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ABSTRACT

Emotional Intelligence (EI) developed through the 1990s and into this century as a model of enquiry in psychology and management and has been applied extensively in the field of leadership training. This theory describes emotions as a form of information that can be utilised by leaders to help them make better decisions. This paper describes the development of an experiential training program that employed the Ability Model of EI (Salovey and Mayer, 1990,1997) combined with tools from the performing arts and drama therapy to create a workshop program. The aim of the workshops was to increase awareness of the role of emotions in working life, and provided interactive learning opportunities to engage with complicated emotional dilemmas arising from their leadership roles.

Relevant theoretical background from each discipline is presented followed by a description of the workshop development, paying particular attention to the challenges of cross-disciplinarity. The workshops were presented within an Academic Leadership Program at Edith Cowan University (ECU), and subsequently within the Leading Edge Program, School of Management, ECU. Both the initial workshops and their subsequent iterations are described. Survey results from the workshops describe the interest and challenges of the workshops for participants. A focus group at three months follow-up revealed that participants used the learning experience of the workshop to address and resolve specific leadership challenges in their role. The researchers describe their experience of collaborating and suggestions are made to address some of the challenges of developing cross disciplinary collaborations within academic settings.

INTRODUCTION

Arts-based training in management and leadership

Recent investigations into learning processes have led to changes in models of education and training from traditional, knowledge-transfer approaches to more interactive and experiential approaches across a wide range of disciplines including business and management (Boggs, Mickel & Holtom, 2007). Drama is especially suited to experiential education. Beckwith (2003) suggests two reasons for using drama processes in management training: influencing attitudes and motivation through stage or screen performances; and dealing with complex, potentially sensitive, management issues through interactive drama processes. Gibb (2004) suggests two further roles in which drama becomes a metaphor for the changing systems and circumstances of an organisation, and the skills base of the improvisational actor a model for resolving problems and conciliating after crisis and conflict. Boggs's et al. (2007) describe a model of interactive drama which makes new concepts memorable, and gives participants the chance to experience the complexities of real-life scenarios in a safe environment where new behaviour can easily be risked.

Chris Skinner, an organisational psychologist, approached the School of Contemporary Arts at ECU to explore the potential of working with artists in the development of practical training applications of the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, 1997). Performing artist and lecturer, Ralf Rauker, and drama therapist and lecturer Robyn Bett formed a working team to address Chris's proposal. Each member of the team was interested in exploring the connections between emotions and arts processes, and each member of the team brought a body of distinct discipline knowledge to this collaboration. To provide a background to understand the distinct nature of each discipline being explored, the ability model of emotional intelligence, relevant theories from the performing arts and drama therapy are reviewed. The distinctive voice of each discipline and contributor to this collaboration is retained in the article.

In the method section, the preparation and delivery of the first workshop is described. The development of the program over subsequent workshops is outlined. This is followed by a review of the feedback received from the workshops, and a discussion of the successes and challenges of this collaboration. The paper finishes with reflections from the team about cross disciplinary work in Universities and the importance of making time for the emotional life of work.

The Ability Model Of Emotional Intelligence

Debate has raged as to the exact origins of the term emotional intelligence, but it is generally regarded that the original seminal article was written by Salovey and Mayer (1990). This work focussed on identification, understanding and merging of emotions in self and with others. Shortly after Goleman (1995) achieved best seller status with his book on emotional intelligence and a subsequent cover story in Time Magazine (Gibbs 1995). Reuven Bar-On followed this work and developed a multidimensional model and questionnaire (Bar-On 1997). Whilst this more popularised approach was being played out, Salovey and Mayer (1997) amended their original approach to a four branch process model of emotional intelligence. These branches were: description of emotions, association of emotions with flexible thought, understanding of emotions, and managing and regulating

emotion in self and others. Table 1 outlines these four branches with associated level characteristics (Caruso, Mayer and Salovey 2000).

