



# **NIGERIA JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS**

ISSN 1116-0381  
Volume 12, No.1 March, 2015

# NEED FOR EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN THE NIGERIAN TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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## Abstract

*The construct of Emotional Intelligence is of great significant in education and teaching as it helps the teachers understand their students in a better way. They can be used to align their pedagogy to meet the needs and aspirations of the students. This paper discusses the concepts of emotional intelligence, teacher education programme in Nigeria, the benefits of emotional intelligence on teaching and learning process; and lastly, the need of emotional intelligence in teacher education programme in Nigeria in line with its five components as stated by Goleman. This paper recommends that, when teachers training institutions incorporate Emotional Intelligence in teacher education programme it would not only produce happier and well rounded pre-service teachers needed in Nigerian schools but also the ones who are better adjusted and more successful.*

**Key Words:** emotional intelligence, Teacher Education, Pedagogy

## Introduction

With the advent of technological advancement in the 21st century, life has become ever changing. Resultantly, the area of teaching had changed to a vast extent. Now, the focus is on how we learn and there has been a determined drive to develop an educational system that helps children learn more effectively for life. This include students developing an understanding of their own learning profile and how to use it to raise their achievement and develop their full potentials. Students in this 21st century need to be emotionally intelligent and flexible learners who could use knowledge of engaging brains to develop transferable skills especially in literacy, numeracy, communication and self-management. In addition, schools have to develop skills in teamwork and co-operation that are so evident in activities such as sports and production for children to take part in and outside of school such as sports and productions. As Vygotsky (1978) posited, social interaction plays a fundamental role in the development

of cognition and that everything is learned on two levels—first through interaction and then integration into the individual's mental structure.

Secondly, the path of technological integration in education is lined with technology teams work to bring useful technology into teaching, all with good intentions, only to encounter unwanted side effects such as distraction and disruption in the classroom. The challenges loom large in classrooms since students can access any form of information through their laptops or phones (high-pads, android and blackberry). But, in this era of fast changing environment, professionalism demands teachers to be innovative in their attitudes, flexible in their approach, refreshing themselves with day-to-day developments in their respective subject area. At the same time they should be capable of recognizing the values of human potentials, understanding the diverse needs of learners and enrich the environment for their growth. In essence, the dream of learning that the society values becomes real only when the teachers are well equipped with professional, emotional and intellectual

### Conceptual Clarifications

#### a. Emotional Intelligence- Conceptual Understanding

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating emotions well in us and in our relationships with others. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to monitor one's own and other's emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions. Emotional intelligence is the capacity to reason about emotions to enhance thinking, to process emotional information, which includes perception, assimilation, understanding, and management of emotions, to meet the requirements of day-to-day living and learning (Cherniss, 2000).

Goleman (1995) defined emotional intelligence as a learned skill that is a better predictor of life success than intellectual attainment or technical ability. According to Goleman, emotional intelligence has five elements: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills.

The benefits of Emotional Intelligence apply to every aspect of life and are especially relevant to teachers. Several studies have found

that emotional intelligence can have a significant impact on various elements of everyday activities. Palmer, Donaldson, and Stough (2002) found that higher emotional intelligence was a predictor of life satisfaction. Increasingly, Emotional Intelligence is being recognized as the critical factor in success and life satisfaction.

The benefit of emotional intelligence was first highlighted by Thorndike (1920) as a predictor of leadership ability through increasing focus on studying the ability to understand and manage men and women and to act wisely in human relations. Rosenthal (1977) discovered that people who were best at identifying other's emotions were more successful in their work as well as their social lives (just like a teacher in a school setting). Goleman (1995, 1996, and 1998) assert that people who were emotionally adept, who knew and managed their own feelings well, and who read and dealt effectively with other people's feelings were at an advantage in any domain of life, be it teaching, acting, technologists, among others.

### Teacher Education

It is well known that the quality and extent of learner's achievement are determined primarily by teachers' competence, sensitivity and motivation. The National Council for Teacher Education has defined teacher education as, a programme of education, research and training of persons to teach from pre-primary to higher education level.

Teacher education is a programme that is related to the development of teacher proficiency and competence that would enable and empower the teacher to meet the requirements of the profession and face the challenges therein. According to Goods Dictionary of Education (1973) Teacher education means, —all the formal and non-formal activities and experiences that help to qualify a person to assume responsibilities of a member of the educational profession or to discharge his responsibilities more effectively. In 1906-1956, the program of teacher preparation was called teacher training. It prepared teachers as mechanics or technicians. It had narrower goals with its focus being only on skill training. The perspective of teacher education was therefore very narrow and its scope was limited. As Kilpatrick in Cherniss (2000) put it, —Training is given to animals and circus performers, while education is to human beings.

Teacher education encompasses teaching skills, sound pedagogical theory and professional skills. Thus, Teacher Education = Teaching Skills + Pedagogical theory + Professional skills.

