

## Study Notes

# Emotional Literacy: Schooling, the Community and Success

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Emotional intelligence serves as a key to boosting student achievement, to preserving sound standards once attained, and to creating the best possible learning environments in our schools and universities. In examining this notion, the following preliminary research study moves beyond the school environment to look at the surrounding community. It details some of the influences that human emotions have upon life and learning, and it establishes the community's knowledge of, and attitude toward, emotion-focused development. This paper reveals that emotional well-being is strongly valued by the general population. Furthermore, this study provides evidence supporting the view that the human heart has enormous ramifications in terms of success for individuals, communities and nations.

**Key words** : achievement, emotion, intelligence, learning, success

## Introduction

What are the causes of plummeting grades in our schools and universities? Responses to that question are as varied as the people providing them. One particularly thought-provoking reply sees the root cause as involving – not a lacking of funds, nor inabilities amongst our educators, nor any general disregard toward learning on the part of students, but instead – emotion. Can human emotion truly be at the bottom of all of this? Are tumbling grades less to do with education systems per se (the outside), and more to do with individuals (the inside)? There exists much debate in academia about the role(s) that emotions serve over the course of human life (Keltner and Gross 1999; Levenson 1999). Beliefs concerning function

vary widely. At one extreme, emotions are seen to have absolutely minimal constructive purpose in life, while, at the other extreme, emotions are viewed as being pivotal to success. As is typically the case with any continuum the truth undoubtedly lies somewhere between the poles. The following research paper explores contemporary opinions as to the validity of, and familiarity with, school-based emotional literacy programs. Specifically, this paper strives to determine an Australian community's attitude toward emotion-focused development. In doing so, this study will draw upon the literature of the field, highlighting some prominent influences that human emotion has upon life and learning.

## Background

It is not uncommon for the news media to tout figures each year, perhaps even several times, suggesting that the effectiveness of educational systems within the developed world is careering downward, out of control.<sup>1)</sup> The evidence to support such claims, however, is rarely as clear cut as the mainstream media would have it.

The Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in contrast, does strive to look objectively at the 'education situation'. Administered by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), PISA is an internationally standardised triennial assessment of the knowledge and skills of 15-year-olds (OECD 2007a; OECD 2007b). Being co-developed by participating OECD countries, PISA assesses student performance and collects data on student, family, and institutional factors, allowing for the development of valid comparisons over time across countries and cultures.

Conclusions from the most recent PISA survey – just released in December 2007 – show that some prominent member countries have, in fact, seen falls in student attainment (OECD 2007c). For instance, Australia, Japan and the United Kingdom (UK) all moved down the international league table in terms

of reading. Scores for mathematics also fell for all three countries, with Japan recording an additional fall pertaining to scientific literacy (OECD 2007c).<sup>2)</sup>

In comparison to OECD averages overall, Australia, Japan and the UK are by no means floundering (as the news media often implies they are). Nevertheless, any decline in achievement for high-income developed countries such as these, particularly relating to fundamental skills such as reading or arithmetic, is a worrying trend. To put it bluntly, the economies of the future will suffer if the youth of today are not being taught adequately, if they do not feel good within themselves, and/or if their needs are not being met at home, school or at university (Gurría 2007; Watanabe and Ischinger 2007).

## Focal Point

Daniel Goleman (1995) takes an interesting and somewhat novel position on the 'slumping grades' matter. He could not agree more with Angel Gurría, the OECD Secretary-General, that poor academic performance is (a) indicative of deeper issues in society, and has (b) negative implications both in the present as well as in times to come. Goleman wonders if enough students are being suitably prepared for their futures – if they are given the necessary skills

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1) Recent examples of mainstream news stories that depict education in a state of turbulence include: "Dismal PISA scores" (2007); "Japanese students fall in all three OECD academic tests" (2007); "Japanese students fall to sixth at science: OECD" (2007); McSmith (2007); "School reading standards falling: OECD" (2007). Full citations are provided in the 'List of Works Cited'.

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2) In addition to formal OECD publications (such as OECD 2007b or OECD 2007c), please refer to: "Dismal PISA scores" (2007); "Japanese students fall in all three OECD academic tests" (2007); "Japanese students fall to sixth at science: OECD" (2007); McSmith (2007); "School reading standards falling: OECD" (2007). Again, full citations are provided in the 'List of Works Cited'.

to cooperate and communicate effectively – and if they are truly developing the capacity to be productive and successful while at school, at university and at work. Such factors have enormous implications for individuals and also for countries and their economies.

