

LD Edge is managed by ATN and is funded by the Government of Canada and the Government of Ontario

Emotional Intelligence

by Elisabeth Geertsma

Depending on how much you have been paying attention the last few years, you will look at the title and say, "Oh no, not again!" or "Hmm, that sounds interesting." Chances are that professionals working in the people business from Human Resources to therapists will at least be aware of the basic theory of emotional intelligence.

Howard Gardner could be considered the pioneer in formalizing the theory that there is a distinct difference between an individual's intellectual abilities and emotional abilities. Gardner called his theory Multiple Intelligences (1983). He included two categories based on personal characteristics as part of his seven kinds of intelligence. The concept was further developed by Jack Mayer and Peter Salovey in 1990 who coined the phrase "Emotional Intelligence" to describe their work. Daniel Goleman's book on Emotional Intelligence would be the catalyst to bring the concept to a much broader population (Kemper, 1999).

So what is all the fanfare about anyway? Why has the concept of Emotional Intelligence been so well received, investigated, expanded and applied? Literature suggests that an individual is much more than the hard skills s/he has been able to develop from education and work experience. Many of us can probably relate to thinking of our success at school as being based on marks. We understood at a conscious level that the straight "A" student had more value than a student floating around that "C" level. A competitive educational system that is based on marks will mean the "A" students get into the best schools and the best programs and thereby assure themselves of an even larger advantage than they already had. I suspect that the majority of us can relate more to the "C" student and have always known at an unconscious level that the life experiences we accumulate are as much or better preparation for life after school as the hard skills we acquire through formal education. Emotional Intelligence is an opportunity for the "little guy" to stand up and say, "Hooray, I feel vindicated. I have some worth." According to Kemper (1999), some studies indicate that emotional intelligence may be more than twice as important as IQ and that upward mobility in an organization is directly related to increasing emotional intelligence.

Okay, so I would still want a brain surgeon who got straight "A"s to be the one opening up my head! But, let's talk about that bedside manner for a moment. Soft skills that we have always referred to as "personality" are incorporated into the scientific concept of Emotional Intelligence. Kemper (1999) quotes from Goleman's book, *Working With Emotional Intelligence*, "EI refers to the capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships." Right,

continued on page 2...



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...continued from page 1...

so there's a reason why that concept of bedside manner has become important lately. It reminds me of the push when I worked in retail many years ago. "The thing that will make this business successful over another is customer service". So it seems that people like being treated like human beings as opposed to numbers or bodies. For some individuals, the ability to relate to others that way comes naturally but for some that ability needs to be learned. What Emotional Intelligence has given us is concepts and categories to talk about how to "be" in the world.

Is any of this a concern for those of us who work with people with learning disabilities? Henry Reiff (1999) discussed this in an online article. He suggests that biologically we are social creatures but how to be social, at least in culturally acceptable ways, is learned. There is that learning thing again. Adults with learning disabilities have certainly had to struggle with the academic aspect of learning but how do they manage when it comes to this social aspect? Reiff mentions that most LDs are the result of a deficit in processing information and this same deficit may make it difficult to process social information effectively. Also, because most of this information is nonverbal and very fluid – changing with the situation – we have to rely on experience to teach us. Those who have nonverbal social perception difficulties already experience problems reading facial expressions and social cues and may very well be unaware of their awkwardness. But those with other types of LDs may have difficulties in this area as well. They may have grown up in an atmosphere of frustration and stigma attached to a learning disability – either diagnosed or undiagnosed – which elicited behaviour problems. These socially unacceptable behaviours can lead to criminal offences in extreme cases. People with LDs may spend much of their education segregated from their peers and are therefore deprived of opportunities to develop acceptable social skills.

