How Higher Education Feels: The Role of Emotions in Teaching and Learning

Ruth Wong Memorial Lecture on Education (2014)

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Emotion and cognition intertwine
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How Higher Education Feels: The Role of Emotions in Teaching and Learning

Lecture Outline

1. Observations about the state of the field
2. Teachers’ emotions
   - “The Pleasures of Teaching Emily Dickinson”
   - “No Offense”
3. A Psychological Perspective
4. A Sociological Perspective
5. Putting the perspectives together: elements of emotional literacy
6. Implications for teaching practice
   - “Lesson of the Day”

1. State of the Field

1. Sparse
2. Fragmented
3. Recent surge of interest
4. Under-theorised
5. Emotion-less writing
2. Teachers’ emotions

1. emotional practice
2. emotional understanding
3. emotional labour
4. “Teachers’ emotions are inseparable from their moral purposes and their ability to achieve those purposes.”

(Hargreaves, 1998, p. 838)

Professors in research universities experience “passionate thought”

(Neumann, 2009)
The Pleasures of Teaching Emily Dickinson

- By Carol Tyx

Teachers in higher education

Positive teacher emotions are associated with student-centred learning methods.
No Offense

• By Bridget Dixon
• Published at The Teacher’s Voice
  http://www.the-teachers-voice.org/bridget_dixon.html

No Offense,

but I can’t stand white people!
She fires the phrase
across the small classroom,
body cocked behind the desk
prepared for anger, or pain,
whatever comes.
She searches for something sharp:
for teeth to clench, for the sturdy
setting of jaw, the splendor of anger
as it molds a face,
sets it taut against bone.
But she’ll take the slide of skin
into suffering or fear,
the slacking of a smile,
eyes that tumble toward the tile.
Behind the podium I struggle,
work to give her nothing she can
call victory but my belly.

That betrayer hardens
seconds too late to diminish the blow.
I cling frantically to façade, reply
none taken.

Bridget Dixon
3. A Psychological Perspective

*We should help students (and teachers) develop the ability to regulate and manage their own emotions more effectively.*

![Emoticons illustrating different emotions](image)

(e.g. Goleman, 1996)

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Potential Steps in Adult Emotional Regulation

- Select or plan the situation
- Modify the situation
- (Re-) Direct your attentional focus
- Re-Appraise the situation
- Suppress your response

(Gross, 2001)
4. A Sociological Perspective

*Students’ (and teachers’) emotions can (and should) be interrogated and critiqued as socio-cultural phenomenon.*

(e.g. Boler, 2004; Zembylas, 2002)

Defense against a soundbite culture
5. Putting the Perspectives Together: Elements of Emotional Literacy

(Adapted from Gross, 2001)

Socio-cultural context

Select or plan the situation
Modify the situation
(Re-) Direct your attentional focus
Re-Appraise the situation
Suppress your response

Tulane Public Relations
Earthquake Coverage: Engineering Cases

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8544700.stm

Lesson of the Day

• By Bunkong Tuon
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