THE ROLE OF EMOTIONAL EDUCATION IN SHAPING AND DEVELOPING STUDENTS' PERSONALITY FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ALIGNING PERCEPTUAL POSITIONS

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***Abstract**: In favour of emotional education, which supports students to adequately manage their behaviours, it is not the case of special argumentation. We easily accept the fact that, for the good work of the educational activities carried out, it is primarily necessary a subtle education of this kind. The state of mind of the students is a framework that we inevitably need to take into account if we intend to achieve a quality didactic act. Therefore, students' emotional intelligence is one of the main concerns of today's teachers. We want good students who are knowledgeable of their own feelings, of the reasons that determine certain behaviours. Education specialists are of the opinion that only academic intelligence (IQ) is not enough, but only with strong emotional abilities we can value both school training and talents. A very practical model for teachers to gain a superior understanding of relationships with students (especially with the difficult ones) is the model of perceptual positions.*

When you master this model, you can find several paths of action and it is easier to connect with students and not only. The model of perceptual positions originates from Gestalt therapy it is an excellent tool for awareness and confers a systemic vision of the interhuman relationship.

Keywords*: emotional education, perceptual positions, emotional intelligence, interhuman relations.*

Teachers and parents have always been interested in academic success and social adaptation of children, both in the formal framework offered by and outside the school. However, only in recent times, researchers have realized that the emotional life of the child has a significant impact on the two aspects mentioned. Thus, emotional intelligence has become an important field of research in the field of human resources, management, education and psychology. The human education system traditionally emphasizes the three fundamental activities - writing, reading, counting - all features of the left hemisphere (dominated by rationality), almost excluding the education of the right hemisphere faculties which is the seat of imagination, spatial orientation, decoding music, color, rhythm , creativity (dominance being intuition). Research over the last decade accepts alongside IQ (coefficient of intelligence) also EQ (emotional coefficient). They are in a relationship of interdependence, being incomplete and inefficient one without the other. High EQ makes us live intensely what happens to us and get to know each other better. Moreover, if IQ is somewhat limited by genetic premises, EQ is endless as possibilities of development and growth.

The emotional area of our lives is vital in our process of growth towards freedom and wholeness.The complex world we live in makes us more and more aware of the fact that emotional intelligence, which is, how we control and understand our emotions, plays an essential role in achieving happiness and success in life.

For a long time, intellectual or cognitive intelligence took precedence over emotional intelligence, in the way in which young people were educated. At present, specialists confirm that emotional intelligence plays a fundamental role in the formation and development of smart, happy and successful young people. Studies on emotional intelligence are relatively recent, beginning around the '90s. Three major directions have emerged in the definition of emotional intelligence, represented by John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey, Reuven Bar-On and Daniel Goleman. Mayer and Salovey (1990) consider that emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive and express emotions as accurately as possible, the ability to generate

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feelings when they facilitate thinking, and the ability to know and perceive emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual development.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, evaluate and manage personal and emotional states, as well as those of others. Most commonly, however, it is perceived as being focused on one's own person, and less on the external environment.

The pillars of emotional intelligence are: a good self-knowledge, a good social connection, as well as adaptation to the environment of belonging. Regardless of the level of the coefficient of cognitive intelligence (IQ), we must not minimize the importance of the emotional coefficient, responsible for our ability to adapt, recognize and interact with the external environment.

Emotional intelligence is an emotional competence that helps us tackle our emotions and apply them to the situations in our daily lives. People who have well-developed emotional abilities, are more likely to be satisfied in life and effective, master their feelings well and properly address the feelings of others. This kind of intelligence comes to complement linguistic, logical and mathematical intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is a concept often associated with Professor Daniel Goleman, who has proposed a psychology that gives equal interest to the intelligence of feelings. Goleman laid the foundation for the idea that emotional intelligence is the strongest predictor of work performance and professional skills development. So, even if a person has sufficient knowledge and intelligent ideas, if he does not know and fails to manage his emotions and feelings, he may have difficulties in trying to build relationships with others or a successful professional career.

Emotional intelligence involves, first of all, self-awareness, self-discipline and empathy. This type of intelligence is reflected in the way we control our impulses and feelings. Compared to general intelligence, which cannot withstand a significant improvement over the course of an individual's existence, emotional intelligence can be optimized even in adulthood. Essentially, all emotions are impulses that cause you to act, are immediate plans to approach life, plans that we are born with.

