

Empowering Educators: The Interplay between Professional Competence and Emotional Intelligence in the Classroom

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Abstract

For centuries, defining teacher efficacy has attracted the attention of all educationists and researchers. This age old profession has always attracted the interest of the researchers and scholar for determining the qualities of an effective teacher. Good command on the content knowledge is definitely a prerequisite for a good teacher in the classroom. But is it successful in achieving the targets of academic achievement and preparing students for lifetime learning? This question has proven to be a persistent intellectual challenge. The role of emotional bond among educators and learners has been considered, to be an additional critical aspect in the classroom teaching and hence the importance of emotional intelligence of the teacher is being researched for its roll in holistic development of the students in addition to the qualifications and personality of the teacher. Teachers can build relationships through emotional intelligence, and support the students by their empathetic behavior, understanding, and compassion. Question also arises for what defines a great teacher? To explain a great there is no thumb rule. This paper is an exploration of importance of relational awareness in learning and teaching. Emotional intelligence favorably enhances motivation and academic success and it is directly connected to verbal and non verbal communication in the professional field. Along with professional competence and experience, meaningful emotional interaction between teachers and students forms a third essential dimension of effective teaching. Policy and training must build appropriate scaffolds to draw the attention of teachers towards this area that has been unexplored for becoming a great teacher. Teachers must cultivate interpersonal abilities through effective professional communication to connect interpersonally with students of diverse culture. This article explores about the interplay of emotional competence of the teachers and professional conversation that can do wonders in the classroom.

Key Words: Emotional Intelligence, professional communication, in-service training, effective learning, holistic development

Introduction

From time immemorial experts have continuously studied and explored teachers' quality for effective learning. Some of the required traditionally centered distinct criteria that were looked for in teachers were the in-depth subject knowledge, professional qualifications, effective classroom management skills, and positive personality. However, emotional intelligence of the teachers with the learners has now been recognized as vital in bringing effective outputs. This has increased attention toward the importance of emotionally supportive relationships between teachers and students, with efficient professional communication skills as another key component influencing teaching excellence. It is found that even highly skilled teachers differ in their level of effectiveness due to the influence of motivational factors. This brought the focus of researchers and educators towards relationship-building between the teacher and the students. Emotional intelligence and efficient communication definitely impact attention of the learner, cognitive skills and consolidation of learning in the classroom critically and analytically. Therefore, besides strengthening subject knowledge and improving instructional practices, teachers should also cultivate interpersonal abilities that help them build meaningful emotional connections with learners from varied backgrounds. Contemporary studies indicate that emotionally supportive teacher-student relationships positively influence classroom participation, learner engagement, academic motivation, and overall educational achievement (Wang, 2023). It is observed that teaching effectiveness cannot be explained solely through pedagogical expertise or content mastery, as motivational and interpersonal factors substantially shape the learning environment and students' educational experiences (Hettinger et al., 2024). Teachers who

demonstrate empathy, encouragement, respect, and enthusiasm are often more successful in establishing meaningful professional connections with students. Such interactions foster intrinsic motivation, improve learners' confidence, and encourage mastery-oriented academic goals (Kupers et al., 2023). In contrast, emotionally stressful or unsupportive classroom environments may adversely affect participation, emotional security, and cognitive growth. As a result, this dimension of teaching continues to demand sustained scholarly inquiry, teacher preparation initiatives, and institutional support from researchers, teacher educators, and educational administrators alike.

Research Objectives

- 1 To analyze the role of relational intelligence in enhancing teacher effectiveness and classroom communication.
- 2 To understand the impact of emotionally supportive teacher–student relationships on students' motivation, engagement, and academic achievement.
- 3 To explore the importance of socio-emotional training and capacity-building programmes in strengthening teachers' professional and interpersonal competencies.

