguingly, a study in Ireland has raised questions towards the lack of concrete intervention methods to develop EI due to which the study concluded with no correlation between

emotional intelligence, gender, academic achievement, teacher performance. Researchers have pointed out various factors explaining the lack of correlation such as the nature of changing individuality of learners and teachers, different cultural contexts and evolving attitudes towards emotions. But the research has strongly supported the need for interventions to develop, nurture and measure emotional intelligence while also providing teachers with training to support the development of emotional intelligence and self-regulation.

However, this study considering this view, has focused on developing and applying effective measures to nurture and objectively study emotional intelligence among learners and its interconnectedness with teacher wellbeing.

Emotional intelligence can be learned through storytelling and empathy building in education

Another research study by Kecskes et al. (2015) emphasized the role of teachers in providing safety and development of positive emotions among learners. The study demonstrated the art of storytelling and practical problem solving as an approach to develop emotional intelligence

Role of unconventional methods in nurturing emotional intelligence and building emotional competence for teachers

Although emotional is teachable yet researchers have indicated that building emotional competence for teachers too, must be a key focus in education. Studies have also emphasized the need for EI training and its internalization across curriculums to ensure wellbeing of learning community and our future generations. Moreover, incorporating daily emotional reflections and using unconventional methods, such as storytelling, music, drama and art have been found central to building and nurturing emotional intelligence for the entire learning community.

The synergy of teacher-learner interaction and emotional intelligence

A research study by Xue Wang (2023) explored the impact of teacher's mindfulness in nurturing emotional intelligence (EI). Results indicated that teacher's mindfulness directly and positively impacted the development of positive relationships indicating that teacher-learner communication is an integral aspect of emotional intelligence, particularly in education.

The need for knowledge building with context to interventions for EI in education

The existing literature on the development of emotional intelligence for the learning community in education reveals several key gaps. Most studies explored correlation rather than causation, or clear intervention strategies for the development of EI. There is lack of clarity with context to factors affecting emotional intelligence positively impacting academic success. Additionally, limited attention has been given to low-EI students, diverse learners, and those with special or neurodiverse needs. The heavy reliance on self-reported EI assessments raises concerns about validity, while evidence supporting EI as a predictive tool for admissions remains insufficient. Moreover, there is little significance given to teacher wellbeing and its impact on nurturing emotional intelligence for learners. Available research studies also observe the absence of standardized EI training models and evaluation methods which are currently resulting in lack of objectivity in measuring emotional intelligence.

Way forward and rationale of this study

This study based on its comprehensive review of existing literature aims to explore everyday life domains of classrooms and their dynamics from a more practical point of view and exploring the domains which concern daily interactions of both the teacher and learner in education. The focus of the study is to study how daily interactions among teachers and learners, self-awareness, and their peer relationships impact emotional intelligence, and further their nurturance. In the same view, this study aims to both study and provide concrete strategies which facilitated the development of EI by investigating its research questions and methodologically applying its strategies to achieve the objectives of this study.

Methodology of data collection

This is a qualitative study based on primary data collection of action research of interventions and observations recorded during the data collection phase. Data has also been obtained from case studies, and anecdotal records during the study. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed through thematic analysis aligned with the research questions and inferences based on the analysis were derived from the data.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Operational definition of emotional intelligence at Prometheus School

Emotional intelligence at Prometheus school is defined as the demonstrated ability of learners and teachers to recognize and understand their own emotions, perceive the emotions of others, and effectively regulate emotional responses to foster positive interpersonal relationships and self-awareness within the school environment.

Based on the operational definition data collected was thematically analyzed, coded and aligned with each of the research questions. The thematic coding table is given below-

How does teacher-learner communication impacts EI of learners and teachers?	How does self-awareness impact EI of learners and teachers?	What is the impact of peer relationships on EI of learners and teachers?
Thematic Coding: Reflective questioning Data Collected: “If hugging is not a bad thing, then why do we need permission?” Thematic Coding: Guided decision-making Data Collected: “Three choices were given – push others, shout at others or wait their turn.” Thematic coding: Guided emotional reflection. Data collected: The teacher used reflective discussion and art to help the learner process the incident and its emotions. Thematic coding: Initiation of response by the learner During circle time, the child volunteered to share his weekend experience for the first time without prompting. He spoke clearly, maintained eye contact with the group, and	Emotional self-recognition During the thumb-print flower activity and reflection questions, learners were asked to explain why they selected a particular emotion colour. Some learners were able to explain their feelings based on the situation (for example, feeling sad when something breaks or happy when winning a prize). These responses demonstrated emerging self-awareness, as learners were able to identify and explain their emotional reactions. This indicates that self-awareness helps learners understand their emotions and respond appropriately in different situations. Thematic Coding: Awareness of personal boundaries	Peer influence in emotional decision-making During the collaborative activities, particularly the thumb-print flower activity and music emotion task, some learners looked at their partner’s responses before selecting their own emotional choice. In certain cases, children changed their responses after observing their peer’s choice, indicating peer influence in emotional decision-making. The observations suggest that peer relationships play an important role in shaping learners’ emotional understanding and responses, especially when learners are unsure about identifying emotions independently. Thematic Coding: Respect for others’ comfort in social interaction Data Collected: “Others may not

