

Topic: Can emotions be measured as educational outcomes?

Abstract:

Background: Current trends underlining the importance of psychosocial skills in the context of education and work seem to justify addressing the issue. Is it possible and merit to measure socio-emotional aspects of students' life exactly in the same way as intellectual competencies, so by assessing measurable outcomes? If not, how find solutions to make 'soft skills' more appreciated by school systems of assessment?

Aim: The main goal of this analysis is to answer the questions whether emotions can be measured as educational outcomes and whether socio-emotional skills should be assessed in the same way as intellectual competencies.

Method: 1) Theoretical and methodological analysis of Pekrun's and colleagues' method of measuring achievement emotions in the new context of assessing emotions as educational outcomes. 2) Clarifying the role of emotional life both itself, taken independently, and in the context of intellectual development specifically.

Results: Theory of achievement emotions together with the reliable and valid questionnaire constructed by Pekrun and colleagues is the successful attempt to measure emotions connected with learning experience. In this approach emotions are not educational outcomes, but assist educational processes, condition them and result from them. Beside achievement emotions other affective experiences may influence intellectual development (e.g. perceived social support). The last but not least, emotional life should be also appreciated independently of educational results to guarantee its right autonomy.

Conclusions: Emotions can be successfully measured. However, they should not be assessed as educational outcomes, or even as outcomes of psychosocial skills. Nevertheless, emotions should be taken into consideration more seriously in the context of education. Achievement emotions give information about the emotional side of learning and testing. What is more, emotional life and emotional maturity of students is important as such.

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