Session 5

Feelings Count:
Emotions and Learning

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I. Key Questions and Learning Objectives

Key Questions

• How do emotions affect learning, and how does the classroom affect emotions?

• How can teachers foster emotional intelligence and create emotionally safe classroom environments?

Learning Objectives

• **Emotions affect learning**—Teachers will understand how their students' emotions affect learning. Teachers will understand the need to make judgments about when emotions are interfering with or supporting learning.

• **Emotional intelligence**—Teachers will consider and understand the five aspects of "emotional intelligence." They will begin to develop strategies to help themselves and their students become aware of and manage their emotions.

• **Creating emotionally safe learning environments**—Teachers will consider how to create emotionally safe learning environments where students can take risks, develop confidence, and grow emotionally and academically.

II. Session Overview

> The elements of emotional intelligence—being aware of our feelings and handling disruptive emotions well, empathizing with how others feel, and being skillful in handling our relationships—are crucial abilities for effective living. We should be teaching the basics of emotional intelligence in schools.
>
> —Daniel Goleman (2001)

Emotions are important in the classroom in two major ways. First, emotions have an impact on learning. They influence our ability to process information and to accurately understand what we encounter. For these reasons, it is important for teachers to create a positive, emotionally safe classroom environment to provide for the optimal learning of students. Second, learning how to manage feelings and relationships constitutes a kind of "emotional intelligence" that enables people to be successful. Emotional intelligence expands on Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences, in particular, the intrapersonal and interpersonal intelligences he defines, which deal with understanding oneself and others (Gardner, 1999). [See Session 4, Multiple Intelligences.] Specific behaviors and skills can be taught to help students develop emotional intelligence.

This session discusses how students' emotions can enhance or impede their learning, explores how to help students develop their emotional intelligence, and describes how teachers can create emotionally safe learning environments.

Emotions Affect Learning

Emotions are often thought of as irrational or "nonintellectual" feelings that are beyond our control. However, emotions are complex states of mind and body, consisting of physiological, behavioral, and cognitive reactions to situations that can be managed and directed. Cognitively, individuals interpret an event as one that may be sad, dangerous, joyous, etc. Physically, a sad situation may yield tears, or a dangerous situation might lead to an elevated heart rate. Behaviorally, we may seek comfort when we are sad or run and seek help when we face danger. It is critical to recognize the important link between emotions, thought, and action. Moreover, it is important to teach our students that emotions can be managed, regulated, and controlled to some degree. In this section, we first discuss the ways in which emotions affect learning; we then consider the importance of managing emotions and building emotional intelligence in the classroom.

Our emotional state has the potential to influence our thinking. For example, students learn and perform more successfully when they feel secure, happy, and excited about the subject matter (Boekaerts, 1993; Oatly & Nundy, 1996). Although emotions have the potential to energize students' thinking, emotional states also have the potential to interfere with learning. If students are overly excited or enthusiastic, they might work carelessly or quickly rather than working methodically or carefully. In addition, emotions such as anger, anxiety, and sadness have the potential to distract students' learning efforts by interfering with their ability to attend to the tasks at hand.

Emotions can interfere with students' learning in several ways; including 1) limiting the capacity to balance emotional issues with schoolwork, 2) creating anxiety specifically about schoolwork, and 3) triggering emotional responses to classroom events.

First, when our emotions are heightened, we use up our intellectual resources (Ellis, Ottaway, Varner, Becker, & Moore, 1997a; Ellis, Ottaway, Varner, Becker, & Moore, 1997b; Hertel & Rude, 1991). Some students may have difficulty learning because their minds are cluttered with distracting thoughts and memories. For example, a student who is distressed might be thinking so much about a sad memory that little mental room is left to think about other things. If students are working to cope with emotions, they might not have sufficient resources available to engage in learning.

In these situations, students may need extra prompts to help them with learning. Some might need a reminder to help them stay focused and to redirect their attention to events in the classroom. Some students might need one-on-one time with the teacher to help process their feelings or resolve a problem. In some cases, the distraction might be temporary, such as a bad day or a fight with a friend. But other students, such as those whose parents are going through a divorce, may need more intensive assistance to direct their intellectual resources to learning instead of focusing solely on their emotions. They may need counseling beyond the classroom.