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responded to follow-up questions with ease. Thematic coding: Respectful communication in collaboration In a collaborative UOI project, the child worked confidently with his group, offering suggestions and accepting others' ideas respectfully. Thematic coding: Peer support in solving problems In a group task solving word problems, the child patiently guided his classmate by asking: "What do we know first?" and "Which numbers do we use?" He helped his classmate find answers to the story sums.	Data Collected: "Others may not feel comfortable if you hug them because you are getting close to them." Thematic Coding: Patience and self-control Data Collected: "We should wait our turn... we should be patient." Thematic coding: Self-realization and responsibility Data collected: Learner acknowledged his behaviour and understood its impact on others. Thematic coding: Emotional awareness through imitation Data collected: Learner expressed emotions such as happiness and excitement through imitation. Awareness of Personal Interests The learner clearly recognizes his interest in cricket and represents it through drawing. This suggests an emerging level of Self-awareness, where the learner understands activities that bring enjoyment and meaning. Interpretation: Being aware of personal interests allows learners to identify what motivates them, which is a foundational element of Emotional Intelligence. Self-Expression Through Creative Representation The learner used drawing to communicate his experience. Interpretation: Creative expression helps learners reflect on experiences and emotions, strengthening self-awareness and emotional understanding.	feel comfortable if you hug them." Emotional Recognition and Expression The learner explicitly states that playing cricket makes him "happy and excited." Interpretation: The ability to label and communicate emotions demonstrates emotional awareness, a key component of emotional intelligence. The learner is not only experiencing emotions but is also consciously identifying them. Positive Social Engagement The drawing includes friends, showing that the activity is socially meaningful. Interpretation: Social interactions contribute to emotional intelligence by helping learners understand shared experiences, empathy, and social bonding.
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Interpretation table- 1

CONCLUSION

Self-awareness among learners and educators plays an integral role in building emotional intelligence of the learning community

This study highlights that self-awareness plays a crucial role in the development of emotional intelligence among learners and teachers as well. The findings indicate that when learners are encouraged to become aware, express, and reflect upon their emotions, they gradually start developing a deeper insight of their feelings and behavioural responses. Learners demonstrate becoming more self-aware through their ability to recognize emotions in different situations, recognise their likes and dislikes, and reflect on how their actions impact others. Behaviours demonstrating patience, respect for others, and taking initiatives further reflected the learners' growth in regulating emotions and building positive social interactions.

The role of creative expression in building emotional intelligence has a far-reaching impact in education

The study further emphasizes that experiential and creative activities, such as drawing, role play, imitation, and collaborative tasks, provide meaningful opportunities for learners to express and regulate their emotions. These activities supported learners in verbalising their feelings, understanding social situations, and developing empathy towards others. The findings suggest that self-awareness extends beyond simply recognising emotions; it also includes the ability to articulate experiences, reflect on emotions, and understand the perspectives and feelings of peers.

Teacher wellbeing is the essence of learner's emotional intelligence

The observations additionally revealed that learners' emotional intelligence developed more effectively when educators responded to situations with calmness, patience, and supportive strategies such as breathing exercises, reflection, and peer cooperation. Providing learners with opportunities to pause, reflect, and discuss their emotions enabled them to respond more thoughtfully rather than impulsively. Over time, learners showed improvement in identifying and verbalising their emotions, coping with challenging situations calmly, and demonstrating empathy and cooperation during peer interactions. These findings indicate that emotional intelligence develops progressively when learners are consistently provided with guidance, emotional support, and opportunities for self-reflection within the classroom environment.