As often as LDs can cause socially maladaptive behaviour, they can have the opposite effect. Some adults with LDs would say that developing their social skills is the way they are able to compensate. These people have found that being charming, astute and charismatic is a key to success. So, maybe they intuitively adapted Emotional Intelligence as a tool to balance what they considered a shortfall (Reiff, 1999). In a study based partly on the relationship between LDs and EI in college students, Reiff et.al. (2001) found significant differences in the areas of adaptability and stress management for students with LDs and those without. This being said, we can not predict EI levels for people with LDs any more than we can predict EI levels for the general population. But we do need to be aware of the various ways in which EI can impact the lives of those with LDs. We need to consider these soft skills as well as the hard academic skills for those with LDs to further help them contend with a very competitive work force.

We will give an overview of the BarOn EQ-i in our next issue of LD Edge.

References

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"I almost flunked first grade and also the second, third, forth, and fifth; but my younger brother was in the grade behind me and he was a brain and nobody wanted to have me be in the same grade as him, so they kept passing me. I never learned how to spell, graduated from eighth grade counting on my fingers to do simple addition, and in general was not a resounding academic success."

-- Robert Munsch
<http://www.robertmunsch.com/bio.cfm>

Motivation – Developing Persistence and The Motivation For Success

By Abraham Adeseye

Article Source: http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Abraham_Adeseye

Motivation is a primary factor in success. Performance equals ability, opportunity and motivation. Motivation is very important because having the talent to do something is not the same as doing it. Even when the opportunity arises, a person's motivation changes from situation to situation and over time.

Motivation is the:-

- * internal state or condition that activates behaviour and gives it direction;
- * desire or want that energizes and directs goal-oriented behaviour;
- * influence of needs and desires on the intensity and direction of behaviour.

To achieve success is to be able to persist until success is achieved. Motivation refers to the forces acting either on or within a person to initiate behaviour. The word is derived from the Latin term *motivus* (a moving cause). Though one can be motivated by external causes, to be successful, it is the motivation that comes from within that really makes the difference.

Are you genuinely interested in being successful? Have you set realistic goals for yourself? Have you got the interest and the desire? Can you develop the internal motivation that really counts? Are you prepared to take action? When it comes to motivation, knowing is not as important as doing. It is the doing that counts.

You must be prepared to fight all the enemies of motivation and go forward to the success that you truly desire. Only 1 out of 100 people achieve the success that they desire. This is because 99 out of 100 people give up and only 1 out of 100 people stay the course. You must be determined that you are going to be among the 1 percent who persevere.

Abraham Adeseye is a trained lawyer, speaker and author. He has over 10 years experience as a life coach. He is the owner of <http://www.amazingdestiny.com>

"Passion is the great slayer of adversity. Focus on strengths and what you enjoy."

- Charles Schwab

Distinctive Learning Center Update

By Tanya Surridge

Our children are our future and too many of these children have talents and skills that are being under utilized because they process and acquire information differently. Every child has the right to an education that meets their own, individual needs in an environment that promotes peer acceptance and social interaction. This is the principle behind the Distinctive Learning Centre (DLC).

Currently, we are focusing on reaching out to interested parents who may have a child with a learning difficulty that doesn't "fit" into the mainstream, traditional school setting. Our hope is to appeal to ten parents and then tentatively hold an open question and answer session in early or mid November.

ATN is further exploring avenues for funding partners for the DLC and we also have some leads on a building for the school, which has a tentative "grand opening" date of September, 2008.

Children who complete their education have better opportunities to get jobs, build independence and achieve their dreams. That makes education of vulnerable children all that much more important. We encourage any other interested parents to please contact us to get more details about this exciting project. Let's help these children turn their potential into a reality.

