



**Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596**

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

[www.vidhyayanaejournal.org](http://www.vidhyayanaejournal.org)

Indexed in: Crossref, ROAD & Google Scholar

---

# **Role of Teachers in Developing Intercultural Awareness: Adaptation of Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence**

**Kalpana J. Lale**

Research Scholar,

Department of English, Sardar Patel University, V.V. Nagar



## Abstract

The world has become a global village. Hence, it has become a survival skill to understand and accept the difference among the people around us. In case of India, being one country, there are 28 states, 8 territories, 22 official languages, and a vast number of dialects present. This multilingual and multicultural aspects make India a unique country on the world map, but this very uniqueness creates a difference among all the Indians. Hence there is a dire need to develop intercultural awareness among Indians. No one can just stick to their own culture, society or values and work in India. It has become mandatory for every professional as well as for a commoner to know, understand and accept the culturally, lingually and socially different person, sitting next to him.

English being an international and library language; has become one of the link languages across all the states and regions in India. English teachers can be an instrumental force to develop intercultural awareness among the young minds. They have the world literature at their hands to impart the knowledge among learners about cultural difference and to develop the acceptance required for the same. The paper discusses the need to develop intercultural awareness and the role of teachers. It even throws light on the challenges faced by teachers and the opportunities available to them. The paper has made a special reference to role of Goleman's theory of Emotional Intelligence for developing this awareness.

**Key Terms:** Intercultural Awareness, Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence

## Intercultural Awareness

Intercultural awareness is defined as part of intercultural communication competence. It is an ability to effectively and appropriately execute communication behaviours that negotiate each other's cultural identity or identities in a culturally diverse environment. It is an understanding of the fundamental patterns of cultural difference and acceptance the existence of this difference as a normal social phenomenon.

Cultural awareness refers to a person's ability to recognise and appreciate the unique perspectives and customs of others. It involves making an effort to learn and embrace traditions that are different and celebrating them together. Cultural awareness can be crucial in teams with members from different states and identities or while visiting another country on an official visit.



## Need to Develop Intercultural Awareness

The world has become a global village. Hence, it has become a survival skill to understand and accept the difference among the people around us. In case of India, being one country, there are 28 states, 8 territories, 22 official languages, and a vast number of dialects present. This multilingual and multicultural aspects make India a unique country on the world map, but this very uniqueness creates a difference among all the Indians. Hence there is a dire need to develop intercultural awareness among Indians. It has become mandatory for every professional as well as for a commoner to know, understand and accept the culturally, lingually and socially different person, sitting next to him.

A new global market place is established, where people across the world, across the states can interact and transact business, irrespective of their ethic, cultural, religious, linguistic diversity. Contemporary transformations in the world of work have made it essential to pay attention to the human-relationship aspects of doing business.

Today's world of work has witnessed three emerging trends in business organizations: Business is increasingly globalized; Business is increasingly knowledge-based and Talent is increasingly mobile.

As a consequence, managers and professionals in the modern workplace are being expected to do value-enhancing work in collaboration with mere acquaintances, which are almost unknown entity as to their personality, culture, country, or even a continent. Yet, the nature of their work requires human relationship, a "*meeting of the minds*" that intends to accomplish something far more complex, noble and lasting than merely extracting a business deal.

Intercultural awareness and intercultural communication skills determine how efficiently and effectively individuals

- Get along with one another,
- Respect each other's ideas, and
- Resolve their inevitable professional and personal differences.



## **Teachers' Role in Developing Intercultural Awareness**

According to the National Education Association (NEA), cultural awareness or cultural competence is “understanding your own culture, other’s culture, and the role of culture in education.” Taking a student’s culture into account as “a basis for learning, communicating high expectations, and reshaping curriculum to reflect student’s diversity leads to better educational outcomes.” In our increasingly diverse and multicultural society, it’s more important than ever for teachers to incorporate culturally responsive instruction in the classroom. It helps in the following ways:

### **Students Become More Empathetic**

Promoting awareness and creating a personal connection with diverse cultures in the classroom can prevent students from developing prejudices later in life. It allows them to empathize with people different from themselves.

### **Students Gain a Better Understanding of Cultures and People**

When learning about people from a variety of backgrounds and cultures present in the world, students gain a more comprehensive understanding of the cultures. It also teaches students how to use their own strengths and points of view to contribute in a diverse working environment.

### **Students Become More Open-Minded**

This will make them open to new ideas and be able to attain a greater comprehension on a topic by taking in different points of view.

### **Students Feel More Confident and Safer**

This allows them to interact in a wider range of social groups and feel more comfortable, safer and confident in themselves as well as in their interactions with others.