*Teaching skills:* would include providing training and practice in the different techniques, approaches and strategies that would help the teachers to plan and impart instruction, provide appropriate reinforcement and conduct effective assessment. It includes effective classroom management skills, preparation and use of instructional materials and communication skills.

*Pedagogical theory:* includes the philosophical, sociological and psychological considerations that would enable the teachers to have a sound basis for practicing the teaching skills in the classroom. The theory is stage specific and is based on the needs and requirements that are characteristic of that stage.

*Professional skills:* include the techniques, strategies and approaches that would help teachers to grow in the profession and also work towards the growth of the profession. It includes soft skills, counseling skills, interpersonal skills, computer skills, information retrieving and management skills and above all life long learning skills.

An amalgamation of teaching skills, pedagogical theory and professional skills would serve to create the right knowledge, attitude and skills in teachers, thus promoting holistic development.

### The benefit of emotional intelligence to teachers

According to Orme (2001) emotional intelligence is of benefit to pre-service teachers, because it is considered as a prerequisite for developing a good relationship with a group of learners, which then can be the basis for producing teachers who have:

- More engagement in both official and hidden curriculum in the school (i.e classroom teaching and learning as well as outdoor activities).
- Greater motivation to learning and motivate others to learn.
- A greater readiness to take risks in their learning so as to be successful.
- A more positive approach to learning in the classroom.
- A readiness to collaborate with other members of the group

(class), that is ability to manage and handled group assignments and projects.

- More creativity and more tenacity to any situation they (students) find themselves.

### The need of Emotional Intelligence in Teaching

According to Claxton (1999), learning is an intrinsically emotional business. Learning invariably involves curiosity and fascination and sometimes comes after a lot of struggle and failures. In the classroom setting, the potential for strong emotions is heightened because of the perception of competition and the dynamics between the teacher and students and amongst the various students. This is what sociologist of education refers to as group dynamics, this have to do with the interaction between and within group that cause a change in behaviour. As a result, the role of teacher becomes extremely important and involves understanding the emotional aspect of learning and using it for teaching and helping the students.

Currently though, many teachers are oblivious of how emotional intelligence impacts their teaching. They might be very knowledgeable and competent in their teaching skills but do not pay attention to the emotional aspect of the teaching/learning dimension. The small things like not addressing students by name, even when the group is small, and not being able to recognize the look of boredom, disinterest and confusion on faces of the students can lose the opportunity for building positive learning environment for the students. All these are what Meighan (2007) consider as hidden curriculum that interfere with effective teaching and learning in the classroom.

Normally, a good teacher brings two things to the class that is expertise in the subject and the teaching pedagogy. Teachers' Emotional Intelligence (TEI) can be developed and employed to complement both the subject expertise and pedagogical skills. The lack of emotional intelligence can seriously diminish the value of knowledge as well as teaching and learning tools.

Goleman (1998) has identified five 'social and emotional competencies' which make up Emotional Intelligence. These competencies are:

- a. Self Awareness: -- Being alert to your feelings

- b. Self Regulation: -- Managing your feelings
- c. Motivation:-- Using feelings to help achieve your goals
- d. Empathy:-- Tuning into how others feel
- e. Social Skills:-- Handling feelings well in interaction with others

Each of these competencies directly or indirectly affects the teaching and learning environment. Teachers who are in possession of these competencies are able to make the experience of teaching and learning more memorable, enjoyable and intellectually stimulating, both for themselves and for the students and that is why they are needed in the development of pre-service teachers. Thus, emotional intelligence become an essential course /contents in the Teacher education programme to help address issues of.

- I. **Self-Awareness:** Gold and Roth (1993) defined self-awareness as a "process of getting in touch with our own feelings and behaviours." Increased self-awareness in teachers involves a more accurate understanding of how students affect their emotional processes and behaviors and how their behaviour affects students. Teachers are seldom unaffected by the behaviours of their students and often the students bring out the best and the worse in teachers (Richardson, 2001). The development of the teachers, to a large extent, depends on their willingness to take risks and to regularly ask themselves as to which of their behaviors is helping or hindering their personal or professional growth.

Although teachers should be able to recognize the signs of emotional distress in their students, it is equally important for them to acknowledge that their own personalities, learned prejudices and psychological histories have shaped their attitudes and responses to certain behaviors. Awareness of their own emotion improves their chance of making rational decisions based on conscious processes rather than unconscious emotional conditioning. The conscious, ongoing efforts to improve self-awareness can enhance their overall effectiveness and job satisfaction. Therefore the need for emotional intelligence in teacher education becomes imperative.

- ii. **Self Regulation:** Orme (2001) defined self regulation as 'being able to face disruptive emotions like anger, fear and making choices when you are in the middle of a crisis'. Teaching is a hard profession and unlike many other professions, teachers are constantly exposed to emotionally provocative situations. The deteriorating climate in the classrooms is leading to an increase in the troublesome student behavior, and teachers can become emotionally exhausted as they try to manage them. When the feelings are highly aroused and the situation demands a strong emotional reaction, self regulation becomes extremely difficult as the teacher cannot simply excuse herself until she calms down. The teacher has to stay in the classroom with the students and sometimes coping with their own negative emotional response can be a major stressor for the teachers.

