

Quality Education News

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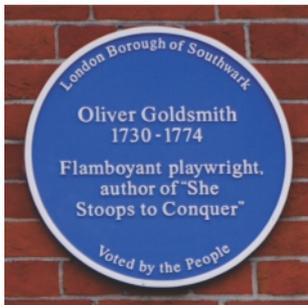
Issue 65

February 2023



A quarterly publication issued by the South African Quality Institute (SAQI) in the interest of promoting educational excellence.

Dear Supporter of Quality Education



What more could the child be given ?!

A teacher in an 18th century English village was usually much revered. Together with the parish priest, they were often the only ones who had any form of tertiary education. When they spoke, the villagers listened. In Oliver Goldsmith's poem, he reflects fondly of a childhood teacher.

The Village Schoolmaster

Beyond yon straggling fence that skirts the way
With blossom'd furze unprofitably gay,
There, in his noisy mansion, skill'd to rule,
The village master taught his little school;
A man severe he was, and stern to view,
I knew him well, and every truant knew;
Well had the boding tremblers learn'd to trace
The days disasters in his morning face;
Full well they laugh'd with counterfeited glee,
At all his jokes, for many a joke had he:
Full well the busy whisper, circling round,
Convey'd the dismal tidings when he frown'd:
Yet he was kind; or if severe in aught,
The love he bore to learning was in fault.
The village all declar'd how much he knew;
'Twas certain he could write and cipher too:
Lands he could measure, terms and tides presage'
And e'en the story ran that he could gauge.
In arguing too, the parson own'd his skill,
For e'en though vanquished he could argue still;
While words of learned length and thund'ring sound
Amazed the gazing rustics rang'd around;
And still they gaz'd and still the wonder grew,
That one small head could carry all he knew.
But past is all his fame. The very spot
Where many a time he triumph'd is forgot.

In our 21st century classrooms, there are many teachers who wouldn't mind the same level of deferential respect! A number of reasons could explain the differences in attitudes towards teachers today. One is the explosion of knowledge in recent centuries.

There has been a knowledge explosion since the year one AD. It took until about 1500 for another doubling of accumulated and transmitted human knowledge. Another doubling occurred over the next 250 years. A further doubling happened only 150 years later in 1900. At the beginning of this century, it has been estimated that the doubling of information takes place in one or two years. (O'Connell, J *et al* 2020: 1 - 15.)

In my personal salad days of teaching, there were usually one or two ways of dealing with questions to which I didn't have the answer. The first way was to tell the class that I'd give the answer the next day. The second option was to set the question as homework. In today's classroom, questions can be answered in a jiffy. Simply switch on your mobile and get on to the internet.

All this instantly available knowledge doesn't mean that the teacher is becoming irrelevant. The teacher is still crucial in helping the child source meaningful knowledge. Even with online teaching, the teacher still has an essential role. Physical face-to-face interaction is still needed. The online programme isn't always sufficient to guide a child through learning difficulties. Think, for example, of the need for a teacher to help a child struggling in a Maths class to understand how to use fractions.

This newsletter focuses on a sometimes neglected teacher's role that now needs to come centre stage in education. That role is to ensure that Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) permeates the school.

SEL brings huge benefits. In the school it will, "positively impact pupil behaviour, mental health and wellbeing as well as academic achievement" (Human Values Foundation: 2022:3). These benefits can be achieved in the classroom by every quality teacher. To make them happen, take SEL on board in your classroom and school.

Sincerely

Richard Hayward

References

<https://www.igi-global.com/chapter/the-information-explosion/244830>

Human Values Foundation 2022. Newsletter 53, Autumn. Yes2values@hvf.org.uk

O'Connell et al. 2020. *A conceptual framework for SMART applications in higher education*. Hersey, PA, United States: IGI Global.



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THE BIG FIVE Social & Emotional Learning skills



The Big Five

How do we go about social and emotional learning in the classroom? The Human Values Foundation (HVF) has asked this question. The Foundation has designed programmes for teachers. Schools across the world have used them and – where needed – adapted them to their own countries.

One programme, The Big Five, is designed for children in the age range of five to eleven. However, the underlying theory is pertinent to all ages. Every component of The Big Five aligns exceptionally well with the concept of emotional intelligence which consists of (Du Plessis 2009: 184):

- Knowing your emotions
- Controlling or managing your emotions
- Self-motivation
- Recognising emotions in others
- Handling relationships or understanding the emotional aspects of relationships

For each focus area of The Big Five, attention is given to a core value. When a child 'walks the talk' of a value learnt in and outside the classroom, the child grows its' personal EI.

Imagine, for example, the child learning about the value of 'Peace'. In the process, the child learns one of the Big Five: 'Self-management'. The child learns to be calm, patient and develop inner silence. As a peaceful child, it learns to be disciplined and have self-control. That

peaceful nature permeates relationships with peers, teachers and others.

