

The authors of this book are not only educators, long practiced in our profession, but are accomplished authors. They write with compassion and have the ability to enter the world of students, teachers, and support personnel. They understand their insecurities, passions, and worries. They practice emotional, contextual, and cognitive empathy providing not simple answers but authentic responses to complex interactions. Each page has a sense of immediacy; the prose is tight and quick. The headings, such as “Pygmalion on Her First Date,” “Let Them Learn Chinese!” “The Marshmallow Challenge,” “Margaret: The Loose Cannon,” “If Teaching Involves Acting, What Does the Audience Think?” and others, invite curiosity and draw us into the fascinating world of the schoolhouse.

For teachers, this book provides validation for the school and classroom situations in which they find themselves. As teachers learn more about themselves and understand personal stressors, this book provides practical suggestions for ways to respond. This tidy compendium of wisdom brings special gifts. First, the book validates all shades of teaching experiences without judgment. Next, it provides research-based answers to why teachers react and feel as they do in challenging situations. It offers not only practical tips borne of the authors’ experience but activities that enhance their capacities for emotionally intelligent teaching. Finally, this extraordinary book enhances teachers’ capacity for self-management, self-monitoring, and self-modification toward their own gain and the learning of students.

What do students learn that is not explicitly taught? While curriculum committees labor to map the curriculum, compose essential questions, decide on what’s most worth knowing, clarify academic outcomes, and formulate assessment rubrics, we must also remember that children’s most enduring learning may not be found in standards, benchmarks, and exit exams. Their most essential and lifelong learning stems from the display of their teacher’s level of emotional maturity in the moment-to-moment response to the twists and turns of daily classroom life.

Students learn best through imitation of significant others. Research with mirror neurons suggests that imitation and emulation are the most basic forms of learning. Teachers, parents, and administrators realize the importance of their own modeling of desirable habits in the presence of learners. In the day-to-day events and when problems arise in schools, classrooms, and homes, children must see the significant adults employing positive, rational, thoughtful, trusting behaviors. Without this consistency, there will be a credibility gap that, in turn, produces stress that distracts from and even negates deep learning. As Ralph Waldo Emerson is quoted as saying, “What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say.”

## AN EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT CONVERSATION

In different ways, the quotations from Carl Rogers and Winston Churchill focus on one of the most ancient and profound misunderstandings in education: the assumption that there is always a direct and causal relationship between teaching and learning. Both authors suggest that in their respective experiences, there were times when *teaching* did not produce the *facilitation of learning*. To the contrary, Rogers suggests (and Churchill implies) that teaching can be hurtful and even destructive to learning. If this is the case, we are compelled to ask, “What are the conditions under which teaching does produce the facilitation of learning?”

When Stephen was ready to move from the eighth to ninth grade, his mother was filled with trepidation. Although Stephen wasn’t a strong academic student, he had had a moderately successful year in the eighth grade. He had had caring, sensitive teachers who worked to support Stephen both academically and in terms of his self-confidence. Stephen was now on the cusp of entering a college-preparatory high school program, and his mother was deeply concerned that the emphasis on academic rigor would be at her son’s expense. Stephen was still wrestling with some basic literacy skills and didn’t handle pressure well. His sense of organization was erratic, and his academic self-confidence was still quite fragile.

At the same time as Stephen’s mother was anxious about her son’s chances of success in the high school, she was adamant that Stephen would not receive learning support from a special education teacher. She did not want her son labeled as LD (learning disabled); nor did she want her son in a resource room with “those kinds of students” (by which she meant “failures” and “troublemakers”).

Stephen’s eighth-grade teachers were very concerned that his mother’s combination of fear and obstinacy would make the upcoming parent-teacher conference difficult and perhaps even counterproductive. Accordingly, the teachers met together before the conference to plan their approach. Initially, they focused on the negative and highly emotive behavior they expected from Stephen’s mother. This led to mutual commiseration in terms of how difficult the conference was going to be but did not provide them with a plan of action. The turning point came when one of the teachers announced that they needed to find “common ground.” In other words, they needed to find some important belief or value that all of them, including Stephen’s mom, could agree on without qualification. One of the teachers suggested that they all cared deeply about Stephen and wanted to ensure his success in the high school. The teachers agreed that whenever the conference with Stephen’s mom became difficult or emotionally fraught, the teachers would return to their

common ground—how much they cared for Stephen and how they were all planning for his success in the high school.

With this as their sole strategy, the teachers went into the conference with Stephen's mom. As they predicted, she was both very fearful and very obstinate. However, the teachers were patient and empathetic, returning frequently to their agreed common ground, and by the end of the conference, Stephen's mother had agreed to have Stephen receive special education support in the high school. Part of her turnaround had to do with the fact that Stephen had had a good year in grade eight and she trusted his teachers, but also a large part of the success of the conference was due to the empathy that the teachers exhibited for this very distraught mother. It was conversation filled with emotional intelligence.