Table 1 Ability Model (Caruso, Mayer and Salovey. 2000: 57)

Level 1

Perceiving	Identify emotions in thoughts
Identify emotions in other people	Express emotions accurately
	Discriminate between accurate and inaccurate feelings

Level 2

Using	Prioritise thinking by directing attention
	Generate emotions to assist judgement
	Mood swings to change perspective
	Emotional states to encourage problem solving

Level 3

Understanding	Label and recognise relations among emotions
	Interpret meanings that emotions convey
	Understand complex emotions
	Recognise emotional transitions

Level 4

Management	Stay Open to feelings
	Engage/detach from an emotion
	Monitor emotions reflectively

What the ability model emphasises is that emotions contain information, and that this information is fundamental in decision-making processes. Caruso and Salovey (2004, p. 9) suggest that there are six basic principles on which this ability rests.

1. **Emotion is information:** Fundamental to the model is a cognitive view of EI: that emotion contains valuable information for decision-makers and people in conflict. In a sense emotions are not seen as random episodic acts, but rather concrete information, vital to motivation, guidance and ultimately to our survival. Various emotions in the workplace can, for instance, help us identify danger (fear), hurt (sadness), injustice (anger) and satisfaction (joy).
2. **We can try and ignore the information, but it doesn't work:** Emotion needs to be understood and incorporated in human interaction. In a particular situation one needs to process the underlying information as well as the emotional element. You do not need to suppress the emotion, nor do you need to be overwhelmed by it; instead one experiences the emotion and it is an energy source to produce more effective outcomes.

3. **We can try and hide emotions, but we are not as good as we think we are:** Hiding emotions may at times be an important aspect of emotional resilience and a needed defence against threatening situations and persons. However, the principle asserts that feelings are read „by some of the people most of the time and by all of the people some of the time“ (Caruso & Salovey 2004, p. 16)
4. **Decisions must incorporate emotion to be effective:** Emotions are seen here as truly human, underpinning our rational experience; that is, they serve a purpose and need to be put to use. Emphasis is on experiencing the full range of emotions, both so-called positive and negative emotions, rather than totally blocking or rationalising away the emotional experience.
5. **Emotions follow logical patterns:** Plutchik’s (1994) model of emotions suggests that there are eight primary emotional states: sadness, disgust, surprise, fear, trust, joy, anticipation, and anger. These can be seen on a continuum of intensity from low to high (e.g. annoyance to anger to rage). Understanding of such emotional patterns can help in prediction and reduction of uncertainty.
6. **Emotional universals exist, but so do specifics:** Emotions can clearly serve to signal important experiences such as threat or interest and in this way they communicate an overall universal signal to all. However specific contexts, with specific display rules, secondary emotions and gender differences, can also be anticipated and acted upon.

Since the initial flurry of activity in the 1990s, many separate emotional intelligence studies and linked measures have been developed. Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) have classified these activities into streams. The first stream encompasses the four branch ability model, as proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1990, 1997) and measured by the MSCEIT (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test). The second stream outlines self report and peer report measures associated with Mayer and Salovey’s work (Jordon et al. 2003; Schutte et al. 1998). Finally stream three incorporates developed models of emotional intelligence not included in Mayer and Salovey’s work (Goleman 1995, 2000; Bar-On 1997).

Interestingly a number of writers (Mayer, Salovey & Caruso, 2000) have termed this third stream a „mixed model“, since from their view it encompasses both personality and behavioural preferences. Criticisms of this mixed model, have centred upon the lack of empirical validation (e.g. Davies, Stankov, & Roberts 1998), turning initial conceptualisation of emotional intelligence into management and leadership models (Locke 2005) and the over extension of original concepts of emotional intelligence to include a variety of personality and competency variables. Thus, in understanding and applying emotional intelligence it is vital to understand and clarify what we mean by the term; and not simply become confused through combining all the streams and approaches under the one banner.

