

IESPĒJAS PEDAGOGU EMOCIONĀLĀS ATSAUCĪBAS PILNVEIDOŠANĀ

The Possibilities For Improving Teachers Emotional Responsiveness

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Abstract. *The article “The possibilities for improving teachers' emotional responsiveness” is part of the research “Improvement of teachers' emotional responsiveness in further education”. It is devoted to a burning topic of the current times – the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness. The study is methodological in nature. The research aims to develop appropriate teaching methods and techniques, which will contribute to the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness throughout their professional education career. The purpose of the article is to describe and evaluate a set of teaching methods and techniques used in the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness. The study summarises theoretical knowledge about the role of feelings and emotions in the teaching process. It includes the author's created structured scheme of methods and techniques for the development and improvement of teachers' emotional responsiveness, which has already been successfully approved in teacher's lifelong learning. The study discusses each teaching methods' and methodological techniques' deeper meaning and effects on the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness. The author has also provided a detailed description of her methodology “What do I learn about myself?” and analyzes its influence and role in the world of educators' feelings. The results of the research are important for the requirements of the 21st century and the cultivation of healthy pedagogical thinking and habits. The results of the study show that successful continuous development of teachers' emotional responsiveness can be achieved by using such methods as “Working with symbols”, “Self-awareness” and the “Drama method”, each of which include a variety of techniques, along with the author's created ones, for example, “What do I learn about myself?”, “See! Do! Assess!” and “Practicing gratitude”.*

The research shows how regular work with teachers' self-study can create healthy habits, which contribute to and expand the personality growth and pedagogical thinking.

Keywords: *emotional responsiveness, lifelong education, personal growth, self-cognition, teacher.*

Introduction

The 21st-century education consists of more than just the academic knowledge. It intuitively senses the need for person's feeling and a spiritual world's development. Currently, there is a lot of discussion around the world

about how to link the learning processes with real life. The aim of the OECD initiative “Education 2030: OECD core competencies' system” is to conduct an in-depth comparative analysis of international curricula and assess which competencies will be essential in the students' future development. Thus, with the project “School 2030”, the Latvian education system is also undergoing an ambitious long-term reform of transitioning to a competency-based learning processes and content. (National Centre for Education of the Republic of Latvia, 2016)

Communication is the heart of pedagogical processes. Therefore, the desired result of a teacher, who interacts with children in class should be someone endowed with the following characteristics: nobleness and generosity, patience and restraint, creativity, sincerity, the ability to inspire and fascinate, the ability to think good thoughts and say good words, the desire for improvement, a wide range of knowledge. Therefore, it is essential to evaluate the current methods and techniques used in teachers' lifelong education as well as find new innovative methods, which encourage the improvement of teachers' emotional responsiveness.

Many researchers (Vorobjovs, 2000; Goulmens, 2001; Shchurkova, 2016; Robinsons, 2013; Vilbers, 2013; Dispenza, 2015; Purēns, 2017; Amonašvili, 2017) admit that emotions are an important component in the learning process. Emotions allow the individual to adapt to the surrounding world, motivates them for a particular activity, affects how they perceive and interpret the surrounding world and gives them additional energy.

While conducting the research, the author's assertion was confirmed, to follow the holistic approach, the teacher must experience emotion-based self-inquiring and personality enhancing learning process within the professional lifelong learning process. This can be achieved by paying attention to the methods and techniques used in teacher lifelong education. Thus, this scientific paper summarizes the existing learning methods and proposes new methods created by the author, which contribute to the improvement of the teachers' emotional responsiveness.

The author has developed a set of methods and techniques used by teachers in lifelong education, which fosters the development of emotional responsiveness in teachers. These teaching methods and techniques have been applied and highly valued in teachers' lifelong education processes throughout all of the Latvian regions.

The work aims to outline and evaluate a set of learning methods and techniques used to improve teachers' emotional responsiveness.