Teachers with high level of self regulation are better able to manage their behavior in the classroom to develop and manage nurturing relationships with their students. They serve as behavioural role models for their students and provide outstanding examples of desired social and emotional behaviour.

- iii. **Motivation:** Motivation is one of the most important things that a teacher should possess. Students have different kinds of tastes, preferences, fears and inhibitions over the subjects. It is the job of the teacher to create enthusiasm and interest and to remove any fear and inhibition that a student may have towards the subject. This is not possible unless the teacher is herself motivated and passionate about the subject.

Teachers who have developed high motivation towards teaching find teaching enjoyable and ensure that students enjoy it too. They set high standards for themselves and their students. They expect their students to succeed and feel a keen sense of responsibility for them. Motivation is highly contagious and gets transferred easily from teachers to students and makes the environment of the classroom conducive to learning. This is only possible when teacher education programme have been able to provide pre-service programmes with the knowledge of emotional intelligence in the course of their training.

- iv. **Empathy:** An empathetic disposition has been seen as a desirable trait for the teachers especially for those working with students from diverse backgrounds. Empathetic teachers often have a caring relationship with their students and this leads to high motivation and better performance of the students. Additionally, empathy can foster openness and flexibility and because of this, the teachers are better able to modify the pedagogy and curriculum to fit with their students' needs.

Pre-service training programme in the teacher education programme needs adequate training in empathy which is acquired through emotional intelligence. A teacher can develop empathy by encouraging open communication in the classrooms. More emphasis can be laid on cultivating a dialogue than a monologue (teacher centered). In order to get feedback from their students, empathetic teachers encourage them to voice their views and ideas openly to make teaching a two-way process rather than one-way flow of information.

- v. **Social Skills:** Social skills involve skills like communication, understanding the students, and managing them in order to make the environment in the classroom more conducive to teaching and learning. Teachers are constantly imparting new knowledge, but it is of no use if the students have a difficulty receiving it. To be more effective, teachers should try to get regular feedback from the students in order to know if the students really understand what the teachers are trying to put across. For this, non-verbal communication is as important as the verbal communication. By attending to the body language of the students, the teachers come to know when the students are confused or bored. From the body language of the teachers students pick up if the teachers are confident and enthusiastic. Paying attention to these cues can lead to more flexibility and readiness to respond in teachers. They can change their methodology and pedagogy to suite the students' expectations.

The teachers high social skills is also important to the their students as it helps to manage them in a better way. Some students

are internally motivated to learn and do not require any external reward or reinforcement. On the other hand, some students will require constant monitoring and optimum use of rewards, reinforcements and sometimes punishment. Some students have to be tackled by using humor whereas others may have to be dealt with sternly. Understanding these individual differences and dealing with different students in a different student's way can increase the effectiveness of teaching.

All these are what pre-service teachers are expected to acquire when exposed to the content and teaching of emotional intelligence during their training period in teacher education programme. Since teaching is a specialized job requiring the services of a specialist that has acquired the right skills such as (emotional intelligence programmes). When used in the right place and time, would truly make a teacher a professional teacher. Pre-service teachers would thus become

- a. **Knowledge imparter:** In most cases, learners acquire certain form of knowledge through active participation, attention and assistance of the teacher. The teacher is shouldered with the responsibilities of helping children to behave in ways which are desirable to the norms of the society so as to promote self-respect, tolerance and patience in the learners.
- b. **Disciplinarian:** Since the teacher is a model to the learners, there is need for the teachers to have self-restrain, orderliness, and eloquence, therefore the teacher needs to install habit of obedience and conduct in the learners to show his effectiveness as a good disciplinarian. He must show an exemplary character so as to command respect from his students and the society at large.
- c. **Decision maker:** Teachers are more intimate with the learners after their parents, the teacher need to nurture the children by using good decision in any rapport with the learners aimed at producing durable attributes necessary for useful

learning in the community.

- d. *Facilitator*: The teacher facilitates the teaching and learning process by recognizing and respecting the learners worth and competence through the learning activities which the learner is undergoing that helps him interact with his physical environment through a variety of learning experience and materials.
- e. *Planner, Organiser and Evaluator*: Since the teacher is the implementer of the school curriculum prepared by education planners, the task a head of the teacher is to organized resources to help build planned experienced which can be evaluated to determine the nature and extent to which such planned experiences were achieved.

#### Recommendations and Conclusion

The paper recommends the need for the teaching of emotional intelligence in Nigeria teachers education programme, since it is not only produce happier and well rounded pre-service teachers needed in Nigerian schools for effective teaching, but also the ones who are better adjusted and more successful in their teaching profession. Thus, the need for emotional intelligence in teacher education programme in Nigeria becomes imperative.