Given the historical primacy of the Ability Model, there is increasingly strong evidence to support the empirical validation of both the model and the associated MSCEIT measure. Ashkanasy and Daus (2005) argue that this approach even though only in existence for a decade and half has led to the development of a solid measure with good psychometric and predictive qualities. High internal consistency has been demonstrated (Conte 2005) together with factorial validation through confirmatory factor analysis (Palmer et al. 2004). On the basis of such conceptual and empirical support the authors considered the most appropriate emotional intelligence approach was Mayer and Salovey’s Ability Model.

Over the last two decades, as with the research interest in emotional intelligence, there appears to be a commensurate interest in the link between EI and Leadership (e.g. George 2000; Sosik & Megarian 1999). Work outcome effectiveness has shown to be effectively linked to emotion related variables (Ashkanasy & Tse 1998). Intuitively, emotional intelligence and various components of transformational leadership appear connected. Research studies have further supported this connection, emphasising the link between empathy and leadership behaviour and outcome (Skinner & Spurgeon 2005) and between various levels of the ability model and dimensions of transformational leadership (Daus & Harris 2003).

Chris's interest was in developing experiential learning opportunities for the model of EI. In their research on emotional coaching, Gottman and Declaire (1997) found that the moments for teaching children about their feelings and helping them to trust, understand and work with their emotions, were when the children were emotional. In other words learning about emotions appears to be state dependent. Furthermore research has shown that some skills do not transfer into stressful, real-world situations when they are taught under nonstressful conditions. Many of the situations leaders face every day can be classified as stressful (e.g. providing feedback to poor performers, resolving conflicts between employees) (Boggs et al. 2009). In order to develop effective workshops Chris was looking for a way to develop an experiential learning frame. This led to the performing arts where actors are trained to generate emotions and to achieve flexibility in receiving, expressing and articulating the emotional content of communication.

Acting Methods informed the development of our Emotional Intelligence workshops – Ralf Rauker

I drew on the acting methods of three of the twentieth century's most predominant theatre practitioners, Konstantin Stanislavski, Vsevolod Meyerhold and Bertolt Brecht. The main focus of this review is on their work with emotions for the stage, and on how we introduced their methods to our workshop participants.

We should not expect that any one acting method could deliver a sufficient theoretical underpinning for our workshops on Emotional Intelligence. The main question in theatre and film is how do we convince or engage our audience and this leads to practical thinking where theory only plays a supporting role.

Making the invisible inner life of a character visible on stage can seem like magic. So too a performance that deeply moves a spectator without physical touch. Stanislavski was a master of this form of art. Meyerhold emphasized physical movement in order to trigger emotions; and Brecht wanted to keep a certain degree of emotional detachment and avoid being overwhelmed by emotions.

Konstantin Stanislavski (1863-1938) believed that the actor working on a role should imagine each theatrical situation „as if“ he was experiencing it himself. To „be“ in character, instead of „presenting“ it, was the goal. To this end, Stanislavski developed a system of actors' training which required the actor to access and then use his or her own deep, and often previously hidden or forgotten, emotions. After many years of practising this method, he realised that this initial emotional identification with the character could be psychologically risky and artistically unreliable. He then developed instead what he termed the „Method of Physical Action“, which focused on an active analysis of the character's physicality.

Vsevolod Meyerhold (1874-1940) and his theatre ensemble gave the first public presentation of „Biomechanics“ in 1920. This method of psycho/physical actor training was based on scientific experiments at the time, suggesting that feelings were triggered through physical reflexes. For example, if somebody walks through the woods and is suddenly confronted by a bear, he will run away instantly, following a physical reflex and, only after running, the feeling of fear will kick in, triggered by the physical action of running.

Bertolt Brecht (1898 – 1956) fled from the Nazi dictator Adolf Hitler. In exile Brecht tried to warn the German people not to trust this Fuehrer/leader (who incidentally took acting classes for some time...), but most of the nation was already in a kind of collective emotional ecstasy. Many of Brecht's plays dealt with this state of mind and his advice for actors was mostly concerned with the dangers that emotional identification with a character could cause. He believed that a level of emotional detachment from the character was necessary for an actor to portray that character and to facilitate objectivity in the audience. This detachment would also allow actors/audiences to look for alternatives to the socio-political scenarios that Brecht's plays highlighted.