II. Session Overview, cont'd.

A second way in which feelings can interfere with learning occurs when students are anxious about their school-work (Cole, 1991; Dobson & Dobson, 1981). Students who are depressed or anxious about learning often do not feel competent academically. They do not trust themselves and are likely to take more time double-checking their answers or questioning their work before turning it in to their teachers. They may even start over each time they make a mistake, convinced that it undermines their entire effort. Because they may take more time on a task, these students give themselves and their teachers an inaccurate perception of the actual time it took for them to solve a problem or understand a concept.

When emotions interfere with competence beliefs, students might withdraw from classroom activities in order to avoid appearing incompetent in the classroom. Students who tend to internalize their emotions are often easy to overlook in the classroom. Teachers can help reduce their students' performance anxieties by providing multiple opportunities for feedback about their work, and by emphasizing that mistakes are okay and a part of learning. For these students, it is important that their entire grade not be based on one big project and that feedback emphasize the things they are doing right, while also giving specific, focused advice on ways to improve. More-over, they will benefit from knowing that the teacher really cares about them as a person and as a learner.

Finally, students can become upset by classroom events—a failed test, a negative comment from the teacher or a peer—and react in a way that impedes further learning. These reactions may play out in different ways, depending on what the student attributes the problem to (Graham, 1997; Weiner, 1994). For example, if two students fail a mathematics test, one might blame herself for not studying enough and commit to studying harder the next time, while the other might blame the teacher for writing unfair questions and conclude that he is doomed to fail the class. His anger might lead to acting out behaviors or disruptive expressions of anger (Graham, 1997). Both students might experience anger from the same source—a bad grade. However, the students differ in their beliefs about their ability to improve the situation. Negative emotions interfere with learning when students become frustrated to the point of feeling helpless or incompetent. This tendency can be offset if students learn how to regulate or manage their emotions in the classroom. A student who is angry and only knows how to blame others is not going to be able to succeed in or out of the classroom. The student needs to learn how to acknowledge and express his feelings, manage his anger, and come up with strategies for letting off steam. Goleman describes one of these strategies:

> A sixth-grade boy in a California school has a history of getting mad and starting fights. Other kids had started to avoid him. But in his class, he's learned a method called "Keep Calm" that he uses when he feels himself start to lose his cool: He steps into the hallway, thinks about how he can control his reactions, what he really wants, and positive ways to get them (Goleman, 2001).

The next sections review strategies for helping students develop their "emotional intelligence."

Developing Skills for Emotional Intelligence

Emotional intelligence, a term that was first used by Peter Salovey and John Mayer (1990), is the ability to manage feelings and relationships. Emotional intelligence is made up of what Howard Gardner (1993) refers to as "intrapersonal" and "interpersonal" intelligences. [See Session 4, Multiple Intelligences.] Intrapersonal intelligence is an awareness of one's own feelings, motivations, and abilities. Interpersonal intelligence is an awareness and understanding of other people and how to interact with them. Emotional intelligence requires abstract reasoning, including the ability to perceive and understand emotion, and the ability to understand how emotions facilitate and influence thought (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). Researchers have found that emotional intelligence can be taught and that children can be coached to develop the tools and skills needed to manage their positive and negative emotions.

Daniel Goleman (1995) outlines five skills involved in emotional intelligence: being aware of one's emotions, managing those emotions, motivating oneself, empathizing, and relating well with others in a group. He explains that these skills can be learned just like any other subject. By modeling, direct instruction, and coaching, teachers can help students learn to monitor their own positive and negative feelings, handle difficulties and frustrations calmly and without giving up, channel their motivation to learn in positive ways, and relate to others in a supportive manner.

