



SOCIAL - EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY AMONG TEACHERS – A PRE-REQUISITE FOR SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING AMONG STUDENTS

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Abstract:

This paper focuses on the need and urgency of developing the Social Emotional Competency of teachers as well as the students. Teachers play an important role in helping students deal with their social and emotional crises. In order to enable the students SEL, the teachers themselves should be well-equipped with this soft skill. Hence the 21st century teachers should first be aware of their own social-emotional needs and the ways and means of handling their personal crises, only then can they help her wards. SEC is one of the essential core competencies in today's challenging world so as to foster the students SEL.

Key words: *Social- Emotional competency, Social – Emotional Learning,*

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Introduction:

“When educating the minds of our youth, we must not forget to educate their hearts”, says Dalai Lama.

The heart represents social and emotional skills. But in order to impart Social-Emotional skills to students, the teacher herself should be equipped with these skills. Thus Social- Emotional Competency is the need of the hour in today's chaotic classrooms. Social interaction between the teacher and the student and the quality of their relationship are essential for the students' cognitive, social, and affective-motivational development (Cornelius-White, 2007; Roorda et al., 2011;Kunter et al., 2013;Hamre et al., 2014;Aldrup et al.,2018a).

Teachers experience a wide range of emotions varying from extremely positive to extremely negative emotions such as joy, pride, satisfaction, happiness, contentment, enthusiasm and hope to sadness, dissatisfaction, anger, frustration, hopelessness, lethargy anxiety, depression and burnout.

In the Indian classroom the teacher finds herself in the midst of a multitude of crises such as demotivated students, chaotic administration, stress, lack of communication, misbehaviour, competition and criticism from colleagues, lack of financial stability, lack of job satisfaction, over expectations of stakeholders, excessive workload, poor service conditions, lack of congenial work environment, racial or sexual harassment, pressure from the educational department, lack of job security and the list is endless. Over a period of time, the teachers' feelings such as anger or anxiety and the inability to interact efficiently and the inability to build positive relationships with the students are associated with a low occupational well-being (Schutz and Zembylas, 2009; Klassen et al., 2012; Dicke et al., 2015; Aldrup et al., 2017, 2018b). According to Darling-Hammond (2001), stress and poor emotion management lowers a teacher's intrinsic motives, reduces the feelings of self-efficacy,



and are the most common causes of a teacher's dissatisfaction and resignation. In this regard, many researchers have repeatedly emphasized the crucial role of the teachers' social-emotional competence for over a decade (Brackett and Katulak, 2006; Jennings and Greenberg, 2009). In this context, we see that the SEC of the teacher plays an important role in the Social Emotional growth of her students.

Social-Emotional Competency (SEC):

SEC roots from Social competence and Emotional competence. However, these two competencies are interrelated. Social competencies are defined as the skills facilitating individuals 'to live together in the world' (Arendt 1958) consisting of aspects of interpersonal, intercultural, social and civic competencies. Lerner (2007) defines emotional competence as "the ability to identify and manage one's emotions. These two competencies- Social competency and Emotional competency are intimately intertwined (Denham et al., 2002; Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). Social-emotional competence involves a person's knowledge, skills, and motivation necessary to master social and emotional situations (Elias et al., 1997; also see Weinert, 2001). Hence SEC encompasses a variety of skills such as recognising and managing emotions, social skills, responsible decision making, and high ethical standards.

According to CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning), the five core SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) competencies are -

1. Self - Awareness: is about being true to oneself.
2. Self- Management: is the ability to manage one's emotions
3. Responsible decision making: implies making the right decisions and taking responsibility for them.
4. Social Awareness: is about empathizing with others.
5. Relationship skills: involve the ability to make, nurture and sustain positive relationships.

Assessment of Teachers' Social-Emotional Competence:

Different questionnaires for self-reporting can be used to assess the emotion parameter and relationship management skills. E.g. the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ - Gross and John, 2003) which asks the partakers to rate how many times they apply reappraisal and suppression. The ICQ - Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (Buhrmester et al., 1988) measures the degree to which people view themselves as able to initiate a relationship so as to pursue and provide emotional care, to assert themselves and for the resolution of conflicts.

Significance of SEC:

- SEC helps the teacher as well as the students to have positive social and emotional growth.
- It helps in improving the academic scores.
- It gives satisfaction to the teacher as well as students.
- It helps in increasing their self-esteem. SEC nurtures a positive social relationship between the teacher and her students.
- It helps in reducing mental health issues. Healthy development of the Cognitive and Psychomotor domain takes place.
- It enhances interpersonal and intrapersonal skills. It is known to bridge the gap between the teacher



- student and teacher - stakeholders.

- SEC enhances the student's ability to conduct favourable behaviours, build and sustain healthy positive relationships with others and also show a better school performance (Elias, 2019; Greenberg et al., 2017; Schonert-Reichl, 2019). Social-Emotional wellbeing creates a safe and secure congenial learning environment.
- It helps in building a positive institutional climate. SEC helps the teacher in managing the classroom efficiently.
- It enhances the teacher's classroom effectiveness and productivity.
- SEC of the teacher increases her job satisfaction.
- It satisfactorily dictates the physical, mental and social health of the teacher and students.

Thus, SEC plays a very important role in today's educational system. According to Patricia Jennings and Mark Greenberg, the foremost experts in the field of SEL, prove that teachers who hold a high SEC are less likely to experience burnouts as they are capable of handling their Social Emotional states and also of their students.

Emerging Trends in SEL:

According to the **NEP 2020**, the educational system must target to develop good human beings proficient of rational thought and actions possessing compassion and empathy for the holistic development of the children. NEP 2020 explicitly speaks about the need to include SEL in the daily school curricula. It emphasizes the importance of counselling and mental health services in the schools today.

ISELF: Indian Social and Emotional Learning Framework, developed by The Teacher Foundation is a national -level research based educational resource to foster SE development among Indian children. Its main objective is to assist teachers and counsellors to develop the firm social-emotional competencies in children.

Labhya Foundation, is a non-profit organization which focuses on creating SEL programs for students in India. This organization works not only for the social and emotional well-being of the students but also of the teachers.

"Happiness Curriculum" launched by the Delhi State Education team aims at helping students and teachers to practice emotional regulation, relationship building and action orientation. The students have a bi-weekly Happiness for 45 minutes.

Hence, SEL is a core competency in the changing world of today. SEL requires a constant sharing of the onus by the stakeholders such the policy makers, educators, parents, researchers and investors.

Thus in a digitally ever evolving world of AI, SEC is one of the core competency that will make us truly human. Therefore improving the teachers SEC would not only enhance the teacher's classroom efficiency but on the whole would elevate the overall quality and standard of education. SEC is thus recognized as an important and teachable characteristic and it should to be acquired by both children and by adults (Greenberg, Domitrovich, Weissberg, & Durlak, 2017; Huitt & Dawson, 2018; Inna, 2017; Schonert-Reichl, Kitil, & Hanson-Peterson, 2017). A research study revealed that when social and emotional skills were taught by teachers in the school, the students' conduct and attitude toward the school enhanced (Durlak et al., 2011).

Hence SEC among teachers is a pre-requisite for the SEL among students.



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