Rationale for Focusing on Emotional Intelligence

A strong teacher–student relationship requires genuine care that stems from emotional intelligence rather than simply learned behaviors. As scholars continue to explore how care can be measured through emotional intelligence, motivation, and the teacher–learner bond, the discussion also revives deeper philosophical questions. The objective is to identify research that elucidates the significance of teacher–student bonds in fostering emotional intelligence, as manifested in motivating the students and academic performances. (George, A. S., Baskar, T., Pandey, D., & Karthikeyan, M. M. 2024.) UNESCO's 2015 "Education 2030 Action Framework" highlighted the importance of emotional quotient in education. It emphasized to begin nurturing it at an early childhood stage, a crucial period for social and emotional development that provides opportunity to lay foundation for cultivating these essential skills, thereby enhancing overall development. As scholars continue to examine emotional intelligence in relation to teacher motivation, learner engagement, and classroom relationships, the discussion has also revived broader philosophical concerns regarding the human values and interpersonal virtues that shape effective educational environments (Brackett et al., 2024). Research findings indicate that emotionally responsive teaching practices contribute significantly to student motivation, classroom engagement, emotional well-being, and academic achievement (George et al., 2024). Consequently, emotional intelligence is now viewed as a critical professional competency within contemporary teacher education and school leadership frameworks. For instance, UNESCO in its Education 2030 Framework for Action emphasized the need to integrate social and emotional learning within educational systems and highlighted early childhood as a critical stage for nurturing emotional competencies essential for lifelong learning and holistic development (UNESCO, 2015). More recent studies similarly affirm that emotional intelligence contributes not only to improved learning outcomes but also to resilience, collaboration, and positive classroom climate in diverse educational settings (Jennings & Greenberg, 2023).

Research Gap

While teacher effectiveness and emotional intelligence have both been widely discussed in educational research, only a limited number of studies have examined how emotional intelligence and professional communication work together to influence classroom interaction and student engagement. In addition, the role of socio-emotional preparation for teachers has not received adequate attention in relation to the growing emotional and behavioural challenges within present-day classrooms. Another important gap exists in understanding how pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes can systematically incorporate socio-emotional skill development as an essential part of teacher preparation and professional growth.

Emotional intelligence a key element for effective teaching and learning

The idea of emotional intelligence (EI) first appeared around 1990. Psychologists **John Mayer** of the University of New Hampshire and Peter Salovey of Yale introduced the concept, which was later expanded by **Daniel Goleman**. Emotional intelligence, commonly known as emotional quotient (EQ), refers to a person's capacity to identify emotions, understand their impact, regulate emotional responses, and use emotions wisely in everyday

interactions and decision-making. It encompasses both emotional and intellectual processes. While the concept has been talked about a lot by the entire educationist and the researchers around for decades, it's far reaching consequences and implications are being studied in depth in recent researches. Emotional intelligence encompasses recognizing one's strengths and weaknesses, one's own emotions, and their impact on others, which we call self-awareness. Facing challenges to achieve set goals and targets in one's life by remaining motivated is also a part of emotional intelligence. It also covers understanding and perceiving others' emotions accurately to empathize and communicating effectively and resolving conflicts as social skills. While IQ is often seen as a static measure and more or less remains fixed, EQ can be developed and improved as it is a dynamic skill that can be enhanced through deliberate and conscious effort. Contemporary research emphasizes that emotional intelligence contributes significantly to effective communication, classroom management, learner engagement, conflict resolution, and the development of positive educational environments (MacCann et al., 2020). Researchers and educationists widely agree that EQ can be strengthened through continuous learning, reflective practice, and conscious behavioural efforts (Sonea & Bordean, 2015). This developmental nature makes emotional intelligence particularly relevant in teacher education, where interpersonal understanding, emotional responsiveness, and relationship-building play an essential role in effective teaching and learning processes.