### The Literature

The long-standing traditional measures of ‘intelligence’ and ‘IQ’ began to radically change when Howard Gardner outlined his now well-known and persuasive case for intellectual multiplicity (Gardner 1983; Harris 2006). Not until 1990 did Salovey and Mayer first conceptualized ‘emotional intelligence’ as a new sphere in its own right, worthy of scholarly research and debate. However, it was Daniel Goleman that popularized the idea of emotional intelligence. Goleman took up Howard Gardner’s emphasis on mental specialization, focusing much more intently on the critical role of ‘emotion’ in human maturation and development (Harris 2006).

In his influential 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*, Goleman outlines the role of teachers, educational institutions and cooperative learning in readying students for success. Goleman (1995) states that ‘emotional intelligence’ – the ability to deal favorably with personal feelings coupled with the capacity to work fruitfully with others – plays a tremendous role in determining outcomes in life. He firmly believes that teaching emotional skills can lead to widespread positive changes for all – not only in terms of increasing self-esteem or promoting interactive cooperation, but also (significantly) in terms of boosting scholastic achievement.

Corresponding decreases are observable in aggression, truancy and delinquency.

Goleman’s book found almost instant resonance in boardrooms, classrooms and living rooms across the globe. A variety of academics began further research upon the topic. In a review of the literature on emotional intelligence, Glossop and Mitchell (2006:10) highlight some of the basics that the research has uncovered up to this point in time, as follows:

Emotional intelligence is learned. Unlike IQ, which is essentially fixed within narrow parameters at birth, EQ can be developed and enhanced. In other words, temperament is not destiny. Empathy and the capacity to understand the emotions of others can be nurtured (Glossop and Mitchell 2006: 11).

Thus, Goleman is not alone. A good deal of the ever-expanding literature that encircles the field of human emotion is concerned with the positive implications of conveying emotion-rich constructs to children and young adults, either at home or at school. In a nutshell, scholarly writings tend to focus on (a) theoretical reasons for building emotional understandings (refer to: Abe and Izard 1999; Bickart and Wolin 1997; Goleman 1995; Keltner and Gross 1999; Levenson 1999; and Pool 1997), or (b) methods for managing (or even curtailing those negative) human emotions (refer to: Cummings and Haggerty 1997; Goleman 1995; Levenson 1999; Sagor 1996; and Wang, Haertel and Walberg 1997).

Bickart and Wolin (1997), along with Cummings and Haggerty (1997), indicate

that knowledge of human emotion builds both intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. In their view, positive self-concepts and sturdy social connections flow directly and naturally through to academic competence.

Levenson (1999), Abe and Izard (1999) and Pool (1997) examine the physiological and psychological functions of emotion. These researchers ascribe to the notion that there is an outgrowth of emotions during a child's normative development. Along the road to maturation, emotions play a central role in helping an individual achieve specific developmental turning points. Should an individual not receive the care, understanding or skills to appropriately address emotional responses as he or she matures, detrimental consequences result. In outlining some negative outcomes of human emotion these authors offer many worthy suggestions to counterbalance emotional difficulties.

Sagor (1996) and Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1997) see formal education as crucial to a person's long-term health and well-being. In their view, emotional clarity is established in children and adolescents largely through the insights provided by wise and experienced adults – parents, mentors and teachers. Often, this knowledge involves an analysis of personal feelings and a realization of how such feelings transpire.

In sum, a large number of scholars and researchers, and an increasingly large body of literature, support emotional literacy programs and the incorporation of emotional development into formal education. Doing so is viewed as having only beneficial outcomes – for the students themselves and for the

greater community as a whole.

### **This Study**

Although open to debate, Goleman's ideas in particular continue to reverberate around the globe, striking a chord with many. The three-way interplay between (1) human emotion, (2) success in life (including performance at school and at work), and (3) a stable economic state of affairs, is an intriguing issue for researchers the world over. However, emotional literacy programs must be embraced, not by scholars, but by the wider community if they are to have any real chance(s) of success.