Psychologist Daniel Goleman, in his paper *Emotional Intelligence Why It Can Matter More Than IQ*, published in 1995 defines the notion of emotional intelligence as a mixture of self-control, motivation, empathy, free thinking, tact and diplomacy. These attributes are characteristic of people with high emotional intelligence. He also credits EQ for the mix of experiences that a person has to control (empathy, seriousness, broad thinking, motivation, etc.), vis-à-vis those he comes in contact with. He concludes that emotions and affective balance are the ones that set the tone and push the buttons necessary for the intellect (which should not be neglected), in order to integrate the individual at the societal level - regardless of the level. In order to achieve this performance, there must be a basis with which we can work, which we can model. During the last twenty years Goleman's statements have been validated by numerous researches, and at present the importance of emotional intelligence is a fact assumed in most organizations.

So, when we talk about emotional intelligence, we are actually talking about emotion awareness and emotion management. As you develop personally and go through life experiences and challenges from which you learn, you begin to gain emotional maturity. This increases your level of emotional intelligence / emotional development.

In other words, emotional intelligence refers to the ability to manage emotions more effectively, for a quality life. Young people have will and intelligence, which must be oriented towards controlling all personal abilities. Few are those who realize the most important needs

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of the mind and how the development of intellect, the evolution of thoughts and feelings of young people (White, 1997) should be directed.

The development of emotional intelligence is an extremely important problem, it has primarily a family base, and secondly a component that is formed during the educational process. Both personal and social life involves the development of communication and empathy skills that are of significant importance in order to solve family problems and social conflicts in the general or professional environment.

In today's world, emotional intelligence can be an essential element of the connection between feelings, character and moral instincts. Those who are the slaves of impulses (those who lack self-control) suffer much from a moral point of view. The ability to control impulses is the basis of will and character, and the root of altruism is found in empathy (the ability to read the emotions of others).

There is evidence that feelings are the most important resources with which the human being is endowed; they give us self-awareness, the need for self-preservation, help us get to know ourselves and others, tell us what the essential things in life are. Empathy is one of the significant dimensions of emotional intelligence.

S. Marcus (1997) defines it as "a psychic phenomenon of reliving the other's states, thoughts and actions, acquired by psychologically transposing the self into an objective model of human behavior, allowing understanding how the other interpret the world." Empathy is built on openness to the feelings of others, on the ability to read the information received on a nonverbal means. He appreciates that the nodal point of the empathic concept is the conduct of the reliving of the states, thoughts, actions of the other by himself by himself through a process of substitute transposition into the psychology of the partner.

Empathy is achieved by the imaginative-ideational transposition in the reference system of another - respectively taking over the way of thinking and realizing the social role - and the emotional transposition, the action of activating an experience, of substitution in his experiences mentioned by affective identification of the partner, taking over his state of mind.

Socio-emotional skills are a set of skills that help us feel emotions constructively, express them in a way appropriate to the socio-cultural context, adjust them and, in this way, develop healthy relationships with those around us. These skills primarily involve identifying and understanding their own emotions, reading and understanding other people's emotions, managing their own emotions and showing them in an appropriate way.

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Although, most of the times, when we learn about emotion and cognition, the two mental processes are treated separately, emotion and cognition are two interdependent processes that help us analyze situations and respond behaviorally. Research shows that our emotions and thoughts help to direct and maintain attention to relevant environmental information, decision-making and learning.

Socio-emotional and cognitive skills need to be developed simultaneously, so that young people can cope with the complex situations they encounter in everyday life

Emotional development is closely related to brain development, both of which are a result of the personal life experience of the child and adolescent. Thus, the emotional health of young people and adults is closely related to the social and emotional characteristics of the environment in which they live.

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The relational development of emotional and cognitive abilities is based on the appearance, maturation and interconnection of certain areas of the brain. As much as we would like to divide the brain into pieces that are responsible for one function, such as language or social behavior, the functioning of our brain is based on the activation of neural networks.

For example, neuroscience researchers have noticed that when we feel and adjust our emotions, there is an interconnection of complex neuro circuits, which include the prefrontal cortex, amygdala, hypothalamus, hippocampus and brain stem. Basically, many areas of the brain, in a neural network, communicate in real time and very quickly, so that we can adapt effectively to a situation. The functionality and connectivity of these regions helps us integrate all information. Studies in developmental psychology and educational psychology show that many students have little developed social and emotional skills.

