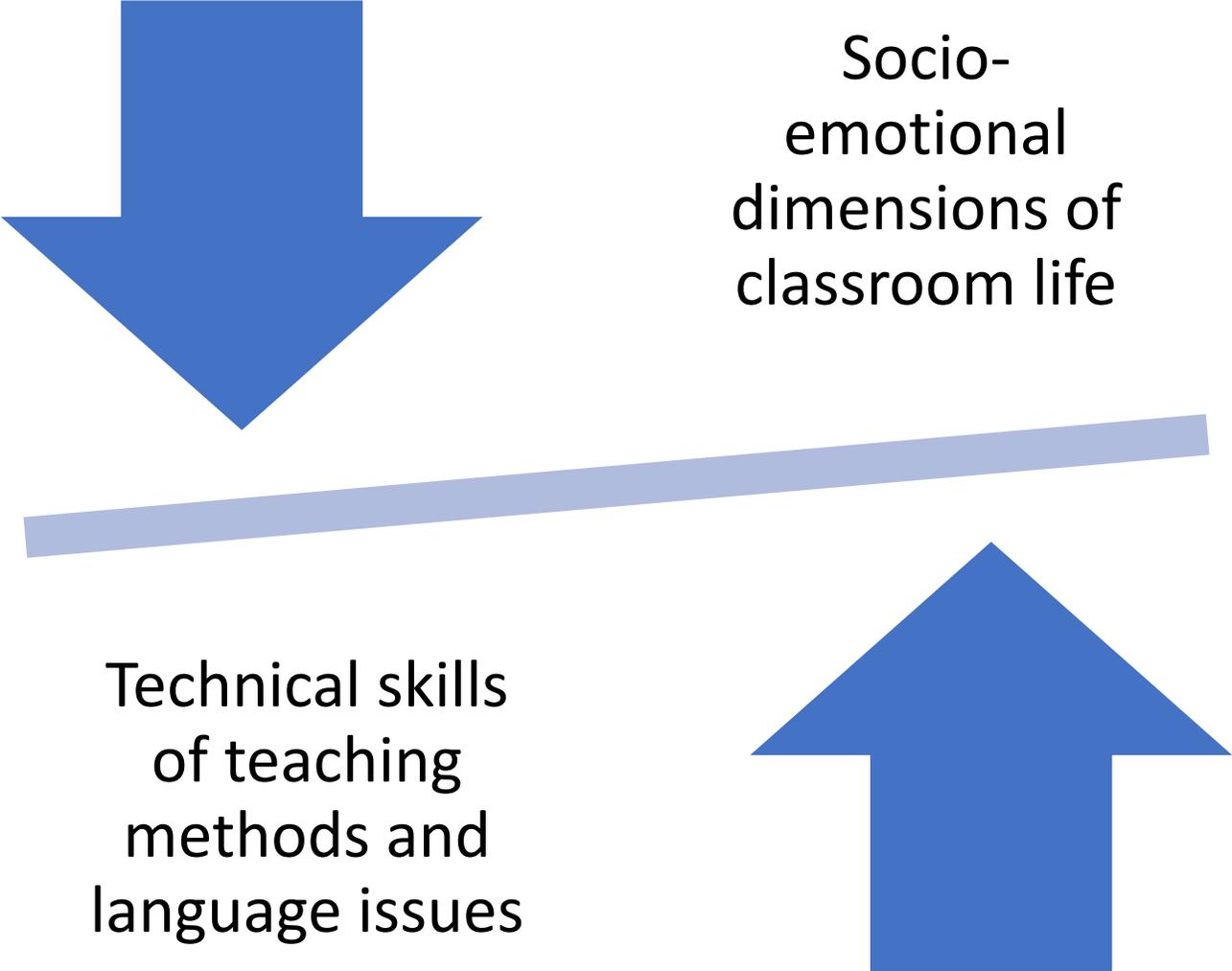


Teaching with heart and soul

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Role of so-called 'soft skills'

- How soft are soft skills?
- Is there evidence to suggest that they could/should instead be seen as core skills?