Within the literature there is a consensus emerging around the capacity of heightened emotional intelligence to positively influence personal, social and intellectual development (Tipper 2006). Emotional intelligence is being viewed as a foundational cornerstone of success. Thus, social and emotional learning ought to be integrated into the ways we live our lives and teach our children (Tipper 2006). The young must be raised to be emotionally literate.

Outside the field of academia, then, does the community embrace the field of emotional intelligence? Are children receiving a focused emotion-based education at home or at school? How does this compare to what their parents received when they were children themselves? Are any changes observable between generations in the ways emotion is taught to youngsters, and if so are the changes positive?

To answer the preceding questions, this study will focus on a sample population of

children, adolescents and adults, and it will ask questions about the practices of parents and schools with regard to emotion-focused development. This paper will, therefore, look into a single community's attitude toward the field of emotional intelligence, including institutional program implementation. It is hoped that the findings may be of use to the general public and to academia in outlining the extent to which emotion-based education is integrated into a representative community and its school system(s).

Australia was chosen as an appropriate location for the purposes of this introductory investigation as it is an adequate representative OECD-member nation. As do other OECD nations, Australia has a standardized school system across each of its states and territories (much as is seen right across both Japan and the UK). Thus, Australia is an ideal location to carry out a preliminary study such as this. Inferences made, or trends noted, from data gathered at a small number of schools within a single community ought to be generalizable and applicable to the wider community as a whole (and to some degree to other OECD-member nations).

This study is important for two further reasons. Firstly, the data gathered ought to reveal whether or not emotion-based programs are moving from the academic arena into the real world on any identifiable practical level. Secondly, although somewhat small in nature, this study should identify areas necessary of comprehensive research and analysis (to be conducted in future studies) including, for example, linked investigations coordinated across multiple OECD-member nations.

## Method

A total of 80 informants, aged from young children to adults, were asked to complete a brief ten-point written questionnaire concerning the field of emotional literacy. Respondents were predominantly from a middle-class background, and they completed the survey at a community hall in Brisbane, Australia, on Saturday mornings where they attended weekly music lessons.

The particular suburb of Brisbane in which the community hall exists is a multicultural area. The sample population was, therefore, not only mixed in terms of age (being parents of children taking music lessons at the hall, or being school-aged children taking music lessons), but also in terms of ethnicity. All parents were Australian citizens (if not Australian-born, having lived at least 7 years in the country). All children were Australian-born. Thus, in terms of ethnicity, the sample population was a mixture of those with a distant Anglo-Saxon heritage, those with distant Italian or Greek family traditions, and those with a more recent Asian-Australian heritage (being Chinese-Australians, Malaysian-Australians and Vietnamese-Australians).

Matters concerning race, religion or political persuasion must be treated with care as they are viewed as personal (and, hence, private) in Australian culture. As such, this specific information was not sought from the sample population as part of the official questionnaire process. However, respondents were a mixture of race, religion and political persuasion – being representative of the surrounding community

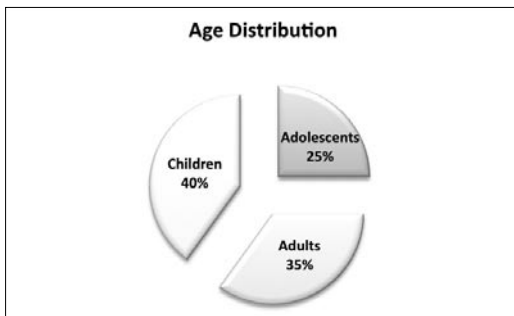
and of Australia as a whole.

Prior to completing the survey each respondent was informally briefed on the topic of emotional intelligence. Most informants were familiar with the discipline, not, however, with its formal academic language.

While answering the questionnaire, respondents were put at ease and could take as much time as they needed to complete the form. Once each document was completed, informants were queried as to whether or not any difficulties were encountered. Where this was the case, the specific problem or uncertainty was clarified. Finalized surveys were then collected and filed for later analysis.

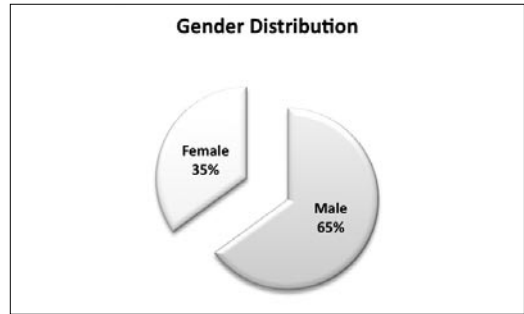
## Results

Below, each question has been analysed in turn with a brief rundown of each finding being provided as appropriate. Comparisons between males and females, and between youth and adults, have been made where possible.

