

OPENING LECTURE. 1ST INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS OF EXPRESSIONS AND EMOTIONAL COMMUNICATION

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A BIOGRAPHY ABOUT EMOTIONAL EXPRESION

I would like to explain the reason why today we are celebrating this First International Congress on Emotional Expression and Communication. This will not be the last congress of this type, on the contrary, we hope that this will become the step that will move us closer to understanding, and especially to helping and supporting that very characteristic facet in the human being which is expressing and communicating the emotions we feel.

As with any good story, we are going to start talking about the beginning, which is marked by one of the most genuine expressions within human beings, as is poetry. The following poem was written by a teenager who decided to let loose one the topics which touches more deeply in that period of people's life: friendship. The poem is called "Friend", and it won the second prize in a poetry contest in the school where he was studying.

"FRIEND"

Cries burst from your inert depth,
laments that hurt me
because I have felt them.
The wind of your rough water blows
on the clear glass
of your dark light house.
You sink in the soft snow
touching its hard bottom,
bottom that I already know,
bottom that I have already lived,
bottom that never existed,
it is the bottom of oblivion.
It always exists in the darkness
a hand that stretches out,

how hard it is
to look for that friendly hand.
My hand is in emptiness,
why don't you hold it?
My light walks lost...
why don't you guide it?
I wish...
that your sweetly green eyes
turn off the darkness
that keeps them in the shadows.

I wish...
that your tenderly kind lips
search for happiness,
and you could tell me...
you are right, it is true.

This fact, of participating in a poetry contest, takes part in a daily event, which sometimes happens in many places. We are facing a young man, who, as many others, had encountered poetry and poetry would walk with him, with more or less intensity, for the rest of his life.

Let us take a little jump in time and summarize the life of this young man, saying that he became a teacher and worked as such. He continued studying about education and, in parallel, once in a while, he would play with poetry, reaching the point of publishing some of his works, and participating on some occasions in radio programs with poetic content.

THE BEGINING OF THE DISCOVERY

At one time, he had the chance of travelling and was invited to give some speeches or workshops about poetry for students who were studying their last year of Philology, something that brought him to unimaginable consequences. The workshops consisted of the description of a creative process from the emotional evidence to the transcription of written language, going through the phase of significant shared expressions with which he illustrated what he was feeling.

Up to this point, everything was normal, just as in many other literary meetings. The significant moment took place when people started asking him simple and even normal questions that he had never considered previously: Such as, for example, why was he writing?

At the beginning those simple questions did not find a direct and known answer within him. He had never planned anything; he just felt the need to write, and did it.

So, with the intention of giving sincere answers, not only for those who felt this curiosity, but also for himself, he started looking for his own experiences, the emotions he had felt, his inner feelings in order to find the answers to those questions.

He began to explain that he would simply write just because he needed it, as he wanted to externalized those ideas that were controlling his thoughts of euphoria, happiness, sadness, etc. He confessed that maybe the root of this activity could have been the separation from his parents when he was six years old, which is why he might have developed a special sensibility with which he could face that noisy, and never recognized, solitude. He felt a special necessity of being in touch and chatting with girls, something unthinkable with children at his age.

He also cleared up with students that he really started writing more when he was 12 and 13, and he discovered authors, such as Becquer. While reading, it fascinated him to find feelings expressed so simply, and it was years later when he tried to express, clearly and simply, through writing, the whirlwind of emotions where his thoughts used to be.

This is how he would answer the students' questions, especially one, which was the one that opened the doors to join education and poetry that until moment were incommunicated.

When he answered his first questions, after a short silence in order to find a sincere response, his answer was a "responsibility", something that surprised

his students and even himself. Then he started explaining why he started writing out of this sense of responsibility.

He told them that his parents had instilled the work ethic in him, the need of building a future without wasting time, and doing it with few resources.

He started writing through his emotional world which was constantly boiling, provoked by the uncontrollable teenager loves that were mining his concentration in his studies, risking passing. He was not very keen on starting his secondary studies due to bad experiences while studying in primary school, however, his parents insisted and he obeyed.

He had the perfect pretext for keeping his studies in a secondary role, but he understood that he had already started the course and would have to try to finish. He was feeling the compromise because of that lack of concentration he was suffering.

While facing this dilemma, between emotional reality and his obligations, which was really damaging his personal balance, it was when he started writing about his emotions, feelings, thoughts, worries...realizing there was a vital detail: The fact that, writing what he was feeling, of giving shape to his thoughts through poems, of reading them to himself and even to a friend, was producing a stunning relaxed effect that allowed him to concentrate on other tasks. Moreover, just with the idea, or the intention, that he was going to write what he was feeling, brought him into a peaceful state that would have been impossible to imagine under other circumstances.

This was the key. He told his students who were listening that this special key made his life take one path and not another. At that moment, he was aware that this sign, almost involuntarily, of filtering his emotions through a written language, was the key to his life. Not only did the literary seed bloom, although not germinating strong and vigorous enough to make it outstanding, but because he also got the straight path to a profitable future. His happiness was doubled, because he perceived the benefits that for his educative world could

have emotional expressions and communications. He got to put together his two halves after over four decades of mutual separation and ignorance.

His students loved the experience, but he learnt even more from them. He made them open their hearts and look into their memories, for the essence that would mark their lives forever. Not only that, there had also appeared an open gap, huge and promising, between the fondness of written expression needed by a major necessity and the professional world of education.

ACTS THAT WERE CARRIED OUT

As a result of this discovery, later on several workshops about emotional expression and communication, based in photo language, took place with some teachers in two schools in Chile, in Chiguayante and Carahue, in the regions of Bio-Bio and Araucanía, respectively. Following the satisfaction caused by these experiences, some experimental programs about the expression and communication of emotions were initiated in Seville, at different education levels, from pre-school through primary, secondary and university, as well as in Puerto Rico, with university students and university and school teachers. Also the experience continued at different levels in the school "Docksta" in Carahue, Chile, where research still continues and we have the pleasure of having here with us today.

