# DIDACTIC STRATEGIES BASED ON EMOTIONAL EDUCATION AS A LINK BETWEEN MACROPOLITICS AND MICROPOLITICS IN CATALONIA

## ESTRATÉGIAS DIDÁTICAS COM BASE NA EDUCAÇÃO EMOCIONAL COMO ARTICULAÇÃO ENTRE A MACROPOLÍTICA E A MICROPOLÍTICA NA CATALUNHA

ESTRATEGIAS DIDÁCTICAS BASADAS EN LA EDUCACIÓN EMOCIONAL COMO ENLACE ENTRE LAS MACROPOLÍTICAS Y LAS MICROPOLÍTICAS EN CATALUÑA

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ABSTRACT: The purpose of this article is to discuss didactic strategies for emotional education by drawing on macropolitical and micropolitical developments in the community of Catalonia (Spain). Initially we present a brief conceptual review of didactic strategies and emotional education, then we discuss the policies developed in this community in the current public health situation, and the challenges and formation possibilities for the construction of emotional competencies. Methodologically, bibliographic research was used through the analysis of official documents on emotional education. The results point to the importance of including emotional education in the educational field, before, during and after the pandemic. Of central concern for the effectiveness of emotional education initiatives is the awareness and formation of teachers, and the development of skills in students which will support them in addressing the new challenges posed by society in the 21st century.

**KEYWORDS**: Emotional education. Didactic strategies. Micropolitical.

RESUMO: O propósito deste artigo é discutir as estratégias didáticas baseadas na Educação Emocional a partir da macropolítica e micropolítica desenvolvida pela comunidade da Catalunha (Espanha). Inicialmente, faremos uma breve revisão conceitual das estratégias didáticas e de educação emocional, em seguida, faremos uma breve discussão sobre as políticas desenvolvidas nesta comunidade na atual situação de sanitária atual e os desafios e possibilidades de formação para a construção de competências emocionais. Metodologicamente, utilizou-se uma pesquisa bibliográfica por meio da análise de documentos oficiais sobre educação emocional. Os resultados apontam para a importância de incluir a educação emocional no campo educacional, antes, durante e após a pandemia. O

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que é importante para a eficácia da educação emocional é a sensibilização e formação dos professores e o desenvolvimento de competências nos alunos, o que incidirá no desenvolvimento de competências que permitirão abordar os novos desafios colocados pela sociedade no século XXI.

PALAVRAS CHAVES: Educação emocional. Estratégicas didáticas. Micropolítica.

RESUMEN: El propósito de este artículo es discutir las estrategias didácticas basadas en la Educación Emocional a partir de las macropolíticas y micropolíticas desarrolladas por la comunidad de Cataluña (España). Inicialmente presentaremos una breve revisión conceptual de las estrategias didácticas y de la educación emocional, seguidamente discutiremos de forma sucinta las políticas desarrolladas en esta comunidad en la situación sanitaria actual y los retos y posibilidades de formación para la construcción de competencias emocionales. Metodológicamente, se utilizó una investigación bibliográfica mediante el análisis de documentos oficiales sobre educación emocional. Los resultados apuntan la importancia de incluir la educación emocional en el ámbito educativo, antes, durante y después de la pandemia. Lo importante para la eficiencia de la educación emocional es la sensibilización y la formación del profesorado y el desarrollo de habilidades en el alumnado, lo cual incidirá en el desarrollo de competencias que permitirán abordar los nuevos retos que plantea la sociedad del siglo XXI.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Educación emocional. Estrategias didácticas. Micropolítica.

#### Introduction

Through this contribution, we reflect and reiterate once again the great importance of didactic strategies, and especially the dimension of the being, as an element of connection between the macro-policies offered by the governments and the micro-policies deployed in the educational centers in their schools. mandatory stages.

The special and delicate global health situation has further highlighted the importance of emotional education in the educational setting, and due to this, we reiterate the low or no formation that teachers have in this area.

We dedicate a few first sections to the conceptual review of didactic strategies and emotional education, to then land on the macro-policies followed by our governments in the current health situation in which, again, this important facet is not considered.

