motions are not academic constructs and do not receive the attention or support that traditional curricular areas often maintain. Many theories of intelligence even leave emotions out of the equation. Yet, the growth and excellence that we desire for our students cannot happen without a firm understanding of the impact of emotions on thoughts and behaviors.

On the other hand, emotional self-awareness is included in almost every model of emotional intelligence. Bar-On (2013) defined self-awareness as our ability to be aware of, identify, and understand our emotions. Emotional self-awareness is important when considering paths to excellence because emotions are attached to the experiences that both inspire growth and impede performance. When students understand that they experience specific emotions in conjunction with behaviors or activities that support or detract from their goals, they can be aware of how emotions can help or hurt their progress toward goals. Unpleasant emotions that accompany setbacks are often not easy to stomach; it may be much more comfortable to avoid or gloss over highly emotional experiences. But, once again, this is a time for students to lean in and push through. If emotions are not dealt with in the present, they will eventually resurface later.

Goleman (2005) noted that self-awareness of our emotions allows us to more easily pilot our lives. There is a purpose for the positive emotions that accompany student interests. Those who have strong self-awareness have clarity regarding their strengths and what motivates them (Bradberry & Greaves, 2009). A student writer may enter a state of flow when creating the next part of her poem in progress; this is accompanied by positive emotions, which reinforce the behaviors surrounding both flow and the activity of interest. The positive emotions and feelings support continued progress. On the other hand, emotions can be additional challenges that students must overcome. Students experiencing maladaptive perfectionism or a fixed mindset may have
feelings of fear or apprehension when approaching a challenging task. As a result, the challenging task and the accompanying emotions are avoided.

Students need to self-reflect on emotions as they relate to achievement motivation concepts, such as growth mindset, grit, tenacity, flow, and procrastination. When students begin to discuss and understand the emotions associated with each of these concepts, they can also begin to reflect on their own decisions and behaviors. They can consider how fear kept them from getting started on their history project or how joy supported a drive to independently learn more about marine biology. Without emotions, we would not experience the joy of learning something new in our areas of interest. Positive emotions fuel progress toward passion. When students begin to understand and connect personal emotions to behaviors, they have unlocked a powerful tool. They know what tasks will be motivating and what tasks will be difficult based upon known emotional patterns. And, as Goleman (2005) noted, this knowledge allows students to more effectively pilot their lives.

In this lesson, guide students to consider the role of emotions in pursuing excellence.

Big Idea

What do emotions reveal?

Objectives

Students will:
- analyze the purpose and need for emotions,
- analyze how emotions are related, and
- self-reflect on the complexities of emotions as they relate to achievement motivation concepts (e.g., growth mindset, grit, tenacity, etc.).

Materials

- Handout 18.1: Emotion Words (cut out in advance)
- Handout 18.2: Need for Emotion Chart
- Paint swatches (one for each student or pair of students)
- Image of Plutchik’s Color Wheel of Emotion (available online)
- Video: “Emotions and the Brain” by Sentis (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xNY0AAUtH3g)
Lesson 18: Understanding Emotions

Introduction

1. Distribute cutouts from Handout 18.1: Emotion Words (if you don’t want to cut them out, students may label the words as a part of a category or use a specific symbol to note a specific category). Ask students to sort the emotions into categories (you may have to clarify the definition of some emotions for students). Ask: How did you organize these? What title would you give each category? Do some emotions belong in more than one category?

2. Distribute paint swatches from a paint store or hardware store. Ask students to assign emotion words to each color (from their emotion words and/or adding their own words). For example, for various shades of red, they may assign varied levels of anger (e.g., irritated, aggravated, furious, enraged).

3. Ask students to share their responses, noting the various interpretations of degrees of emotion.

Class Activities

1. Show students Plutchik’s Color Wheel of Emotion. Ask students to describe the organizational patterns of the emotions (e.g., organized by opposites, organized by level of intensity, organized by motivations, etc.). Ask students to choose one petal of the wheel (e.g., ecstasy, joy, serenity) and think of scenarios when a person’s emotion would change on the spectrum. Plutchik claimed that there are eight basic emotions (joy, fear, trust, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation) with various degrees, intensities, and combinations (Plutchik & Kellerman, 1980). Note that the wheel folds down to indicate more relationships.