### **Students Are Better Prepared for a Diverse Workplace**

With the rise of globalization, it’s more important to be able to work with people from different cultures and social groups. If students are exposed to diversity and learn cultural awareness in the classroom, it sets them up to flourish in the workforce.



## Adaptation of Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Emotional Intelligence refers to the capacity to recognize and manage our own feelings and to recognize and respond effectively to those of others. Daniel Goleman's model was originally developed in 1998 with five domains and redesigned in 2002 with four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness and relationship management. This

Developing Intercultural Awareness is closely related with Goleman's concept of Emotional Competence'. Hence, the following framework for emotional competencies could be highly useful for enhancing essential skills. To make the original Goleman's framework more relevant for understanding intercultural communication issues, it is essential to add four more elements:

1. Own culture awareness,
2. Other culture awareness,
3. Non-judgmental Ness, and
4. Respect

The same is illustrated in the following table.

	<b>Personal Competencies (Intra-personal)</b>	<b>Social Competencies (Interpersonal)</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	<b>Self-Awareness/ Own culture awareness</b> - Emotional self-awareness - Accurate self-assessment - Self-confidence - Own culture awareness	<b>Social Awareness/ Other culture awareness</b> - Empathy - Service orientation - Organizational awareness - Other culture awareness
<b>Regulation</b>	<b>Self- Management/ Non-judgmental Ness</b> - Emotional self –control - Trustworthiness - Conscientiousness - Adaptability - Initiative	<b>Social Skills / Respect</b> - Developing others - Influence - Communication - Conflict management - Visionary Leadership



	- Non-judgmental ness	- Catalysing change - Building bonds, Teamwork - Respect for all cultures
--	-----------------------	---

## Adaptation of Goleman's Model as per following

### D) Self- Awareness / Own Culture Awareness

Self-awareness is explained by Goleman (2002) as the ability to read and understand your emotions as well as recognize their impact on others. It can simply be put that self-awareness is a basic understanding of how we feel and why we feel that way. The more we are aware of our feelings that easier they are to manage and dictate how we might respond to others.

When applied to intercultural awareness development, this stage refers to knowing about own culture and understanding the basics of it. It includes identifying strengths and weaknesses of own culture, accepting them and reflecting on them.

### Teachers' Role

**Start with Awareness.** Teachers must first recognize their own cultural background. Reflecting on one's own background will help indicate the ways in which it is similar to or different from that of one's students. Then, only teachers can facilitate students' perception about other cultures.

**Cultural Capsules:** The point of this technique is to raise awareness about cultural differences. A culture capsule consists of a paragraph of explanation of one minimal difference between the students' native culture custom and the target culture's custom, which should be represented by the student out loud, together with the relevant pictures or video or realia connected to that custom

**Culture Clusters:** According to Saluveer (2004), a culture cluster is actually a group of three or more culture capsules on related topics followed by classroom simulation. As an example, students can assume the role of the singers or journalists who interview the stars from the specific culture.



## II) Self-Management/ Non-judgmental Ness

Self-Management can be defined as the ability to manage one's actions, thoughts, and feelings in flexible ways to get the desired results. It includes emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative, etc.

When applied to intercultural awareness development, this stage refers to not being judgmental about the behavior, customs or thought processes of other cultures, self-controlled responses to the different cultures and transparent behavior with the people from other cultures. It means anticipating consequences before acting impulsively with the people from different cultures.

### Teachers' Role

**Confront Implicit Bias:** "Implicit bias" refers to "the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner." By making students aware of their implicit bias, they will understand that everywhere human race is driven by their unconscious manners which are product of everyone's upbringing.

**Enabling Students to Locate the Culture Gap:** A culture gap is any systematic difference between two cultures, religions, ethnicity, age, or social classes which hinders mutual understanding or relations. Such differences include the values, behaviour, education, and customs of the respective cultures.

**Practice Cultural Sensitivity:** It's important to make sure that students are being sensitive to everyone's culture, beliefs, and language concerns. Take the time to make them understand cultural nuances – from learning styles to the language they use.

**Comparison Method:** It enables students to investigate differences and make them understand the basics of livelihood of all cultures. Aiming at the different cultures, teachers can discuss various topics with their students, such as education, holidays, sports, family, food, etc.

## III) Social Awareness / Other Culture Awareness

Social Awareness is the ability to accurately notice the emotions of others and "read" situations appropriately. It is about sensing what other people are thinking and feeling.



It means knowing about the different cultures, their ways, customs, languages, basics etc. at this point students must be aware that their culture is only one of the cultures in the world and not the only one.

## Teachers' Role

**Communicate with Cultural Awareness.** A person's cultural background shapes the way they communicate. Some cultures may avoid direct eye contact with opposite gender or with elderly persons, or have distinct attitudes about authority and family dynamics.