II. Session Overview, cont'd.

Self-Awareness

Self-awareness and self-knowledge are important components of emotional intelligence. Among the attributes of self-awareness is the ability to recognize one's own feelings. Students (and teachers) may not always identify what they are feeling or understand *why* they feel a certain way, much less what to do about how they feel. Students' ability to understand their emotions is linked to greater self-confidence, since this understanding helps them to feel greater control over their inner life (Goleman, 1995; Hamacheck, 2000). We can support students in developing this self-confidence by helping them learn to identify what they are thinking and how they are feeling when they make decisions. For example, a teacher might model the use of self-reflective language in the classroom to help students get in touch with their emotional states of mind. Talking about positive and negative feelings is one way to help students learn how to deal appropriately with their emotions. Talking about feelings of stress, anger, frustration, and disappointment can help students learn how to identify their feelings. Teachers can facilitate this discussion during class meetings or during one-on-one conversations with students, or as students work together in pairs and groups. For young children, stories can provide opportunities to talk about different emotions; for older students, journal writing may be a productive way to help them identify complex feelings. In the process, teachers can give students the language to interact productively with one another about how they are feeling (e.g., teaching students to make "I" statements, such as "I feel frustrated when ..." rather than, "He was mean.") Teachers can also support students' patience to wait to act after acknowledging their feelings until they have considered thoughtful alternative actions.

Teachers should be aware of and sensitive to the different ways children respond to and display emotion. Although the recognition of emotions may be universal (Eckman, 1999), emotional expression differs from culture to culture, and from family to family. Displays of emotion may also differ between boys and girls depending on the culture, the family, and circumstances. It is important for teachers to be aware that children may bring into the classroom different ways to respond to and display emotion, based on what is normal behavior in their families and communities. It is also important for children to understand that their peers may respond to and display emotions differently than they might. [See Session 6, Culture and Learning.]

Managing Emotions

Being aware of one's emotions is only one aspect of emotional intelligence. The emotionally intelligent individual also knows how to manage these emotions. Students will sometimes be frustrated or anxious when they try to learn something that is difficult. Teachers cannot eliminate frustration in the classroom; instead, they can help students learn to manage their feelings. And while conflict is inevitable in classrooms, teachers can minimize unnecessary conflict and help students learn to resolve their disagreements peacefully. Students can be taught to have more patience with themselves and each other and to develop perseverance and skills to work through conflict and frustration.

Teachers can use students' emotional expression as a teachable moment to coach and support them in developing the skills needed to manage their emotions successfully (Gottman & Declaire, 1998). Managing emotions includes the ability to redirect disruptive impulses and to "shake off" negative moods (Goleman, 1995). One way to teach students to manage their emotions effectively is to teach anger management, conflict resolution, and the skills needed to work cooperatively with others, with the long-range goal of teaching students to work together in positive and productive ways.

Conflict resolution education involves helping students process their emotions in productive ways when disputes or disagreements occur. Teachers can help their students understand that conflicts are a natural part of life, and that there are many ways to resolve conflicts so that the parties are satisfied with the results (Lieber, 1998). This process involves each party voicing his concerns, fully hearing the other's point of view, identifying the areas of contention, and seeking a plan to address these that is fair to each person. In this session's video, Kristen Bijur demonstrates a "conflict resolution" process with two of her students. The steps she uses to coach her students to take responsibility for their actions include: 1) cool down, 2) agree to ground rules, 3) talk it out (share versions of the incident, feelings, etc.), 4) brainstorm solutions, and 5) come to an agreement. Good conflict resolution "is non-violent, meets important needs of each person involved, and maintains—and can improve—the relationships of the people involved" (Lieber, 1998, p. 19).

II. Session Overview, cont'd.

Self-Motivation

A third area of emotional intelligence is self-motivation, which is the ability to generate feelings of enthusiasm, zeal, confidence, and persistence, especially during setbacks (Goleman, 1995). Students who are optimistic motivate themselves to expect success. [See Session 12, Motivation and Learning.] "From a standpoint of emotional intelligence, optimism is an attitude that buffers people against falling into apathy, hopelessness, or depression in the face of tough going" (p. 88). Goleman suggests that:

> Optimism and hope—like helplessness and despair—can be learned. Underlying both is an outlook psychologists call self-efficacy, the belief that one has mastery over the events of one's life and can meet challenges as they come up. Developing a competency of any kind strengthens the sense of self-efficacy, making a person more willing to take risks and seek out more demanding challenges (Goleman, 1995, p. 89).