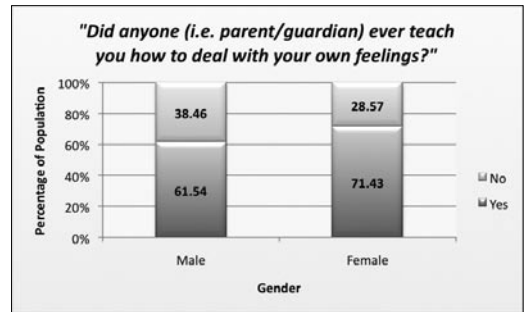


**Figure 1.** The respondents are approximately equally distributed in terms of their age or stage in life (Children – 5-15yrs; Adolescents – 15-20yrs; Adults – 20yrs+).<sup>3)</sup>

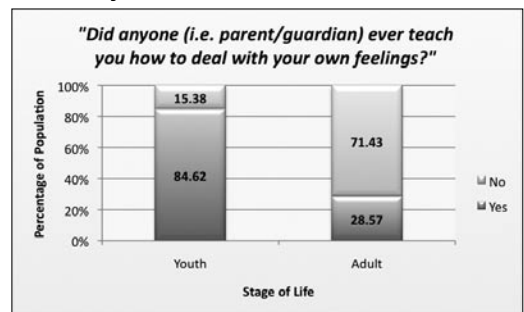
3) Please note, for the purposes of this preliminary study, the categories of ‘children’ and ‘adolescents’ will be grouped together under the single title of ‘youth’. In this way, comparisons between the younger generation (children and adolescents) and the older generation (adults) can be clearly ↗



**Figure 2.** Due to the randomly selected sample, an unequal split between male and female respondents resulted. Although unfortunate, statistically this will be accounted for in the ensuing discussion.

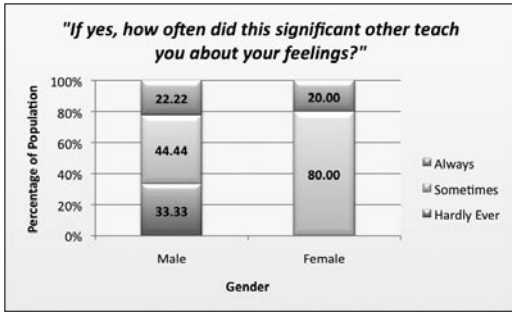


**Figure 3a.** Overall, respondents have had a reasonably high degree of association with emotion-based education programs within (or near to) the family home. Both males and females express this opinion approximately equally – with males showing slightly less familiarity.

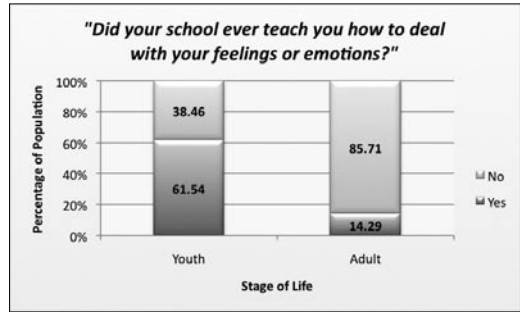


**Figure 3b.** Adults have not been emotionally educated. They have not received a guided emotion-based education within the family home – making a marked difference in comparison to the youth of today.

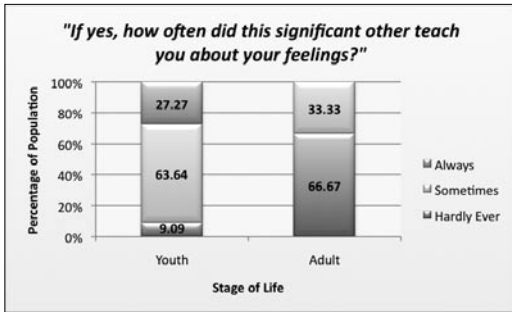
↘ made. In addition, doing so will allow comparisons between the present and the past to be more simply made.



