

## **Chapter Six**

### **Understanding Emotions**

*Emotions play an important role in human survival and adaptation as they affect the way we perceive our surroundings, interpret them, and act upon these perceptions.*

*This chapter assess the effectiveness of a teacher-based instruction on emotional understanding and development. In the first part of this chapter I have discussed the theoretical templates that facilitated the construction of a patchwork of emotional curriculum. In 'A labyrinth' I have examined and developed a framework for the curriculum and 'The analytical quest' clarifies the paradigms of my research in emotions. In Section 2, I present the implementation of the framework designed to enhance the students' emotional understanding step by step. Each step comprises the aims of the particular level of emotional learning, applicable data and the analysis of it. To make my writing more coherent I have provided signposts to inform each step.*

*At the end of this chapter I have I have examined the effectiveness of my curriculum in a discussion, which presents the children's post-learning level in April 2003.*

### **Section 1**

#### **Emotions**

Feelings play a vital role in the development of learning since it is through our subjective emotional world that we develop personal constructs and meanings out of reality. A range of issues involve understanding emotions and coping with them. According to Greenberg, Kushche and Speltz (1990) social and emotional competence is related to emotional awareness, affective-cognitive control and social-cognitive understanding and is thus reflected in our behaviour and internal regulation.

Affective development is an important precursor of other modes of thinking (Kavanaugh, Zimmerberg and Fein, 1996) and precedes most forms of cognition (Greenberg, Kushche and Speltz, 1990). Making emotional understanding and regulation a vital aspect of general social competence and personality development. It is therefore, a significant objective in a life skill enhancement programme (WHO, 1995).

An emotionally competent person is:

- aware of his/her own emotional state, including the possibility of experiencing multiple emotions.
- able to discern others' emotions.
- proficient in verbal emotional communication.
- capable of empathy.
- able to realize that inner emotions may not be matched by outer expressions.
- aware of culturally accepted rules for the display of feeling.
- able to take individuality into account when assessing emotions.
- able to understand that his/her way of expressing emotions affects others, and takes this into account.
- capable of managing unpleasant emotions both in terms of their intensity and duration.
- competent in recognising elements of emotional intimacy and genuineness with respect to personal relationships.

(adapted from Hyson, 1994; Greenberg, Kusche, Cook, and Quamma, 1995; Webster-Stratton, 1999)

Therefore, I reason that emotionally competent children should:

- be able to handle their emotions effectively.
- have less behaviour problems.
- be confident.
- have high self esteem.
- be optimistic.

### **A labyrinth**

I struggled with the ambiguity of my curriculum in 'understanding emotions', how could I collect data and analyse it.

The broad questions guiding my study in emotions are:

- How do I understand emotions and enhancing of emotional intelligence?
- Would emotional understanding promote social competence?
- How would I use drama to teach 'understanding and coping with emotions'?

- How would I test the emergent findings?
- How would I record the findings in the class?
- How would I report the students' and my work in the class?

The struggle began with the first question ' how do I understand emotions' as the concept of emotion is one that is all pervasive, entering numerous fields of research including psychology, biology (evolution), sociology, anthropology and philosophy. Each discipline put forward an attempt to better understand and explain the skills, traits, and abilities associated with emotions. Each school has drawn its own definitions of what emotions are and why we have them. The study of emotions in psychology, cognitive psychology, neuro-psychology and psychiatry are generally all unfamiliar grounds for a teacher. If I were to build my theory of emotions on them, my lack of understanding would bring confusion to my work as these disciplines are baffling and unrelated to my profession. Above all there is the fear of understanding these theories superficially and misinterpreting them and distorting them to suit my purpose.

The study undertaken by Salovey and Mayer (1990) on emotions clarified my thoughts. Salovey and Mayer are credited for introducing the term 'emotional intelligence' (Cherniss, 2000). Mayer and Salovey (1993) define emotional intelligence as '*the subset of social intelligence that involves the ability to: monitor one's own and others' emotions, discriminate among them and use this information to guide one's thinking and actions.*' (p. 433)

The concept of emotional intelligence includes attention to the mental processes related to emotional information (Salovey and Mayer, 1990) such as:

- a. appraising and expressing emotions of self or others;
- b. regulating emotions of self or others;
- c. utilizing emotions in adaptive ways.

The Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale (MEIS) and the most current measure of the Mayer and Salovey model, the Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, Emotional Intelligence Test v.2.0 (MSCEIT v2.0), are both designed to assess emotional intelligence. They are performance scales, that is, they measures how well people perform tasks and solve emotional problems. The MSCEIT v2.0 was developed from an intelligence-testing

perspective and was informed by the latest research in emotions. The approach of MSCEIT v 2.0 is based on an individual's performance on a set of items designed to measure the four-branch model of emotional intelligence. They are: (a) perceiving, (b) assimilating, (c) understanding, and (d) managing emotion. These are described in more detail by the authors as follows:

- a. Emotional Perception: involves such abilities as identifying emotions in faces, music, and stories.
- b. Emotional Facilitation of Thought: involves such abilities as relating emotions to other mental sensations such as taste and colour (relations that might be employed in artwork), and using emotion in reasoning and problem solving.
- c. Emotional Understanding: involves solving emotional problems such as knowing which emotions are similar or opposites, and what relations they convey.
- d. Emotional Management: involves understanding the implications of social acts on emotions and the regulation of emotion in self.

The work of Greenberg and Kusche (1993, 1998) and Greenberg, Kusche, Cook and Quamma (1995) are studies I found equally adept. To promote emotional competence, they formulated an intervention model which was designed to provide school-aged children with instructions regarding various issues involved with the expression and understanding of emotions. The model designed by Greenberg, Kusche, Cook and Quamma (1995) focused on increasing the children's ability to:

- discuss emotions;
- utilize a large emotional vocabulary;
- recognise emotions in oneself and others;
- understand display rules;
- recognise the simultaneity of emotional experience.