Finally, we show the two priority challenges that education must achieve from this emotional point of view, such as the formation of teachers in emotional education, and the development of skills in students to be able to face adverse and highly complex situations.

## The need for didactic strategies or educational intervention

We consider that a strategy is "a potentially conscious action of the professional in education, guided by one or more principles of Didactics, in its triple dimension (knowing, knowing how to do and being), and directed towards the optimization of the teaching-learning process (from its reception to its evocation)" (RAJADELL, 2014, p. 467, our translation).

Figure 1 – Educational intervention strategies model

Source: Rajadell (1992)

The basis of this figure is configured by the eight principles of didactics, which we must always bear in mind in our educational performance, and which will appear to a greater or lesser extent. For now, we will simply mention them: Communication, Activity, Individualization, Socialization, Globalization, Creativity, Intuition and Openness.

Having laid the foundations, we focus our gaze on the triple dimensionality that configures our didactic-strategic action:

- Knowing, focuses on the acquisition and mastery of certain knowledge, which is why a
  series of methodologies will be used, fundamentally of a memorization nature or
  informative knowledge, as well as a certain typology of strategies such as
  explanations, readings or talks.
- Know how, aims for the person to develop those skills that allow them to carry out certain actions, considering the ability to modify and transfer later to different contexts.
- Being, it delves into the affective facet of the person, in which the modification and
  consolidation of interests, attitudes and values play a priority role. Learning to
  perceive, react and cooperate in a positive way in any situation, welcomes a powerful
  complexity.

To facilitate this didactic action, the educational professional must consider the didactic resources that they must or can use, considering that a didactic resource is "that human or material element that facilitates the educational intervention of the educator to promote student learning, influenced by other aspects of an organizational nature" (RAJADELL, 2013, p. 113, our translation).

The human elements correspond to personal and material aspects of the educator that can stimulate or block the learning process; the tone of voice, the movement of the body, the fillers or the clothes in which he is dressed are, among a variety of elements. We also find the material resources that the educator selects and that facilitate his intervention, from a digital screen to a microphone; resources that you cannot always achieve. And finally, we must have the elements of an organizational nature, among which space, time and economy stand out, but which are often offered to the educator, without too much flexibility on their part.

Despite the importance of the three dimensions shown, the dimension of being is a priority, and even more so in this complex and delicate moment that we are living. Without forgetting the cognitive, emotional and behavioral components that comprise it, it is essential to deepen the knowledge of a personal nature (autonomy, initiative, creativity, responsibility, spirit of improvement...), which facilitate individual progress according to abilities and interests, and always respecting the way of being of the person; It is also necessary to work on social knowledge (collaboration, solidarity, team spirit, sense of belonging to a group...), since we are part of a society, and therefore we have to learn to live and coexist in it.

The dimension of being evolves through five successive phases that should always guide us as teachers, and that we briefly review:

- *Perceive*: sensitize ourselves to a specific situation, manifesting it through interest and motivation, and with a basic desire for improvement.
- Answer: interest us to make the answer that may be more appropriate.
- Assess: take as your own a response from others, and for this we must consider others and their peculiar ways of being and acting.
- Organize: Based on our clear conviction, we will adopt strategies to achieve certain ends that we consider fair and suitable.
- *Get involved:* commit ourselves to this acquired value, striving and defending it above all else, always framed with respect and responsibility.

## The importance of emotional education

Education is a permanent and dynamic process that offers the individual the precise tools for their personal fulfillment and social and cultural insertion (SÁNCHEZ; ARAYA, 2012). Therefore, the role of education in the formation of people and in the development of society is indisputable. Let us not forget that education must respond to social needs and requires preparing for life. Emotional education follows from all of this.

We consider emotional education as an educational process, continuous and permanent, which aims to promote the development of emotional competencies as an essential element of human development, in order to form them for life and in order to increase personal and social well-being (BISQUERRA, 2000; BISQUERRA, 2009).

