

## Leading with Emotional intelligence

At the dawn of a new era, change is on most people's minds. Education prepares the generations for the future and educational change is at the forefront of all the talk about change in general. Educational reform is indeed pervasive right now. Learning standards are being defined for children. This is most evident by the government's need to implement standardized testing in Ontario schools particularly in Grades 3, 6, 9 and 10. Professional standards are also being delineated for teachers. Teachers are appraised every five years and are expected to complete an Annual Plan every year.

Good leaders are charged with positive emotion. Leading is not just a matter of knowing your subject, being efficient or learning all the right technologies. Good leaders are not just well-oiled machines. Computer can never replace them. They are emotional, passionate beings who fill their work and their classes with pleasure, joy, creativity and challenge. In Freud's (1995) terms, teaching is a "passionate vocation". Good leaders are passionate about ideas, learning and their relationships with students. Woods and Jeffrey (1996) studied what made "exceptional" school leaders especially creative. These leaders did more than lead by example, they brought out the strengths of all staff around them. Their school relationships featured "interest, enthusiasm, inquiry, excitement, discovery, risk-taking and fun". Their cognitive scaffolding of concepts, teaching strategies was "held together with emotional bonds" (p. 71).

In his book entitled, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman (1997) examines the importance of emotional and human skills over IQ not only in schools, but also in the workplace. By reading through the narratives of corporate people (i.e. managers, business consultant) in an effort to gather twenty –five years worth of empirical and qualitative data that examine both how and why the emotional components of intelligence affect job performance and other life successes.

In Goleman's view (1998:5), "emotional intelligence matters for success". Goleman (1998:7) defines emotional intelligence as the ability to "manage feelings so that they are expressed appropriately and effectively enabling people to work together smoothly toward common goals".

Parents and teachers around the world are waking up to the need for emotional literacy programs as a practical investment. As Goleman (1998:314) points out:"the State of Rhode Island has already begun an initiative to boost emotional intelligency in sites as varied as schools, prisons, hospitals, mental health clinics, and job retraining programs".

The Dawson College incident of school violence and C.W. Jeffreys shooting serve as constant reminders to Canadians for the need for emotional literacy programs in schools. The violence at C.W. Jeffreys is, in part, the responsibility of all of us who have replaced intrinsic human values with dollar signs. The capitalist mentality that govern North American society endorses the exploitation of people and resources. Schools must teach emotional competencies to students in order to improve both the cavity of life in both our schools and communities at large.

Learning itself is an intrinsically emotional business (Claxton 1999:15).

It follows that if you are responsible for assisting others to learn, then you need to recognise this emotional component of the teaching-learning exchange and to be able to work with it; in short, leaders (in whatever capacity whether as a Superintendent or an administrator of a school ) need to use emotional intelligence. This term was popularised by Daniel Goleman with his 1995 publication, *Emotional Intelligence*. Developing a critical self-awareness of yourself as a leader, particularly how you interact with learners.

Using emotional intelligence is a prerequisite for developing a good relationship with a group of learners, which then can be the basis for producing learners who have:

- More engagement,
- Greater motivation,
- A greater readiness to take risks in their learning,
- A more positive approach,

A readiness Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ. Goleman defined emotional intelligence more specifically as the capacity for recognising our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships (Goleman 1998: 317). For me, to use emotional intelligence in teaching means that you need to:

- Be able to recognise and respond to your own feelings of both you and those of the learners in the classroom in order to make you both more effective in your respective roles.
- Encourage an emotional state in the learners on your course, which is conducive to learning.
- What does it mean in practice to use emotional intelligence in a school? Examples of its use include: acknowledging and discussing with staff their school vision and community? How do staff, students and parents envision their school community? As a Superintendent, I would set high expectations and goals for my principals in leading by example and carrying out the to collaborate,
- More creativity and more tenacity.

When I run workshops on this, participants often say to me, 'I agree, Josephine, but I do this anyway. I could not live my life, or be an effective leaders, without using emotional intelligence'. What I say in response to this is that there is more to be done. We need to do three things:

Firstly, we can rescue emotional intelligence from being an extra quality that a minority of leaders offer to learners. Instead, it should be recognised as an essential component of what all leaders offer. Secondly, rather than let the use of emotional intelligence just be intuitive, we should be more deliberate in using it, for example in planning and delivering the school's mission statement coupled with system wide priorities. Thirdly, we should give the use of emotional intelligence as much attention as we give to content and methods; we should give it a greater share of our energy.

The recognition of the role of emotions in leaders, is long overdue. It does not mean that we have to sacrifice a higher education which values and fosters coherent critical argument, independence of thought and academic rigour but that these aspects can be enriched by infusing them with humanity. The neuroscientist Antonio Damasio's explorations of the workings of the brain lead him to the conclusion that: 'certain aspects of the process of emotion and feeling are indispensable for rationality.' (Damasio 1996: xv). We need to recognise and work with the power of emotions in learning by teaching with emotional intelligence.

#### References:

Carson, B. H. (1996) 'Thirty years of stories: the professor's place in student memories' *Change* 28 (6) pp10-17

Claxton, G. (1999) *Wise up: the challenge of lifelong learning*, London: Bloomsbury

Damasio, A. (1996) *Descartes' error: emotion, reason and the human brain*, London: Papermac

Fried, R.L. (1995). *The passionate teacher*. Boston: Beacon Press.

Goleman, D. (1996) *Emotional intelligence*, London: Bloomsbury

Goleman, D. (1998) *Working with emotional intelligence*, London: Bloomsbury