Based on the above-mentioned works of Mayors and Salovey and Greenberg and Kusche and the features described in the list of an emotionally competent person (p.2), I framed a few questions to shape my lessons to enhance the children's understanding.

- What are the names of the emotions/feelings you can think of?
- Are all feelings 'okay' to have?
  - Yes? How do you know that?
  - No? Why not?
- Can you recount an occasion when you felt \_\_\_\_\_ (sad/happy/lonely...)?
- How do you know when you feel \_\_\_\_\_ (sad/happy/lonely...)?
- How do you know when others feel \_\_\_\_\_ (sad/happy/lonely...)?
- Can somebody feel two emotions at one time?
- Can you hide your feelings?
- Do you think there are times when people should hide their feelings?
- Can feelings change?

### **The analytical quest**

I was worried that my study would lack the rigour of '*reports informed by numerical renderings of human experience*' (Taylor, 1996:p 39), as numbers are sometimes considered more credible than the description of people and their work. Using psychological tests for example, would mean that I would have to import an agenda that was foreign to my work, which would stifle my teaching ability (Chapter 9, p.249-50). I would have to use:

- quantitative checklists used by psychologists not teachers;
- methods that are extraneous to educational drama.

I was faced with the challenge of keeping my students' and my collective voices and perspectives alive, at the same time recognizing the researcher's role in shaping the research process and product. How was I to grapple with this tension and dilemma?

Trying to report the growth of the children's emotional understanding in numbers would be problematic. When I calculated mean averages of the children's emotion vocabulary, for example, I obtained numbers like 3.5 at pre-learning stage. Now the number 3.5 implies three and a half words!

In the post-learning test (Table 11) the average number of words named in five minutes is 13. However, Samir identified as few as 5 words and Sarla, who could express only 3 words in the beginning, named as many as 19 words. Rather than just showing that the average child learnt a certain number of words, what was more important to my study is why Samir did not learn, whilst Sarla learnt so much. I believe by merely using quantitative numbers I would not be able to demonstrate the students' learning. As I was working with only ten children, it would have the appearance of a watered down survey of a tiny sample. Doing qualitative analysis in this fashion would dilute the richness of the data. It would inadvertently undermines one of the greatest strengths of the qualitative approach, which is to provide a window into a contextual setting of a research.

An additional problem was that the children had a poor vocabulary and therefore could not articulate the precise feeling words. I had to consider alternative methods to validate the children's progress. As:

- Even though they studied in an English medium school, most were weak in English.
- 9/10 children had slow speech and language development (see Table 7, p120), a problem children with Specific Learning Difficulties (SpLD) often face.

Using Ability tests like Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test would have been irrelevant as, for example the second question (see sample of test items MSCEIT) asks:

*2. Someone feels more and more happy. When their emotion grows even past happiness and they are out of control, they feel:*

- a. satisfied*
- b. content*
- c. manic*
- d. joyous*

None of the children would have been able to give the correct answer, as words like manic are not a part of their vocabulary.

In the following text I seek to recreate the contextual setting of my class as a framework that can be analysed and understood. I would rather describe and critique my work and allow others to judge for themselves whether the analysis and interpretation are credible in light of the data. I have included detailed field notes, transcripts and written

documents and the same time I have presented my data in a more prosaic form such as numbers and tables. With the aid of these multiple perspectives I aspire to allow outsiders to view my classroom situation from the perspective of the participants and at the same time hope to demonstrate the rigour and trustworthiness of my work.

## **Section 2- In the Classroom**

*In this section I describe the implementation of my curriculum in enhancing emotional understanding in children and is divided into steps 1. to step 9. Each step is sequenced according to the significance of the level in the hierarchy of emotional understanding it is focused on. They are written in a chronological order of the events. Each step describes the progress the students made, as they understood emotion. The intention of this section is to critique the effectiveness of the module. Therefore the activities in the drama class and the analysis of the consequence of the teaching are of most importance, which I have reflected on in this part of the chapter. It has the data written in the form of the transcripts and tables and analysis of the data presented by my reflections in Times New Roman Bold. I have not separated process and result, but defined them interactively as I desire 'to unite my thoughts and my actions' (Schon, 1963: p 69).*

### **Learning about emotions**

My drama class lessons on 'understanding and coping with emotions' were framed in steps. Emotional learning was taught over a period of seven months (Table 1, p.7): three months (Cycle 1) plus four months 'Learning about emotions' (Cycle 2). The final test was completed in April 2003, to confirm maintenance. However, as Heathcote (1984) suggests, 'emotions is at the heart of drama experience' (p.97), no class in the period of twenty-two months were devoid of a meaningful experience in emotional learning.

### **Step 1**

*In Step 1, I introduced the children to emotions. In order to become aware of a particular emotion in yourself and others, you first have to be able to name it. The aim of the step 1 was to enable the children to compile a feeling lexicon. The section 'The Importance of*

*naming emotions' is self-explanatory and justifies my initiative to introduce the children to writing a 'learning diary'.*

The first class served as an introduction to emotional learning. At the outset the children were asked to name all the 'emotions' or 'feeling words' they could think of. Concurrently, I separated feeling words from non-feeling words, in their list and also pointed out and explained the non-feeling words.

Swaroop: What are the feelings we experience?

Children: Happy, sad, hurt, jealous, guilty, proud, excellent, laughing, hurting, loving, strongest.

Swaroop: Are strongest, laughing and excellent feelings? Strongest means....