Researchers from Loyola University in Chicago and The University of Illinois in Chicago conducted a meta-analysis aimed at studying the effects of the Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL) program implemented in schools, on children's behaviours, academic performance and well-being. Following the evaluation, the researchers concluded that a high level of development of socio-emotional skills is associated with an increased well-being and high academic performance, while a low level of skills development is associated with personal, social and academic issues.

If a student is sufficiently knowledgeable and intelligent but does not know and cannot express his/her emotions and feelings and also fails to manage and promote his/her ideas, he/she finds it difficult to try to build relationships with others and to have successful school performance. In the modern world, children are taught to listen, not to let the imagination run free (because uncivilized or forbidden behaviors would result), to respond only when asked. All that matters (sometimes) is to know the lessons and homework almost perfectly, mechanically, if they want to get good grades, thus not developing their ability to express, communicate feelings and emotions. Thus, many fail in life today even though they have a high level of cognitive intelligence.

School is the context in which students should develop these skills. We want to raise young people who are not controlled by external factors, who think and make critical and autonomous decisions, according to their own values and principles, and to assume the consequences of these decisions. We want to raise young people who show compassion and empathy for those around them, to trust them, to dream, to have the courage to fight for their dreams. This cannot be achieved if we do not help them develop socially and emotionally.

In favor of emotional education, which helps children to properly manage their behavior, it is not the case of a special argument; we readily accept the fact that, for the smooth running of the educational activities carried out in the school, a subtle education of this kind is required first and foremost. The mood of the participants represents a fund that we must inevitably take into account if we intend to carry out a quality teaching act. We cannot communicate anything at random at any time, just because the lesson in question is being followed in the planning process. In most situations, the conduct of the lesson is sensitive to the context and the effort of cognitive understanding proposed by the teacher is adapted to the psycho-affective availability of the students. Then we know that the first step in achieving a successful lesson is to capture the attention and determine a positive attitude of receptivity to what is to be done in class. Finally, the transfer of knowledge, the evidence of competences formed in new contexts means demonstrating the usefulness of those learned in concrete life situations, including by adopting a suitable affective tone.

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Competitiveness (most of the time, unproductive) that settles in the school environment generates a kind of frustration, envy towards those around us, and limits our intrinsic capabilities (which we hold apriorily and which become inhibited because of emotions). What we do not realize or do not want to realize is the fact that they accompany us every day (whether they are positive or negative). The minimum requirement for a peaceful and healthy life is to accept them. Then, after we become aware of our own emotions, we can learn how to cultivate in us the states that put us in value and which lead us to constructive behaviors - individually and organizationally. Basically, to make our emotions an ally that works for us and not the other way around.

In the complex act of emotional education, parents, teachers, other people in the student's life are called to collaborate. What happens in everyday life, through more or less adequate human interactions, through the reactions that everyday events provoke, sets a certain mood, a psycho-social environment in which you can feel more or less good.

And since our goal as teachers is a positive educational-formative one, it follows that, inevitably, we pose the problem of emotional education to which we seek both professional and personal answers.

Once we come to understand that everything and everyone is interconnected, we understand that everything in life is about relationships. We have a relationship with everything around us and with all those we directly and indirectly face. This includes the relationship you have with yourself, with your faith (if you have one), with other people (family, friends, colleagues, including those you only once in a lifetime) with animals, with local and global environment, with social environment or technology.

In many situations the emergence of conflicts or tensions is generated by the misunderstanding of the other and, or by unsatisfactory communication. For example, we have the impression that we are misunderstood, or that the other acts bizarre and consequently our tough reaction is justified. There are often situations where teachers, parents or even students do not share the same point of view. Some do not want to do it, and others really cannot. But there is nothing abnormal in the behavior of people in each of these scenarios. The explanation is simple and can be found in the NLP axiom "Map is not the territory, as the menu is not the food!" This explains very well the fact that the experiences are always much deeper when you analyze them from several positions. First of all, it is important for each of us to realize that each person has, at one point, his or her own unique perspective on an object, action, lived experience, ideas, etc. And this perspective has many chances of not totally matching the perspective of another person. From here it derives the emergence of many communication conflicts and beyond.

A higher level of personal development consists primarily of being aware of these different perceptions, of respecting one's perceptual position, and of trying to communicate in such a way that the message is perceived as faithfully as possible. With the help of the studies of John Grinder or Gregory Bateson, renowned NLP trainers, we can now benefit from knowledge of at least three perceptual positions and how we can use them to enrich our own *map* and better understand the universe around us.