Teach a young person to be emotionally intelligent and it is given transferable skills. According to psychologist Daniel Goleman, people with high levels of emotional intelligence are better able to: build long-lasting relationships, cope with the ups and downs of life as well as handle conflicts. American high schools that implemented a programme to teach emotional intelligence found that 38% of students improved their grade point average.

References

- Du Plessis, M 2009. *Emotional intelligence and leadership in Leadership in the African context*. Cape Town: Juta.
- Goleman, D 2006. *Emotional intelligence*. 10th Anniversary edition. New York: Bantam.
- Habib, R 2015. *Emotional intelligence*. TEDx Talk. February 2015.



Human Values Foundation
Life-enriching values for everyone

The Human Values Foundation is a charity based in Sussex, England. It supplies personal development and well-being teaching resources to educators across the world. A small number of South African schools have already used their programmes and found them most meaningful. For more information, google Human Values Foundation and visit the site. The email address is yes2values@hvf.org.uk.

Seven strategies to teach SEL

Sherrri Gordon is based in Ohio, America and an author of more than thirty books. She teaches children, students and staff on ways to include social and emotional learning (SEL) into the curriculum. Seven of her strategies are (Gordon 2021: 1-5):

1 Embed SEL into lesson plans

Wrap SEL into the actual lesson plans. Education is far more than facts, facts and more facts. For example, a South African history lesson of the 16 June 1976 Soweto student uprising, could discuss the emotions and feelings of African students on that fateful day. The students didn't want half of the secondary school subjects to be taught in Afrikaans. The teacher's lesson should be far more than a factual account of an event in history. It is an opportune time to embed social and emotional learning about those involved in the struggle.

2 Engage students in problem-solving

Set problems that involved teamwork. When group challenges are set, it's not only the children's knowledge that grows, so do their people skills. As they solve problems together, they learn to listen to other viewpoints. They learn the social skills of interacting peacefully to achieve common goals.

The problem-solving activities could focus on social issues. Topics to be discussed could include bullying, gender based violence, racism and stealing. When such topics are raised, the children themselves are usually the most directly impacted. Their solutions are sometimes better than those given by well-meaning teachers who are far removed from the actual daily realities of the problems.

3 Instil perseverance

To have a happy and successful school career, perseverance is a must-have character trait. Effort and gritty perseverance precede achievement. In verbal comments and written evaluations given by the teacher, the teacher can instil perseverance. Praise the effort and the hard work. Encourage that spirit of perseverance. Take the word 'cannot' out of the child's vocabulary and shorten it to 'can'.

4 Model respect

It's not an-always popular observation but it contains considerable truth, "The overall behaviour of students in a class reflects the way that they're treated by the teacher." When students are treated with empathy, kindness and respect, those social skills permeate the class. Such a teacher creates a classroom emotional climate where different cultural, linguistic, political and religious backgrounds are respected. All feel that they belong.

5 Incorporate character education

It's not on the official subject timetable but include it. Teach character education. History and Literature are ideal subjects to study people's characters. Discuss the preferred as against the to-be-avoided behaviours. Almost every school subject has the potential to highlight characters in the particular field of study. In the scientific field, for example, Edison and Einstein's characters show what can eventually be achieved by ignoring searing ridicule of their initial research work.

Teach students what it means to be responsible for one's actions and to take the consequences – good or bad. Discuss what it means to be a person of good character. Give students opportunities to display their character traits by being, for example, leaders both in the classroom and on the sportsfield. Let them begin and run community

outreach programmes. Turn the talking about values into actually walking them.

6 Encourage sharing of opinions

Create a classroom environment that encourages discussion on issues. As children share opinions, they understand and value viewpoints different from their own. Empathy grows. When children share opinions, they develop self-confidence in public speaking and expressing themselves. Through their sharing, positive relationships with peers and their teachers are further nurtured.

7 Prioritise caring behaviour

Too often a child can be too-focussed on itself. There's an obsession to be the best and it can be done in an unhealthy competitive spirit. Your failure is my success; your trip-up puts my nose in front of yours. Guide the child's thoughts from thinking of itself as the centre of the universe. Move from 'I' to 'We'.

Think of others who might be experiencing difficulties. Care. Empathise. Ask questions such as, "What can we do to help Mark with his Maths?" or "How can we make newly-arrived Betty feel welcome?" Sherrri Gordon (2021:5) states that such caring behaviour not only helps children develop positive relationships but is also, "... the cornerstone of social and emotional learning."

Reference

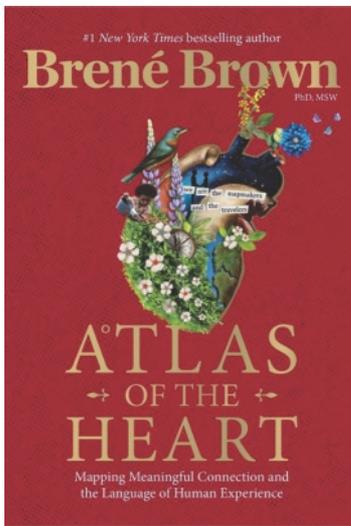
Gordon, S 2021. Strategies for teaching children emotional intelligence. <https://www.verywellfamily.com/strategies-for-increasing-emotional-intelligence>



Moments of conflict are part of daily school life. There are those children and staff members who manage conflict well. Often they are able to defuse conflict. Such peacemakers are invaluable in the classroom and the staffroom. Emotionally intelligent people have acquired skills to keep negative emotions under control.