Drama Therapy informed our Emotional Intelligence Workshops – Robyn Bett

Drama therapy is the intentional use of theatrical processes for therapeutic purposes. Drama therapists are trained both in psychotherapy and performance techniques.

The term „role“ was used by Moreno, the founder of psychodrama, as a label for certain actions that a person takes (Hale, 1981). These roles are defined by physical limits, by systems and cultures, or by a person's imagination and for practical purposes are made up of thoughts, feelings and actions. The way people learn new roles is to observe those roles, imitate the role as a way of becoming familiar with it, and then through feedback from others develop an approach to enacting the role in the world. Through careful and thoughtful exploration of a role in a training workshop, members of groups begin to co-produce the growth of roles for one another. In our workshops we investigated the four abilities/levels of EI as if they were roles, that is, certain abilities that a person either makes use of or does not make use of in a given situation.

Thinking about role-play from a drama therapy perspective, people will put parts of themselves into a role and also develop towards the role. They have the experience of being „me and not me“, and in this expanded state can develop a new way of being in the world. In this model, role playing provides the opportunity to identify with a role, that is, to be someone different.

Distancing in drama therapy refers to the balance between feeling and thought, and this is a good match for the balance that the ability model of EI is developing. Scheff (1979) describes an extreme of over-distancing as a state of repression, where an individual has blocked his ability to experience painful emotion. This person's primary mode of experiencing is a cognitive one. It is reasonable to assume that academic leaders have a well-developed cognitive role. The other extreme is of under distance, where an individual is overwhelmed by painful emotion and thus experiences a high degree of anxiety. Here the primary mode of experiencing is an affective one. The aim of drama therapy is to help clients achieve a catharsis or state of equilibrium between feeling and thinking states. EI similarly provides a model in which participants are invited to think about their emotional experiences and use that as information in their decision-making.

Purpose

With the theories of emotional intelligence, performing arts and drama therapy, the team worked together to create a practical training for people in leadership positions and in the use of EI in their working lives. Our working model was to find ways to both engage and inspire participants in each level of the ability model of EI through scripted performances, and then to work with participants using dramatic activities to engage them in each of the processes of emotional intelligence.

METHODOLOGY

Cross disciplinary processes

Initially the links between the differing theoretical constructs seemed to hover just outside our ability to articulate. Early conversations were characterised by lengthy monologues as we struggled to understand the differing world views of the three participants. Our connection was the task of articulating links between emotions and arts, and their potential for training.

An important contextual issue was that each of us was struggling with emotional difficulties we were experiencing at work. The first part of our meetings became a forum to express some of our frustrations about current challenges: impossible directives, the insensitivity of colleagues, the University's financial crisis and the ensuing impact on what we could offer students. As we struggled to achieve enough emotional regulation to focus on our assignment, we were realising in a very practical way the importance of emotional life in our workplace!

Academic Leadership Program

The Academic Leadership Program was a series of workshops developed by the Professional Development Program at ECU. Workshops were published on a calendar and made freely available to all staff.

The Design and Development of the First Series of Workshops

We designed a series of three workshops hosted by the Professional Development Program. For our first workshop we prepared a Power Point presentation explaining the ability model of EI. We commissioned two scripts created to empathise with our participants. One of these performances was a tongue-in-cheek performance about the University as a whole, called *La Bella Figura*, showing the University as a demanding Gloriana, requiring grovelling submission from her minions in the pursuit of external assessments of excellence. In the second, an academic arrives for work to face a cascade of escalating demands from voice mail and email, only to discover at the end of the performance that it is only 9.00am on Monday morning.

We further commissioned a local playwright to develop a series of scripts demonstrating each level of the EI model by showing a series of typically emotionally challenging situations for academics. These included a

squabble over room bookings, thinly veiled competition between staff research interests, dealing adequately with student complaints, and staff members dropping important administrative tasks under work load pressure.