The first perceptual position is given by one's own position, also called the position of the Self, through which we perceive our own reality. It is the perceptual way to experience the world through your own eyes and you find it when you associate yourself mentally and emotionally with your own person. To be as *at home* in this position you need to know yourself and your values in order to convey your example to others. The position of *I* represents the glasses through which *I* perceive *you*. They can be pinker, if I am in a sunny mood, or grayer, if I had a bad day. They can be blurred if we have not adapted them for a

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while, or they can be almost opaque. The position of *I* is my life experiences, my memories, my beliefs, my dreams, everything that means my past, present and future.

The second perceptual position involves a creative leap of your imagination so that you can perceive the world through the perspective of another person, through which we understand the world through the eyes of the interlocutor (the empathic basis). This perspective can be emotional - understanding the emotions of the people we relate to and the intellectual - the ability to understand how someone thinks (based on their beliefs and values). The more *plastic* description would be like getting into the other person's skin and you were looking at or perceiving the outside world. This perceptual position develops your mental ability to perceive the world seen by the other, as well as the emotional ability to perceive what you might feel by putting yourself in his emotional state. We would certainly be much greener when we realize that we can emotionally hurt the other and what effects this can have. A person trapped in this perceptual position will live his/her life being constantly influenced by the opinions of others and will be an eternal *saviour of souls. You* are another position of *me*. There are emotions, goals, desires, memories, preferences, except they belong to someone else. *You* and *I* may be more similar or different, but never the same. And they may never be completely different. The similarities help the interaction between *me* and *you* and differences make the interaction sometimes interesting, sometimes difficult. Problems are emphasized whenever *I* or *you* tend to believe that their own perspective is real or true.

The third perceptual position involves a complete detachment of both your own perspective and the other, so you are above them, as a spectator to a play or as an independent observer. It is a detached position, not involved in the interaction I – you. This is also called the *Observer position*. This position helps you analyze the ecology of all positions and equidistantly analyze the position of each involved in that life experience. If you really want to experience the position of a neutral and detached observer one may watch a movie carefully, 3-4 times, until a kind of boredom is installed, accompanied by the absence of any emotion towards events, as well as any sympathy or dislike for any of the characters.

If you can create this experience with the film of your own life, if you can look from outside what has happened to you without feeling any thrill, then you can access the extraordinary resources of the Observer's position. However, a person trapped in this third position can become insensitive and detached, devoid of emotions, fact which can turn sensitive and emotionally persons away.

Robert Dilts, a well-known NLP trainer and author of several NLP specialty books, specified the fourth perceptual position in the position of *we*, where in this position we joined from the perspective of the entire system of which we belong. This fourth position can also be found under the heading of *Meta Position*. There is not a single correct perspective because personal understanding and development is based on several perspectives and none should be denied. None of these perception positions is superior to another and all positions have an equal value. The important thing is that we can consciously position ourselves as we want in any perceptual position in order to be able to make the best decision or communicate as we wish. Nlp uses specific methods for accessing and clarifying perceptual positions (Rapport, Calibration and Alignment of perceptual positions). Thus, interactions with others can be lived more consciously and objectively, and their own decisions can be more realistic.

Aligning Perceptual Positions provides a practical way to accurately access and align three fundamental experiences that we want, think and feel. At the same time, it allows us to experience more compassion and connection with others. This method improves emotional intelligence in our relationships – helping us become more attentive to our needs and desires, while having more compassion and understanding towards others.

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Jan Ardui and Peter Wrycza proposed the fifth perceptual position, namely, the Universe. This corresponds to a general background that generalizes everything. This results from the application of universal quantifiers (everything, always, all) on the other points of view. It is a metaposition in relation to everything, which helps us to adopt and vary much more easily the other four perceptual positions. The essential thing is that all perceptual positions are just as important as each of them is useful to us in certain context. A good communicator knows when to use one or the other and to switch from one to the other.