**Culture Assimilator:** This technique is used to describe cultural incidents of cross-cultural interaction that would occur due to misunderstanding of cultural ways. One way is to briefly describe an incident in a form of a story and offer four possible solutions for students, which are followed by discussion and teacher's explanation of the appropriate ways.

## IV) Social Skills/ Respect for All Cultures- Acceptance of Differences

It includes values of empathy, service relationship management, inspirational leadership, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, etc.

When applied to Intercultural Awareness its means developing teamwork and collaboration. The ability to take one's own culture, the cultures of others, and the context to manage social interactions successfully. The kind of communication that dominates in any culture relates to the role of social context in that culture. Social context is interpreted as the network of social expectations that determine a person's behavior.

**Micro Logue:** The teacher chooses a text about some cultural aspect and asks students to read it out loud in the class. After that, students answer questions, give an oral summary, and write a small dictation about the topic.

**Critical Incidences:** Critical incidences are descriptions of incidences or problematic situations which demand students' decision on the ways of solving problems. Firstly, students read the incidences by themselves and make individual decisions. After that, they are put into small groups where they should discuss their decisions. Finally, the teacher shows them what a native member of a target culture would do in such situations.





**Research:** Students should use all kind of resources for their research, such as the Internet, library, magazines, songs, movies, realia, other people's testimonies and their personal experience. A teacher can ask students to present their research individually, or they can be divided into groups and create a final product in a group work.

**The Culture Quest:** This technique is based on a mix of tech skills and cultural knowledge. This is actually a web-based activity for older students, with a goal of making a website with cultural elements. Students' groups investigate different aspects of culture, focus on elements of their own culture, focus on different countries and explore their differences and similarities.

**Celebrating Festivities:** Teachers can prepare celebration for Christmas, Easter, Thanksgiving Day, Halloween, Diwali, Pongal etc. The preparation of festivities can include various things, such as, decorating classroom with posters, pictures, hand-made figures, practicing folk songs and folk dances with students which should be played at the festival's day, learning some words their language, organizing workshops with elements of the specific festive, etc.

## Challenges Faced by the Teachers

**Teacher's Personal Philosophy about Culture:** The teachers' intercultural experience is the one that primarily determines their culture-teaching practices. In order to teach culture effectively, it is important for teachers to develop the skills and cultural awareness. In addition, teachers may be afraid of teaching culture because they may fear they do not have sufficient knowledge about the target culture.

**Fear Regarding Students' Responses:** Students may be judgmental towards the other cultures and have a negative attitude towards learning in general. They try to understand the target culture within only their own framework of native culture". It happens mostly because of the inappropriate way of teaching, and because the content of cultural facts does not correspond to students' expectations

**Overcrowded Curriculum:** Teachers often face overcrowded curriculum and feel as they cannot spare enough time for including cultural activities into English lectures. They focus mostly on developing grammar and vocabulary, and leaving only a small part for culture in their lesson plans. This happens because some teachers indeed think that teaching culture is not as important as teaching grammar and



vocabulary. On the other hand, some teachers hope they will expose their students to the cultural material in the later phases, after they have properly acquired grammar rules and vocabulary of the target language.

**Disregard for Assessment of Cultural Knowledge:** Another problem is disregarding assessment of cultural knowledge and measuring intercultural awareness in class. It is challenging because cultural content is perceived as difficult to teach and assess. Language teachers have not received much help from the profession in terms of teaching, and assessing culture learning.

## Conclusion

English, being a library language, provides exposure to wide literature at the world canvas. Hence an English teacher can make use of it in developing intercultural awareness. Goleman's model can help teacher in this regard. It's a duty and responsibility of a teacher to make students tolerant towards different culture. Then only all people from different cultures can co-exist peacefully.



## Vidhyayana - ISSN 2454-8596

An International Multidisciplinary Peer-Reviewed E-Journal

[www.vidhyanaejournal.org](http://www.vidhyanaejournal.org)

Indexed in: Crossref, ROAD & Google Scholar

---

### References

- Doctor, R.A. & Doctor, A.H. (2000). *Principles and Practices of Business Communication*, Sheth Publishers Pvt. Ltd. Mumbai
- Ghanekar, A. D. *Essentials of Business Communication Skills*, Everest Publishing House
- [online.mc.edu/degrees/education/cultural-awareness-for-educators/](http://online.mc.edu/degrees/education/cultural-awareness-for-educators/)
- [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture\\_gap](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Culture_gap)
- <https://drexel.edu/soe/resources/student-teaching/advice/importance-of-cultural-diversity-in-classroom/>
- <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/197553961.pdf>