The materials and methods combine identification and assessment of the psychological, pedagogical and scientific literature as well as reflections on self-experience, observations of teachers' actions, a questionnaire and a summarization of results

As a result, a set of teaching methods and techniques has been created that stimulates the formation of teachers' emotional responsiveness throughout their lifelong education process. Individual methods and sections have been highly rated in the teachers' lifelong education process, as well as at local and international conferences and seminars.

Feelings and emotions in the pedagogical process

The competency-based approach in modern education and the TOP 10 skills of the humans' future encourages teachers to learn methods and techniques which promote the development of emotional responsiveness. In the pedagogical interaction process, the teacher can only pass on to their students what they themselves have deep in their hearts. Emotions are closely related to feelings. For example, prolonged happiness about the other person's presence may over time grow into love, while loving - into fear, contempt, and hatred.

The psychologist Ilyin (Ilyin, 2017) distinguishes four viewpoints about emotions and feelings:

- these concepts are synonyms;
- feelings are a type of emotion;
- feelings include various types of emotions;
- feelings reveal attitude; they are separated from emotions (Ilyin, 2017).

Currently, fourth is the most popular approach in the world stating that feelings are a person's emotional process revealing a relatively subjective attitude towards real subjects important to people. They are formed as a result of socialisation and usually affect values important to society. In his research, Braden (Bradens, 2008) shows that feelings arise when thinking is combined with the emotional power that comes from the lower energy centres. Thus, feelings are formed from thoughts of love or fear that a person feels towards a particular fact or event.

Emotional intelligence, which involves the interconnection of emotions, characteristics and moral tendencies, is not genetically conditioned, it can be taught and developed (Goulmens, 2001).

Meikshane (Meikšāne, 1998), however, believes that feelings characterise and reflect the person's attitude towards their surrounding life as a whole. Therefore, nurturing them has an essential part in human's life. Emotions are formed by repetition and consolidation of certain emotional experiences. An

important study has been done by Vorobyov (Vorobjovs, 2000) on feelings being a system for evaluating the human's subjective world. To his words, the connection of subject's feelings with the subjective evaluation actualisation process, is called emotions. The author has classified the following peculiarities of feelings:

- the polarity of feelings – a range of feelings in response to the experience – joy, happiness, love, cheerfulness, suffering, sadness;
- the ambivalence of feelings – the simultaneous experience of polar feelings about the same object, phenomenon;
- the intensity of feelings – strong, weak and turbulent;
- the asthenia of feelings – feelings, which activate the human activity, increase energy, feelings that can provoke a depressive condition.

Depending on the attitude towards different situations, feelings serve as a motivating factor for human activity, therefore feelings play an important role in the person's life and actions (Vorobjovs, 2000). Science refers to feelings and emotions as the source of human energy.

Schmitz (Šmits, 2013) expresses a contemporary view on feelings by recognising that acknowledging an awareness of feelings helps to understand the other people both, on an intellectual and instinctive level.

By knowing and understanding the meaning of feelings in human lives teachers can give light to the children, assist them, dismiss the negative thoughts with the help of positive ones. This can only be done by a teacher with a bright and lively heart. That is the source of light in education. Live with your heart, talk from your hear and listen with your heart.

Methodology

The study was conducted to review and create methods for improving teachers' emotional responsiveness. It happened from August 2017 to March 2018 and gathered results from 240 teachers of different age groups and levels of experience from all regions of Latvia, creating a total of 11 groups. The research design used mixed methods approach with the focus being put on observing and interviewing teachers. Qualitative research and scientific strength authentication criteria, their definitions and means of provision are taken as the basis for the scientific approach of the research (Pipere, 2011). These criteria - justice, ontological authenticity, educational authenticity, catalytic authenticity, tactical authenticity - indicate that the research carried out is important for a sustainable development of education.