Transcript: Class11- 13.7.2002

### **Importance of naming emotions**

Emotional literacy is the ability to recognize, label, and understand feelings in one's self and others. It is a prerequisite skill to emotional regulation and successful interpersonal interactions and problem solving (Denham, 1986; Webster-Stratton, 1999). Limited emotional literacy on the other hand, can result in misperceptions of feeling in one's self and others. In order to correctly perceive feelings in yourself and others, you first have to have words for those feelings, a feeling lexicon. Many children are either 'happy' or 'sad' and miss all the subtle gradations of feelings in-between because they do not have labels and definitions for those emotions. A large and more complex feeling vocabulary allows children to make finer discriminations between feelings, to communicate better with others about their internal affective states and to engage in discussions about their personal experiences with the world. Children with SpLD often have a limited vocabulary compared to their normally developing peers, thus it is detrimental to their progress in achieving emotional literacy.

Gottman and DeClaire (1997) suggest everybody experience emotions, however, the impediment is in accessing our feelings. How do we gain access to our feelings? The answer, as I understood, from my readings (Greenberg, Kusche, Cook and Quamma, 1995; Webster-Stratton, 1999) is in naming them. Words give meaning to our world, and through

them we gain understanding. Gottman and DeClaire (1997) recommend maintaining a daily log of our feelings to facilitate an increase in emotional quotient. With time and self-awareness, they continue, our feeling language will become more differentiated and therefore more precise. With this view in mind I initiate my students' to the art of maintaining a diary.

I also gave each of them a feelings chart which said, “ How do you feel today?” it had thirty-seven emotions illustrated on it. I recommended they stick it up in their room and look at it everyday. All of them very proudly showed their family their chart and stuck it near their bed at home.

Manni: .....So I can see it in the morning as soon as I wake-up.

Transcript: Class19- 21. 9. 2002



The feelings chart.

## **The students' diary**

Maintaining a feelings list enables us to personalise our feelings. To enable this I gave each child a diary, an eighty page notebook to write down:

- The feelings they experienced in the drama class and when away from class.
- The feeling words they learnt while reading, talking and so forth.

Keeping in mind that all the children in this group had SpLD and therefore may experience difficulty with writing, I clarified that I would not judge their handwriting, grammar or spellings when they wrote in this diary. To ensure that children realised that writing was not compulsory I decided not to grade the book or give marks. Writing new words was for the joy of learning and communicating this learning. I made this point clear, as Indian students tend to think all schoolwork is undertaken for grades or marks. While I elucidated the guidelines, I also explained to them why they were going to maintain the diary, instructing them the values of 'naming feelings'.

To assist the children with their diaries I gave them guidelines:

- They could take help from their teachers, parents and siblings.
- They could refer to dictionaries.
- There were no marks or grades for the work accomplished.
- I was not going to take into account their:
  - spellings;
  - handwriting.
- They could draw or stick pictures.

Additionally, I asked them questions which I wrote in their diaries:

- Are all feelings ok to have?
- How do you know that?
- How do you know what you are feeling?
- Can you hide your feelings?
- Do you think people should hide their feelings?
- Can you feel two feelings simultaneously?
- Can feelings change?

This diary served a tripartite purpose. For the children, it was a logbook in which they could write down their thoughts. For me, the teacher, it was a means to initiate reflection in class when the children wrote new feeling words or thoughts about feelings. Additionally, as four children had a memory problem, it would be unfair to test their learning merely by what they said in class during the post-learning test. For the teacher-researcher, it served as a data collection tool.

During the course of the term, the children and I sat and reflected on what was written by them. Sometimes they wrote words which made me ask them if they appreciated what the word meant. The act of merely writing words and compiling a long list was not central to this exercise, as was understanding the words.

Swaroop: Elated!!??

**I was extremely surprised with entry of the word and wanted to know if Sarla was aware of the meaning of the word. I did not want the students to merely write words without understanding their meaning.**

Swaroop: Do you know what it means?

Sarla: Happy...

Swaroop: Just happy?

Sarla: very ...very ...very happy.

Transcript: Class 17-7.9.2002

In the following class (24.9.2002) Sarla showed me her diary in which she had stuck a picture to illustrate her answer. It was a picture of some happy school children carrying a trophy, high above their heads.



**From Sarla's diary.**

Of the ten children:

- Five maintained their diaries efficiently.
- Three did not show their diaries as they continuously forgot to bring them to class.
- Two were inconsistent in maintaining their diaries.

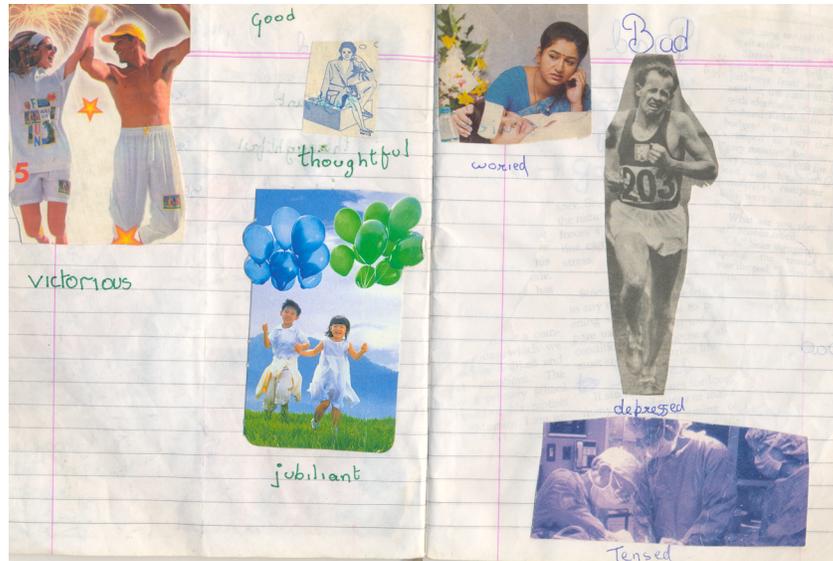
The five children that maintained their diary were the ones who made the maximum progress in class. Sarla, who started out naming not more than three emotions, compiled a list of 120 emotions. She cut pictures from magazines to illustrate that she understood the word, as I would ask them to explain or act out the new feeling word they learnt.

Lali wrote in her diary, consciously making connections with what was practised in class and her experiences in the outside world.