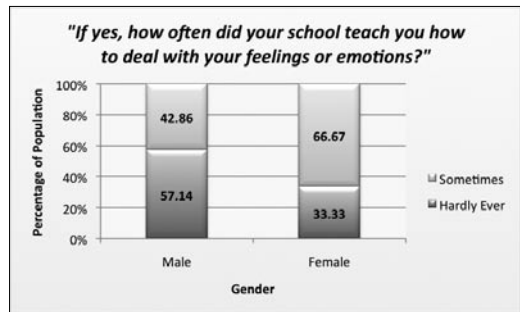
**Figure 4a.** Of those males and females that did receive an emotion-oriented education within (or near to) the family home, the emotional instruction occurred with an irregular degree of frequency. Interestingly, female respondents indicate that they received an emotion-based education more often than their male counterparts.



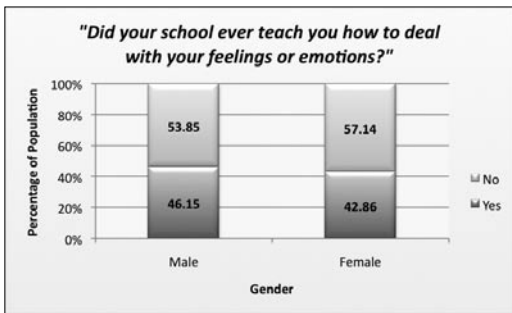
**Figure 5b.** A marked difference exists between youth and adults in terms of experience with school-based emotional literacy programs. Although, on the whole, responses to this question indicate low school-based emotional development (as shown in Figure 5a), adults observe in Figure 5b that their own school education provided them with negligible emotion-based training. To some extent, contemporary youth did, in fact, receive emotional guidance while at school. Adults, however, did not.



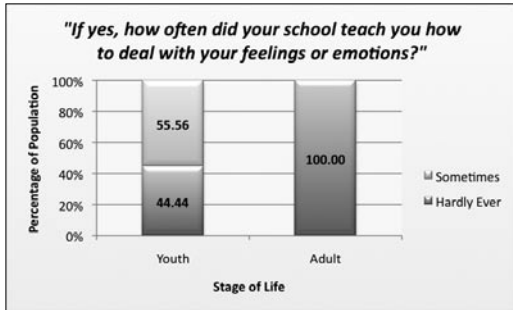
**Figure 4b.** When comparing youth with adults, once again the results indicate that adult respondents have received explicit emotional training much less frequently.



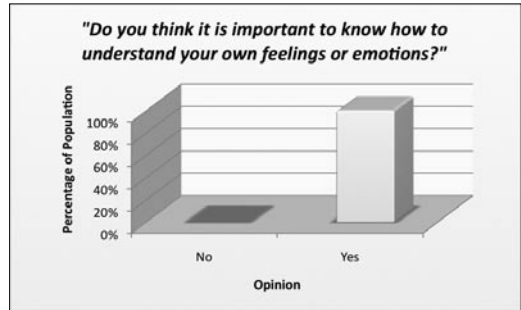
**Figure 6a.** When schools did foster emotional development, respondents indicate that this occurred sporadically. For the majority of males this hardly ever occurred. Female respondents in 'emotionally aware' schools received guidance infrequently, although far more frequently than their male counterparts.



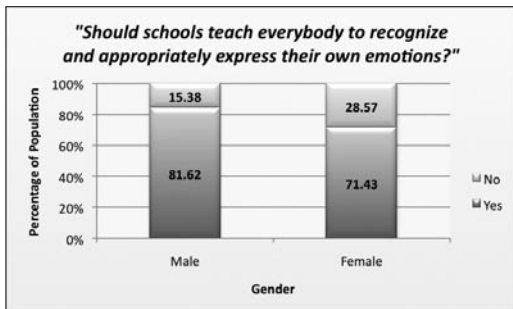
**Figure 5a.** The formal education environment has less influence upon emotional development than does the family home (compare Figure 3a). A low correlation is observed between schooling and emotional literacy programs overall. Both males and females respond similarly.