The Emotional intelligence Framework: Essential Skills for Life

Goleman's (1995) work on emotional intelligence has greatly influenced discussions on social-emotional learning in education. Teachers are not only responsible for delivering subject knowledge but also for creating a supportive classroom environment, fostering strong relationships, and guiding students' overall development. At the heart of this idea lies emotional intelligence (EI), which refers to the ability to recognize, understand, manage, and use emotions effectively. A close link exists between teachers' emotional intelligence and the quality of classroom experiences, shaping learning both within school and beyond, as part of lifelong education. Emotional intelligence is shaped through five essential dimensions: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These components are essential for collaboration, peer learning, and meaningful interaction. Studies have shown a clear connection between teachers' emotional intelligence and students' academic achievement (Chen & Wei, 2020). Recognizing the role of teachers' emotional intelligence is therefore vital for aligning teaching practices with evolving educational goals. It has emerged as a critical professional competency associated with effective teaching and long-term educational success (Mérida-López & Extremera, 2020). In addition, emotional intelligence contributes to improved teacher resilience, professional satisfaction, and classroom climate, thereby influencing the overall quality of educational processes. (Valente et al., 2022) Emotionally intelligent teachers are more likely to create inclusive and learner-centred classrooms that encourage active participation, confidence, and mastery-oriented learning.

Relationship between professional communication and teacher effectiveness

Teacher are seen as multi talented person in handling diverse classroom environment with multidimensional construct such as a teacher's ability to interact effectively with pedagogical clarity, subject mastery, managing inclusive classrooms, planning the lesson, effective classroom delivery, developing connect with the pupils and many more to state for the overall school environment. Effective classroom communication goes hand in hand with what is referred "effective teaching" and an effective teacher encompasses the component of organizational skills, effective classroom interaction, and managing all the challenges of the classroom on the whole. (V. Kareva 2011) So to manage these classroom environment a teacher should have high emotional connection building skills along with the interaction techniques to make her teaching effective Both the qualities are interlinked because only one quality is not sufficient to single handedly manage any situation. According to academics, emotional intelligence has an impact on interpersonal communication (Lestari, 2021; Mujanah & Wahyurini, 2019; Santera et al., 2021). So the ability to communicate effectively with others is a prerequisite for emotional intelligence is reflected in the studies. Teachers with strong self-awareness understand their emotions and use this awareness to guide their decisions. They are confident, realistic in judging their abilities, and open to honest discussions. High emotional intelligence is also reflected in their leadership qualities, their ability to handle challenges calmly, and their skill in resolving conflicts to strengthen teamwork. These traits highlight their open-mindedness and readiness to listen to different viewpoints, which further supports relationship building and classroom harmony. According to Vesna Kareva (2011), effective teaching involves organizational ability,

meaningful classroom interaction, and the capacity to manage complex classroom situations in a balanced and responsive manner. Research evidence supports the close association between emotional intelligence and interpersonal interaction. A study conducted by **Raeissi et al. (2019)** identified a meaningful association among the dimensions of emotional intelligence, including self-awareness, self-regulation, self-motivation, empathy, and social skills.—and interaction styles among healthcare professionals, and the findings remain highly relevant to educational settings where interpersonal communication and emotional responsiveness are equally important. Similarly, emotional intelligence has been found to influence professional commitment, workplace relationships, and collaborative behavior. (**Sunny & Salathiyah, 2022**) Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are generally more capable of understanding, regulating, and appropriately expressing their own emotions while also responding sensitively to the emotions of others (**Wijekoon et al., 2017**). Studies have also demonstrated that communication skills and emotional intelligence mutually reinforce one another and together influence professional interaction and ethical communication practices (**Amini et al., 2018; Wangchuk, 2021**). In contemporary educational contexts, these competencies have become increasingly relevant not only in face-to-face communication but also in virtual and technology-mediated interactions. Consequently, the ability to communicate effectively is widely regarded as an essential dimension of emotional intelligence.

In-Service Training for Teachers: means to Refresh, Recharge and Reform

Teaching and learning is a vibrant, reciprocal exchange that breathes life into the school environment. It is a dynamic process with interaction between the teacher and the student under no circumstances the process should become monotonous. So to create an environment full of cognitive, social and emotional development for the students regular in service training helps in capacity building of the teachers for required skills in the classrooms. To keep the teachers updated with latest curriculum and pedagogies these programmes serve in updating the teacher already in the profession. It is very important to organize such capacity building programmes to improve the quality of our education system and standard of our teachers by providing them with continuous training during their entire career. These programme help in strengthening the whole structure of our education system. It completely depends on effectively planned teacher training programmes. (**Shulman, 1986; Driver, et al., 1994**) Teachers create an environment of learning for the students by providing child centric learning environment and guiding them as mentors in their experiential learning. For the teachers to be able to achieve all of these, they must be updated with new trend of relating with students along with the latest pedagogical skills. Capacity building increases teachers' knowledge, skills and competencies for effective teaching, in developing relevant knowledge and skills needed to deliver effectively in teaching, as well as take up new challenges, and adapt to changing environments.