The existing contributions from the field of educational research highlight the benefits that emotional education has in the educational field. The improvement of emotional competences contributes to the increase in learning of children and adolescents (DURLAK *et al.*, 2011), the improvement of physical and mental health (FERNÁNDEZ-BERROCAL; EXTREMERA, 2016) and greater well-being by minimizing the problems derived from drugs, violence, discrimination, etc. (BISQUERRA, 2008; SERRANO; ANDREU, 2016). Likewise, emotional education offers the necessary tools so that the person can confront with assertiveness the various situations and obstacles that arise in life (REDORTA; OBIOLS; BISQUERRA, 2011).

On the other hand, the Covid-19 pandemic is having a strong emotional impact on our society, putting the health and well-being of the educational community at risk. To address and counteract this aspect, it is more necessary than ever to develop emotional competencies among teachers, students and families. UNESCO (2020) is one of the first international organizations to respond to the pandemic from an educational perspective, proposing actions that promote socio-emotional well-being.

In this sense, all of this highlights the importance of including emotional education in the educational field, before, during and after the pandemic. Therefore, investing in emotional education is investing in educational quality, since it involves the development of skills that will allow us to tackle the new challenges posed by 21st century society.

Next we present a bibliographic review on the macro and micro policies on emotional education. The choice of bibliographic research is due to the need to carry out a mapping to obtain an overview of the policies in the Catalan community for the management of emotions in times of pandemic.

## Well-being and emotional development in the new educational model

International organizations such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UN and WHO (2020) highlight the impact that the closure of educational centers has on the learning and development opportunities of children and adolescents. In addition, they support the need to reform the educational model completely, from administrations to activity in the classroom (SAVE THE CHILDREN, 2020; UNESCO, 2020). The reduction in learning entails the loss of skills development and, consequently, according to the OECD (2020) has a direct impact on the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and on the future economy of a country. Therefore, education must be offered with total guarantee, since the right to schooling is indisputable for human development and for a nation.

This crisis can be an opportunity for deep learning for life and for building a better educational system in which the well-being of the person (HARGREAVES, 2020) and the development of emotional competences (UNESCO, 2020) are a priority. Already at the time, the report "Rethinking education" (UNESCO, 2015) affirmed that well-being should be the fundamental purpose of education in the 21st century, highlighting the need to go beyond conventional academic learning, taking the idea of integrating into education the four pillars described in the Delors report (1996): learning to know, learn to do, learn to be and learn to live together, on which a humanistic vision of education is based.

Emotional education adopts a life-cycle approach and, therefore, should be part of the academic curriculum throughout all educational stages, from early childhood education to adulthood and, therefore, extend to lifelong learning (BISQUERRA, 2009).

If we review the curriculum of each of the educational stages, we can observe the absence of emotional education. Since the implementation of Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 of May, on Education (LOE, 2006), to the Organic Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality (LOMCE, 2013), compulsory schooling is oriented towards a integral vision of the person, based on the development of their skills (LÓPEZ-CASSÀ; PÉREZ-ESCODA, 2019), but in no case does emotional education appear explicitly. However, in the draft Organic Law of Modification of the LOE (LOMLOE, 2019), it is explicitly mentioned the obligation to work it both at the primary and secondary education levels. Currently, and pending approval, at least we can say that future educational legislation is taking an important step for emotional education to have visibility in the curriculum.

The most surprising thing is that the pandemic has led the Ministry of Health and Education and Professional Formation of the Government of Spain (22 June 2020) to agree on

and disseminate a guide on "Prevention, hygiene and health promotion measures against to Covid-19 for the 2020-21 academic year", which includes the need to provide emotional education tools to the educational community. This guide was agreed upon and shared with the autonomous communities and cities, which have been inspired by it to develop their own protocols and contingency plans for educational centers.