In order to exemplify the applicability of the alignment of perceptual positions in resolving a conflict, the following exercise can be carried out:

1. Think of a conflict situation that you have not been able to resolve yet.
2. Then write on a piece of paper the names of the people involved, including you. If necessary, generic names such as Bank, Sales Department, Politicians, etc. can be included.
3. Then distribute the labels on the floor in positions that you think are appropriate.
4. Switch one position over another, stand next to the pieces of paper, as follows:
   a) metaposition: what do you think about the conflict, the parties involved, the relationship?
   b) position 1: what do you observe from this point of view?
   c) position 2: pass one at a time through each position, putting you in their place. For each one, find out how the whole situation is perceived, what are the constraints, what are the values and beliefs, what is the most appropriate objective?
   d) position 3: how do you understand everything, if you separate yourself from the situation and look at it from the outside?
   e) position 4: imagine you are the relationship, the system, the process. What do you discover now when you take this position?
   f) go back to your own position what are you aware of now? What are your new options?
5. Take the tour of the positions again. If you find a new option in position 1, check its acceptability for each of the other positions. If necessary, make the necessary adjustments.
6. If you did not find a new option in position 1, go again through position 2 in order to eventually take an option that is acceptable.
7. Finally check everything from position 5, that of the background, of the Universe. Imagine that the conflict was resolved in the way you just found and check for any unexpected consequences. If they occur, ask the unconscious to solve them or take another tour of the positions to find a solution.

Then, after the interruption of the condition, step into another Perceptual Position and further analyze it by bringing new and new distinctions. This technique will bring you valuable insights into how the other person's perspective looks at what you are doing, and you will also be able to better understand it.

From the perspective of these perceptual positions and the technique presented, we can also align the emotional intelligence, in this case, of the students. According to Daniel Goleman's studies, emotions circulate in a group, regardless of our will. Specifically, Goleman and his colleagues say that the emotional state of a leader, a teacher, in this case is literally contagious to his team, class and students. Science shows that behind this contagious effect, there is a function of our limbic system that allows us to adjust and give our emotions interpersonally. By simplifying, research shows that when a person sends certain signals, those around them receive them and that can change their emotional state. The interesting part

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of the research shows that although we feel the effects of this function of our brain, we are almost not at all aware of the process. For this reason, we can wake up with an emotional state (positive or negative) without having any idea why and how we came to feel that way. Daniel Goleman proposes only four areas of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness (Emotional Self-Awareness, Accurate Self-Asessment, Self Confidence), Self-management (Emotional Self-Control, Transparency, Adaptability, Achievement Orientation, Initiative, Optimism, Conscientiousness), Social awareness (Empathy, Organisational Awareness, Service Orientation), Relationship management (Inspirational Leadership, Influence, Developing Others, Change Catalyst, Conflict Management, Building Bonds, Teamwork and Collaboration, Communication). An important mention is that, regardless of classification, Goleman argues that these other areas of emotional intelligence are not innate talents, but rather skills that can be formed. The first step in forming students from the perspective of emotional education starts from understanding our own inner universe. It is important that we consciously align our inner life with the goals we set for ourselves, such that we feel and want to move in the same direction. And because the achievement of a goal is rarely up to us, in the process we must learn to recognize the moods and emotions of those around us. And only when we are aware and aligned with ourselves and when we come to feel authentic about those around us, then do we really start building healthy relationships with students and also with those around us.

Although some authors argue that emotional intelligence predicts success at work, school and relationships, as well or even better as academic intelligence, there is little research to support or disprove this hypothesis. Given the range of variables that fall into the field of emotional intelligence, it seems possible that at least a few of them will be able to predict success, but it is also possible that not all of them can predict all kinds of success.

D. Goleman believes that, in order to be successful in life, each of us should learn and practice the main dimensions of emotional intelligence - awareness of one's emotions, control of emotions, personal motivation (exploitation, use of emotions productively); empathy - reading emotions; directing (conducting) interpersonal relationships. The pedagogical evaluation is revealed by the academic performance, which represents the totality of the changes of the student's personality, acquired through learning. In the concept of academic performance, there are both cultural changes (accumulation of knowledge) and those of personality development.

Educational and organizational processes need to adapt to take advantage of the beneficial effects of new technologies, but also to compensate for the negative effects associated with them. It is important to develop programs that stimulate the right hemisphere and develop emotional intelligence (EQs) for young people, with all the components that involve self-confidence, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills. Applying certain methods for the development of emotional intelligence, conjunctural and relational changes (in school environments, familiar, group) can compete, together with other necessary factors, to increase the academic performance of students.

In conclusion, we mention that students with a high level of emotional intelligence have a significantly higher academic performance than those with a low level. The development of the emotional intelligence in the school allows the university to enhance the intellectual skills, creativity, ensuring later achievements at the professional level.

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