Even if a person is discouraged after experiencing a setback, his ability to calm himself and think through productive strategies for trying again can eventually produce success, thus reinforcing a sense of self-efficacy. Similar to the skill of managing emotions, self-motivation brings a sense of mastery over one's emotions. Motivation is a strong internal drive to pursue and achieve goals. Students who are self-motivated have a strong drive to keep learning and a positive self-concept. Teachers can influence students' motivation:

> Motivating students requires not only general knowledge about how to engage young people and sustain their interest at different ages but also an understanding of what individual students believe about themselves and their abilities, what they care about, and what tasks are likely to give them the success that will keep them working hard to learn (Darling-Hammond, 1997, p. 296).

To be motivated, people need to value a goal and feel that, with effort, the goal is attainable. Teachers motivate students when they develop engaging lessons that connect to students' lives, help students to see how they can meet learning goals, and provide opportunities for their success. We motivate our students when we encourage them to be optimistic and help them think through how they can try again after a failure; when we give them specific, concrete feedback about how to improve their work; and when we help them identify the strengths on which they can build. Doing so gives students an incentive to persevere in spite of difficulties. Students are more productive when they are self-motivated and engaged in their learning. [See Session 12, Motivation and Learning.]

Empathy

For productive exchanges in the classroom, and in life, we need not only to be aware of our own feelings, we also need to be aware of other's feelings. "Empathy" is the ability to recognize emotions in others and to have compassion when others react emotionally (Goleman, 1995; Milojkovic, 1999). Students who display skills in empathy are good listeners, are sensitive to others' needs and feelings, and treat others with respect. Empathy is a prerequisite for social problem-solving and conflict resolution. Teachers can help students develop empathy by providing opportunities to put themselves in one another's shoes, to take on and understand different perspectives, and to take responsibility for their actions. For example, teachers can help students empathize with another student who is experiencing a particularly difficult time. Teachers can foster empathy by encouraging students to remember what it was like for them when they experienced a similar frustration. Teachers can also choose texts and select activities that enable students to explore multiple experiences and different points of view.

Handling Social Relationships

All of the previous skills described—being aware of emotions, managing emotions, self-motivation, and having empathy for others—are involved as we engage in social relationships. Positive social relationships in school—working well with others and developing meaningful personal relationships—are often associated with positive academic achievement (Asher & Rose, 1997). In addition, students who develop social skills become team players and team builders, which is important both inside and outside of the classroom. Teachers can facilitate positive relationships and effective group interactions when they encourage a commitment to working as a group, valuing each other's participation, being mindful and caring of others, and showing appreciation for team members (Preskill & Torres, 1999). Teachers can also model ways to have students work together in groups, including taking

II. Session Overview, cont'd.

different roles, sharing responsibility, active listening, developing consensus, and reflecting on one's own and the group's work (Johnson & Johnson, 1991). In this session's video, for example, Kristen Bijur facilitates her students' respect for each other's participation in their mathematics groups as they work toward an agreed-on approach to jointly solving mathematics problems. [See Session 7, Learning in a Social Context.]

James Comer (2001) notes that teachers sometimes take for granted that children come to school able to manage their impulses. This is not the case for many children. Teachers often need to teach students how they are expected to behave, rather than assuming they are "bad" when they behave in ways that do not jive with the teacher's expectations. [See Session 2, Development and Learning, for further discussion of developmental pathways.] Teachers can help students learn to recognize and understand their own and others' emotions, learn how to express their feelings and concerns, negotiate and work out their problems, and handle frustrations productively. For example, students can be introduced to a "no-fault" approach to working out problems, a process that does not blame other individuals but instead helps students internalize a way of working through and thinking out problems. When teachers encourage a fair, just, and responsible classroom environment, students are more likely to experience the comfort and confidence that encourages them to want to learn (Comer & Haynes, 2001).

In Kristen Bijur's fourth- and fifth-grade class in this session's video, students put into practice emotional intelligence when they negotiate space for both the girls and the boys to play their respective soccer games. These students demonstrate the ability to step back and problem-solve, rather than react impulsively. They are motivated to persist in solving their conflict and to listen to each other's ideas for a solution. As Goleman explains, "impulse control" is an important aspect of emotional intelligence:

> A key ability in impulse control is knowing the difference between feelings and actions, and learning to make better emotional decisions by first controlling the impulse to act, then identifying alternative actions and their consequences before acting (Goleman, 1995, p. 259).