The cast included professional actors, graduate performance students and team members. Rehearsals with the scriptwriter enabled improvisations in rehearsal to be included in rewrites of the script. It was challenging to work with the scripts to both retain their narrative and emotional interest, while elucidating a particular level of EI. This highlighted differences between didactic models of training using distinct learning concepts, and the drama process that is more experiential and not so easily focused in a single direction for a particular learning aim. This dichotomy was apparent throughout the project.

We developed a series of performing arts activities such as walking holding your body in different shapes, balancing poles on fingertips and moving in unison, that created opportunities for participants to identify emotions and experience how sensory stimulus can create emotions.

We prepared instructions to invite participants to bring in examples of emotional challenges at work that could be workshopped by the actors to help participants develop understanding and management of EI at work.

The First Workshop Series

Our first series of workshops was held in a wide gymnasium room. We had 15 participants who attended in response to the email bulletin. Thirteen participants were women. A range of academic leadership positions were represented including Heads of School, Program Chairs and Unit Coordinators.

After a short introduction to the workshop, we presented each performance, followed by discussion, and then a presentation of the relevant level of the EI model. The performances were recognisable and controversial to the participants who argued about what was the right course of action in the deliberately unresolved performances.

In the first workshop participants also took part in explorations and exercises on the connection between physical motion and emotion. As described above, Stanislavski with his method of physical action and Meyerhold with biomechanics used the same fundamental principle in their actors' training: *Physical action triggers emotion*. By working on each physical action in detail, the actor could prepare a kind of vessel for the associated emotions, the way a riverbed that holds and channels water. In our workshops we completed the first step in this direction by making participants aware of how, for example, their posture influenced their emotional state. The simple exercise required walking through the space and manifesting a clear emotional message through the body posture. Focusing on the physical posture first, participants could register within themselves when and how strongly the anticipated feelings kicked in.

Acting methods and daily life experience: The discovery that physical actions trigger emotions is available to all of us. We all realise that we feel differently if we are sitting or walking with our shoulders and head hanging down or if we are opening up with our whole body. We even intuitively use this knowledge in our daily life when we get up and stretch our body after sitting down for a long time or after having some depressing thoughts. Sometimes a friend will say: „Hey, you look like you're carrying a ton on your shoulders. Whatever it is, get it off for a moment and breathe." Of course you are not an actor in that situation and your friend is not your director, but you are using the same principles in managing your emotions as a theatre or film professional would. One big difference

is that you use those principles for your own wellbeing and not in working on a character in a play, which can be a physically and emotionally exhausting experience.

The ideas presented were interesting to participants who unexpectedly expressed their pleasure at having an opportunity to talk with colleagues about the emotional aspects of their work.

In the second session, participants reviewed what had been achieved and spent most of the session in feeling spaces. In the first shorter activity, participants took part in a rhythmic movement together, experiencing themselves slowly becoming in step with other people in the room. In the second activity, participants became members of a unique performance art experience, involving lying down while different coloured lights were shone on them and piano music was played; each piece of music had been developed to match with the coloured light. To stop making sense was a challenging experience for most of the participants, but in the end each participant appreciated the unusual activity because it gave "time for me".

One of the developments from the first workshop was the direct use of the acting methods of Stanislavski, Meyerhold and Brecht. Ralf explains:

I intuitively started to introduce some of their principles and exercises, but rarely used their names, because I thought participants didn't want to feel like they had to study acting. Later I realized that giving some historical context, and even using some of the acting terminology, helped to structure the workshops and strengthen the pragmatic approach. These were like tools that the participants could use in the workshop and take with them to use in their own workplace.

After watching a scenario presented by professional actors, the workshop participants were asked to work for about 10 minutes on each of the following two writing exercises:

1. What if I were in the same situation as the (chosen) character in the scene? What would I do?

The "magical if" is an important instrument within the Stanislavskian System. In daily life one would say: "I put myself into his shoes" or "I try to see it through her eyes". This is a very important tool when using EI to understand conflicts with others in our workplace. I will return to this point below.