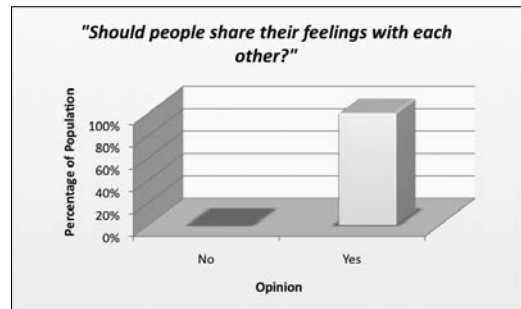
**Figure 6b.** Youth undertook emotional development within school on occasion. In contrast, of those adults that consider their schooling environment to have been 'emotionally aware', minimal to no guidance whatsoever was provided.



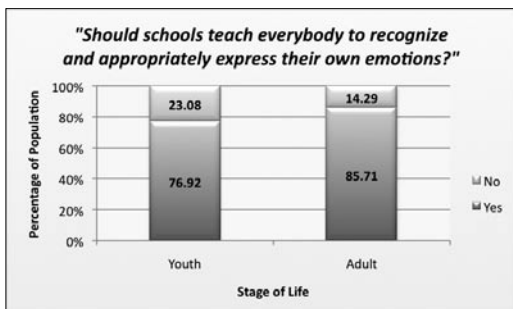
**Figure 8.** In line with Figures 7a and 7b, respondents indicate that, without reservation, they view the field of emotional intelligence as indispensable.



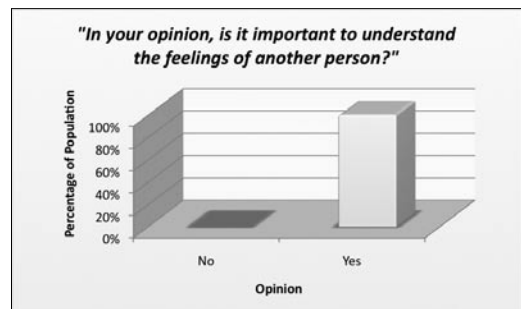
**Figure 7a.** Males and females (regardless of age) view school-based emotional education in a positive light. Formal emotional literacy programs are considered, on the whole, to be beneficial for all.



**Figure 9.** All people see value in sharing feelings with others. This data suggests that intimate and trustworthy bonds assist people to achieve quality in interpersonal relationships.



**Figure 7b.** Corresponding to Figure 7a above, youth and adults (regardless of gender) see value in formal and explicit school-based emotional literacy programs.



**Figure 10.** Respondents value empathy. This finding implies that empathy is believed to be an important socialization skill, necessary for cooperative and productive interrelationships.



## Analysis and Discussion

Pool (1997) identifies that emotional well-being is the strongest predictor of achievement in school and on the job. Figures 3b, 4b, 5b and 6b affirm that adult respondents, in particular, have experienced a lacking in emotional-development programs. However, by their own accounts and from their own experiences, adults see emotional understandings as crucial to success in life – socially, academically and personally (Figure 7b).

Figures 7a, 7b, 8, 9 and 10 portray that the community believes wholeheartedly in the importance of an emotion-based education. Thus, the significant effects of emotion on learning are increasingly being recognized (Westerback, Primavera and Spielberger 1996:190).

While youth are also largely accepting of formal emotion-based programs, adults clearly back the implementation of institutionalized emotional literacy programs (Figure 7b). A child's health is a continued concern for parents. Parents are responsible for promoting children's wellness and preventing children's illness from the moment of conception (Tinsley and Lees 1995:187). Minor illnesses that children encounter during the early years of life may serve as an indictment of parents' caregiving abilities, causing feelings of uncertainty and inadequacy (Tinsley and Lees 1995:192). Perhaps this can account for some of the interest that parents (adults) hold in the emotional well-being of their children, and of the community. It is not possible to accurately determine the degree to which this is true

within the data of this study. Nevertheless, from the evidence available, it is convincing that parents are extremely emotion-conscious. It is presumed that, from their own life experiences and through the processes of raising children, adult respondents have come to believe that having the necessary skills to interpret emotion is essential for an individual's long-term well-being. Abe and Izard (1999:527-541) and Goleman (1995), among others, concur.

People are happiest, healthiest and most productive when they are accepted, loved and united in a social context. Personal relationships are an active, crucial ingredient in the social support equation (Sarason et al. 1996:22). Responses in Figures 7a, 7b, 8, 9 and 10 support the latter statement. The surveyed population overall, therefore, believes in the importance of emotional literacy's role in fostering positive social relationships.