Nihar who was good at drawing drew faces to explain the meaning of feelings, as he understood them.

Of the three that did not maintain a diary, Mukul and Pratik rarely attended class in Cycle 2, the third child, Samir attended class but was often distracted. His lack of progress in class was demonstrated in the way he answered questions raised at reflection time and during the post-learning test.

Chandani and Manni were inconsistent in recording in their diary and irregular in bringing it to class. Both were more interested in acting and expressing themselves verbally during reflection time. Their learning was best assessed from their classroom activities.



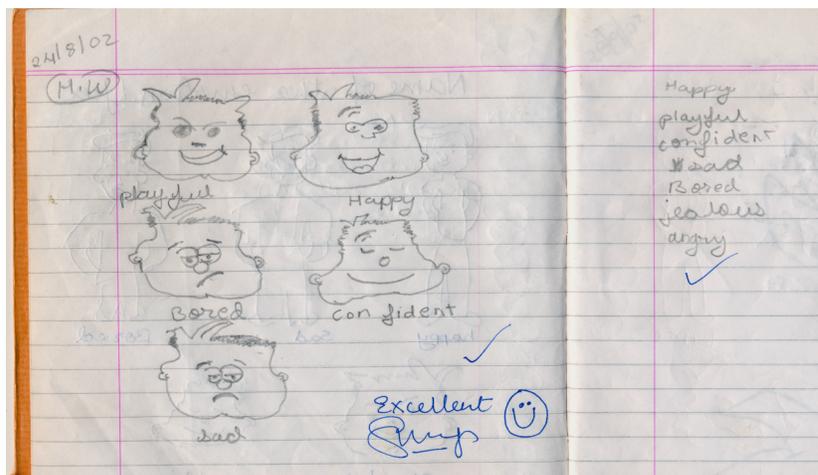
Sarla's diary.

Emotion  
 If we do some drama in school we always have some kind of emotion  
 eg If our exam is coming near and we have not studied properly we always get scared this is also one kind of emotion.

Lali's diary.



Kanha's diary.



Nihar's diary.

## **Step 2**

*This step presents the pre-learning level of the children and 'Moving On' in which I introduced the children to the concept of how in one situation different people experience different feelings.*

I pre-tested the children one at a time in class, asking them to name all the emotions they could think of and to act them out for me. The following is a transcript from Class13-10.8.2002; my reflection-on-action are in Bold.

Swaroop: How many emotions can you name? Can you come forward and act out the emotion for me?

Chandani: Happiness, angry, sad... jealous, proud

**Chandani was the first to answer. There are two reasons for that:**

**She enjoys acting and therefore was motivated to come up and act the emotions.**

**Moreover, by this time she was, slowly gaining confidence and would often be the first to answer or protest when she did not agree with something.**

**Manni and Pratik were the children I called next, however both declined saying they needed more time.**

Swaroop: Samir will you name some emotions?

Samir: Naa [no]

Swaroop: You know any emotions?

Samir: None.

**Samir would not get up at first and when he did stand up he did not name any emotions. I decided I would give him another chance later on. That they named limited emotions was understandable, but not naming any was inconceivable.**

**Most of the children had low self-esteem as a result even if they knew the answer they may not come forward respond. Therefore I decided to be patient with them and give**

**the children as many chances as they needed to come forward and answer. Additionally, the act of ‘testing’ words (verbal expression) was moving away from drama and towards curriculum studies therefore I could sympathise with their hesitation to speak. That is the reason instead of asking them to write the words down I asked them to act it out. I also understood that by asking them to act it in front of each other there was a possibility that they would copy each other. However that was a risk I was prepared to take.**

Pratik: First I will do happy.... sad, angry, proud, jealousy ...Then I will do fighting...  
WWF ...inhale ...

**Sometimes the children named words that were not emotions, non-feeling words, like in the previous class Chandani said strongest, Sarla said excellent, here Pratik said WWF (World Wrestling Federation), by which he tried to convey a clash. He then said ‘inhale’, referring to the cool down exercises of inhaling and exhaling.**

Kanha: Happiness, sad, jealousy, proud, angry.

**Manni was still not ready to come and answer, Samir agreed to come and try once more.**

Samir: Happy, sad, jealous, breathing.

**Samir clearly copied Pratik by saying breathing. This is one of the disadvantages of doing tests where the children can see each other like I suggested earlier. However, I did not want to make the test enigmatic for the children by doing it ‘in-camera’.**

Manni: Shy, happy, sad, angry, jealous...only this much.

Nihar: Happy, sad, jealous.

Transcript: Class 13- 10.8 2002

**Four children could name five emotions and two children could only name three.**

## **Moving on**

To help connect the children's feelings with their body clues I played the 'walk-about' or 'walk' activity.

Swaroop: I want to see you walking in a place that's got lots of water ...like it is flooded ...now one by one tell me how you are feeling ...

Manni: (*who is usually the first to answer*) Feeling uncomfortable.

Sarla: [feeling] bad, bad thing ...

Snehal: Fish will come and bite us ...

Swaroop: (*to understand his feelings more clearly*) are you scared?

Snehal: Yes, miss.

Swaroop: Kanha, good ...See how he is walking on tiptoes.

Tell, me Kanha, how are you feeling?

Kanha: Nice.

Manni: eeeek! (*Expressing displeasure at the thought of all the water around her*)

Swaroop: And you Pratik are feeling ..... nice?

.....Now you are walking in a park. How are you feeling?

**'Excited', 'lovely that place is', 'happy' (two children said happy) and nice (four children said nice) were the words drawn on. I noticed that they could express their feelings through facial expressions; however, the words availed were not always appropriate. Manni for example said uncomfortable which is an appropriate feeling, as in the monsoons when the streets of Mumbai are flooded with murky water. It is an unpleasant experience to walk through it. However, 'fish will come and bite us' is not a feeling.**

Swaroop: All of us had gone to see a film and on the way back we were separated from our parents ... we were lost .....it is dark ...and we can't see our parents ...what are the feelings?