#### From macro to micropolitics in Catalonia

In Organic Law 8/2013 and, specifically at the territorial level, with the *Llei d'Educació de Catalunya* (LEC) it is stated that "The curriculum has to help students to develop the capacities that allow them to identify themselves as people with security and emotional well-being, living affective relationships with oneself and with others, knowing and interpreting the environment [...] and progressively developing personal autonomy" (Education Law 12/2009, 10 of July, p. 91). Although it is not specified as a compulsory subject, certainly emotional development has a presence in the comprehensive development of students, and some evidence shows it from the Department of Education, area of socioemotional education:

- **Didactic proposals**. Formative spaces for families in educational centers to educate their children so that they can recognize their emotions and those of others. Activities for students: Tutoring space in the classroom with their teachers, and with complementary activities to do at home, with the aim of working together with the family and the educational center.
- **Publications and resources**: compilation of articles, institutions and web resources on education and emotional intelligence. The publications in this collection are aimed at different groups (children, adolescents, the elderly and people with disabilities), and are applicable in different formative settings (school, home, workplace).

As an example, we show below some resources related to the expression and management of emotions, self-knowledge, self-esteem, self-regulation, etc.

**Table 1 – Some resources related to the expression and management of emotions** 

Program I love myself	Self-esteem and self-awareness workshops for adolescents
My friends, my garden	Comic book featuring vegetables and work proposals to promote personal
	maturation and enhance interpersonal relationships.
My friends, my garden	Selection of publications, articles, institutions and web resources on education

	and emotional intelligence. They are aimed at different groups, as well as applicable in different educational settings.
Emotional education.	Compilation of publications, articles, institutions and web resources on
DIXIT compilation	education and emotional intelligence. They are offered to be applicable in
_	different educational settings and serving different groups.
Let's talk about	Guide of health resources of the "Consell de la Joventut" of Barcelona related
Emotional Health (1)	to emotional health for adolescents and young people.
Suitcase of emotions	Pedagogical suitcase that allows you to explore 7 basic emotions: fear, sadness, disgust, rage/anger, joy, surprise and love. For each of these emotions, three picture books are offered, from which three activity sheets emerge.
CUSTOMIZED:	Collection of materials to work on values with adolescent boys and girls in
Education in values to	the tutoring space offered by ESO.
act as a tutor in ESO	
Socio-emotional	EduCaixa resources on socio-emotional education for educational centers.
education	
How to educate the	Notebook that presents a current concept of emotions and explains how
emotions?	emotional intelligence has been passed to emotional education, as well as the
	role of families in formal education.
Emotional education	Compilation of a series of links where you can find information about
experiences	experiences in emotional education classrooms.
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Source: Telecommunication educational network of Catalonia - School and community health plan: Emotional well-being - emotional balance

#### The current context and emotional education

The health crisis caused by Covid-19 has affected people's lives worldwide. Specifically in Catalonia in the middle of March, educational centers of all levels were closed, as well as work centers considered non-essential, and families were forced to confine themselves at home.

The politicians responsible for education (macropolitical) closed the schools, and a few days later, they proposed to the teachers to resume academic activity again, now with a telematic modality. The lack of formation and resources contrasted with the vocation and creativity on the part of the teachers over the next two months until reaching the summer holidays.

Leaving aside this situation, about which a lot has already been written, we want to influence the return to schools, after five months, two of which corresponded to summer holidays. What has been the role of the Administration and how have the teaching teams worked on it, with the idea of trying to normalize this abnormal situation as much as possible from its own origin?

The mixture of personal and social sensations experienced during this parenthesis, together with the waiting for the return, the self-conviction of returning to normality, the mourning for having lost a family member... All this has raised the need for greater

preparation on an emotional level faced with an unforeseen or uncontrolled situation, despite the fact that the Education Administration opts to keep the schools open throughout the new year.

Through the media, is announced to families that educational centers are prepared to care for their sons and daughters; In parallel, the teachers have received a series of Orientations to accompany them in their return to the center, which we summarize below:

- Explain what the return to the educational center will be like so that they know what they will find: distributed entrances and exits; They will be in the classroom for groups, and they will have to maintain a safe distance, wash their hands often and use the mask when necessary.
- Transmit a positive attitude to them in the fact of going back to school, seeing their classmates and meeting again with enthusiasm.
- Offer them proposals to participate in extracurricular leisure activities.
- Encourage them to participate in initiatives that involve them in responding to the pandemic and promoting responsible attitudes.
- Appreciate all the effort they have made during these months at home (in homework and learning) and the responsibility they have shown.
- Appreciate all the effort they have made during these months at home (in homework and learning) and the responsibility they have shown.