Emotion systems are considered to play a central role in helping people achieve major milestones and tasks at different stages of life (Abe and Izard 1999:526). An example of a preschool milestone includes an increased sense of self-awareness, whereas in adolescence a major developmental milestone includes an increased capacity for abstract thinking. Thus, non-emotionally-literate individuals will be hampered, one way or another, as they progress along the path toward maturation.

An individual's progress from one milestone to the next will be restrained should he or she not have a self-reflective capability or the capacity to analyze specific (detrimental) emotive forces. This is particularly true of the higher-order emotional responses such as jealousy, shame or envy (Abe and Izard

1999:538; Tinsley and Lees 1995:194). It is absolutely essential to have the ability to conceptualize self-evaluative emotions such as these. For example, people must learn to look at their own angry or depressive responses, and deal with them, if they are to function peacefully, cooperatively and productively in society. Abe and Izard (1999:535) point out that careful analysis of emotional responses can often motivate individuals to improve themselves so that they can function appropriately within school and the community, and so that they will be less vulnerable to such uncomfortable feelings in the future.

Where youngsters do not have the ability to interpret their own feelings appropriately, a negative and recurring downward spiral may result (Abe and Izard 1999: 542; Tinsley and Lees 1995:194). A child who is not 'emotionally intelligent' will not have the capacity to understand that emotional responses may be harmful, negative or unproductive. In such a case, an otherwise naturally calm and collective homeostasis will gradually become one that lacks motivation and will power (Levenson 1999:493-4). Thus, an individual not 'emotionally stable' will lack the drive to participate or achieve in life (Tinsley and Lees 1995:194). This, undoubtedly, is a mirthless situation for any person to inhabit – with repercussions extending into the community and beyond.

Negative emotions left unsoothed have a tendency to beget more of the same – often over prolonged periods of time. Even when an experience is extremely negative, individuals often seek out further experiences similar to familiar ones, so as to maintain some consistency

and control over their world (Tinsley and Lees 1995:194). In such instances, the resulting poor self-concept(s) can only lead to low academic achievement, poor social skills and decreased life chances.

Largely, negative emotional outcomes occur through the relinquishing of control (Band and Weisz 1988:247-253). To regain that control – along with consequent improvements in chances of success in school and in life – it is essential for emotion-focused training to be incorporated within educational institutions. This is necessary for the betterment of all, but especially as a safety net for those students that may be particularly 'emotionally vulnerable' (Gross 1999:551; Tinsley and Lees 1995:195). Emotional literacy can only have positive end results for individuals and communities alike. As noted in Figures 8, 9 and 10, respondents are unanimous in their agreement, as are long-term researchers such as Abe and Izard (1999), Bernard (1993), Bickart and Wolin (1997), Cummings and Haggerty (1997), Goleman (1995), Gross (1999), Keltner and Gross (1999), Levenson (1999), Parrott (1999), Pool (1997), Sagor (1996), and Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1997).

### **The Australian Education Context**

Although clearly valued by the academic community, by parents and even by youth (children and adolescents alike), emotion-based education has yet to be firmly integrated into the education system in Australia. Surprisingly, exploration of Australian state education policies, curricula and documents reveals that no formalized emotion-based classes exist for

students.<sup>4)</sup>

In Australian schools, programs have been created which focus on basic health and well-being issues, but none specifically focus on emotions or emotional understandings. Interestingly, younger respondents in this preliminary research study indicated that they are educated about emotions to some degree while at school (albeit somewhat sporadically as indicated in Figure 6b). Hence, one can only presume that individual teachers or specific schools are bringing the subject of emotional intelligence into the classroom of their own accord – rather than as any kind of professionally pre-packaged and coordinated program.

Is this the same situation across the whole of Australia? What is the situation across other OECD-member nations? Why is this the case? It is of paramount importance that these questions be clarified in future research projects.

As the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (2008) and Tipper (2006) outline, emotion-based learning helps children and adults develop the fundamental skills for life effectiveness. Thus, the teaching of emotion ought to be implemented in a coordinated manner, school-wide, at least from pre-school through high school (and ideally

beyond into the tertiary sector).

Governments across the globe may need reminding that organizations need leaders, managers and employees who are team players and who can work in harmony toward common goals – achievable only in an emotionally literate society. To put it simply, governments need to understand that, by improving the social skills of a particular population, positive reverberations are generated within and far beyond the point of origin.