The educators' work with the various teaching methods and techniques offered by the author was observed throughout the entire day in author-led

professional competence development classes. Each class followed a certain structure:

- setting and coordinating performance goals;
- awareness of the achievable results;
- self-awareness “Here and Now” by using body movement and thinking integration;
- ensuring an empathic link within the group by using the “Inspiration Story”, “Wish”, “Emotion Awareness”, “See! Assess! Do!” methodical techniques;
- learning process using methods based on the theme offered – Drama, Working with symbols, Awareness method;
- selection and creation of methods and techniques in the active process, while observing and recognising the needs of the participants;
- reflection on the self-experience and experiences gained in action by using the “What do I learn about myself?”, “Gratitude”, “Questions and answers”, etc. methodical techniques.

During the study, teachers were asked the following question to find out the effectiveness of each chosen method: What are the benefits of using the proposed method? Does the method used, stimulate the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness? How does the method used in the teaching process affect the teacher's personal growth?

A very important methodological tool, the Personality Growth Map, was developed and put into practice for gaining feedback from the teachers' education process by organising and managing the teachers' learning process. By working with this technique, the teachers can come to a conclusion of which methods used in the study process contribute to the improvement of emotional responsiveness in themselves. Hence, the teachers are motivated to adopt the acquired methods and techniques to their own structured cooperation process with the students. This stands as a great benefit and support for the long-term development of pedagogical thoughts based on self-experiences gained in the learning process.

Results and discussion

The author has created a structured scheme of teaching methods and techniques usable in life-long education (Table 1), which contributes to the improvement of teachers' emotional responsiveness. It is based on the author's long-standing work experience as well as the research and evaluation of scientific, psychological and pedagogical literature published by other authors (Shchurkova, 2016; Muhin, 2012; Robinsons, 2013; Fišers, 2005; Grofs, 2006; Špona & Čamane, 2009; Vedins, 2011, Purēns, 2017; Amonašvili, 2017). The

scheme also includes methodological techniques “See! Do! Assess!”, “What do I learn about myself”, “Inspiration story”, “Practicing gratitude” developed by the author.

The teaching methods and techniques have been tested in practice by Latvian teachers in pedagogue professional competence development programs initiated and managed by the author. The used methods' deepest essence and influence on the development of teacher's emotional responsiveness were identified during the learning process. It was done by considering the teachers' answers to the questions asked, observing the practical work and mutual communication, evaluating the feedback gained after the lessons and observing teachers' communication after the lessons.

Table 1 The set of the methods and approaches for the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness

The learning methods	Approaches	Benefits
DRAMA METHOD	Situation role-playing	– Problem situation resolution
	Role-playing	– Cultivation of talents and abilities – Self-expression – Reacting to emotions
	Etudes	– Tension relief – Creativity – Interplay – Brainstorming – Expressing emotions
	Staging fairy-tales and myths	– Self-cognition – Self-analysis – Self-regulation
WORKING WITH SYMBOLS	See! Assess! Do!	– Problem recognition, resolution – Positive emotion actualisation – Promotion of collaboration – Elimination of egoism, the joy of sharing – Development of mental habits – Experiencing revelations
	Association building What do I learn about myself?	– Imagination training, an impulse for spiritual growth – Promotion of creativity – Awareness of cultural and personal subconsciousness – Personality growth promotion – Empathy strengthening

	Inspiration story, wish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Awareness of life-force resources - Creative thinking training - Providing trust and safety - Promotion of kindness
AWARENESS	Breathing exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Self-awareness - Defeating tension and stress
	Awareness of emotions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Empathy strengthening - Development of emotional intelligence
	Awareness of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Broadening of consciousness - Awareness of mind's and body's entirety
	Practising gratitude	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Faith, reliance - Overcoming Ego - Feeling elated emotions - Flow of life-energy
	Meditation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Skill to observe your own thoughts, emotions - Harmony - Awareness of your own self-existence

98% of the 240 surveyed teachers acknowledge that working with the chosen methods and techniques in the learning process ensured the following:

