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Emotional Intelligence and Learning

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ABSTRACT: If it is true that emotions play an important role in the processes of reasoning, judgment and decision, it is equally true that emotional intelligence is an essential skill not only for affective life and the sphere of personal relationships, but also for activities work and social.
Emotional intelligence generates psycho-physical and relational well-being. It can be learned and perfected, it is a duty of the school to introduce emotional education to enhance learning and prevent the discomfort of young people and many harmful behaviors.
Developing strategies for developing emotional intelligence is fundamental during all learning phases.

KEYWORDS: *discomfort prevention, emotion, emotional intelligence, learning, welfare*.

I.   INTRODUCTION

Emotional Intelligence is the ability of an individual to recognize, discriminate, identify and label in the appropriate way and, consequently, to manage their emotions and those of others in an effective and productive way in order to achieve certain objectives. The pedagogical model that has been affirmed is derived from the models of American psycho-pedagogy. After the first scientific publications (early 90s) some particularly innovative schools and organizations began to integrate Emotional Intelligence into their didactic programs. The results could only be positive: the emotional dimension is fundamental in the learning processes. The educational model deprived, of emotions makes every science sterile. It is the passion for research and knowledge that has generated and continues to generate great scientists.
Prevention and intervention programs based on emotional intelligence can be the best investments to ensure a positive future for students.

II.   EMOTION

To talk about emotional intelligence and emotional education, must first start from the concept of emotion.
There are many disciplines involved in the study of emotions: ethology, neuropsychology, clinical psychology, social psychology, philosophy, psychiatry and psychoanalysis. Although scholars are engaged in the study of emotions over time, it has not yet reached a shared definition of emotion, nor has it reached a solution to the debate between what originally caused the emotion.
Most theories define emotions, or rather emotional experiences, as a multicomponential process, which develops in several components, with a path temporal that evolves and believe that emotions play an important role in the reasoning, judgment and decision processes.
In psychology, emotion is defined as the "*intense affective reaction with acute onset of short duration determined by an environmental stimulus. Its appearance causes a somatic, vegetative and psychic modification*"[1].
On a somatic level, the expressive reactions caused by an emotion concern: facial expression, body positions and attitudes, forms of communication.
At the vegetative level, physiological reactions, as a consequence of an emotion, affect blood circulation, respiration, digestion and secretion, motor functions (through muscle hypertension) and sensory functions like hearing and view.
Psychological emotions determine a reduction of self control, difficulty of reflections, decrease of the ability to apply methods, choices and review.
"*Emotions have many effects on our cognitive system, and one of their roles is to establish the goals we want to achieve*"[2].

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[1]Galimberti U., Dizionario di psicologia, Utet, 2006, 326.

[2]Goleman D., Intelligenza emotiva, Rizzoli, 1996.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Emotional intelligence is an aspect of intelligence linked to the ability to consciously recognize, use, understand and manage one's own and others' emotions.

Salovey & Mayer were the first scholars to describe emotional intelligence, defining it as "*the ability to control one's own and others' feelings and emotions, and use this information to guide one's thoughts and actions*".

Salovey & Mayer with their publication Emotional Intelligence[2] have shown that emotional intelligence is composed of three main aspects:

- evaluation and expressions of emotions;
- the regulation of emotions;
- the use of emotions.

The same authors in 1997 reviewed the definition given in 1990, as with subsequent studies it appeared imprecise and lacking in the sentimental sphere, and Emotional Intelligence was defined as "*ability to perceive, evaluate and express an emotion; ability to access feelings and/or create them when they facilitate thoughts; ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth*"[3].

Golem defined Emotional Intelligence as "*the ability to correctly express one's own experience, to recognize one's own and others' emotions, and manage them positively, assuming adequate social behaviors and adequate empathetic* attitudes"[4]. Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence"became a best seller worldwide, in this book Goleman expounded his thesis according to which certain factors, such as awareness, self-management and empathy determine the personal and professional success of individuals. In the mid-nineties he already noticed how teachers began «to understand that there is a different type of gap, very dangerous: "emotional illiteracy"».

Numerous research workers (Barchard[5], Bracket & Mayer[6], Mestre et al.[7], O'Connor & Little[8]) have demonstrated the relationship between school success and Emotional Intelligence.