"Learning disabilities cannot be cured, but they can be treated successfully and children with LD can go on to live happy, successful lives." ~ Anne Ford

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Print Practices for Dyslexics

Most/many people with dyslexia experience some discomfort when confronted with a printed page. The following information is detailed in length at: [www.ljmu.ac.uk/EOU/EOUDocs/dyslexia-guide\(staff\).doc](http://www.ljmu.ac.uk/EOU/EOUDocs/dyslexia-guide(staff).doc)

It is possible to alleviate the pressures of visual discomfort, and changes you make to accommodate the dyslexic student will also make life more comfortable for others. There are simple strategies to help dyslexics get the most from their reading:

- **When producing paper work** - Keep writing style in short simple sentences. Avoid dense blocks of text by using short paragraphs.
- **Fonts and type** - Use sans serif fonts such as Arial or Comic Sans. Try to keep the font size at 14pt or more, not smaller than 12pt. Expand the spacing between letters and lines. Use bold to highlight rather than italics or underlining. Avoid underlining titles or key words. It can make the words 'run together'.
- **Layout of text** - Keep lines left justified with a ragged right edge. Try using boxes or indented spacing between lines to break up text. Use bullets or numbers rather than continuous prose. Use wider spacing between sentences and paragraphs. Do not begin sentences at the end of a line. Use wide margins and headings.
- **Presentation of information** - Use coloured paper instead of white, there is some preference for cream. Keep the design of leaflets simple, as background graphics can make text difficult to read. Do not use a variety of fonts. On leaflets or posters about events, keep essential information about time and place grouped together.
- **Notice boards** - White boards are easier to read when the writing is in colour. Use print rather than joined writing on boards. Notice boards positioned at an angle are often easier to read.
- **Alternative ideas for presenting information** - Flow charts are ideal for explaining procedures. Pictograms and graphics help to locate information. Lists of 'do's and 'don'ts' are more useful than continuous text to highlight aspects of good practice. Provide a glossary of abbreviations and jargon. Include a contents page at the beginning and index at end.

Application Process for Accommodations Checklist

In the LD Edge Guidelines several checklists are available to allow you to access the accommodations which are carried out at your workplace. One of these checklists provides tips on what to consider when posting a job description when a position becomes available. The check list follows:

- Recruiters are aware that candidates for employment may require accommodations in the workplace.
- Job openings posted on bulletin boards (electronic and paper version) are accessible to all employees including persons with disabilities.
- Managers are aware of any special measures for recruiting and are encouraged to use them.
- All job advertisements accurately reflect qualifications and skill requirements.
- Job advertisements indicate that we are an equal opportunity employer.
- All jobs are open to all fully qualified individuals.
- All job advertisements are written in clear language designed to attract a wider pool of job applicants.
- Our recruitment practices are up-to-date and consistently reflect our written policy and procedures.
- Our recruitment policy and practices have been clearly communicated to unions, managers, and employees.
- We have developed mechanisms to carry out consultation and collaboration with employee representatives.
- We advertise employment opportunities through a wide variety of mechanisms and media when conducting open competitions.
- We distribute job bulletins to communities without reserve.
- When conducting recruitment at educational institutions, we seek advice from employment equity officers, designated groups and student associations.
- Our staff inventory has a representative pool of qualified candidates at all job levels.

Dysgraphia

By Brenda Sword

We all know of someone that has poor handwriting, but are you aware that sometimes this poor handwriting can be a symptom of something else; a learning disability called Dysgraphia.

Dysgraphia is an LD resulting from “difficulty in expressing thoughts in writing and graphing”. Often persons experiencing Dysgraphia will have problems with sequencing as well, they may reverse their letters and numbers regularly. This writing of letters, numbers and even whole words backwards easily explains the poor handwriting. Imagine pen in hand poised over a paper and your brain is not sure which way to tell your hand to move. Slowly writing the words or letters may result in a correct order however the shakiness and hesitating over what comes next can result in an uneven flow of the pen stroke. When working with numbers, taking this time to slow down the writing process to enable proper order can make one lose track of the calculating process and can result in a wrong answer as well.

Poor handwriting alone does not mean that an individual has Dysgraphia. Because Dysgraphia is a processing disorder, throughout a person’s lifetime various difficulties can arise. Look for these symptoms:

- illegible handwriting
- tight awkward grip on writing instruments
- avoidance of writing or drawing
- missing letters in words
- missing words in sentences
- poor organizational skills when writing
- tiring quickly while writing
- difficulty with syntax structure and grammar
- large gap between written ideas and understanding demonstrated through speech

How do you help someone with Dysgraphia?