The STOP technique is a simple and effective way to manage our emotions in difficult situations. In a conflict situation, do the following:

- S** Stop. Avoid reacting impulsively by hitting out physically and/or verbally.
- T** Take a deep breath or two or three. Calm down. Bring angry emotions under control.
- O** Observe what has happened. Take note of the people and the situation.
- P** Proceed. Take action or do nothing or wait until negative emotions have cooled down.



Find the right word

We all have moments of anger. The last time that you were angry, what other emotions were part of the anger? Could there also be confusion, hurt and jealousy? Maybe they weren't those specific three but others. Brené Brown (2022: 222), gives a further sixteen emotions that are linked to anger. Ten of them are: fear, anxiety, frustration, grief, hurt, sadness, isolation, guilt, helplessness and outrage at

injustices. Maybe the root cause of your anger still hasn't been mentioned. Maybe you couldn't precisely pinpoint the real cause of your anger.

The child and often the adult too, finds it sometimes difficult to put into words their exact emotions. The angry person might scream in frustration at not being able to articulate their true feelings. Imagine a child who misbehaves in a particular teacher's class by having emotional outbursts. The first question to ask is: Why?

Try to understand the child's core reasons for the anger. When that's understood, the teacher is better able to reduce the anger. Different

emotions demand different responses. A particular approach would be needed if, for example, the root cause of the child's anger was perfectionism that was demanded by the teacher. Another approach would be needed if the teacher lacks patience when the child is unable to quickly grasp new subject matter. First diagnose the cause of the anger. Follow afterwards with the healing treatment. In the two classroom situations above, both teachers would need to change behaviour.

Children need to be given the vocabulary to accurately describe their emotions. The more that they are able to do so, the greater the ability to socially interact and be emotionally intelligent. Brown (2021: xxii) makes the point:

... our emotions help us make sense of our surroundings and provide needed input for managing ourselves and responding effectively to others.

Give children the emotional vocabulary to make themselves understood and for others to understand them.

Reference

Brown, B 2021. : *Atlas of the heart*. London: Penguin Random House.

What's your EI (Emotional Intelligence) level?

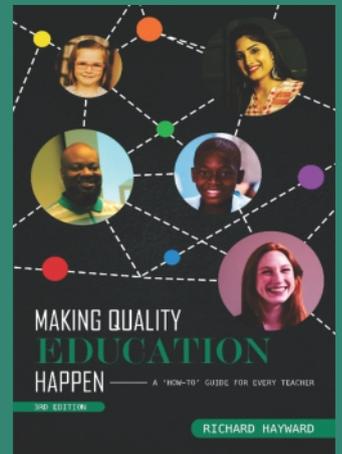
There are advantages in having a high EI. Manfred Kets de Vries is one of Europe's leading management thinkers. In his book, *The leadership mystique* published by Pearson Education: London, (2001: 37): he observes that the higher up a person is in an organisation, the more important EI becomes. Technical skills become less important. Being empathic and self-aware are huge career enhancing factors.

A person's EI isn't static. De Vries has designed a questionnaire to help one rate one's present strength areas and to identify those in need of improvement. A ten-point scale is used to answer questions such as:

- Are you willing to express your emotions to others?

- Can you easily adapt your behaviour to changing circumstances?
- Does your behaviour invite other people's expression of warmth towards you?
- Are you good at seeking out others to help you when the need arises?
- Do you routinely reflect on your actions?

If you'd like to know your EI, there are online questionnaires on the internet. The EI questionnaire designed by De Vries is available in Richard Hayward's book, *Making Quality Education happen – a 'how-to' guide for every teacher*. The book is on sale at takealot for R 200. Amazon has it in kindle format at \$ 8.04 as well as \$16.99 for the paperback colour edition. Smashwords sells the e-book format for \$ 6.99.



The higher the teacher's EI, the better the teaching



SACE

South African Council for Educators

Towards Excellence in Education

Of course, being cognitively intelligent is important for every teacher and every member of the school management team. Yet the most successful educators have high emotional intelligence too. They get on well with the children, parents and peers. Their classroom management is fair, friendly yet firm. When given leadership roles they are effective as well as efficient. The above-titled workshop looks at EI and discusses ways to nurture it in one's personal and professional life.

This workshop is done under the aegis of the South African Quality Institute (SAQI). It's a SACE-endorsed activity and earns five Professional Development points. The workshop facilitator is Dr Richard Hayward. For more details of this and his other workshops, please contact him at either rdphayward@yahoo.com or 011 888 3262. Poor schools are sponsored.