In the international literature, and in particular from that from the USA, numerous testimonies of research-intervention projects are reported, created with the aim of introducing particular attention to the social and emotional dimensions into school programming. Schools that integrate their programs with reference to Emotional Intelligence have been shown to perform better[9].

The results obtained in other countries pushed Europe with the Istanbul Convention drawn up by the Council of Europe in 2011 and ratified by Italy with law no. 77 of 2013, to ask member countries to include education in affectivity in school curricula. Everyone has fulfilled their commitment, except Italy and Greece.

In Italy, despite several years having passed and despite the 18 December 2014, a Bill was presented for the institution of the teaching of socio-affective education in secondary schools of first and second degree as well as in university study courses, nothing of the Convention has still been implemented.

In Italy on 1 March 2019, the Social Affairs Commission presented a motion to invite the government to promote education in emotional intelligence and social education in the classroom. After almost a year, on 29January 2020, the President of the Culture Commission in the Chamber reported in a conference: "*Today we are approving the law of bullying. I want to talk to you about article 7, education on emotional intelligence. Teachers and students have to work with their emotions* " In November, immediately after the approval of the amendment, the same reported: «*The possibility of training teachers and therefore educating our children to recognize their own feelings and those of others and positively manage actions and relationships represents an important signal of reaction to the growing climate of hatred and what we might call "emotional illiteracy"*».

The Italian school still awaits the introduction of the discipline.

IV. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AS A PREVENTION OF STUDENT DISCOMFORT

The need to introduce emotional education in schools is dictated by a series of evidences. First of all, the third international survey on civics and citizenship International Civic and Citizenship Education Study (ICCS) promoted by the IEA (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement), showed that, in Italy, education in social skills and emotional represents the "missing piece" of school curricula for teacher

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[3]Salovey P. & Mayer J. D., Emotional development and Emotional Intelligence: educational implications, Basic Book, 1997.

[4]Goleman D., Emotional Intelligence, Bantman Books, 1995.

[5]Barchard k., Education and Psychological Measurement, Sage Journal, 63, 2003, 840-858.

[6]Brackett M. A. & Mayer J. D., Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, Sage Journal, 29, 2003, 1147-1158, doi: 10.1177/0146167203254596.

[7]Mestre J. M. et al., Emotional intelligence and social and academic adaptation to school, Psicothema , 18, 2006, 112-117.

[8]O'Connor R. M. Jr. & Little I. S., Revisiting the predictive validity of emotional intelligence: Self-report versus ability-based measures, Personality and Individual Differences, 35(8), 2003, 1893–1902, doi: 10.1016/S0191-8869(03)00038-2.

[9]Devaney E. et Al., Sustainable Schoolwide Social and Emotional Learning (SEL): Implementation Guide and Toolkit, ERIC, 2006.

training, this has a heavy impact on the education of young people. In fact, youth discomfort, ascertained by numerous studies and daily news reports, is, first of all, an emotional uneasiness that causes early depression, often with a tendency to suicide, school dropout, eating behavior disorders, alcohol and narcotic substance abuse, and realization of criminal acts, committed in large numbers against property and, to a lesser extent, also against the person.

Youth discomfort, detectable in the school environment, is framed in a set of dysfunctional behaviors (poor participation, inattention, prevalent rejection and disturbance behaviors, bad relationship with classmates) that do not allow the subject to adequately live the activities in class and to learn successfully, limiting the use of one's cognitive, affective and relational skills[10]. Psychological suffering, as evidenced by scientific research, can lead to stress, attributable to school performance, this can lead to episodes of bullying, learning difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, or "school refusal".

Emotional intelligence with its dimensions: awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy and social skills, can strongly influence the school context in terms of behavior, learning, and social behavior. Let's see in more detail how they are structured and how they can help the student:

- "Awareness" is a deep and adequate knowledge of oneself, one's desires, thoughts, abilities and emotions, this allows adequate monitoring of one's actions and decisions. Increasing awareness levels also increases the level of self-esteem and self-confidence. More aware pupils will have more knowledge and a clearer vision of their potential and their limits. Teachers must work on developing "awareness" by giving them the necessary space to express themselves.