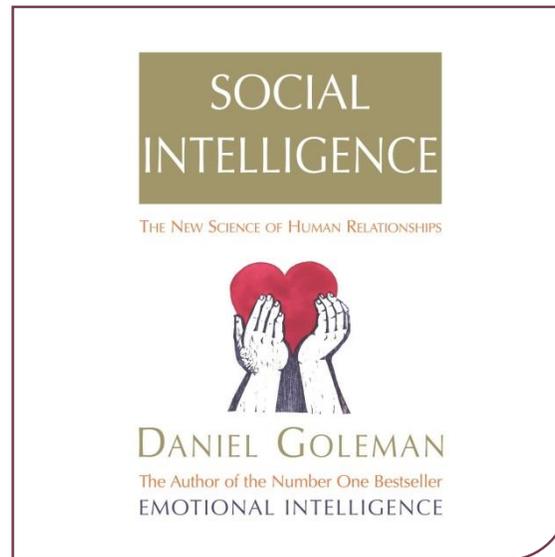
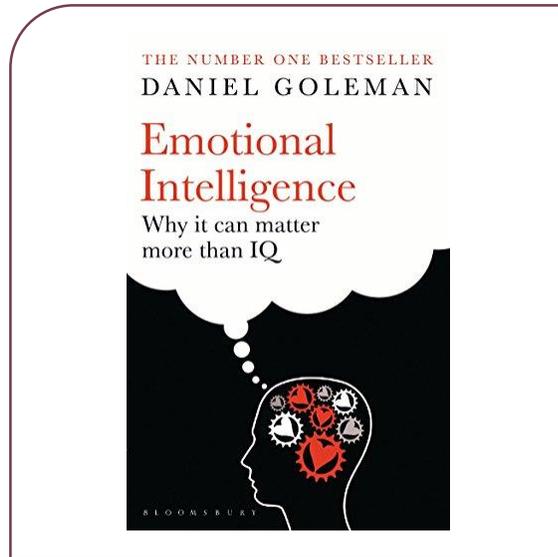


An extensive study of teachers' lives...

“experience and research, then, suggest that a dichotomy between promoting technical competence and personal growth in professional learning is false, and that ignoring the contributions of teachers’ sense of emotional wellbeing to their capacities to teach to their best is foolish” (Day & Gu, 2010: 36).



- 
- If we enhance the well-being of teachers, the well-being of their learners will also be enhanced.
 - *“psychologically wise teachers can make a huge difference to the lives of their learners”* (Duckworth, 2016: 218).
 - Teachers ↔ Learners
 - *“emotional contagion”* (Dresel & Hall, 2013; Frenzel & Stephens, 2013)

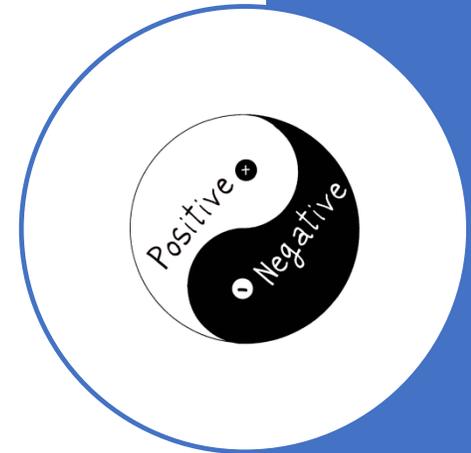


What are these 'soft skills'?

- Emotional intelligence
- Social intelligence

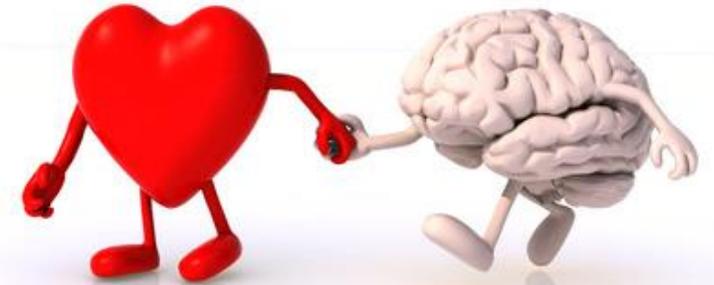
Task 1

- Work with the person sitting next to you.
- Choose one of the statements in the following pair and argue for it, giving personal examples.
 - ***“Negative emotions never help me.”***
 - ***“There can occasionally be positive outcomes when I feel sad, angry or worried, because these emotions motivate me to do something to feel better.”***



Emotional intelligence

- *“the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships”* (Goleman, 1998: 317)
- Five key components of EI:
 - Self-awareness
 - Self-regulation
 - Motivation
 - Empathy
 - Social skill



Emotional intelligence (cont.)