2. Ask: What is the relationship between awe and disapproval? How are they alike? What are some things you notice about how emotions are organized?

3. Explain that all emotions have a purpose and are linked to a need. Distribute Handout 18.2: Need for Emotion Chart for students to complete. Guide discussion using Figure 11.

4. Explain that emotions are complex and often involve “blends” of emotions. Refer to Plutchik’s Color Wheel of Emotion, and ask: What emotions would be combined to form “jealousy”? (Fear, sadness, and anger.) Ask students to also develop combinations for pride (anger + joy), love (joy + trust), despair (fear + sadness), hope (anticipation + trust), and curiosity (trust + surprise).

5. Ask: Why is it important to understand your emotions, specifically their need and purpose? How do emotions influence a drive for excellence? How might they
Teaching **TENACITY, RESILIENCE, and a DRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE EXPERIENCES</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>NEED INDICATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>Student responses</td>
<td>To avoid threat, to protect</td>
<td>To be reassured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>Student responses</td>
<td>To make change, to cause action, to release energy when faced with a threat</td>
<td>To be respected</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Student responses</td>
<td>To hide anger, to retreat, to deal with loss</td>
<td>To be comforted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Student responses</td>
<td>To share, to connect with others, to trust</td>
<td>To feel satisfaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret</td>
<td>Student responses</td>
<td>To move us towards our goals</td>
<td>To feel hope</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**FIGURE 11.** Teacher’s guide to Handout 18.2.

*divert your drive for excellence? How do emotions relate to concepts presented in other lessons?* Review related concepts and talk with students about which emotions are associated with each (some from the color wheel, or otherwise). Emphasize that unpleasant emotions can be associated with positive concepts (e.g., being “gritty” may involve some unpleasant emotion). Many concepts involve both pleasant and unpleasant emotions.

- **Grit/tenacity:** Love, interest, optimism, joy, trust, acceptance, admiration, apprehension, discomfort
- **Flow:** Joy, trust, interest, optimism, awe
- **Growth mindset:** Trust, discomfort, apprehension, courage, facing fear
- **Fixed mindset:** Comfort, safety, fear of unknown
- **Perfectionism:** Remorse, disgust, fear, apprehension, pride, joy
- **Procrastination:** Temporary comfort; avoiding pain, annoyance, distraction, fear
- **Goal setting:** Optimism, trust, joy, anticipation

6. **Ask:** *Can we control emotions, or do they control us? Can you make yourself feel sad? Angry? Joyful? How do you do it?* (By thinking about something, by having a memory, etc.) Explain: *In our distracted, busy world, it can be difficult to be self-aware of our own emotions and how they influence our actions and behaviors, but we can manage emotions and use them for our benefit* (see Lesson 20...
on optimism). When we become self-aware of our emotions, we can be curious about ourselves and ask, “What is this emotion telling me? What is its purpose? Is this motivating me toward action?” This can help lead to management of emotions (in future lessons). Follow this discussion with the video “Emotions and the Brain.”

Conclusion Connections

1. Ask: Why is it important to lean into and explore our emotions rather than try to push them aside or avoid them? Even when emotions are unpleasant, why is it important to “feel” them? (Understanding what we feel and why brings the emotion to a conscious level so that we can move forward to manage the emotion.)

2. (Optional) Have students respond to the following in their journals: Next time you feel an unpleasant emotion, ask yourself what the purpose of that emotion is and reflect on your need. Explore the emotion and what triggers your emotional response (past experiences, your values, memories) to a particular situation.

Curriculum Extensions

Have students complete one or more of the following:

- View a piece of art, such as *The Subway* by George Tooker (1950): What emotions are evoked? What emotions are revealed? How does the artist produce this effect? How do the emotions relate to the ideas portrayed in the art? Use Plutchik’s color wheel or modified versions of it to name the emotions.

