

## **Emotional education in people with functional diversity.**

*La educación emocional en las personas con diversidad funcional.*

**David Moreno Molina**

dmmolina@ujaen.es

Universidad de Jaén (España)

**Yaiza Adaya Villalba Delgado**

yaizaa60@gmail.com

Universidad de Jaén (España)

*Páginas 25-33*

*Fecha recepción: 11/10/2019*

*Fecha aceptación: 25/12/2019*

### **Abstract.**

The objective of this text is to explore and make visible the relevance of emotional education in students, as well as its repercussions. This importance is related to the objective of achieving a comprehensive education of students in all its facets, so that they can cope with emotionally complex situations that arise in their lives. In addition, emotional education becomes more important in relation to people with functional diversity, because they have to face emotionally complex situations, which they have to overcome, and where emotional education provides them with a series of tools that make possible different techniques to be able to face such situations in an adequate way. The results provided derive from an analysis of different research on emotional education, where it is appreciated that the techniques on which emotional education should be based are aimed at achieving emotional balance, improving the level of health, motivation of students, etc.

**Keywords:** emotional education; functional diversity; emotional intelligence; integral education

### **Resumen.**

El objetivo de este texto es explorar y visibilizar la relevancia de la educación emocional en el alumnado, así como sus repercusiones. Esta importancia se relaciona con el objetivo de lograr una educación integral del alumnado en todas sus facetas, de manera que pueda hacer frente a situaciones emocionalmente complejas que se les presenten en su vida. Además, la educación emocional cobra más importancia en relación a las personas con diversidad funcional, debido a que deben hacer frente a situaciones emocionalmente complejas, las cuales han de superar, y donde la educación emocional les aporta una serie de herramientas que le posibilitan diferentes técnicas para poder hacer frente a dichas situaciones de manera adecuada. Los resultados aportados derivan de un análisis de diferentes investigaciones en torno a la educación emocional, donde se aprecian que las técnicas sobre las que se debe basar la educación emocional van encaminadas a

lograr un equilibrio emocional, mejorar el nivel de salud, motivación del alumnado, etc.

**Palabras clave:** educación emocional; diversidad funcional; inteligencia emocional; educación integral

### **1.-Introduction.**

The new educational models give us a very necessary perspective about the teaching of emotional education in the classroom, but not only the educational models, but also the emotional education has become a necessity for the students, more and more emerging, because it is vital for an adequate development, both personal and interpersonal. It is for this reason that emotional education becomes fundamental, if one takes into account the benefits and possibilities that it offers a person, among them, being able to regulate their own emotions, to face complex situations, to understand the emotions of others, becoming empathetic persons, in such a way that they are able to face them and respond to complex situations in the correct manner.

Emotional education is even more important if we refer to people with functional diversity, because it is a group that has a series of handicaps simply because they have functional diversity, difficulties that they have to face in their daily lives, and where emotional education can play an active role in dealing with such situations. The most common conflicts they have to face are, for example, society's prejudices towards them, prejudices that are due to a lack of information from society towards people with functional diversity. If we add to these prejudices the lack of acceptance, rejection, discrimination, it can be seen at first sight how emotional education plays a vital role, not only to cope with this type of situation, but also to have an adequate state of health, high motivation to achieve their goals, etc.

Teachers, in the classroom, must take into account various areas of people with functional diversity, since, in general, they present characteristics of their disability, which we have to take into account to achieve the proposed objectives, such as being able to regulate their own emotions, a fundamental aspect for them to lead a good standard of living, managing to promote their self-esteem and motivation to achieve the objectives. In addition, we must take into account the prejudices that are held towards people with functional diversity, erroneous prejudices about diversity itself, which are a severe emotional blow to the person, in addition to the lack of understanding, acceptance or social support they receive, can take real havoc, both within and outside the school environment, if they do not receive the relevant emotional education.

There is a long historical perspective which attempts to relate intellectual quotient and success as the only factors in achieving one's goals in life. However, it is now known that success is influenced by other factors such as emotional intelligence as essential for success.

Moreover, given that the ultimate goal of education is to achieve comprehensive learning of students in all its facets, we must not leave aside emotional education, that is, emotional education is fundamental to the complete development of the human being as a social being in everyday life. Therefore, we believe that emphasis should be placed on introducing and working more actively with emotional education on a daily basis in the classroom in an interdisciplinary manner.

## **2.-Theoretical framework.**

### **2.1.-Emotional Intelligence.**

It was in 1993 when Howard Gardner, in contrast to what was thought until then, that is, the existence of a single intelligence, scientifically demonstrated his best known theory on multiple intelligences. This research led him to clarify what we know today as the eight forms of intelligence: musical, visuospatial, linguistic, naturalistic, kinesthetic, logical-mathematical, interpersonal and finally, intrapersonal.