Teachers also need to understand how their own emotional intelligence influences the classroom. A teacher's positive state of mind and ability to manage her emotions and relationships productively are a model for her students. Teachers demonstrate how to express emotion and manage relationships when they communicate their feelings to students and show how to build respectful relationships with others.

Creating an Emotionally Safe Classroom Environment

An emotionally safe classroom environment is necessary for students' cognitive learning, growth, and creative expression. Teachers can create emotionally safe classrooms by affirming students' accomplishments in noncompetitive ways, encouraging self-confidence, providing opportunities to take risks without penalty, and giving thoughtful feedback. Researchers have found that students' emotional and academic functioning improve when caring and respectful teachers support students' competence in a noncomparative and noncompetitive way, and support students' autonomy through meaningful curriculum (Roeser, Eccles, & Sameroff, 2000). The positive relationships that develop between students and teachers and that, in turn, influence academic performance are key to creating an emotionally safe classroom environment (Baker, Terry, Bridger, & Winsor, 1997; Charney, 2000; Noddings, 1992).

Teachers can foster positive relationships with their students by conveying respect and compassion for students, by listening carefully to them, and by responding to their needs and feelings. It is also important that students feel that teachers will manage the classroom environment and relationships among students in ways that protect their integrity and right to learn without fear of ridicule or humiliation (e.g., where classroom norms for interacting include respect rather than put-downs). Strife or fear in the learning process can create a negative "affective filter" that interferes with students' abilities to process new information and to perform (Pennington, 1996). In this session video, Nancy Flanagan is aware of the normal anxieties of her eighth-grade students. When she presents opportunities for students to play a new instrument or to lead the band, she provides emotional support as they experiment with these new skills. She encourages risk-taking while developing her students' self-confidence.

II. Session Overview, cont'd.

Teachers can create an emotionally safe classroom environment by providing targeted, positive feedback on successful elements of work in conjunction with suggestions for improvement. Positive classrooms have many ways of acknowledging students' capabilities (for example, through teacher comments and display of students' work). High expectations of students, combined with support, encouragement, and opportunities for success help affirm students' accomplishments in noncompetitive ways.

Emotionally safe learning environments can be developed with purposeful action. For example, the New Haven, Connecticut, Public School District developed a social and emotional learning program that includes instruction on emotional intelligence skills, attitudes and values, relationships, and school/community responsibility. The program supports students' emotional development through activities in which adult mentors (e.g., business professionals, Board of Education representatives, fire and police personnel) serve as role models for students. The mentors provide students with positive reinforcement for the skills they learn in the social and emotional curriculum. Teams of teachers, social workers, mental health staff, and on-site coordinators work together to teach students how to lead healthier lives through programs designed to prevent substance abuse and dropouts, support peer mediation, and respond to crises. (New Haven Public Schools, 2003). The Yale University Child Study Center conducted an assessment on the Social Development Program and found that as a result of the program more students felt school was a safe place, fewer students were involved in gang fights and weapon carrying, and race relations were improved (Cohen, 1999). Researchers also found that the program reduced students' anxieties and feelings of hopelessness (Cohen, 1999).

Social and emotional education programs that work best extend beyond the school to include parents and the community (Goleman, 1995). As teachers, it's important to keep students focused, creative, and excited about their learning. This includes helping them to become emotionally healthy people who can work with others while maintaining hope and the determination to learn.

III. Additional Session Readings

Elias, M. (1997). *Promoting social and emotional learning: Guidelines for educators* (Chapter 1) The need for social and emotional learning. *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development,* 26. [Online]. Available: http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/books/elias97.html.

Goleman, D. (2001). *Emotional intelligence.* [Online]. Available: The George Lucas Education Foundation Web site at http://www.glef.org/eihome.html.

O'Neil, J. (1996, September). On emotional intelligence: A conversation with Daniel Goleman. *Educational Leadership,* 54(1). [Online]. Available: http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9609/oneil.html.

IV. Session Activities

Getting Started

Answer one of the following prompts in a free-write, pair-share, or small-group discussion.

> **To the Facilitator:** These activities can be used as session warm-ups or as activities that occur after video viewing.

1. Think of a classroom event that you experienced as teacher or student in which emotions affected learning.

   - Briefly describe this event.