## WHAT IS EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE?

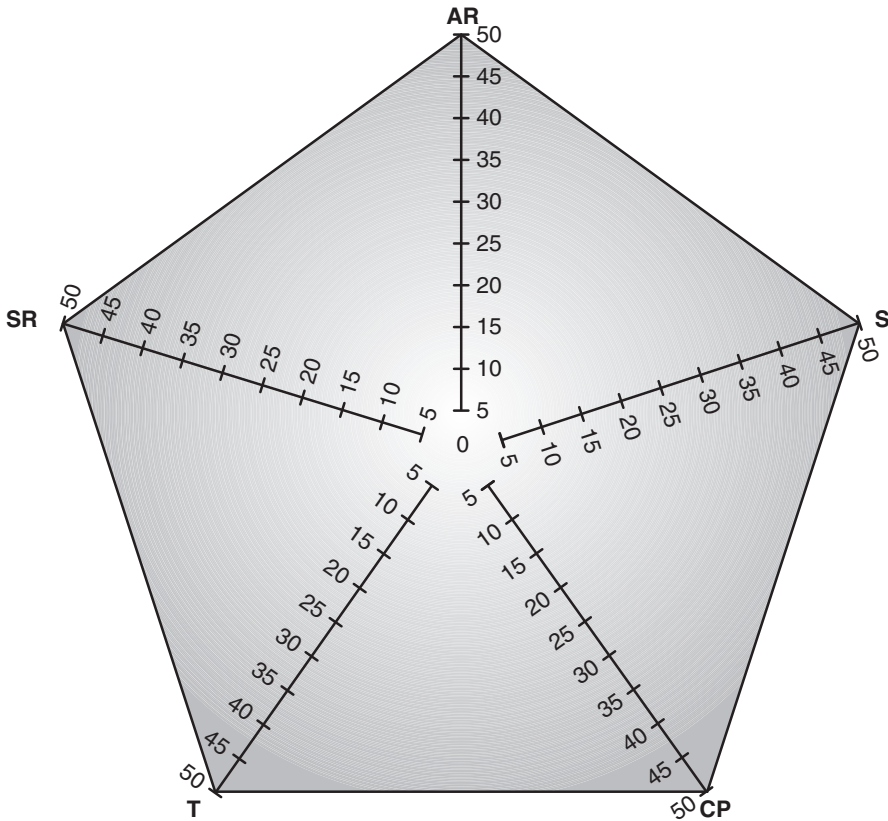
What is emotional intelligence, and why should it be important to a teacher in a classroom? Mayer and Salovey (1997) define emotional intelligence (EQ) as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (p. 10). A leading researcher in the area of emotional intelligence in the workplace defines it as a skill through which employees treat emotions as valuable data in navigating a specific situation (Barsade & Gibson, 2007).

Goleman (2006) takes issue with these behavioral definitions of EQ because he finds them devoid of values. In other words, if EQ is simply social acuity and aligned behaviors, it can be employed for all sorts of self-serving, manipulative purposes from selling second-hand cars to confidence games to predatory sexual advances. Goleman rejects the idea that such Machiavellian use of interpersonal skills can be considered "intelligent." He suggests that such trust-destroying behaviors contradict the notion of genuine intelligence, and therefore, he perceives that compassion and caring and other "other-centered" values are inherent in EQ. We share Goleman's perspective.

Daniel Goleman's model of emotional intelligence has been through a number of iterations and we summarize it here based on his original work (1995) and his later books and essays, most notably his work in linking emotional intelligence to the work of leadership (1998, 2001). Goleman suggests five dimensions of emotional intelligence:

1. *Self-knowledge.* People who are emotionally intelligent have a reasonable degree of self-knowledge and are always seeking ways in which they can come to know themselves in deeper, more meaningful ways.

**Figure 5.1** (Continued)



AR	Academic Rationalist
SA	Self-Actualizer
CP	Cognitive Processor
T	Technologist
SR	Social Reconstructionist

## COGNITIVE STYLE INVENTORY

Directions: Put a check in the boxes below if the descriptor is like you. A check in the “2” box on the left-hand side indicates a strong similarity with the descriptor on the left-hand side of the page, a check in the “1” box a less strong similarity, and a “0” a balanced or neutral response. The checks on the right-hand side reflect a similarity with the descriptors on the right-hand side. There should only be one check per line.

	2	1	0	1	2	
I openly express my emotions.						I am hesitant to express emotions.
I openly express affection for others.						I am not demonstrative in expressing affection.
I like to work in groups.						I prefer to work alone.
I am influenced by what other people think.						I make my own decisions regardless of what other people think.
I like to help other people. I take pleasure in their accomplishment.						I enjoy competition and a sense of personal achievement.
I want to know exactly what is expected of me before I accept a task.						I want to set my own goals, standards, and work schedule.
I rely on intuition and gut responses when making decisions.						I use logic and analysis to solve problems and make decisions.
I like to be shown how to do something before trying it independently.						I like to experiment with new things on my own.
I need concrete examples in order to make sense out of things.						I enjoy working with abstractions and finding new connections.
I am relationship oriented.						I am task oriented.
<b>Total points per column</b>						

Scoring: Total each column. If you accumulated more points on the left side of the center line, you have a preference for field dependence. If you accumulated more points on the right side of the center line, you have a preference for field independence.