To this day, there is no definition of the term intelligence in concrete terms. There is a great number of authors who have tried to limit this conception by passing through different theoretical approaches that we will analyse below, through a meticulous bibliographic search.

Howard Gardner (1993) provides a series of concepts around which emotional intelligence revolves. Firstly, he defines intrapersonal intelligence as the capacity that people have to carry out a deep analysis of introspection and understand the reasons why one acts in certain situations. More specifically, it is the ability to access your emotions and feelings in order to reflect on them. Within Gardner's definition of intrapersonal intelligence, he considers that a key factor within it is distance, that is, knowing how to de-dramatize an event with a negative emotional impact, such as knowing how to eliminate negative emotions and using the necessary techniques that allow the individual to maintain a healthy personal situation, with the aim of having a personal and work situation as humane as possible, with a view to the future. This is because emotional stability and the development of emotional intelligence make us perform better in different facets of our lives.

On the other hand, as for interpersonal intelligence, according to Howard Gardner (1993), it is defined as that in which the person is capable of putting himself in the point of view of the other, of feeling as the other person can be in that moment, that is to say, in empathizing with the other person. This is achieved through the person's ability to interpret gestures, words, feelings, the speaker's speech, position, etc.

Currently, and with increasing relevance, there is a need to introduce emotional intelligence in the classroom, to work with people who present functional diversity, so that students may be able to develop empathy with the person with functional diversity, understand their situation a little more, and generate a climate of help and cooperation with the other person.

The main reason why there is this emphasis on two of the eight intelligences (interpersonal intelligence and intrapersonal intelligence) proposed by Gardner is because both types of intelligence influence and at the same time favour the emergence of a new term within the theoretical framework of general intelligence: emotional intelligence.

What does emotional intelligence mean, therefore? Taking into account Salovey & Mayer (1990), emotional intelligence is a form of social intelligence. This social intelligence ranges from our own ability to manage our emotions and feelings, as well as those of others, to using that information to help us drive our thoughts and actions towards our own interests. Within the brain connections, specifically from the amygdala, it is automatically verified who we relate to and who we don't, that is, who we can trust and who we can't. Therefore, it can be said that social intelligence is the capacity that an individual has to relate with the rest of society, from an assertive and empathic point of view.

Mayer, Salovey & Caruso (2000, p.396) explain that emotional intelligence is "the ability to perceive and express emotions, assimilate them into our thinking, understand and reason through them and regulate emotions in oneself and others". In other words, EI focuses on an individual's ability to understand his or her emotions and those of others. Also, reporting them in the right way so that they have a beneficial impact on him and his environment.

The writers mentioned above warn that EI requires verbal and non-verbal self-assessment, expression of emotions, and regulation of those emotions. Therefore, we must work on the use of such content from the emotional plane to solve various conflicts that arise (Mayer & Salovey, 1993).

Many authors like Steiner (1997) proposed the creation of emotional education (clearly related to EI) and stated that if you have a high emotional awareness it could increase your personal well-being, a reason we consider important enough to continue on emotional intelligence.

Goleman (1995) was one of the authors most interested in the development of the story that constitutes EI. He presented his statement on EI based on the works of Mayer & Salovey (1993) mentioned above. According to the author Goleman (1995) the key to increasing our quality of life is EI. It can be so decisive at different times, more so than a person's own intellectual quotient. Emotional intelligence helps us to predict the personal satisfaction we will obtain throughout our existence.

In different works of the author, mentioned in the previous paragraph, special emphasis is placed on works of analysis on emotions, the social behaviour of human beings, the functioning of the brain, etc. In addition, he presented interesting results and projects to increase different social and emotional skills in children.

This last idea is so important that many authors claim that the intellectual quotient does not determine true human intelligence, but rather the emotions themselves (Molero, et. al. 1998). For this reason, we have begun to delve deeply into the emotional field, focusing on the emotions, on the development and finally, on the social adaptation of people with functional diversity.

## 2.2.-The importance of acquiring emotional intelligence in teachers

In the 20th century, following the ideas of Ruiz-Aranda & Fernández-Berrocal (2008), it was said that a teacher was successful when his or her students had good academic results. Today, in the age in which we find ourselves, it is no longer enough to obtain good performance in our students, but the main objective, as teachers, is to develop competent people, integrated into society, who in turn have both social and emotional tools to face the future challenges they are shown in everyday life.

Cabello, Ruiz-Aranda, & Fernández-Berrocal (2010, p. 42) express that "on the other hand, as different authors have repeatedly pointed out, this training in social-emotional aspects is not only scarce and precarious, but when it occurs it is excessively theoretical and not very practical". Due to this, our concern as teachers should be to provide our students not only with knowledge, but also with emotional and social skills, which in turn are very useful in various areas, both personal and professional. Currently, our educational system is in the process of change and transformation of study methods, directing the teaching to the integral development of the students' skills (LOMCE, 2013). In the Delors report (1996), UNESCO has already proposed numerous options to improve education and training, specifically, giving an important role to emotions and the need to instruct and train our young people according to social demands.