- Ability of individuals to:
 - be aware of their own emotions and those of others (**self-awareness**)
 - manage their emotions efficiently (**self-regulation**)
 - empathise with people in their immediate social environment by taking their perspective (**empathy**)
 - participate in social interactions and manage interpersonal relationships effectively (**social skill**)
 - have a positive outlook on life by remaining motivated to work on daily tasks (**motivation**)

Task 2

- With a partner, discuss Goleman's areas of emotional intelligence:
 - Where do you think you have strengths?
 - How do you use these in your work?
 - Could you employ them more consciously?

Self-awareness

Self-regulation

Empathy

Motivation

Social skill



Social intelligence

- “being intelligent not just *about* our relationships but also *in* them” (Goleman, 2006: 11)
- EI: one-person psychology
SI: two-person psychology
- Skill of managing interpersonal relationships for genuine humanistic, caring and healthy social relationships

Higher levels of
teacher socio-
emotional
competencies...

... are linked to:

- better classroom discipline
- better atmosphere, rapport
- student motivation
- lower anxiety classrooms
- reduced teacher stress/burnout

(Brackett et al., 2010; Chan, 2006; Corcoran & Tormey, 2012; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Meyer & Turner, 2007; Nizielski et al., 2012; Zembylas, 2003)

Socio-emotional competencies and language education

- Language learning is inherently and fundamentally social and interpersonal.
- Communicative Language Teaching.
- Intercultural understanding and communication.



Emotional Intelligence

Social Intelligence

Age

Teaching experience

Overseas teaching
experience

(Qualifications)

(Level of teaching)

Overseas teaching
experience

Qualifications

Teaching experience

(Age)

(Level of teaching)

- Trait EI/SI similar to educational-context-specific EI/SI.
- Females scored slightly higher than males.

Our project (Gkonou & Mercer, 2017)

Task 3

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- *You can always keep developing your socio-emotional competencies.*
- *You cannot really change how socially and emotionally competent you are.*



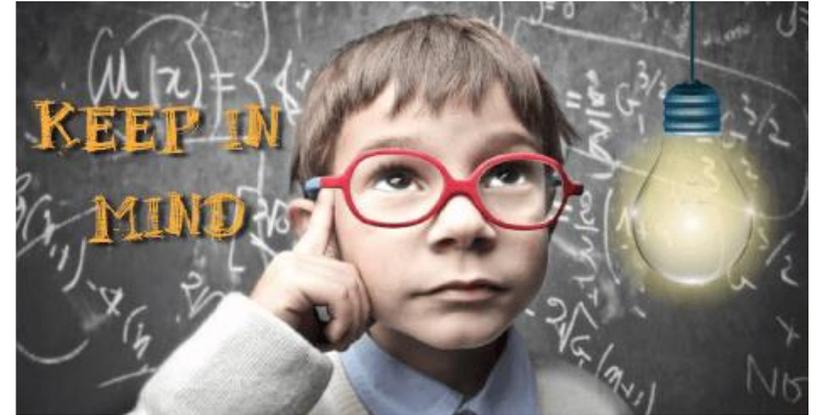
We begin with this mindset: Socio-emotional competence can develop further.

- Link between age/teaching experience and higher levels of EI/SI (in this study).
- These competencies are malleable (Brackett & Katulak, 2006; Nelis et al., 2009; Zins et al., 2004).
- Naturally certain people will be more emotionally/socially intelligent than others; however, socio-emotional competencies can be fostered through practice, sustained effort and experience.



Conclusion

- Socio-emotional competencies will not solve all classroom problems.
- BUT they are key life skills for teachers and their learners.
- Learners are different (and so are teachers)!
- Individual and differentiated support where necessary.
- Teachers as role models.
- Candid and explicit discussions on emotions.



Thank you!



Please feel free to get in touch via email:

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