   - Analyze this event, focusing on how feelings may have impacted learning in this particular lesson.

OR

2. Think of a time when you had strong emotions that were impacting your teaching.

   - What were you feeling?

   - How were those feelings affecting your teaching?

   - What did you do in response to this episode?

   - What might you do differently today?

Discussion of Session Readings

> **To the Facilitator:** You may want to select questions from the Other Learning Activities and Assessments section to launch a discussion of the session readings. The questions used for the Checking for Understanding activities may be a particularly helpful resource.

Session Video

The ways our students experience and manage their emotions throughout their day has a profound effect on their ability and motivation to learn. Confident students pay attention, learn, and process information differently from anxious students. When we create a safe environment for students, we allow them to grow, explore, take chances, and learn from their mistakes. All of these things are essential for learning. This ability to recognize and manage one's emotions and relationships is known as "emotional intelligence" (Goleman, 1995).

Background on Teachers

Kristen Bijur was teaching fourth and fifth grade at San Francisco Community School, San Francisco, California at the time this show was taped. She has eight years of teaching experience. Ms. Bijur is a National Board-certified teacher and received her bachelor's degree in history from Middlebury College, Middlebury, Vermont. She currently is head teacher for the San Francisco Community School.

The first video segment features fourth- and fifth-grade teacher Kristin Bijur. She begins each day by providing her students with an opportunity to express themselves and connect to one another. Then, throughout the day, she keeps her finger on the pulse of student feelings and interactions. Ms. Bijur employs a number of strategies to help her students recognize what they feel and resolve conflicts. She takes time to help them find words to express their thoughts and to communicate with their peers in effective ways.

IV. Session Activities, cont'd.

Nancy Flanagan teaches seventh- and eighth-grade band at Hartland Middle School at Ore Creek, Hartland, Michigan. A 27-year veteran teacher, she received her master's degree in gifted education from Michigan State University and her bachelor's degree in music education from Central Michigan University. Ms. Flanagan is a National Board-certified teacher, a Teacher in Residence for the National Board, and former Michigan Teacher of the Year (1992-93).

The second video segment features Nancy Flanagan teaching and reflecting on her experience with her middle school band students. She tells us what strategies she uses on a daily basis to create and keep her classroom a safe space for every student. Throughout the video, we see how Ms. Flanagan's gentle and caring manner fosters emotional development along with academic learning. She helps her students take risks, pursue new challenges, and practice the skills they need to succeed both as individuals and as a team.

Discussion of Session Video

> **To the Facilitator:** You may want to pause the tape at the following points to discuss these questions. If you are watching a real-time broadcast on the Annenberg/CPB Channel, you may want to consider the questions as you watch and discuss some of them afterward.

1. Conflict Resolution (Kristen Bijur)
Video Cue: *The Learning Classroom* icon fades out at approximately 11:45 into the program.

Audio Cue: Ms. Bijur says, "It's always easier in coaching a child to take responsibility for his or her actions to say, 'What do you feel like went wrong in this situation?'"

- Can you recognize the steps Ms. Bijur uses in the "conflict resolution" process?
  - What do you think the students are learning when they resolve their conflict in this way?
  - What might be some of the spillover effects in the classroom?
- What kinds of strategies can you (do you) use with your own students to help them become problem solvers?

2. Soccer Problem Solving (Kristen Bijur)
Video Cue: *The Learning Classroom* icon fades out at approximately 13:15 into the program.

Audio Cue: Ms. Bijur says, "It sounds like you are trying to figure out how to solve this problem in a way that is peaceful and harmonious. Is that true? I'm really impressed about that."

- What specific things do you think Ms. Bijur's students may have learned in their efforts to solve their playground conflicts?
- What impact do you think Ms. Bijur's praise of the students' own strategies has for them? What other strategies might you employ in this kind of situation?
- Think about issues and conflicts that arise in your school outside of the classroom. How might you support students becoming problem solvers outside of your own classrooms as well as within them?

IV. Session Activities, cont'd.

3. Creating Structures (Kristen Bijur)

Video Cue: *The Learning Classroom* icon fades out at approximately 14:15 into the program.