It is undeniable that the improvement of social-emotional skills is essential today. And in order to teach effectively, teachers must master social, emotional, and affective skills.

Why is it important that as teachers we develop Emotional Intelligence? In the first place, because the skills that are developed using EQ in our daily lives intervene in the learning process, in our own physical health, in the effectiveness of our interpersonal relationships and therefore in our academic and work performance. Due to its importance, more and more teachers are demanding training in emotional competences.

According to a study published by the University of British Columbia (2019), it states a series of results in which it is shown that the teaching of social and emotional learning promotes a series of benefits for people with or without functional diversity, such as an improvement in health, encourages the development of social skills and even promotes an improvement in academic results.

The study by the University of British Columbia shows that the program was applied to 97,000 primary and secondary school students in the United States, Europe and

the United Kingdom (children aged 5-13), the effects of which were evaluated half a year after completion of the programs. The researchers concluded that socio-emotional learning continued over the long term to provide positive effects to these young people.

Similarly, taking into account Emmer (1994), teachers more often perceive a greater number of negative emotions than positive ones. And positive emotions in teachers help to improve their own well-being and, consequently, the adjustment of their students, creating a climate in the classroom that favors learning in itself.

### **3.-Method.**

The method used was mainly a literature review. We have prepared the article based on documentary research, that is, we have selected and compiled the most relevant articles and authors for our research on which we have based ourselves to contrast the previous hypotheses that were held. In this way we have been able to gather information about emotional education and emotional intelligence as such, and its importance in the educational field.

We have chosen a methodology based on a systematic review of the literature because the objective of this paper has been to describe and group the most relevant contributions to emotional education, so that we can extrapolate a series of conclusions about the subject that concerns us.

Likewise, at the time of selecting and analysing the articles we are going to analyse, we have taken into account inclusion and exclusion criteria, where from a total of 78 localised studies, 66 have been excluded because they were not relevant to the objective of the review.

### **4.-Results.**

Once all the information that emotional education involves and encompasses has been analyzed and distilled, different perspectives on the topic that concerns us can be taken into consideration.

We have to take into account the definitions of interpersonal intelligence which is currently defined as the virtue of understanding other people, that is, understanding what worries them, what motivates them, or finding the right way to work together with them. On the other hand, the second intrapersonal intelligence (Gardner, 1995) is referred to as the ability to create one's own personal model and be competent to apply that model on a daily basis in order to function effectively on a daily basis (Davis, Christodoulou & Seider, 2011). According to the contributions of the different authors, as emotional intelligence is fundamental to detecting and understanding the circumstances and problems of others, this capacity makes people develop and progress towards a more balanced life, even more so if we take into account people with functional diversity.

People with functional diversity have a series of handicaps imposed by society in a negative way, difficulties such as social acceptance, rejection, among others, that they must face and where their emotional balance, their emotional, interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence is vital. It should be borne in mind that when a negative mood or feeling is experienced on a continuous basis, a person's cognitive capacity is weakened, which is why all people, and more particularly people with functional diversity, must have the appropriate strategies to cope satisfactorily with this type of situation. Supporting this view David Goleman (1995) "The emotional brain responds to an event more quickly than the rational brain".

Moreover, when a person is going to establish a social relationship with another person, and both are in an atmosphere, intrapersonal and interpersonal, of total confidence, it helps to express freely emotions, feelings, their social relationship is encouraged from spontaneity and respect. Therefore, this respect and empathy towards people with functional diversity is fundamental to promote, so some of the techniques that can be used are:

1. Establishing eye contact.
2. Use a friendly tone of voice and expression.
3. Try to listen attentively and actively.
4. Create a coordination or synchrony in the movements.
5. Smile whenever the context of the smile is appropriate. It is one of the most positive emotional expressions, the brain prefers happy faces.

Likewise, it can be considered that emotional education is not only the task of a few, but that, from the education system itself, teachers should have the necessary training in emotional education, not only to teach students, but also to face possible difficulties that may arise in the classroom.

But once we have analyzed the different investigations we see how emotional intelligence plays a fundamental role, due to its close relation with social intelligence. This relationship is based on the common term that states that both need the management of emotions to be able to establish a correct socialization process, that is, to be able to improve interpersonal relationships.

Bearing in mind these aspects and the new models that are emerging, we can leave aside various pejorative terms such as "the dummy of the class" or "the smart of the class", since nowadays the IQ, which used to be fundamental in discerning a person's future, is not the only one that should be taken into account in measuring a person's intelligence, but aspects such as emotional intelligence and all that this implies emerge as a vital aspect for achieving a comprehensive education of the person.