- Self-control is that ability to manage one's emotions by preventing them from interfering while performing a task. Self-control is also the ability to manage your negative and stressful impulses, making you take an appropriate and correct attitude. For a pupil it is essential to "learn" to manage emotions because in the future it will allow them to manage "school anxieties".

- Motivation is that ability that regulates, maintains and guides the way we act. It is the ability to use one's emotions to self-motivate and to react to failures. Motivation plays a fundamental role in learning processes, ensuring commitment, concentration, search for effective strategies, and optimization of resources. In the school you can work on the motivation of pupils by providing them with new teaching experiences. A high level of motivation improves curiosity, open-mindedness and problem setting, and also provides fundamental skills for the student's extracurricular life.

- Empathy, working on empathic skills at school, is fundamental to counteracting highly critical behaviors that can lead to bullying and widespread violence. The value of empathy is fundamental to create a cohesive, collaborative and strong class group, guaranteeing moral support to each individual in the class group. Empathy also prepares for the values of acceptance and acceptance of the other.

- Social skills, effective work on emotional intelligence must guarantee correct use of emotions in different social contexts, thus promoting the development of functional and critical relationships. Supporting the correct relationship skills allows you to reduce phenomena such as: bullying, disrespect, vandalism. Promoting the development of emotional intelligence at school is a social need of great importance.

To understand the need and urgency to introduce emotional education in schools from childhood, it would be enough to observe the experience of some countries. Reference can be made to Denmark where the Klassens tid has been introduced into the study programs since the 1970s. This social lesson from 2016 began to be linked to the concept of empathy. They expose their problems and, after an exchange of opinions and advice, they collaborate together to find a solution. In Denmark, the perceived level of social well-being is high, the economy is more vigorous, teachers and pupils are happier, there is no bullying or social emergencies.

V.   EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE IN EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES

Emotional intelligence can be learned. It has genetic bases that contribute to 50% of the EQ (Emotional Quotient), the remaining 50% is attributable to environmental factors which, as explained by the studies of Moira Mikolajczak[11], can remit a deficient genetic set in this sense. Studies conducted in France and Belgium have shown that genetic deficiencies can be compensated for if educated in a family environment rich in emotional stimuli. So emotional intelligence can be learned and enhanced.

Salovey & Meyer uphold that individuals differ in their ability to use their emotions and those of others to solve their problems. Positive emotions can improve memory organization so that cognitive material is better integrated for better stimulation of ideas: "*When people approach life task with emotionnal intelligence, they*

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[10]Mancini G. & Gabrielli G., Test di Valutazione del disagio e della dispersione scolastica, Erickson, 1998.

[11]Mikolajczak M., researcher at the Belgian National Fund and the Faculty of Psychology of the Catholic University of Leuven.

should be at an advantage for solving problems adaptively. And is for this reason that such skills are included within the construct of emotional intelligence"[12].

From the experience of other countries and the studies conducted have shown that people with high emotional intelligence use more effective coping[13] strategies and are more capable of managing stress. Emotional intelligence, unlike intelligence, can be learned and therefore increased[14]. Teaching emotional intelligence skills can improve learning skills, social relationships, stress management, self control, and generally promotes the well-being of the individual and the group.

Emotional intelligence should be taught systematically in all schools starting from childhood.

In the 1990s, an emotional literacy course was activated in over 100 public schools in New York (Creative Conflict Resolution Program), the course focused on the method of solving the contrasts that arise in the school environment. There has been a noticeable reduction in anti-social attitudes and an increase in pro-social behavior. In particular: - less violence in the classroom - less verbal humiliation in the classroom - more benevolence - more willingness to collaborate - more empathy - more communication skills.

Linda Lantieri, creator of the Program said: "*The program shows students that in addition to passivity and aggression, there are many alternatives for dealing with conflicts. We show them the futility of violence and replace it with concrete skills. Children learn to defend their rights without resorting to violence. These are abilities that remain throughout life and are not just for those most prone to violence*"[15].