Audio Cue: Ms. Bijur says, "I think in any classroom it's really important to be attending the emotions of the children and giving that time and weight by creating structures to address those."

- How do you feel about the tensions between conveying content and helping students learn social and emotional skills?

- What do you think about Ms. Bijur's decision that she needed to give more weight to the emotional needs of her students?

  - Are there any possible negative effects you can think of?

  - How do you think this has helped her and her students in the long run?

4. Anxiety (Nancy Flanagan)

Video Cue: *The Learning Classroom* icon fades out at approximately 18:45 into the program.

Audio Cue: Ms. Flanagan says, "They're anxious about deep and serious things. Every now and then they're anxious about the world at large."

- Ms. Flanagan describes a variety of issues and anxieties that students bring into her classroom. What kinds of issues and anxieties do you think your own students bring with them to school?

  - How do you see these issues manifest themselves in the classroom?

  - What kinds of impact do you think emotional issues may have on your students' ability to learn?

- What are some strategies you've used successfully (or seen used) to help students deal with their anxieties?

5. Taking Risks (Nancy Flanagan)

Video Cue: *The Learning Classroom* icon fades out at approximately 22:30 into the program.

Audio Cue: Ms. Flanagan says, "Take her away, Matt. You're the boss." [Music plays for several seconds.]

- Ms. Flanagan talks about the need for students to take risks and to be in charge of their learning. Why does she think this is important?

  - Do you agree with her? Why or why not?

- What kinds of risks might you encourage students to take in your classroom?

  - What kind of classroom environment do you think encourages these kinds of risks?

  - How can you go about creating such a classroom environment?

V. Other Learning Activities and Assessments

> **To the Facilitator:** These activities and assessments are for you to choose from according to your group's needs and interests. Many of the activities offered here would work equally well as assignments both inside and outside of class. You may want to use class time to prepare for and/or reflect on any activities assigned as homework.

Applications

1. Journal

List the five skills Goleman identifies as important to developing emotional intelligence. For each one, give a concrete example of what it might look like in one of your students. In addition, generate a teaching strategy you might use to help develop each of these skills in your students.

> **To the Facilitator:** Learners could do a think-pair-share with this journal. The concluding large-group discussion is an opportunity to grapple with the idea of emotional intelligence and how we can teach for it in our classrooms.

2. Field Assignments

a. *Describe a classroom's "emotional" environment.* One of the "strands" of emotions and learning discussed in this unit is the notion that emotions affect learning. With that in mind, the authors and teachers in this session discuss the importance of developing a "positive, emotionally safe classroom environment." Think about the teaching situation you are most familiar with (for example, your classroom or a current student-teaching assignment). Describe that classroom's "emotional" environment. Use the following questions as guides, but feel free to write about other things that you see as important to the "emotional environment" in your classroom:

- What kinds of interaction and dialogue occur between and among the teacher and the students? What kind of feedback does the teacher give students?

- What opportunities do students have to express themselves and their feelings?

    - Do you see risk-taking in the classroom?

    - How is it supported?

    - How do students and teachers react and respond to others' mistakes?

- How are students' achievements recognized?

    - Is there room for all students to succeed?

    - What role does competition play?

- What kinds of relationships exist between teacher and students?

Use specific evidence from your observations to support your descriptions and analyses.

V. Other Learning Activities and Assessments, cont'd.

b.   *Observe a student.* If you are currently observing a classroom, over the next week or so, try to observe students as they "manage their emotions." Managing emotions might include dealing with a conflict with another student or a teacher, getting upset over an assignment or activity, or appearing overly excited for some reason. Observe and take notes, and then choose a specific student or incident to write about.

   •   How did the student's emotions get expressed?

   •   How did these emotions affect her interactions at school and her capacity to do productive academic work?

   •   Do you think the student was able to deal with this emotional episode in a positive way?

   •   In what ways was she supported by her teacher or peers?

   •   In hindsight, do you have any recommendations for teacher action in this case or suggested strategies for the student?

   If you are teaching or observing a classroom, over the next week or so, observe a student with a focus on his emotional development.

   •   How would you describe this student emotionally?

   •   How comfortable and skilled is he with displaying, identifying, and/or managing his feelings?

   •   What kinds of issues or concerns might he bring to the classroom?