- encourage them to continue practicing handwriting while using a computer for the majority of their work. There will be times in their lives when they will need to write but using a computer will allow them to see that they can do the work.
- dictating into a tape recorder before they write their thoughts down could keep their thoughts in order
- definitely allow more time for writing tasks
- remove neatness or spelling as marking criteria for this individual taking in the “whole picture” of what it is they are saying

e-learning Benefits for Persons with Learning Disabilities

By Brenda Sword

With the advancement of technology so too comes advancements for persons with learning disabilities. On-line learning is one of these advancements.

Each person with a learning disability has their own learning style and what better way to cater to this style than an individualized learning plan.

Advantages of e-learning for a person with an LD:

- More time – material can be read and reread as necessary allowing the individual to absorb information. No time limit exists on most e-learning platforms so you can learn at your own pace.
- Taking a break when you need one, you have the advantage of stepping away from the teacher for a break. A lot of individuals find they need frequent breaks. This is especially true for someone that may have an LD accompanied with ADD or ADHD
- e-learning platforms may be adapted to assistive technology software such as Dragon or Kurzweil. The material can be read to an individual at their pace and in a voice that they are used to, allowing better retention
- Your learning environment is suited to your needs. If you require a quiet place or a quiet time of day, e-learning provides you that flexibility

ATN offers e-learning platforms that can be tailored to suit your needs. Contact us for further information.

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We hope you have enjoyed this issue of the LD Edge Newsletter and that you are looking forward to the September issue.

If you have any information or articles or submissions to share with us, please contact us at anytime.

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If we give them an edge,
they may give us one.

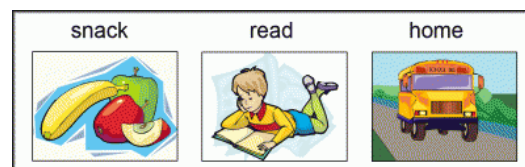
Visual Cues

by Elisabeth Geertsma

I am acquainted with a young couple who have been trying to understand the life of their pre-school child "Ryan" suspected of having Asperger's Syndrome. This is a neurobiological disorder that falls under the category of "autistic spectrum disorders."

With the help of a health care professional, one of the tools the parents have learned to use is a "planner" or calendar that takes Ryan step-by-step through his day. It is put in a conspicuous and easily accessible place – usually on the fridge – so Ryan can refer to it any time. He has learned to understand his day as a series of tasks that follow some kind of fairly regular pattern. By checking his calendar there are no surprises. He has order to his day. The thing that makes this calendar even more user-friendly is that it is done with pictures rather than words. Ryan can use these same pictures to choose something he would like to do in his day and add them into his calendar.

This tool is amazing for reasons other than those stated above. Think about the opportunity it gives parent(s) and child to spend time together - choosing pictures to cut from magazines, drawing and coloring pictures or finding clip-art on the computer that they can use. It enhances the cutting, coloring and computer skills necessary to perform these various tasks. It can be developed based on a child's attention span and abilities. As things turned out, the results of further testing showed Ryan had a non-verbal learning disability rather than Asperger's as originally thought. So one has to wonder if the calendar tool was helpful after all. Well, I think Ryan's parents would say it definitely was and is. Here is the beauty of accommodations. They may originally be designed for one particular need and end up having multiple applications. Imagine having a calendar for each of your pre-school children. Help them learn what their day will look like. Give them some control over their day by offering three pictures of activities you know will fit into a particular time slot and have them pick the one they want to do. Spend some time going through magazines or clip-art programs and see how creative you can become with ideas for fun things to do. This will not only be helpful for children who are just learning to speak, but will benefit children who are slower than their peers whether that is developmental or learning based. It takes away competition and builds in self-awareness and responsibility.



See <http://autism.healingthresholds.com> for a more detailed explanation of this tool.