The role of daily positive interactions among learning community and its impact on emotional intelligence

The study also emphasises the importance of teacher-student and peer interactions in fostering emotional intelligence. Open and respectful communication creates a reliable environment in which learners feel safe to express their thoughts and emotions. Furthermore, when educators model respectful and empathetic communication, learners mirror these behaviours in their peer relationships, resulting in better teamwork, patience, and perspectives. It was observed that learners supporting each other during collaborative activities, it further highlights the role of peer relationships in strengthening empathy and understanding of emotions.

The role of learner's interests, and emotional experiences in nurturing emotional intelligence

In addition, the findings suggests that learners' interests and positive emotional experiences contribute significantly to the development of emotional intelligence. For example, the

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learner's expression of joy and enthusiasm towards cricket reflected an awareness of personal interests and emotions, indicating the growth of self-awareness and emotional expression. The inclusion of peers in the learner's drawing also emphasised on social dimension of emotional intelligence, suggests that meaningful social interactions and shared positive experiences contribute to emotional wellbeing, empathy, and a sense of belonging.

The role of daily life in education in the development of emotional intelligence

Overall, the study concludes that emotional intelligence is nurtured through continuous opportunities for self-awareness, reflection, communication, and social interaction. The findings suggest that emotional intelligence is not developed through isolated incidents, but through consistent daily experiences that encourage learners to pause, reflect, communicate, and empathise with others. Therefore, creating emotionally supportive classroom environments and embedding reflective and collaborative practices into everyday learning experiences are essential for fostering learners' emotional growth and overall wellbeing.

Scope of future research

Future research in this domain may focus on development of new knowledge and strategies to enhance and support the development and nurturance of emotional intelligence in education along with intentional social emotional learning and consider it as a key aspect in holistic development of an individual. Instead of qualitatively measuring emotional intelligence, research must attempt to capture integral aspects of daily lives of learners and educators qualitatively. Daily experiences are indeed the core of nurturing emotional intelligence among learners.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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ANNEXURE- I



This annexure visually documents an engaging activity focused on emotional expression through art. Participants were invited to create thumb-painted flowers, with each color representing a different emotion. The aim was to provide a tangible and creative outlet for exploring and articulating feelings.

Completed Activity Sheet

This image showcases a completed 'Feeling Flower' activity sheet. It features a vibrant collection of thumb-painted flowers in various colors: blue, red, and green. Each flower's color is intentionally chosen to symbolize a specific emotion, with accompanying labels indicating the associated feeling. The arrangement demonstrates the diverse emotional palette explored during the activity.

Participant Engagement

The second image captures a participant actively engaged in the 'Feeling Flower' activity. The participant is shown utilizing a color wheel, a tool that likely aided them in selecting and understanding the emotional connotations of different colors. This visual highlights the hands-on and reflective nature of the art-making process.

Aesthetic Considerations

The overall visual presentation employs a soft, calming pastel color scheme. Gentle pastel backgrounds and subtle pastel accents create a serene atmosphere conducive to reflection and emotional exploration. The typography is clean and professional, maintaining an academic yet approachable aesthetic. This consistent visual theme reinforces the gentle and supportive nature of the activity.

Summary of Findings

This visual research annexure demonstrates the effectiveness of the thumb-painted flower activity as a tool for emotional expression. The completed activity sheets and images of participant engagement provide compelling evidence of the creative and therapeutic potential of art-based emotional exploration. The use of color to represent emotions offers a unique and accessible pathway for individuals to articulate their inner states.

ANNEXURE-II



This annexure provides a visual overview of the "Music and Emotion Identification Activity." The research aimed to understand how different genres and styles of music evoke specific emotional responses in individuals. Participants were tasked with identifying and selecting emotion cards that best represented their feelings while listening to a curated playlist.

Activity Flow:

- Participants were seated at a table equipped with a laptop and a variety of pre-designed emotion cards.
- The laptop was used to play diverse musical selections, ranging from classical and ambient to upbeat pop and melancholic tunes.
- After each musical piece, participants were prompted to choose the emotion card(s) that accurately described their emotional state.
- Data was collected on the music played and the corresponding emotion card selections, allowing for analysis of music-emotion correlations.

Key Components of the Activity

Musical Stimuli: A carefully curated playlist designed to elicit a broad spectrum of emotional responses.

Emotion Cards: A set of visually distinct cards representing various emotions (e.g., joy, sadness, anger, surprise, calm, excitement).

Participant Interaction: Direct engagement where participants actively link auditory experiences with emotional labels.

Data Collection: Systematic recording of musical inputs and participant emotional outputs for comprehensive analysis.