2. Describe the physical behaviour of the chosen character by speaking/writing in the third person.

This is one of Brecht's strategies to achieve detachment: talk about the character in the third person. Some participants had difficulties in keeping their objectivity. They judged very quickly and speculated on the hidden motivations instead of soberly describing the physical actions that they saw and the consequences this behaviour had for the interactions of their chosen character.

These writing exercises introduced participants to the major question in acting as well as in EI: Is emotional identification useful or do I have to stay detached in order to handle the situation, whether it is on stage or in real life? Of course there is not an easy answer to this question.

The most delicate situation in using the "magical if" is when we are in conflict with somebody and try to see things through the eyes of the conflict partner. It can be a revelation to do this, but there are risks involved. Empathising could lead to becoming emotionally overwhelmed. This is why Stanislavski

developed the Method of Physical Action and why Meyerhold came up with Biomechanics as an actor training. But did they want the actor to stay cold and without any feeling? Of course not! We have stated several times in our article, that there is a certain risk in working with emotions. But is it really so dangerous to feel? There is probably more danger in constantly controlling our emotions. We are simply not trained to feel and think in unison.

At the end of the first session participants were given the following instructions to prepare for the final session.

Before the next workshop find some time to :

Choose an interpersonal situation at work, one which left you with strong feelings. Describe briefly in on or two sentences:

The setting

The characters

The practical issue that was being dealt with

Reflect on the process issues using the first 3 levels of the Ability Model of EI:

1. What emotions were there in the situation? What did you see/hear that helped you to recognise these.
2. How were these emotions used during this interaction? Were feelings communicated or not? Were feelings used to enhance, or distract from the cognitive process? What was the context issues that were having an influence on these emotions?
3. What can you understand now about how these emotions played out? What emotions came first? How did they influence what happened next?

In the next session we will use these situations to explore the 4th level of the Ability Model of EI.

In the third and final session, we reviewed and discussed what had been achieved previously. Then we asked participants to tell the group about their prepared scenario. These scenes were role-played by the actors and paused at certain points to examine each level of emotional intelligence. After modelling from actors and other participants, the teller of the story had the opportunity to re-enact her own story, using emotional intelligence to manage the situation in a different way.

For example, one participant described a scene in which she had to have a difficult conversation with a subordinate. The subordinate brought her sick child to the interview so the leader felt unable to address the situation. During the role play it became clear that our participant had failed to identify her emotions in the situation, and that doing that could have provided a clue to a more empowering path of action. She recognised that she had immediately felt angry at the beginning of the interview but she had covered this rather than using this information to cut short the interview and arrange another time when she could meet the employee in private.

In a second scene, a unit coordinator was frustrated because a staff tutor would not do his job, and she continually ended up doing it for him, and resenting it. As we examined this situation, including fantasies and real possibilities, it became clear that the tutor was bullying her by coming to her at the last minute and asking for help while sitting on her desk, threatening the success of her program if she didn't rescue the situation.

Understanding how this emotional tangle was a set piece, with each part of the drama being followed by the next, provided a context for this participant to make a different choice.

Three months later we met these workshops participants over lunch, and asked them to tell us how the workshops had influenced them.

Development of Workshops

Following this first series of workshops, we conducted five more workshop series, two more with academic leaders and three with the School of Management as part of their Leading Edge program. Each workshop was slightly different; however, all followed the basic plan of including a presentation of the EI ability model, discussion of scenarios relevant to the participants, experiential learning activities from performance training, and role plays from participants' real-life experiences.

The working model that has emerged from the sessions is described in the box below.

Emotional Intelligence Workshops – Current Working Model

1. Performances by professional actors showing emotionally engaging work scenes relevant to the particular profession of the participants.
2. Discussion with participants focusing on participants' identification with the emotional content of the performance.
3. Presentation of the ability model of EI: identifying, using, understanding and managing emotions.
4. Performing arts activities to generate different emotions.
5. Writing activities to experience different distances from emotions.
6. Interactive role plays generated from participants' current emotional challenges in leadership at work, examined through the lens of EI.