In addition, people with functional diversity will develop their own goals taking into account their needs and the characteristics intrinsic to their diversity, as, for example, a person with functional diversity will develop spatial intelligence to be able to move in their environment, that is, they will develop intelligence that has a key impact on their

personal motivation, pursuing personal development. Another example, if we are going to carry out an intervention with a person with an intellectual disability, we have to take into account a series of premises. These concepts, which are taken into account a priori, are fundamental to act in a satisfactory manner with students with intellectual disabilities. The damaged areas that the student has will be taken into account, it may be that the connections of the brain areas related to emotions are damaged. Therefore, it is essential that the teacher has enough tools to be able to work with this, so that they can give rise to new brain connections.

From this line the methodology based on neurodidactics plays a fundamental role. The fact of starting from the brain connections of the student, and from there to use techniques and strategies necessary to provoke learning in the student, is essential. That is to say, knowing what a person's motivations are, their emotional state, what emotions arise at different times in children, what their objectives are, etc., is necessary in order to know where we have to start and where we have to guide the learning process. It must be known as accurately as possible, to determine the level of self-esteem, frustration, motivation, since emotional education will provide them with a series of strategies and tools to cope with situations of stress, tantrums, etc.

### **5.-Conclusion.**

Once the importance of emotional education has been highlighted, a clear nuance can be seen in the way in which a person constructs their own identity, their personality in which emotional education plays a fundamental role.

For this reason, through this text, the necessary recognition of emotional intelligence as a key element in controlling impulses, regulating our own emotions and those of others, facing a priori complex situations, and above all maintaining social relations in an adequate manner is presented.

More specifically, if we refer to students with functional diversity, competence, education and emotional intelligence becomes even more important, due to the difficulties that they may sometimes have in this area, which often lead to negative and disruptive behaviour typical of the difficulties they have in some areas, and more specifically in emotional education.

Having a good climate in class is increasingly important, because it generates a feeling of security in the students, as well as positive emotions that, in the end, contribute to the well-being of the students and, in short, to their happiness.

From all the above, we can deduce that it is fundamental to introduce various concepts such as empathy, emotional facilitation, emotional understanding and emotional regulation, in school life, because, from this perspective our students will acquire a series of skills and abilities that will make them able to recognize both their own emotions and those of others, reducing in this case, to a minimum, negative behavior in the classroom that could cause us emotionally difficult situations. On the

other hand, developing emotional intelligence in the educational field, gives us a rich vocabulary related to it, which becomes fundamental when it comes to finding the right words when we interact with people who are going through difficult situations, and, therefore, what we say to ourselves and how we face such emotionally complex situations.

## 6.-References.

- Cabello, R., Ruiz-Aranda, D., Fernández-Berrocal, P. (2010). Docentes emocionalmente inteligentes. *Revista Electrónica Interuniversitaria de Formación del Profesorado*, 32 (13, 1), 41-49 [online]. Recovered from: <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=3163455>
- Davis, K., Christodoulou, J., Seider, S., Gardner, H. E. (2011). *The theory of multiple intelligences*. Recovered from: [https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract\\_id=2982593](https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2982593)
- Delors, J. (1996). *La educación encierra un tesoro*. Madrid: Santillana-Ediciones UNESCO.
- Emmer, E.T. (1994). Toward an understanding of the primary of classroom management and discipline. *Teaching Education*, 6, 65-69."
- Fernández Berrocal, P., Ruiz Aranda, D. (2008). La educación de la inteligencia emocional desde el modelo de Mayer y Salovey. En Acosta, A. (Dir.). *Educación emocional y convivencia en el aula*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación y Ciencia.
- Gardner, H. (1993). *Frames of mind* (ed. 10º aniversario). Nueva York: BasicBooks.
- Goleman, D. (1995). *Inteligencia Emocional*. Nueva York: Bantam Books.
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D.R. (2000). Models of emotional intelligence. R. J. Sternberg (Ed.). *Handbook of intelligence* (pp. 396-420). Nueva York: Cambridge University Press.
- Molero, C., Saiz, E., Esteban, C. (1998). Revisión histórica del concepto de inteligencia: Una aproximación a la inteligencia emocional. *Revista Latinoamericana de Psicología*, 30, pp. 11-30.
- Salovey, P., Mayer, J.D. (1990). *Emotional intelligence. Imagination, cognition and personality*, 9(3), 185-211. Recovered from: <https://doi.org/10.2190/DUGG-P24E-52WK-6CDG>
- Steiner, C., Perry, P. (1997). *Achieving emotional literacy: A program to increase your emotional intelligence*. Nueva York: Avon.