- Read a speech such as “Day of Infamy” by Franklin D. Roosevelt, “I Have a Dream” by Martin Luther King, Jr., or “The Space Shuttle Challenger Address” by Ronald Reagan: Use Plutchik’s color wheel to identify the emotions that the speech writer evokes in the audience. How did the authors achieve this emotional effect?

- Conduct an emotional ups-and-downs analysis for a character in a specific short story or novel. Create a line graph showing ups and downs of the character’s emotions and levels of intensities. Refer to Plutchik’s color wheel and consider combined emotions as well.
Personal Reflection

Have students respond to the following: *Create an emotion line graph to show the emotions you experience within a day (or possibly week). Time can be the x-axis, and type of emotion (positive/negative) can be the y-axis. Include times when you may experience more than one emotion at once (happy and sad at the same time). What insight do you have about yourself from this graph? How does this graph relate to the ideas of grit, growth mindset, sticking to a goal, flow, pursuing excellence, etc.?*

Check for Understanding

Have students complete an exit ticket: *How can understanding emotion be helpful in pursuing excellence?*
**HANDOUT 18.1**

**Emotion Words**

**Directions:** Sort the emotions into categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Optimism</th>
<th>Interest</th>
<th>Aggressiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annoyance</td>
<td>Contempt</td>
<td>Remorse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boredom</td>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>Disapproval</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensiveness</td>
<td>Distraction</td>
<td>Awe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appreciation</td>
<td>Submission</td>
<td>Love</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serenity</td>
<td>Acceptance</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td>Trust</td>
<td>Ecstasy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rage</td>
<td>Vigilance</td>
<td>Anticipation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loathing</td>
<td>Amazement</td>
<td>Grief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terror</td>
<td>Admiration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HANDOUT 18.2
Need for Emotion Chart

**Directions:** Reflect on situations in which you experienced each of the emotions in the chart. Then, think about the purpose and indicated need of each emotion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EMOTION</th>
<th>EXAMPLE EXPERIENCES</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
<th>NEED INDICATED</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fear/Anxiety</td>
<td>Feeling before giving a speech in front of a large audience.</td>
<td>To avoid threat, to protect.</td>
<td>To be reassured.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sadness</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regret</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
HANDOUT 19.3

Emotional Toolbox

Directions: Review the following ways to control the intensity of a feeling or emotion.

1. Take deep breaths and even close your eyes when feeling overwhelmed, stressed, frustrated, or angry.

2. Pause 5 seconds before speaking, especially if angry.

3. If anxious, to calm down, take deep breaths to allow oxygen to get to your brain. To remain in a positive high-energy state say, “I’m excited!” three times.

4. When angry or upset, imagine putting a filter over your mouth before you speak.

5. Change your facial expression (researchers have indicated that smiling can actually create a positive mood. Even just holding a pen in your mouth to make your muscles form a smile can lift mood).

6. Distract yourself for a short time until emotions calm down (take a walk, take a break).

7. Talk to a friend. Hearing someone else’s opinion helps you see a broader perspective.

8. See the situation objectively, with no emotions attached. Imagine you see yourself from the perspective of a fly on the wall. See yourself with no negative judgment. Focus on one small step to move forward.

9. See the bigger picture: If emotionally upset, consider if the situation will be a big deal 5 years from now, 10 years from now, etc.

10. Exercise. It releases physical endorphins to help you feel happy.

11. Gratitude. Think of things you are thankful for. Keep a list.

12. Practice mindfulness. Take a few moments to be aware of the present, focusing your attention on each of your senses. What do you hear? Pay attention to your physical responses, your breathing, your heartbeat. What do you notice about your surroundings? (extend with taste, touch, etc.)

13. Do something kind for others. Doing something constructive to help others will shift the focus beyond yourself and will likely lift your mood.

14. Understand that the sting of an intense unpleasant emotion (anger, fear) is only temporary, usually 90 seconds. Although unpleasant emotions will still linger, unpleasant feelings are intense for only a short time. Endure the 90 seconds and know that it won’t last forever. Getting through the initial sting of unpleasant emotion will build emotional strength, and you will know that you can get stronger through the experience.