In addition, a specific web page is created, shared between the Department of Education and the Department of Health, called *Traçacovid*, which provides daily and updated information to families, regarding the data of all educational centers, from the security measures of each center, until the update of data and protocols before the detection of a case.

The Education Administration offers instructions to the management teams to organize the start of the course in September based on the following points:

- Reduction in the number of students in Primary Education (20 per classroom) and in Secondary Education and High school (smaller groups).
- The patio will be carried out in shifts and always with a mask, if different groups coexist.
- Classes outside the center will be exceptional.

- The spaces must be disinfected and ventilated, and there will be hydroalcoholic gel in the common spaces.
- The schools will have a reference person, who will manage suspicious cases.
- More than 8,000 educational professionals will be hired.
- Teachers on leave will be replaced from day one.
- A digital plan will be promoted and devices will be provided to students from the third year of Compulsory Secondary Education.
- 500,000 PCR tests will be carried out on students and teachers between 15 of September and 15 of November.
- The meetings with the families, and also among the professionals of the center, will be carried out electronically.

As we can see, the proposals from the macropolitics, influenced by the health perspective, have concentrated practically exclusively on material aspects, highlighting the spaces and the organization of the class-groups. However, the emotional aspect does not appear in any of the proposals; not a single minute dedicated to the emotional care of the teacher or to facilitating strategies to ensure the well-being of each of their students. And here we find that, regarding the daily activity of the teacher, micropolitics, the minimum collaboration is not provided.

There are many issues that occupy and concern the teacher:

- Their emotional stability and well-being, which are reflected in their relationship with others, whether they are students or colleagues. Will physical closeness prevent me from motivating my students for learning? Will I know how to combine my personal and family situation with my homework at school? Do I have tools to balance the diversity of situations experienced with the family in an emotional setting? Will I be able to turn this strange situation into an opportunity for the students?...
- Within the framework of the individuality of your student: how will I deal with the grief and sadness of a student who has lost a family member? How will I help facilitate the expression of emotions and feelings of a student before others? self-knowledge and self-esteem in a student? Do you know how to self-regulate in situations of emotional impact? Are you prepared to live with uncertainty?...
- In the scenario of the group's social collectivity: how to recover values such as coexistence and cooperation in the classroom? How to promote respect for the experiences of classmates? Is my student prepared to listen without judging others?...

There are no recipes to solve these questions because each student and each group, each space and each time are unique; However, the imperative need to have a minimum foundation in emotional education emerges again, from the initial formation as teachers, because we must remember that the essential meaning of education consists in accompanying people in their formation process.

From all this, we can consider that now is the time for the reforms, policies and educational programs offered in the educational system to be in line with what our society really needs (CUENCA, 2020).

## The challenges for education from this emotional point of view

We present below the two fundamental sections that we consider essential: teacher formation in emotional education, and the development of skills in students.

#### **Teacher formation in emotional education**

Teachers are a key figure in education and in the development of students' emotional competencies. Emotional education implies a theoretical and practical knowledge, since educating what oneself has not been educated can hardly be carried out efficiently. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to promote the emotional development of students if they have not previously worked on it (CABELLO; RUIZ-ARANDA; FERNÁNDEZ-BERROCAL, 2010; PÉREZ-ESCODA *et al.*, 2013).

There are different investigations that show the relevance of the formation of teachers in emotional education to achieve a positive effect on academic performance, the quality of relationships and the classroom climate (CABELLO; RUIZ-ARANDA; FERNÁNDEZ-BERROCAL, 2010). Likewise, this type of formation encourages teachers to prepare to face the diverse and complex challenges of educating and is a determining factor in the reduction and prevention of Burnout syndrome in the teaching body and the management of work stress in the educational context (EXTREMERA; FERNÁNDEZ-BERROCAL, 2004). For this reason, the emotional well-being of the teacher must be considered in teacher formation programs, since they are the key piece on which the emotional education of students rests.

The implementation of efficient emotional education requires teacher formation, it is essential that teachers develop their emotional skills (BISQUERRA; GARCÍA, 2018). Therefore, it is necessary that emotional education be considered a basic foundation in initial formation and professional development.