Importance of developing emotional intelligence in teachers

Teachers have diverse role to strategies classroom teaching, creating healthy classroom interaction developing emotional strength in the student facilitate healthy environment formative assessment and giving guidance and feedback. They act as a facilitator, architect of the young minds in shaping and molding them, enabling the students to develop positivity and bring out their hidden qualities through motivation. Teachers have to be a good observer to assess the qualities of the students and tap the innate qualities by becoming a good evaluator of abilities and potential of the child and compiling the anecdotal records of every student's for future references. This can cause exhaustion, stress and work fatigue that can lead to loss of motivational emotional imbalance and disinterest in work. Low emotional intelligence and facing job burnout in teachers, has a direct connection. (**Akbar, 2013**). People possessing high emotional intelligence can navigate through the adverse situation with calm composure and can effectively manage stress, resolve conflicts, and turn their setbacks to lifelong experiences. Education contributes not only to cognitive growth but also to the development of social, emotional, and ethical competencies that shape responsible citizenship and lifelong learning (**Setyawan & Luthfia, 2024**). The increasing complexity of teachers' responsibilities can, however, contribute to professional stress, emotional exhaustion, and work-related fatigue. Excessive workload, classroom pressures, behavioural challenges, and institutional expectations may gradually reduce teachers' motivation, emotional balance, and professional satisfaction. Teachers who experience emotional imbalance often face difficulties in classroom management, decision-making, and maintaining positive interactions with learners. Emotional intelligence helps teachers handle stress effectively. resolve interpersonal conflicts constructively, and transform professional setbacks into opportunities for learning

and growth. Such emotional resilience supports sustained professional commitment, psychological well-being, and effective instructional performance (**Zuraida, 2016**). Studies further suggest that emotionally balanced teachers positively influence students' motivation, academic engagement, and personal satisfaction (**Rismanto, 2016**). Teachers who possess strong self-management abilities are also better equipped to regulate emotions, maintain motivation, and adapt positively to changing educational environments.

Cultivating Self-Mastery: A Path to Emotional Well-being

Research shows that strong self-management skills lead to better performance and help reduce stress, which in turn lowers the risk of physical and emotional exhaustion at work. Motivation is often seen as a central part of emotional intelligence (**Tully, Tiwa, & Hartati, 2022**). Individuals who can manage their emotions well are able to inspire themselves and also encourage others who may feel discouraged, anxious, or upset. By controlling emotions effectively, they create a positive influence on both their own actions and the feelings of those around them. (**Rahayu and Fauziyah 2019**) High motivation produces quality results in student if a teacher with high work motivation could correlate to the feelings of their students and his condition (**Hapsari and Mardiana, 2016**). Empathy is a fundamental aspect of personality, and it is all the more important for the teachers as they handle many students with diverse background as well as individual needs. (**Muljawan, 2016**). Additionally, for stronger relationships and more fulfilling interactions strong interpersonal skills allow individuals to connect with others inspire others and build lasting relationships. (**Jamaluddin 2015**) A research study found that a teacher's strong belief in their connection with students can significantly overcome emotional exhaustion, pointing towards the importance of fostering positive classroom relationships. (**Milatz, Luftenegger & Schober 2015**) By understanding the emotions and nonverbal cues of their students, empathetic teachers can create an interactive and open learning environment. . Studies indicate that individuals with well-developed emotional regulation skills demonstrate higher professional performance and lower levels of occupational stress and emotional exhaustion (**Brackett, Rivers, & Salovey, 2011**). Within the framework of emotional intelligence, motivation is considered a core component that strengthens perseverance, adaptability, and goal-oriented behaviour. Research further suggests that emotionally responsive educators exert a constructive influence on students' emotional experiences and academic behaviours through positive interaction patterns and effective communication practices (**Rahayu & Fauziyah, 2019**).