## Conclusions

The broader community welcomes emotion-based education and is knowledgeable of the field, as shown clearly by this brief survey within Australia – a representative OECD-member nation. Overwhelmingly, respondents believe that homes, schools and communities should encourage, nurture and further develop the domain of emotional intelligence. Although there has been a marked increase in emotional-development programs over time (as noted by the youth-adult comparisons throughout this investigation), there is room for emotional literacy to be instilled in education systems over and above that which may already be in place – particularly so in a more coordinated, structured and formalized way.

Goleman (1995:259) indicates that explicit teaching of emotional literacy will boost a person's self-awareness. It will help the individual identify, express and manage feelings. It will allow that person to control impulses and to control irrationality. It will allow the need for immediate gratification to be delayed. Finally, it will grant the individual the ability to

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4) The websites of state education departments in Australia clearly outline the goals and directions of education in their respective states, along with descriptions of curricula and courses of study. Well-defined emotional literacy programs, integrated into mainstream curricula, are noticeably absent. As representative examples, the reader is encouraged to browse the New South Wales Public Schools website (<<http://www.schools.nsw.edu.au>>) along with the website of Education Queensland (<<http://education.qld.gov.au>>). Again, full citations are provided in the 'List of Works Cited'.

control stress and anxiety. Without such skills Goleman (1995:233) believes the inevitable outcome can only be withdrawal from society, social problems, anxiety, depression, poor self-concepts, cognitive problems, delinquency and aggression blended with poor performances at school, at university and at work.

Bickart and Wolin (1997), Cummings and Haggerty (1997), Pool (1997), Sagor (1996) and Wang, Haertel and Walberg (1997), among others, are of the same mind as Daniel Goleman. In a nutshell, emotions regulate our relation to the external environment (Keltner and Gross 1999:468). Youth, therefore, must be given every opportunity to learn about the self, as well as the means to favorably manage emotions. The negative outcomes of not doing so are tremendous for individuals and for societies alike.

Angel Gurría, Secretary-General of the OECD, made the recent point that it is extremely difficult to reverse patterns of poor scholastic performance (Gurría 2007). In addition, as skill demands in labour-markets increase, the social costs of poor educational levels are high and ever increasing. Thus, even if the proportion of low performers at school in Australia, Japan or the UK (or in any other nation) appears insignificant at first glance, the monitoring of downhill trends ought to deserve close and continued attention.

Studies such as PISA are an important help in identifying where, when and why achievement in schools and universities across the globe makes headway, or declines. PISA, coupled with other surveys such as the brief investigation of an Australian community outlined in this paper, serve as dependable

tools for the improvement of performance, not only for policy-makers but for all of us striving to provide the highest quality education, and hence the best futures, attainable.

Emotional intelligence, then, serves as a key to generating human prosperity, although many avenues exist for further research. Additional studies ought to be implemented – specifically focusing on Japan and the UK (and extendable to other nations) – comparing the findings against those presented here for this Australian data set.

Parrott (1999:465-6) indicates that additional investigations must be carried out with a focus upon the functions of emotion. Even more specifically, Tinsley and Lees (1995:192) argue that the emotional component of child socialization is conspicuously missing from the child preventative health literature. Therefore there are large gaps in our knowledge of emotional development. Through further scholarly research we must become more acutely aware of how human emotions affect people, how they influence performance at school and at work, and how they determine outcomes for individuals, communities, cultures and nations.

Children and adolescents must feel good every day. They must be autonomous. They must exert some degree of control over the surrounding environment. They must feel as if they belong and that their lives are meaningful.

Emotion impels all steps of the teaching and learning process. In every community, parents and teachers constitute the front-line of support and, therefore, it is largely up to them to ensure that the young grow to be

as knowledgeable, resilient and, thereby, as successful as is possible. It is the duty of the home, the school and the community to equip children and adolescents with the necessary skills of life. Not doing so, one way or another, as clearly outlined by Goleman (1995:233) and OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría (2007), reduces the quality of life for us all.

### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank all respondents for generously giving up valuable time in order to participate in this preliminary investigation. In addition, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for the constructive and insightful comments provided during the preparation of this paper by the anonymous referees.

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