The relationship between teachers and pupils has changed, pupils have changed (digital natives) who learn differently than in the past, in this new scenary, educators must manage educational relationships effectively. Positive relationships between teachers and pupils play a fundamental role both for the emotional development and for the development of intrinsic motivation and for the self-esteem of the pupils.

The school for the important role it plays, cannot ignore the importance of emotional intelligence, both for the training of pupils and for the promotion of the well-being and professional effectiveness of the teacher.

The individual tends to remove the memories that create negative emotions for him. In a not calm climate, where those who have to learn feel anxiety, boredom and fear, learning will be difficult: the instinct for survival is activated in the mind, the self-defense mechanism to escape, because there is uneasiness. Otherwise, in a peaceful environment where there is a predisposition for listening, acceptance of error, curiosity, cheerfulness is learned with joy and learning will remain indelible. Research workers have explained the prevalence of attention of our brain towards negative stimuli rather than positive ones[16].

From a good emotional and emotional education, therefore, depends the quality of the learning that will serve to make young people independent in adult life.

Even in the world of work, if we consider that emotional intelligence has been included in the top ten skills required by 2020 by the World Economic Forum, we understand the thesis of UNESCO that considers this skill as the greatest achievement of modernity after the internet.

A relationship with colleagues that goes beyond the working one, allows you to collaborate better in a team and to be an element of motivation for them. A colleague, a leader willing to listen to problems, characterized by excellent persuasive skills, capable of receiving non-verbal messages and helping in times of difficulty, will create a much more peaceful and consequently productive work environment.

Today the whole world is experiencing a moment of enormous crisis due to the spread of Covid19, schools in many countries of the world are closed and the alternative to the frontal lesson in the classroom is E-learning, a teaching that highlights the gaps perpetrated for many years. In fact, ignore of emotional education is now making itself feel bursting. Never before would a previous baggage of learning one's own emotions and those of others have been useful, which would have greatly helped our young people to face the moment of crisis and above all of physical solitude.

In E-learning or rather virtual teaching, emotions and empathic resonance are minimal or even absent.

If we consider real communication, it is verbal and non-verbal interactions, gestural and tonal messages that make you see the moods, convey what you feel, you can well include it as in the virtual world, where the physical body is absent and all the mimic representations are missing, it is impossible to comprehend the stages of mind, to make direct contact with the anguish, with the tremor, with the joy of the other and with the complexity of his personal experience.

Young people, the natives digital, accustomed to communicating through messages, they move further and further away from any human interaction. They cannot express what they feel or have difficulties to find a name

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[12]Salovey, Peter et Mayer, John D.; 'Emotional Intelligence', in Imagination, Cognition and Personality, 9, 1990, 206.

[13]Coping is considered to be the process that arises from interactions that overcome or challenge a subject's resources and which is made up of multiple components, such as cognitive evaluation of events, uneasy reactions, personal and social resources, etc.

[14]Salovey & Mayer, 1990; Goleman, 1996.

[15]Goleman D. interview with Linda Lantieri in "The New York Times", March 3, 1992.

[16]Olofsson J., University of Umea (Sweden).

with which to define what they feel, they replace the definitions of emotions with the "emoticons" that submerge social conversations.

Says Moira Mikolajczak "*Knowinghow to give a name to what you feel, talking about it to people close to us, sharing our inner world with those around us are essential components of the emotional skills that make life happier and better adapted to social reality. And what's more, they improve health*"[17].

VI.   CONCLUSION

If at school you learn to use and manage emotions, learning and training become more engaging for students and teachers, more effective and more important. Emotionally involved, we learn faster and more, collaborate in the group and learn from the group.

The importance of educating to emotions had already been felt in the late 1800s. Lombardo Radice[18], starting from his own experience, said "*the teacher must go to school to meet souls there, and not to look for ears; must bring life to school; the one that children bring with their experience*". Lombardo Radice saw school as a theater of life where life is interpreted, lived in the best, created by putting it in the best conditions. A school where the teacher takes the lesson from the heart, where he talks, discusses, where one enters through the door of life and comes out strong and ready to face life.

After almost a century, the Italian school, despite the innumerable progress, has not understood the value of Emotional Education and that the management of emotions is fundamental in school, so like it is outside of school, in social and working relationships.

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