      •   How might these issues affect his academic progress?

   •   What types of skills or strategies might be helpful for this student?

   It may be useful to use Goleman's five skills that make up emotional intelligence as a framework to view this student. Use specific evidence from your observations to support your descriptions and analyses.

3. Create an Action Plan

a.   *Develop/adapt a lesson plan.* Design a new lesson or revise an existing lesson to explicitly address one of the major concepts in this unit. This might be a lesson you could use at the beginning of the year to establish norms for an emotionally safe and supportive classroom or a lesson focused on building your students' proficiency with one of Goleman's emotional intelligence skills.

   Include a brief explanation of how the pedagogical choices you made in this lesson support your teaching goal.

b.   *Create an emotionally safe learning environment.* Write down three specific actions that you can take to create an emotionally safe learning environment in your classroom. Write the specific action and a brief rationale. Refer to the section "Creating an Emotionally Safe Classroom Environment" above for productive starting points.

> **To the Facilitator:** You will find other learning activities on the course Web site at www.learner.org/channel/courses/learning-classroom. You will want to look ahead to assign learners the reading and any homework for the next session.

V. Other Learning Activities and Assessments, cont'd.

Checking for Understanding

1. Short-Answer Questions

a. Generate two concrete examples of what you might do or already do in your classroom to create an emotionally safe environment for your students. Give examples of strategies that you can or do use to model taking risks, build self-confidence, and help students to be emotionally receptive to new ideas.

b. Give an example of how a student's emotions might affect his learning.

c. Describe emotional intelligence. Use Goleman's five traits and/or specific examples to help you develop your answer.

2. Essay Questions

a. Describe and discuss the link between emotions and learning. What can you do as a teacher to promote your students' learning by supporting their emotional development? Include specific concepts and examples in your essay.

b. Develop your own scenario where emotions are impacting learning. This could be from a real life-experience you have witnessed or a fictional account you create. Write a description of the scene. Generate questions and actions that a teacher should consider to guide her response to this particular scenario. Use specific terms and concepts from this chapter in your writing whenever appropriate.

3. Reflective Essay

Write a reflective essay on what you have learned in this unit.

•   What ideas stand out for you as the most useful and helpful?

•   How do you think these ideas might affect your own teaching?

•   What questions remain for you about these issues?

Long-Term Assignments

Curriculum Case Study

Consider your case study learning problem from the perspective of the emotional aspects of the classroom environment. (Note: If your curriculum case is on a unit you plan to teach in the future, answer in the form of what you project for that unit. You may have to anticipate some of your students' reactions.)

•   From the perspective of different students with varying classroom status and differing levels of self-confidence, how safe or risky might various aspects of the classroom environment have felt (e.g., the task, the interactions among students, the interactions with the teacher)?

    •   What affective filter may have been operating for different students?

•   What aspects of the unfolding events could increase or decrease the level of emotional safety different students may have experienced in the classroom?

    •   How do you think this may have influenced what occurred?

VI. Web Sites and Organizations

6 Seconds Emotional Intelligence Network: http://www.sixseconds.org

6 Seconds is "a nonprofit organization dedicated to bringing emotional intelligence into practice in schools, families, organizations, and communities." This Web site (and the "EQ directory" linked to the home page) includes an abundance of resources—articles, lesson plans, learning tools, and organizations—related to teaching emotional intelligence in the schools.

Center for Social and Emotional Education: http://www.csee.net

The Center for Social and Emotional Education is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting parents, educators, and health care professionals who want to use social and emotional learning and literacy with children and adolescents.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning: http://www.casel.org/

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning is an organization dedicated to establishing social and emotional learning as an essential part of education from preschool through high school.

Edutopia: The George Lucas Educational Foundation: http://glef.org/classrooms.html

The George Lucas Educational Foundation Web site provides feature articles related to emotional intelligence, interviews with Daniel Goleman and other experts, and examples of teaching emotional intelligence from K-12 schools around the United States.

TRIBES: A new way of learning and being together: http://www.tribes.com

TRIBES is a community building and peer leadership process designed to help transform school and classroom environments into positive learning communities.

VII. References and Recommended Readings

Note that recommended readings are marked with an asterisk (*).

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