Emotionally Intelligent, Professionally Effective: Teachers, EQ is their PQ

Communication is the processes of exchanging ideas and information and in turn influencing minds (**Prutianu, 2008**). Classroom teaching is one such example of professional communication. It is high time that the focus of the teacher training programs should also be diverted towards equipping educators with the necessary emotional intelligence skills to create supportive and engaging learning environments for improving the classroom academic environment. Through the effective use of emotions by focusing on emotional perception, self-regulation, social skills, teachers can create positive learning environments. (**Wang, L. 2023**). Positive psychology in recent year has attracted the attention for study in education sector on building teacher student communication. It suggests that strong teacher-student communication can build a strong pupil teacher relationship by development of students' emotional intelligence. Research findings indicate that emotionally intelligent teachers are more capable of creating positive classroom climates characterized by trust, empathy, collaboration, and active learner participation (**Wang, X., 2023**). Studies further demonstrate that teacher emotional intelligence contributes significantly to learner enjoyment, reduced academic burnout, and improved educational experiences (**Li & Zhang, 2024**). Recent meta-analytic evidence suggests that teachers' emotional regulation skills significantly influence classroom management, teaching effectiveness, instructional quality, and psychological well-being (**Wang, Burić, Chang, & Gross, 2023**). Similarly, **Aldrup, Carstensen, and Klusmann (2024)** observed that emotional regulation functions as an important predictor of teaching effectiveness across diverse educational settings. Positive educational approaches emphasize supportive interpersonal relationships, emotional flourishing, resilience, and learner well-being as central elements of meaningful education (**Seligman et al., 2009**). Recent international studies similarly indicate that teacher social support and emotionally responsive interaction significantly improve students' classroom engagement and emotional experiences across diverse educational contexts (**Jia & Cheng, 2024**).

Empowering Minds: The Role of Emotional Intelligence Education

The growing emotional, social, and academic demands within modern classrooms highlight the urgent need to strengthen socio-emotional training for teachers through both pre-service and in-service education programmes. Teachers who possess abilities including empathy, emotional control, clear communication, and the development of positive relationships are better able to create supportive and inclusive learning environments where students feel emotionally secure and actively involved in learning. On the other hand, the absence of such competencies may contribute to classroom stress, emotional fatigue, reduced student participation, and weaker teacher–student relationships. Recent longitudinal evidence further underscores that teacher self efficacy is closely linked to student motivation, particularly when instructional practices align with learners’ perceptions. Such findings highlight the reciprocal nature of teaching confidence and student engagement in diverse classroom contexts (Hettinger, Lazarides, & Schiefele, 2024) Therefore, socio-emotional training should no longer be treated as an optional aspect of teacher education but as a necessary professional requirement for improving classroom effectiveness and educational quality. Strengthening teachers’ socio-emotional competencies can contribute significantly to healthier classroom environments, improved instructional practices, and the holistic development of learners.

Conclusion

Emotional connections are a vital part of effective teaching and should be valued just as much as technical skills. The art and science of teaching profession is guided by the established principles and ethics. These principles and ethics are subject to change as they reflect in the life of man and the society and education is the prime agent to bring change. It is imperative for the teachers to understand the circumstances that surround the changing nature of their profession and seek knowledge and skills to cope with the challenges the upcoming change might cost. Capacity building programmes are an immediate solution to the current needs and updating the teachers’ performance in school and as well as keeping teachers abreast of social and educational changes. Emotional support stands alongside subject knowledge and teaching methods as a core driver of effective pedagogy and student achievement. While technical expertise and evidence based strategies are essential, they alone cannot guarantee the best learning outcomes. It is the combination of emotional support with instructional skill that creates a balanced approach, helping teachers maximizes both academic success and personal growth among students. Effective teaching goes beyond content delivery; it involves building strong, supportive relationships with each student to foster their academic potential through developing emotional intelligence.

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