Sarla: Sad. (*answering immediately without thinking*)

Swaroop: Sad?

**I wanted them to name the most powerful feeling in the particular situation. They could add other feelings like sad or tired, after saying the dominant feelings such as worried, anxious, scared or frightened. Sarla’s expressions and body language, at that moment conveyed fear and anxiety but she used the word ‘sad’. However, I refrained from telling her what she ought to feel, as I wanted the children to try to identify the emotions for themselves.**

Manni: Scared.

Sarla: (*catching on*) very not excited. Not anything ..... only where are we?  
(*Explaining the feeling of helplessness in her performance, as she often experiences difficulty in verbal expressing*)

Pratik: Sad.

Swaroop: Worried? (*But not one child picked up the word worried, or a related feeling word*)

Swaroop: All of you are in your own houses and... mummy, daddy, brothers, sisters are all gone ..... you are all alone. How are you feeling?

Transcript: Class 13- 10. 8. 2002

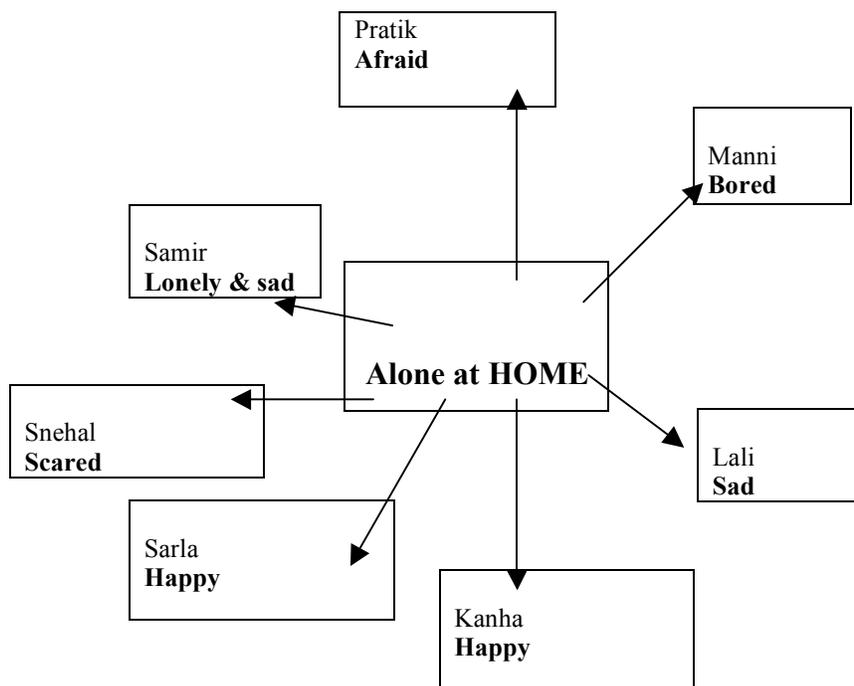
**They were slowly learning to reflect on the question by putting themselves in the particular situation and then answering. Happy, sad, lonely, bored, scared and afraid- ‘suppose someone comes and kills us’, were the answers I received.**

**I drew a diagram for them (Fig 3) to explain how people feel different emotions in the same situation.**

**Sarla expressed her thoughts by saying, “Miss, all have different, different ...iiii...”.**

**“Ideas?” I suggested. “Yes, ideas. All have different, different minds,” she continued.**

**I was very pleased that even one child could express a reflection such as this.**



**Fig. 3: Alone at home.** (Class 13-10. 8. 2002)

### **Step 3**

*Continuing emotional understanding in this section my aim was to increase the children's feelings lexicon by introducing them to new words.*

Swaroop: I'm going to give you card, with an emotion written on it, you are going to read the emotion, understand the emotion and perform a small mime depicting the emotion.

**When the children protested to miming and wanted to use dialogues as well, I explained why I suggested a mime.**

Swaroop: ...The reason we are going to do a mime is to save us from thinking of correct sentences to say. Look. First we have to think of an emotion. Secondly, we have to think of how to act it out. Then on top of all this, if we have to think of dialogues it will be very difficult. So after we have settled down we will add dialogues ... Is that all right ?...We are going to do it in pairs ...

Transcript: Class 14 -17.8.2002

**I wrote cards for them with ‘feeling words’. I adopted this technique to introduce the children to new words, with the interest in increasing their emotional lexicon. I asked them to mime so they could be more focused on displaying the emotion correctly. To make it more interesting I designed the class in a dumb charade like activity, where one pair came and performed and the others guessed the word they had performed. This assist:**

- **understanding the word;**
- **expressing it correctly;**
- **identification of emotions in others.**

#### **Step 4**

*This step deals with the concept of identifying feelings in others by noticing facial expressions and body language and taking note of the tone in verbal communication.*

To clarify the concept of the ability to identify emotions in themselves and others I asked them two questions. I first asked them how do you know when you are feeling sad, happy, angry...? I then asked them how do you know when someone is feeling sad, happy, angry...?

Swaroop: How do we show our emotions?

Manni: From our face ...by what we do.

Transcript: Class 14- 17.8.02

In the ‘walk’ and ‘statue’ game I often side-coached and commented on their facial expressions. I taught the children how to identify feelings in other people. Identifying feelings in others involves:

- noticing facial expressions and body language;
- listening to the tone of voice; and
- considering the situational context.

After each emotion was mimed, I stopped the class to discuss facial expressions, after which I would ask the whole class to express the emotion just discussed.

Facial expression, bodily movement and posture play significant part in attempts convey emotions and at the same time to understand emotions (Jecker, Maccoby and

Breitrose, 1965). They play a central role in the human communication process. Additionally, training is required in order to properly interpret these nonverbal cues of comprehension (Jecker et al, 1964, 1965).