Outcomes

In our cross-disciplinary exploration we were concerned with developing strategies for dealing with the daily emotional struggles at the workplace. We intentionally didn't use academic jargon and sometimes simplified the connections between acting methods and a pragmatic approach to EI. The justification again was very simple. Feedback we received from workshop participants encouraged us to emphasise the experiential benefit of making playful and personal connections, rather than intellectualising the subject.

Our investigation has not resulted in proven theories of EI and the Performing Arts. As in theatre, we often have to look for „what works" and „what doesn't work" – keeping in mind that what works for one actor or audience member doesn't necessarily work for the other. Therefore, our exploration on EI has been not so much about

generalisations as about what suits each character/personality. To enhance the performance of our university staff (particularly in leadership positions), we concentrated on the „art of performing“ – not with the intention to make staff-members professional actors, but to open their minds to the art of communication. The performing arts offer handy training tools for people to become more perceptive to emotional messages of other people; to be more versatile in using emotions for specific tasks; and to manage our own emotions and deal with other people’s emotions – all of this without hurting and harming.

Becoming an actor can be lots of fun, but during their training or careers most actors experience some sort of emotional or mental crisis. The acting profession incurs risks and can at times be like opening Pandora’s Box, especially if not approached with caution. In our workshops on EI we did not use the art form and direct acting methods. We provided tools, techniques, useful terminology and exercises as a handy survival kit for dealing with the emotional life in our workplaces and in ourselves.

The Professional Development Program distributed participant evaluation forms following out second workshop series. In response to what they found most valuable participants described the scenarios as reflecting reality, making them think, and providing a great platform for discussing the issues. People described the active participation as valuable and were able to recall the framework for understanding provided by the power point slides of the Ability Model of EI.

In response to questions about what was least valuable to them, some participants described their difficulty with understanding the relevance of some of the performance-based activities designed to heighten people’s awareness of the link between emotions and physicality, and wanting more time to discuss the issues being raised. There was also a comment about the use of politically correct statements by other participants.

For all participants, the workshop met people’s personal objectives. The stated objectives of this workshop, and the average of the responses indicated on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 reflecting complete dissatisfaction and 10 reflecting complete satisfaction are listed below.

Created an awareness of the importance of emotions in academic leadership through professionally performed scenarios AVG 8.4

Develop an understanding of the four levels of Emotional Intelligence as they relate to Academic Leadership AVG 8.3

Participate in experiential work aimed at developing your leadership capacity to deal creatively with interpersonal challenges. AVG 7.8

One surprising result was a low rating for the quality of group interaction in which statements such as *You were encouraged to participate* and *You were encouraged to ask questions* received average ratings of 6.1 and 6.3 respectively.

Three months after the first series of workshops, we invited our participants to meet us for lunch and talk with us about how the workshops had affected their subsequent work experiences. Each of the nine participants that attended this follow up meeting was able to talk about a change that had developed in their working life that they attributed to their experience in the workshop. These changes included personal challenges, such as a novelist figuring out the ending for a story, a manager finding a better work/life balance, and a Head of School dealing

with a difficult subordinate. Both of the long-running difficulties that we worked with in the role play had been resolved. Some changes instigated by an individual had resulted in wider systemic changes. For example, following the workshops one participant had for the first time asked for a private interview with her Head of School to discuss her opinions about the development of the program she had worked on for many years. The Head of School found this very helpful, and instigated similar meetings for all the senior staff in her School.

This group of participants said that they could imagine an ongoing group that met to support staff to use the skills of emotional intelligence at work, like a leadership coaching group.

We did not collect formal feedback from the remaining four series of workshops. One of the frequently encountered difficulties in the workshops related to participants finding system solutions for the emotional challenges that were shown in either our performances, or in the participant role plays. It seemed that avoiding the difficulty by changing the system was the model of management they were most familiar with. It took constant gentle coaching by the team, to focus participants onto the emotional content of the scene and using those emotions to help find a new solution. Of course, as managers, the system solutions could be important but they were not the focus of our workshops. At times, participants would voice their frustration with sidetracking into systems issues.