Table 2 Summary of answers provided by the teachers

Question asked	Number of respondents per answer	Frequency expressed in % of the total respondents	Received answers
What are the teachers' benefits when studying according to the proposed methods and techniques at the professional competences development courses?	130	54%	A wide range of positive feelings are repeatedly experienced in the lessons - joy, passion, lightness, love, satisfaction, surprise, friendship, optimism, inspiration, affinity, interest, gratitude, support.
	55	23%	Self-acquired experience creates motivation to work with yourself, evaluate and improve learning methods in collaboration with the students.
	26	11%	By associating the learning process with yourself, knowledge is strengthened in memory and becomes more personal.
	14	6%	There is a chance to self-actualize during the lessons; self-experience is gained by observing yourself and listening to others.
	10	4%	By actively engaging in the process of

			thinking and acting, co-responsibility for the results is being increased
	3	1%	The inner protest that the person themselves should be actively involved during classes.
	2	1%	Surprise that the person must observe themselves and express their feelings.

As a result, the author has observed that the methods providing the better results for the improvement of teachers' emotional responsiveness are the ones with improvable and expandable techniques by taking into account the needs of the target audience while being used in real time. Methods achieve higher results if they simultaneously involve mind, heart, body, emotions and breathing. This is shown by the surveyed teachers' answers to the lesson reflection question "What feelings was I experiencing during the lessons?":

- ease and relaxation;
- joy and flow of energy;
- openness to cooperation and overcoming of internal barriers;
- pleasant memories and positivism during classes;
- self-awareness;
- peace, kindness, creativity, responsibility;
- mental and emotional enrichment;

The author's observations about group members during classes:

- elated emotions, kindness between the participants in the classroom;
- experiencing elevating self-esteem;
- return of belief in their own abilities;
- professional confidence strengthening;
- becoming more attentive to one another;
- smiling more, working actively;
- learning to recognise and express their feelings;
- members of the group become internally more harmonious by being aware of themselves as "Here and Now".

The author's methodological technique "What do I learn about myself?" is created in the style of personality growth cards (the set consists of 70 cards). They are based on the cultural code derived from the poet Aspazija's autobiographical memory collection "The blue sky in the golden clouds" (Aspazija, 1968). By using this methodology in the learning process, teachers have the opportunity to get to know and improve themselves through personal, collective and cultural subconsciousness. The developed methodological techniques contribute to the personal growth through associative thinking. The cards contain 140 nouns, which encourage strengthening feelings of nobleness and being aware. They also encourage attracting true and pure thoughts, such as

child, morning, life, beauty, path, development. Through the 70 verbs, it is possible to exercise self-education by emphasising strong verbs in your consciousness and life, such as stop, touch, gather, spiritualize, hear, play, trust. 30 of the cards contain the conjunction “and”, which prompts new impulses from subconsciousness and become support for one's personal growth. By using the author's created personality cards, teachers are encouraged to follow their own sensations during the learning process to learn to feel themselves, set aside previously developed thinking patterns, listen to the impulses of their inner voice, dispose of the stereotypes and assumptions of “correct” and “incorrect”. After group observations, it can be concluded that working with the “What do I learn about myself?” technique paves the way for creative thinking, understanding and strengthening of feelings and removing the inner safeguard mechanisms. After applying the personality growth cards to different learning stages and situations and gathering feedback, the participants acknowledge that the methodical technique:

- provides an extensive range of usability options, thus helping to expand pedagogical thinking;
- is an opportunity to feel and listen to yourself;
- shows the influence words can have on thoughts, emotions and feelings;
- allows the development of mental and emotional habits;
- is an opportunity to recognise and use the internal energy resources.