On 17.8.02, class 14, I had my first opportunity to teach body language. The children were enacting a scene to illustrate the word ‘frightened’. Snehal, Pratik and Kanha enacted a scene in which two children are fighting, a little later their schoolteacher arrives at the scene and shouts at them, this frightens the children. The mine was not enacted appropriately as they used incorrect body language. All three just stood, ram-rod straight. The teacher merely held out his hand loosely, his body language not suggesting that he was admonishing the children.

Instead of pointing out that they were incorrect, I used the strategy of ‘stopping to consider’ (Chapter 5, p.133)

Swaroop: ...All of you stand here and I’m going to shout at you ...

Transcript: Class 14 - 17.8.02

All of them immediately assumed a defensive posture in contrast to my aggressive posture. I talked them through the process, explaining each child’s posture and then mine. I then asked them to assume the role of someone who is frightened and display their body language and facial expressions.



**Samir crouching down: his body language depicting ‘frightened’.**



**Kanha and Pratik display 'frightened' and 'angry' respectively.**

Guiding them through the action and asking them to notice each other's expressions and body language enabled them to see and recognise how different people express similar emotions differently. This facilitated understanding of other's emotions.

### **Step 5**

*Learning in 'drama' is not linear. I have discussed this position in 'Assessment' in Drama, p.98 and reiterate that learning in drama does not proceed logically from one point to the next. In order to deepen, refine and clarify the work that lies ahead reverting to an earlier stage may be necessitated (Fleming, 1994).*

I moved back to 'statues' and 'walk' as the children experienced some difficulty in performing short plays to express the chosen emotion. For example, when they had to make a play for 'angry' they rushed around the room, grins on their face. I believe this an example of 'inappropriate display of emotions'.



**Display of inappropriate emotions: walking in pain with ‘smiles’ on their faces.**

### **Step 6**

*This step describes an incident of incompatibility between two children which materialized into a ‘learning situation’ for students. Dewey (1897) suggests that the role of the teacher is not to impose his/her ideas on the students but to select incidents and experiences and use them effectively to assist the child to respond to them. I believe that a teacher's goal should not be merely to produce a given behaviour but to support the students to reflect on their actions to enable them to behave as responsible and caring children (Kohn, 1991).*

An adult can model emotional regulation skills for children by verbalizing the course of actions they can take in order to calm down or cope with certain feelings. Having feeling words and being able to recognize emotions in others and in oneself is a necessary but an insufficient step toward helping children achieve social and emotional competence (Joseph and Strain, 2003). Adults also need to assist children in developing and becoming fluent with the skills of emotional regulation (e.g. calming down, controlling anger and impulse) and problem-solving (e.g. generating solutions to interpersonal problems that are safe, impartial, and result in positive feelings).

In Class 17 -7.9. 2002, Chandani and Sarla were paired together. They had hardly started work when a quarrel ensued. Both of them stubbornly stuck to their own ideas and could not reach a settlement. Each of them sat, arms folded not budging a bit. The rest of the students, noisily, went about their activity. I noticed Sarla sitting by herself and asked

her to come to me and was talking to her when Chandani noticed us and started crying. I stopped the class activity to solve the problem.

Swaroop: ....Today what happened was not nice. One wanted her way and the even other [child] wanted it her way.

What do you say .....is it true ...?

Chandani: We should share our feelings with others ...You have to understand each other's feelings ...Then we can achieve something ...we have to give others also chance

Swaroop: Do you know what this class is all about? Improving life skills. Do you know? What life skills are?

Sarla: About life and living ...

Swaroop: .....It is also about being confident to do things ...solving problems well ...Do you remember we did that story about the cat chasing the girl, Mira (see Chapter 9,p.255-57) ...and then the cat entering her house? And Mira was scared? Do you remember what her mummy suggested? Did she suggest beat-up the cat or push it out?

Samir: No, miss ...To give the cat something to eat or drink.

Swaroop: Yes, mummy said don't get scared ...give the cat something to eat, then it will go away ...There we learnt to solve a problem.....

So next time we ...

Chandani: We have to understand the feeling of others...

Swaroop: And you have to explain your feelings to others ...Talk to your friend.

.....Sarla was feeling very sad and lonely sitting there all by herself in spite of all this noise ... She didn't tell me anything but I noticed from the way she was sitting and her expressions. And I tried to understand what was happening...

Manni: The first mistake they made was by not telling each other their feelings ...they made a very big mistake.

Swaroop: I also want to explain to you that I am not going to punish you nor am I upset ...In fact we want to thank you for an opportunity to learn. This was real life learning ...

Transcript: Class 17- 7. 9. 2002

### **Step 7**

*Discussions of personal emotional experiences encompassed this step. At the pre-learning level, I noticed that the children had weak communication skills and could not discuss emotional experiences with their friends.*

Swaroop: Sit facing each other and talk about some childhood memory of yours. Some happy moment, some sad moment ... do not yet think of making a play. Just talk to each other. [About] something that has happened to you ... a real situation. Look at each other and talk.

Transcript: Class18-24. 7.2002

**I found most of the students experienced difficulty in sharing an experience. Sharing an experience is related to communication skills. It reinforced my understanding that most life skills are interconnected (Appendix 10).**

**The difficulty they experience in conversing with each other and sharing experiences was not because of group cohesion as by September 2002 nine months into the program, the children had become friendly with each other. They often played together during the school recess time in spite of being in different grades and divisions. They experienced difficulty in talking to each other because of ineffectual communication skills.**

I asked them to tell me about the time when they felt an emotion like happy, sad, angry, lonely, anxious, jealous. When the children denied having felt a particular emotion, I asked them to provide an example of another person's experience. The answers were considered inappropriate when they denied having felt an emotion or if they gave example that expressed a different emotion.