UNESCO (2020) makes the following recommendations to improve teacher formation in emotional education. First, include socioemotional skills in teacher formation programs both in initial formation and during professional development (lifelong learning). Secondly, to guarantee that the directors of the educational centers allocate time to the teachers for their formation and give them the opportunity to acquire these emotional competencies. Third, promote communication and networking among teachers to encourage this type of learning, mutual support and ongoing well-being. In addition, it is convenient that formation in emotional competencies reaches the entire educational community.

From the information we have, the development of emotional competencies is quite absent in initial teacher formation programs. Yes, there are specific formation in emotional education during permanent formation, but these are at the private request or by educational centers. Therefore, it is not considered as an essential aspect in education curricula and, by extension, in professional development formation programs. Bisquerra (2005), proposes a subject on emotional education in the initial formation of teachers in both infant, primary and secondary education.

Some of the objectives to consider in teacher formation (GARCÍA-NAVARRO, 2017) consist of making teachers aware of the need to develop emotionally due to personal, professional and social responsibility, knowing basic concepts about emotions, emotional intelligence and emotional education, promoting the development of teachers' emotional competencies and their practical implementation in the educational center.

For this reason, public administrations, governments, universities and entities involved in teacher formation must become aware of the need to include emotional education as an essential requirement in the initial teacher formation curricula and in its continuous formation.

# The development of emotional competences in students

The main objective of emotional education is the development of emotional competencies. Emotional competences are understood to be the set of knowledge, capacities, skills and attitudes necessary to understand, express and regulate emotional phenomena appropriately (BISQUERRA; PÉREZ-ESCODA, 2007). The pentagonal model of emotional competencies offered by these authors is structured into five competencies: emotional awareness, emotional regulation, personal autonomy, social competence, and competencies for life and well-being.

Emotional awareness refers to the ability to become aware of one's own emotions and those of others, including the ability to capture the emotional climate in a given context. Emotional regulation corresponds to the competence to express emotions appropriately. It includes, among others, the domain of coping strategies. On the other hand, emotional autonomy is a competence that includes self-esteem, a positive attitude towards life, responsibility, the ability to critically analyze social norms, the ability to seek help and resources, as well as emotional self-efficacy. Social competence refers to the ability to maintain good social relationships with other people in which basic social skills and effective communication are contemplated. And finally, the competencies for life and well-being consist of the ability to adopt appropriate and responsible behaviors for the daily challenges of life.

## A few last words to ponder

To finish, we want to offer a few words, charged with emotionality, to share our reflection, since, thanks to the impact caused by Covid-19, perhaps now is the time to:

- Realize the great influence we have as teachers, both positively and negatively, on our students.
- Consider the transforming or reproductive political nature of our teaching activities and ask ourselves if we feel accompanied and valued by the higher political levels.
- To question whether school structures and inertia, encapsulated in the form of laws or regulations, focused on academic results, do not hide the true meaning of education, based on affective relationships, equity, curiosity, creativity or the desire to move towards a better world.
- Offering really meaningful learning for each of our students, that will serve them for their lives, reflecting in parallel and honestly if this curriculum that has us truly enslaved, is actually so important as to leave emotional competences cornered.
- Dialogue and share more with the families, beyond the results and the notes, taking an interest in them, each and every one of them, accepting them with the utmost respect.
- Provide the entire educational community with spaces and moments of awareness, formation and realization of a true emotional education.

- Think about the importance that our accompaniment can have for the most vulnerable student, from the most disadvantaged environments, to increase their self-esteem and personal and social well-being.
- Feel and spread the importance of didactic strategies based on emotional education, at all levels of education throughout life, as the engine of the true meaning of education.

In short, we have enough evidence for emotional education to be considered intentionally, and not punctually, in the educational field. For this reason, educational administrations, governments and entities must explicitly introduce in the curriculum the teaching of socio-emotional skills in students of the different educational stages. In addition to raising awareness and enhancing the emotional development of teachers, both in initial and continuing formation, and offering the necessary resources for emotional education to be effective for the entire educational community and society in general.

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