By using this methodical technique, the author's practical work confirmed Vorobjov's (Vorobjovs, 2000) statement on the importance of working through feelings to strengthen them. Listening to the stories of other colleagues and hearing the similarities increased teachers' empathy levels. Similarly as acknowledged by Shmit (Šmits, 2013), it was possible to see how kindness from thoughts and words influences mutual relationships. This is how the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness takes place in the learning process. After experiencing the methodical technique “What do I learn about myself?” in various learning situations, f.e. realization of one's professional skillset through stories (“My most beautiful teacher's life story”, “A story on cooperation with pupils”, “Today I'm thanking you for...”, “My character trait – strength or weakness”, “Me – a happy person”, etc.), the participants were asked a question - “What are the personality development benefits of using the chosen method?”. Acknowledgement in teachers' answers confirmed the previously expressed thought on how the experienced technique improves the following:

- the ability to stimulate thinking based on cultural and personal subconsciousness;
- the reception of both direct and indirect impulses for personality development through words;

- intentionally amplifying the awareness of feelings and emotions;
- the skills to take notice, listen to and hear the other person;
- the self-cognition process through the culture code;
- the opportunity to purposefully reach results in a short period;
- creating a transition from learning processes to the real-life environment;
- the teachers' inner motivation to grow, learn, change and be unique “Here and Now”.

An important aspect worth noting from the teachers' feedback on the appliance of “What do I learn about myself” methodical technique is the experienced personal growth leading to:

1. returning to pleasant memories and recognising them as a source of strength;
2. finding new sources of energy by becoming more self-aware;
3. self-cognition leads to a surprise about one's true abilities;
4. smiles and positive emotions creating benevolent and creative environment for teaching process;
5. broadening of person's sensitivity and depth of thought by allowing peace to enter their inner space;
6. formation of friendly relationships with others by being in touch with and understanding yourself.

Conclusions

The study described and evaluated 3 learning methods and 13 techniques that contribute to the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness. 3 of these are the author's created learning techniques - "What do I learn about myself?", “See! Assess! Do!”, “Practicing gratitude”.

Teachers' lifelong learning should include learning methods such as the Drama Method, Working with Symbols, Awareness and a range of learning techniques - staging fairy-tales and myths, association building, "What do I learn about myself?", “Practicing gratitude”, " See! Assess! Do!", awareness of emotions, breathing exercises, meditation. This creates the possibilities for the teacher to learn to be self-conscious and express feelings, to experience the inner-feeling of peace and gratitude, to work on self-knowledge and do self-analysis, to learn self-regulation.

By working with the author's own personality growth technique “What do I learn about myself?” at the teachers' professional competences development courses, it was discovered that through a practical application of this technique, teachers experience a better inner sense of culture and personal subconsciousness, strengthen empathy, gain positive emotions, gain a more

personal nature towards learning, develop motivation to work with themselves, evaluate and improve learning methods when interacting with students.

Each of the learning methods and techniques chosen are considered to be positive when improving the teachers' emotional responsiveness. As a recommendation for teachers' further education, the methods and techniques mentioned in the research should be adapted depending on the teaching situations. It is an opportunity to enrich the emotion-based self-experience of learning, to improve self-knowledge and self-regulation skills, to motivate towards life-long education.

The practical application of the summarized and evaluated methods and techniques in teachers' professional competences development courses facilitates the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness, which is an important indicator for a sustainable development of education.

Summary

This article "The possibilities for improving teachers' emotional responsiveness" gives insight into the theory of feelings and emotions in the pedagogical process. The article provides an insight into a study aimed at characterizing and evaluating a set of learning methods and techniques for improving teachers' emotional responsiveness. As a result, a set of teaching methods and techniques has been compiled and evaluated to facilitate the development of teachers' emotional responsiveness in the process of professional lifelong education. The study involved 11 groups of teachers, altogether 240 pedagogues of all ages and different experiences from all regions of Latvia. The study describes the author's created personal growth technique, "What do I learn about myself?", which has been well-accepted and appreciated by teachers in the processes of lifelong education, conferences and seminars of international importance.

The teaching methods and techniques summarized and described in the research contribute to the improvement of the teachers' emotional responsiveness. They have been tested in practice at the teachers' professional development program courses for Latvian teachers developed and managed by the author. A deeper meaning of the applied methods and their influence on the formation of the teachers' emotional responsiveness was observed during the learning process by reviewing the teachers' answers to the questions asked, observing the practical activities and communication between the groups as well as evaluating the feedback received and teachers' communication after the classes.

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