### **Step 8**

*This is the pre-level learning level of ' understanding simultaneous feelings '.*

To understand the concept of simultaneous feelings I asked them if they could feel two feelings at the same time? I asked them to perform a short play depicting simultaneous

feelings. All of them did not understand the concept at that time and always performed a play about changing emotions as a sequential process. The following are some examples of the explanations they gave after they performed the plays.

Pratik: We were playing happily and the teacher shouted at us so we became sad.

Chandani: We were happily playing with the ball and we broke the glass so we were scared mom would shout at us.

Manni: I did not want the play in the park, which I thought would be dirty, I was sad, but when I saw the clean park, I was happy.

Lali: I was happily playing when I saw this girl wearing lovely jewellery, I became jealous.

Transcript: Class 20- 22.10. 2002

### **Step 9**

*Here I have presented the findings of the post-learning tests of the children and communicated the developmental changes in the students.*

- *Increase in the feeling lexicon can be compared with the pre-learning level in Step 2.*
- *They gained in confidence in their communication skills and understanding of emotions and could exchange their personal emotional experience effectively in class, as compared to the pre-level learning in Step 7.*
- *There was a significant change in the understanding of 'simultaneous feelings' as compared to their pre-learning level in Step 8.*

### **Feeling lexicon**

There was a significant increase in number of 'feeling words' the children learnt and could name. In the beginning five children could name only three emotions and four could name five emotions (see Table 10, p.197).

**Table 10: Emotional competence analysis - Pre-learning test.**

	Feeling Vocabulary	Are all feelings ok?	why	Emotional Experience	Cues to Recognise Emotions- Yourself	Cues to Recognise Emotions- In others	Simultaneous feelings	Can feelings change?
Mukul	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab	Ab
Samir	3 2 nf	Don't know	-	1	np	-	np	-
Chandani	5	Don't know	-	2	np	-	np	-
Lali	3	Yes	They come from our heart	2	np	-	np	-
Manni	5	Don't know	-	2	From our face...by what we do.	-	np	-
Kanha	5	Don't know	-	2	np	-	np	-
Snehal	3	Don't know	-	2	np	-	np	-
Pratik	5 2 nf	Don't know	-	2	np	-	np	-
Sarla	3	Don't know	-	1	np	-	np	-
Nihar	3	Don't know	-	1	np	-	np	-
	Av. 3.5 words	a- 1 child n-8 children	a-1child n-8 children	Av1.6 words	a-1 child np-8 children	-	np-9 children	-

Ab- absent

Av-average

a-applicable

n-do not know

nf-non-feeling word

np- Not appropriate word, expression or display of word

In the Class 20-22.10.2002, I performed a post-learning test (Table 11) now the children emotional vocabulary had increased and could name between 5-19 words in a timed oral test. They had also named 100-120 words in their diary.

**Table 11: Post-learning test.**

	C-1	C-2	C-3	C-4	C-5	C-6	C-7	C-8	C-9	C-10
Feeling Vocabulary (Reflection time -5 mins.).	-	5	15	15+ 1nf	17	6	17	-	19	10
Feeling vocabulary (in diary).	-	-	50	92	54	52+ 2 nf	45	-	120	10
Are all feelings ok?	-	yes	no/ shifted to yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	-	no	yes
Are all feelings Ok? Why?	-	x	x	y	y	y	y	-	x	y
Emotional Experience Tested n=7	-	3	7	7	7	6	6	-	3	5
Cues to Recognise Emotions- Yourself	-	x	y	y	y	y	y	-	y	y
In others. Tested n=10	-	3	8	10	10	7	8	-	9	6
Simultaneous feelings.	-	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y
Can feelings change?	-	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y	y

x-inappropriate answer y- appropriate answer nf-non-feeling word

There was a significant developmental change in the children as an effect of the intervention, which was evident from the way they reflected on the questions asked post-teaching stage. More than the numbers displayed in the post-teaching tests, the evidence given through following discussions can best describe this.

### **General questions about feelings**

In the pre-teaching level most did not understand the concept of: ‘are all feelings okay to have?’ Only one child (Lali) said, “feelings are not good or bad, and they come from our heart.”

When this topic was discussed during reflection time, all except Samir listened and participated in the discussion. Samir continuously tried to distract the class and went on insisting we play some game.

In the post-learning test (see Table 11, p.198) when asked if they thought all feelings were okay to have:

- Six children answered in positive.
- One child replied in negative however she shifted towards ‘yes’ during the discussion.
- One continued to feel ‘all emotions were not ok to have.’ She, however, could not give a satisfactory reason for why all feelings were not ok to have. She merely kept repeating ‘no’.

According to me it was not important whether the children’s answer was positive or negative. What was more important was their reasoning. In the ensuing discussion, of the eight children:

- Six could give a valid answer.
- Two could not give valid answers. One (Sarla) went on repeating ‘no’ and the other, Samir said he had replied in positive as “all said yes, so I said yes”.

### Discussion of personal emotional experience

In the post-learning test, all the children were able to provide appropriate personal examples emotional experiences. Most of the students' interpersonal skills were enhanced and recounted incidents during reflection time even when they were not formally asked to give examples.

For example, when we were discussing the feeling scared, Manni interrupted the discussion to share an experience of when she was extremely scared. She narrated an incident when she and her family were holidaying and were driving through the fog at night they had suddenly stopped the car. When they got down they realised in a few minutes they would have fallen down a precipice. Her narration explained the meaning of the word 'scared' well and the rest followed suit by sharing his/her own experiences.

Assessment of development in the area of discussing emotional experience was a done in two ways:

- In the post-learning test.
- By way of the data that was collected, during class time, as the learning took place.

In the post-learning test, the children's ability to discuss their emotional experience was assessed by using seven specific emotions (Table 12). Their response was rated as appropriate or inappropriate. If a child did not answer or give an example, the answer was marked as inappropriate. Eight children were present, Mukul and Pratik were absent on the day I implemented the post-learning test.

