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Article Critique

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Cherniss, C., Goleman, D., Emmerling, R., Cowan, K., & Adler, M. (7 October 1998). *Bringing emotional intelligence to the workplace: A technical report issued by the consortium for research on emotional intelligence in organizations*. Retrieved November 5, 2006 from <http://www.EIConsortium.org>

Summary

The current technical report by Cherniss et al. (1998) addresses the issues of teaching emotional intelligence in nonformal educational settings. The report provides an excellent overall approach in the optimal process model (OPM) for the adult educator who aspires to consult or become a trainer in emotional intelligence. It taps a diverse literature base from neuroscience, organizational theory and development, human relations, and psychology to formulate a comprehensive model for increasing the effectiveness of EI training in the workplace. The OPM presented based on four phases of education, each with its own comprehensive set of guidelines for increasing the likelihood that experiential learning and transference will take place. As reported by the authors, although the model is quite comprehensive, “Fortunately, the effect of adhering to the guidelines is multiplicative and synergistic: the more guidelines that trainers can follow, the greater and more lasting will be their impact” (p. 29). Each guideline need not necessarily be followed.

A total of 22 guidelines are offered under the four-phased approach. In the first phase, *Preparation*, the trainer builds trust by (a) assessing the organization’s needs, (b) assessing personal strengths and limits, (c) providing caring feedback, (d) maximizing learner choice, (e) encouraging participation, (f) linking learning goals to learner personal values, (g) adjusting

expectations, and (h) gauging the readiness of the learners and the organization. In the second phase, *Training*, the trainer builds enthusiasm and motivation for change by engaging participants to (a) foster additional positive relationships, (b) maximize self-directedness, (c) establish and communicate clear goals for learning and application, (d) break goals down into manageable steps, (e) maximize practice, (f) provide frequent feedback, (g) rely heavily on experiential methods, (h) enhance insight, and (i) build systems to prevent relapsing into old patterns of reactive behavior. In the third phase, *Transfer and Maintenance*, learning is fostered by (a) encouraging the use of new EI skills on the job, (b) providing an organizational culture that supports learning, and (c) removing situational constraints. Finally, in the fourth phase of training, *Evaluation*, (a) worker and organizational performance is monitored and measured to (b) evaluate the effectiveness of the training. If the training appears to fall short based on evaluation criteria, then the training should be revised to include more of the optimal process guidelines.

Implications for Adult Education

Although the emotional learning system (ELS) (Nelson & Low 2003) has proven useful in academic environments where teachers spend comparatively more time with students and generally work toward somewhat different developmental ends, the ELS may be insufficient by itself to guide EI education in corporate or industrial environments. As opposed to college and university settings where EI is often built into the curriculum over many class periods or even through multiple courses, the corporate trainer will normally spend much less time with participants than the college professor and the goals for education always include improving the company's bottom line.

The difference in the two models may also be reflected in the innate differences between formal education and nonformal education in a theoretical sense. On the other hand, there is

some divergence in classrooms when one compares teaching EI to teaching traditional academic subjects in formal education classrooms as well. Is it possible that EI education based on the ELS and pursued in the formal arena might also be improved by incorporating aspects of the OPM?

Personal Opinion

It seems that the ELS and OPM are complimentary models in several ways. The OPM suggests a systematic approach to EI education in nonformal educational settings. The ELS provides a systematic approach for developing EI skills in individuals on a personal level. Although not delineated in a model per se, many of the elements specified for enhancing EI education in the OPM are also addressed in Nelson and Low's transformational approach for teaching emotional intelligence. Some of these include the need to establish a trusting environment, which are addressed in the preparation and training phases of the OPM. Also, the pre- and post-test evaluation suggested by Cherniss et al. (1998) is often employed in college and university classrooms using the emotional skills assessment process.

References

Nelson, D., and Low, G. (2003). *Emotional intelligence: Achieving academic and career excellence*. Prentice Hall: Upper Saddle River, NJ.