Emotions in Learning and Teaching

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• What are your beliefs about emotions in teaching and learning? How does this impact your practice?

• How is learner motivation developed and sustained in your classroom?

• How can emotions be used to further enhance your teaching and your students learning?
Why is this important?

- Current system – devalues emotion in learning & teaching
- Cognitivist-oriented pedagogy
- Challenge: measuring emotional states
• SoL changing this:
  – Brain networks highly integrated
  – Sensory input draws attention = value determined by emotions

• Calling for reconceptualisation of emotions in learning and teaching

• More holistic approach
Attention
Interest
Engagement
Motivation

Self regulation
Overview of session

• **What...**
  – Are emotions?
  – Is their function?
  – Is happening?

• **Why...**
  – Are they important for teaching and learning?

• **How...**
  – Are they involved in teaching and learning?
  – Can we promote positive emotions in teaching and learning?

• **Application...**
Activity 1 – Handout 1

- Emotions of teaching and learning

Think

Pair

Share
Emotions are.. 

- Relatively brief, psychological states that result from experiencing an event or an interaction that evokes a response along a continuum of threats and opportunities
The Ocean

- Essential for survival and to thrive
• Primary emotions are universal
• “biologically built, but culturally shaped”
• Highly interconnected to multiple brain regions
• Emotions are highly subjective
• Emotions need to be understood:
  – Hazards avoided
  – Possibilities realised
The ‘why’ of emotions

• Innate

• Guide interest, attention

• Response to environment: external (physical, social) but also internal (psychological):

  “Given the present sensory information and the individuals present internal state [and subjective value of the experience], how should it react?” Pessoa, 2008
• Barometer of response to environment

• Sensory input from our environment
• Sensory-activated

• Trigger brain-body loop = embodied experience

• Interconnected systems
Activity 2

• Select an emotion from your list

• How is that emotion embodied for you – what is your physiological response?

• Can you manipulate your emotion through changing your physiological response or physical posture?

• Think-Pair-Share
Social synchrony

• ‘feel what others feel’

• Neurologically evident

• Shared emotional state = understand others
Adolescent social brain

- Increased social interest

- Period of structural and functional brain development

- Positive social and emotional role models important

Almost 400 years ago, Shakespeare was portraying adolescents in a very similar light to the light that we portray them in today - but today we try to understand their behavior in terms of the underlying changes that are going on in their brain.

— Sarah-Jayne Blakemore —
Activity 3

• Refer to your list of learner emotions:
  
  • How do your students embody emotions?
  
  • How do you know what they are feeling?
  
  • How does it make you feel?
Emotions...

- Help us understand ourselves, our world, and others
- Influence our interpretation of experiences
- Shape thoughts, decisions
- Make memories

www.pinterest.com
Emotions and cognition
Emotions underpin cognition

- Attention
- Memory
- Motivation
- Problem solving
- Reasoning
- Decision making
- Information processing
- Engagement
- Interest/Curiosity
So we now know...

☑️ Emotions underpin cognition

☑️ Emotions are embodied

☑️ Emotions help us understand ourselves, our world and others

☑️ Emotions are defined as...
ACHIEVEMENT EMOTIONS:

- those emotions “tied directly to achievement activities or achievement outcomes” (Pekrun, 2006, p.317).
TOPIC EMOTIONS:
• triggered by teaching or learning about a particular topic or content, and directly influence the level of interest (Pekrun, 2006; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014).
EPISTEMIC EMOTIONS:

• related to the knowledge-generating aspects of cognitive processes (Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014, p.4).

• “How do I know what I know?”
SOCIAL
EMOTIONS

www.stevemccurry.wordpress.com

www.leitsculinaria.com
INCIDENTAL EMOTIONS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9wP1xEHU3LI
Activity 4 – Handout 2

Incidental
Achievement
Social
Topic
Epistemic
LEARNER
Teacher emotions

• Teacher emotions impact learners

• Teacher emotions impact teacher well-being & capacity
Teacher emotions

Teacher

Student Behaviour

Time/workload

Policy/curriculum

Job Satisfaction

Relationships

Professional identity

Personal Context

Beliefs

Values

Norms

Attitudes

Knowledge
Activity 5 – Handout 3

• Refer to your emotions list:
• Plot your emotions into the dimensions
• Is there a particular dimension that elicits the majority of your +/- emotions?
Activity 6 – Handout 4

NEGATIVE

NEUTRAL

POSITIVE
Negative Emotions

Can:

• Impact overall well-being: negative physical and psychological effects

• Heighten awareness of task difficulties

• Impede learning

• Interrupt cognitive function
Sadness

• Slows capacity to think and process
Trauma

- Heightens levels of anxiety, fear, stress and sadness
- Can have long-term or sporadic effects on learning
- May disrupt emotional development
Positive Emotions

- Wellbeing
- Flourishing
- Interest
- Creativity
- Persistence
- Perspective
- Motivation
Positivity ratio

3:1

How can we deliberately cultivate positive emotions for ourselves and our learners?
Motivation

- the underlying psychological process, the energy and direction, that underpins behaviour through linking affective and cognitive components (Ainley, 2012; Ainley & Hidi, 2014; Pekrun, 2006).
Sources of motivation may be different for different learners
Emotional appraisal system

- **Cognitive control** over emotional response to an experience or event
- Can be targeted for intervention

You can choose to live in the front row, or the third row...

futureyouuniversity.blogspot.com
• Subjective control:

• Subjective Value:
Achievement

Topic

Epistemic

Social

Incidental

Subjective control

Subjective value

LEARNER
Subjective control

Subjective value

Teacher

Personal Context

Professional identity

Relationships

Job Satisfaction

Time/workload

Policy/curriculum

Student Behaviour

Subjective control

Subjective value

Teacher

Personal Context

Professional identity

Relationships

Job Satisfaction

Time/workload

Policy/curriculum

Student Behaviour
So, to summarise, Emotions...

- are **essential** for human survival
- are **biologically built but culturally shaped**
- help us **understand** ourselves, our world, and others
- influence our **interpretation** of experiences, shape **thoughts and decisions**, make memories
- are **embodied**
Emotions...

• underpin cognition

• impact **well-being** of ourselves and others

• can **impede or enhance** learning

• can be **deliberately targeted** to enhance learning and teaching.
Activity 6 – Handout 5 - Artifact

• What emotional challenges – for yourself and your learners - may you face in this class/ unit/ lesson/ activity?

• How are you deliberately engaging learner emotions? Can higher levels of positive affect be engineered?

• How are you engaging the learners’ sense of relatedness, competence and autonomy to increase their motivation? Are there ways that this could be enhanced?

• How could individual learners’ subjective control and subjective value of the experience be increased?

• What challenges may you face in addressing these emotion-related concepts?
• What are your beliefs about emotions in teaching and learning? How does this impact your practice?

• How is learner motivation developed and sustained in your classroom?

• How can emotions be used to further enhance your teaching and your students learning?
References and further reading


Pekrun, R. (2005). ‘Progress and open problems in educational emotion research.’ *Learning and Instruction, 15,* 497-506. DOI: 10.1016/j.learninstruc.2005.07.014


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