**Table 12: Post-learning test-1**

	Anger	Sad	Happy	Love	Afraid	Relaxed	Jealous
Appropriate	7	6	8	6	6	7	7
Inappropriate.	1	2		2	2	1	1

*(numerals represent the number of children)*

In the second part of the test (Table 13) on the children's ability to discuss their emotional experience, I asked them to share an experience with a partner and then perform a short play. The emotions I selected were happy, scared and sad. All the eight children gave appropriate answers for happy and scared. However, one child could not give an appropriate answer for sad.

**Table 13: Post-learning test-2**

	Appropriate	Inappropriate
Scared	8	
Happy	8	
Sad	7	1

*(numerals represent the number of children)*

### **Understanding simultaneous feelings**

All the students felt it was possible to experience simultaneous feelings at the post-teaching level which was a concept they could not grasp at the beginning of the lessons (p.195-6). In the beginning they only understood simultaneous feelings as a sequential process. However, as their emotional understanding was enhanced they performed inspired plays to explain the concept. They all reached a level where they could describe a single situation in which they felt simultaneous feelings.

Chandani and Kanha performed a play to display simultaneous emotions of joy and sadness by showing two children collecting their report cards. Kanha got less marks than his best friend, Chandani. This how she explained the feelings.

Chandani: ...Miss, He is my best friend I am so sad that he has not done well in class, but at the same time I am happy I have done so well...

Transcript: Class 20-22.10.2002

### **Changing feelings**

All the children understood the concept of how feelings change. They all gave example of changing feelings and even performed imaginative plays on changing feelings.

The feelings discussed were happy to sad, bored to sad, scared to happy, happy to angry, anxious to comfortable.

### **Cues to recognise emotions**

By October 2002, all the children could describe cues that would reflect their emotion and emotions in others. There was a gradual development in the children's reasoning as regards to recognising their own feelings. In the beginning only one child had answered, however, in the post-learning test all answered the question: How do you know what you are feeling?

Lali: From my heart ...

Chandani: ...what my heart is doing.

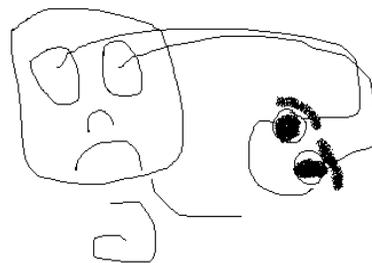
Manni: I can tell to others my inner feelings ... inside feeling my heart and our [my] face.

Nihar: ... by my heart and..... by seeing in the mirror (*Laughs, as he knows he is trying to be funny*).

Samir was the only child who did not explain the internal process of emotions. Instead he answered by saying he could know what he is feeling judging from facial expressions:

Samir: ...by .....my face.

Transcript: Class20- 22.10.2002



**Fig 4: By my face.**

I did the image above during the class to involve him and the rest of the children to reflect on how impractical it was to see one's face without a mirror.

The children displayed a higher development in reporting on how they could recognise emotions in others. Here again Samir did not answer, however, the rest gave appropriate answers.

Kanha: by acting [persons behaviour]

Sarla: by body and full face [body language and facial expressions]

Nihar: by face [facial expressions]

Chandani: by finger, face expression [body language and facial expressions]

Snehal: by expression, eyes [facial expressions]

Manni: voice and face [vocal and facial expressions]

### **Discussions**

*In Class 37- 14. 4. 2003, I completed an additional post-learning test on emotions. This was to determine maintenance of learning and presents the children's post-learning level in April 2003. As can be seen in Table 1. p. 7 the lessons focused on emotions were performed during the period January 2002- October 2002. However, I repeat that no class in this twenty-two month module, were devoid of a meaningful experience in emotional learning.*

Enhancing emotional competence was the goal of this section of the life skill module. The results indicate that, that is a period of seven months was effective in improving the children's:

- emotions/feeling lexicon;
- their ability to provide appropriate personal example of experiences of feelings;
- their understanding of cue to recognise emotions in themselves and others.

In addition to that they could reflect on general questions on emotions like those specified on p.176. As my life skills enhancement program was not a static intervention but a dynamic on going process, I performed a re-view of emotional competence in April 2003. There was a significant growth in the children's emotions lexicon.

The children, when asked to name feelings in Class37-14.4.2003 began with happy and sad and went on to name emotions like:

Sad	Joyful	Pleased	Scared
Happy	Terrified	Elated	Bitter
Jealous	Embarrassed	Alarmed	Startled
Angry	Confident	Depressed	Excited
Proud	Nervous	Worried	Furious

By April 2003, they could discern that there are degrees in emotional experience.

Lali: Miss, you [one] can feel irritated, little angry, angry and furious.

Transcript: Class37- 14.4.2003

A noteworthy understanding regarding the children's belief about emotions arose from question whether or not feelings should be hidden.

Chandani: Some feelings you can ...some you can't.

When asked to elaborate Chandani said:

Chandani: If they are serious feelings you should hide them and if they are not serious you can tell.

Lali elaborated by giving a poignant example:

Lali: Once I was alone at home with my brother [who is mentally challenged, and has a speech and language problem] ...he was troubling me and I was missing mummy and I was feeling very lonely ...I was wishing she were at home with me. So I thought I'd call her and tell her to come home fast. Then I thought why should I trouble her by telling her I'm feeling lonely ...so I said [to myself] let it be.

Transcript: Class37-14.4.2003

This narration shows that not only had the intervention influenced their emotional fluency, but also appreciably affected their emotional regulation skills and social problem solving ability.

When asked to discuss the concept of recognising emotions in 'self', all could give appropriate answers. To the question: If people are hiding their feelings how can you find out? Some of the answers I got were:

Lali: By their voice.

Nihar: By their face [expressions].

Manni: The way they are behaving.

Transcript: Class 37-14.4.2003

Significantly, Lali remarked on that fine day in April:

Feelings cannot be stopped so we can't stop learning...