We have thought convenient that, with all this accumulated experience, it was important to create a forum where we could share, exchange opinions, experiences, results, worries and especially open a communicative door between the different educational levels and the simple need of sharing the topic of emotions between people who think it is important both for their professional and personal lives. Here there are no areas of knowledge, no subjects, no departments. This is a multidisciplinary central concept that goes through professional and personal fields to be inserted in the path of our present and future.

Under these circumstances, CIECE was born. A new way of reading was found, an element of positive action, coming from an activity as ancient as Humankind, the need of expressing and communicating feelings.

SITUATING IN A SCIENTIFIC CONTEXT

Up to this point we have seen a real confirmation of the possible consequences of expressing and communicating what we feel, of its utility in a personal, social and educational field.

The next important question, located in the birth of experience, is how to locate this knowledge, in a scientific context, within an emotional theme.

We have two very clear references in this line of work and with a relatively short life:

The first can be found in a new conception of the concept of intelligence that was proposed by Gardner, when he identified different kinds of intelligence, interpersonal and intrapersonal. On the one hand, this intrapersonal intelligence refers to the capacity the person has to know, in order to control their own feelings, thoughts, emotions, etc. On the other hand, interpersonal intelligence concentrates on the capacity of knowing, understanding and managing the relationship with other people.



It was Daniel Goleman (1995) who popularized this kind of intelligence, so important and meaningful to the lives of people, especially in reference to emotional intelligence.

From this moment on, many researcher projects have taken place, by both educators and researchers. There are many authors who study and investigate in this field, who all support the idea of the benefits of controlling emotions not only professionally but socially.

The second is found directly in Emotional Education, not being very well defined with respect to the first but centering its ideas in educational aspects. It ignores the word intelligence and adopts and focuses more on educational content of knowledge.

In both cases there is a clear intention of directly improving emotional competencies, which would be its objective to act.

But, how could we locate at a theoretical level the proposal which we make inside this context of the treatment of the emotional world, expressions and emotional communication? Apparently it looks like we are talking about the same things: Emotional Intelligence, Education, Expression, and Communication, although there are significantly different ranges. The principal and most important are those of objectives that try to define an educational level.

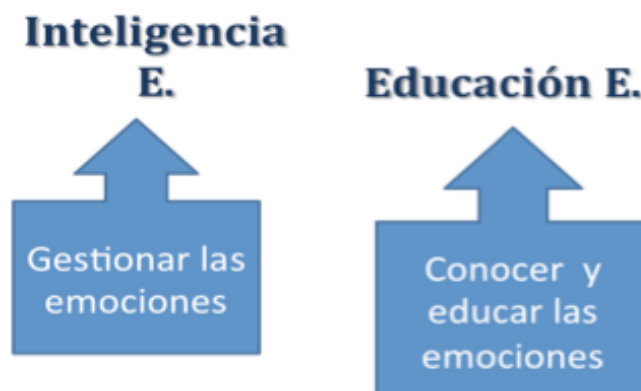
We have seen through experiences that have been shared the benefits which bring to a person the right expression and emotional communication at a given moment. This expression, by itself, already constitutes an important value of improvement and prevention of difficulties that may appear.

**Expresión y Comunicación Emocional.
(E.C.E.)**

Objetivo



This is why, the principal objective of this focus is the generation of spaces and strategies where people can express and communicate emotionally. These are not what they pretend to be with intelligence and emotional education, although contents and strategies could exist shared from ECE, with advantages in expression and communication themselves, without ignoring that their own development will place or bring us closer to the objectives of intelligence and emotional education.



This is a plan to achieve: The knowledge and emotional management, but without focusing on this management and not turning it into the direct objective of the intervention. So, we are in front of a different approach to a shared situation, where in a natural way, as expression and emotional communication are, we come near the knowledge of emotions (Emotional Education) and even management (Emotional Intelligence). It is not a matter of turning them into another academic activity or having the people do activities that are not natural

for their age. It is a matter of creating potential objectives which are already in the curriculum and to offer those spaces and strategies by impregnating them of the relevance that personal development has inside the education system, always theoretically present but forgotten in practice.



VENUES AND CONCLUSIONS

We will not limit ourselves to teaching venues in schools, not even at a concrete level, but the activity can take place with any formal or informal group and age, in any venue. As a matter of fact we are working with children and adults at a high level. The members of any group feel the need to communicate and can share the benefits, since it is an essential human characteristic.

In conclusion, we can say that ECE pursues the improvement of one's emotional aspects from a spontaneous and willing communication perspective, not being responsible for an artificial performance by the individual, where elements of metacognition are not taken into consideration, such as: Thinking, emotional management, and others. Behaviors that on many occasions the person is ready or not to express, but it is through one's own manifestation, in which some mechanisms are produced to connect in a natural way with educational objectives. This is where we can find the main difference between emotional intelligence and education intelligence with ECE

Between emotional intelligence and education, in general there is a range of differences according to which emotional intelligence tends to concentrate more into metacognitive aspects of emotion, as there would be control and management as much as one's self or in others, while emotional education places its stress in the world of knowledge of emotions, in oneself or others.

We are developing various strategies for ECE, such as photo language, reciting poems, working with poetry, legends and initiation to written emotional expressions in different formats. Some of these works can be found in this congress.

I hope I was able to explain myself and transmit to you how a real experience germinated the source of these ideas, which we would like that time and research will confirm the benefits. I also hope for your collaboration in order to reach this goal.