Discussion

Verbal and written feedback from the workshops suggest that we fulfilled our purpose of bringing together three distinct ways of working to develop a workshop model to support people's emotional experience of leadership.

With the performances we motivated discussion about the role of emotion in the workplace, and provided a framework for all the participants to engage in. With the performance activities we challenged participants to think about how they were using emotions. These methods encouraged participants to think functionally about emotions rather than be the passive victim of them. This active level of focus on emotions was difficult for some participants. In the role plays people owned up about leadership situations they struggled with. Participants described situations in which they had either distanced their emotions or not dealt with the issue effectively, or had „lost their cool“ and felt uncomfortable about the outcome. Such experiences can be lonely, frustrating times unless people have strong support through coaching or supervision. Through the role play participants relived these moments with the support of colleagues, with actors who heightened the emotional experience, and with facilitators. The workshop in its entirety gave participants the opportunity to acknowledge and seek understanding about the emotional experience of a leadership difficulty and through the interactive theatre provided the opportunity for the emotional information to be integrated and understood.

The challenge of having enough time to adequately process all the issues brought up by participants was highlighted by the questionnaire feedback. This is in part a consequence of having three presenters, trying to work together to find the learning moments for participants. It is also a common outcome in using the performing arts in training that the work creates some „personal and group disequilibrium“ (Gibb 2004, p. 741) that needs sufficient space and time to be processed for maximum learning opportunity.

We also noticed the difference in cohorts between different groups. A group in which all participants had freely chosen to attend, and who developed a collegial manner, found the personal and group challenges easier to

process and learn from. This suggests that efforts directed at welcoming, and building the sense of group-as-a-whole (Ringer, 2007) are important aspects of making training like this maximally effective.

Lessons learnt and concluding comments from the three authors

At first, Robyn and Ralf struggled with applying the principles of role play and acting methods to the ability model, which Chris had introduced. Respecting this particular model as a useful framework had to be reconciled with wanting to work within one's own expertise. In our cross-disciplinary approach we had to establish a common terminology and we had to trust each other's professional know-how in the application of EI.

In the workshops, each of us was responsible for introducing the specific method of dealing with emotions that we had expertise in; and so by observing each other we increased our knowledge base of the other disciplines. This sounds simple, but it is a crucial process in cross-disciplinary work: to be open and curious about the work of your colleagues, whilst you are contributing with confidence in areas of your own expertise. Also important for us was the realisation that workshop participants picked up our willingness and ability to collaborate with each other.

In dealing with the acting scenarios that were written for our workshops, the different frames of professional reference were most evident. For Ralf, who was responsible for the rehearsals and presentation in front of an audience, the quality of the acting had the highest priority, whereas Chris was more concerned with how the scenarios could be connected to the goals of EI and the ability model. The need for empathy and acceptance of such professional frameworks is clearly important for the success of cross-disciplinary work.

There were other obstacles that had to do more with politics than with our work. Many institutions mouth the necessity of undertaking cross-disciplinary work, but make it difficult for this to occur. In our experience the practical facilitation of cross-disciplinary work in universities generally is very limited. The organisational mentality is often not about sharing knowledge, but rather keeping it within one's own institution or departmental setting. Academic leaders and managers need to be encouraged to take risks and be challenged to widen their horizons – never an easy task!

In our exploration, we were lucky to receive support from staff in Professional Development at the University. Their position allowed for a more macro and less departmental view of such an initiative. The series of workshops that we developed were linked with a program on academic leadership, which was delivered across all schools and faculties.

In the future we intend to continue our work in universities and to conduct workshops in other communities. Emotional Intelligence can become something really juicy, full of life and extremely useful for the art of living. Our working hypothesis is that the Performing Arts offer tools for a playful and effective training in Emotional Intelligence. We see our cross-disciplinary work as successful in vitalising the workplace communities.

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