

Leading Group Projects with Emotional Intelligence



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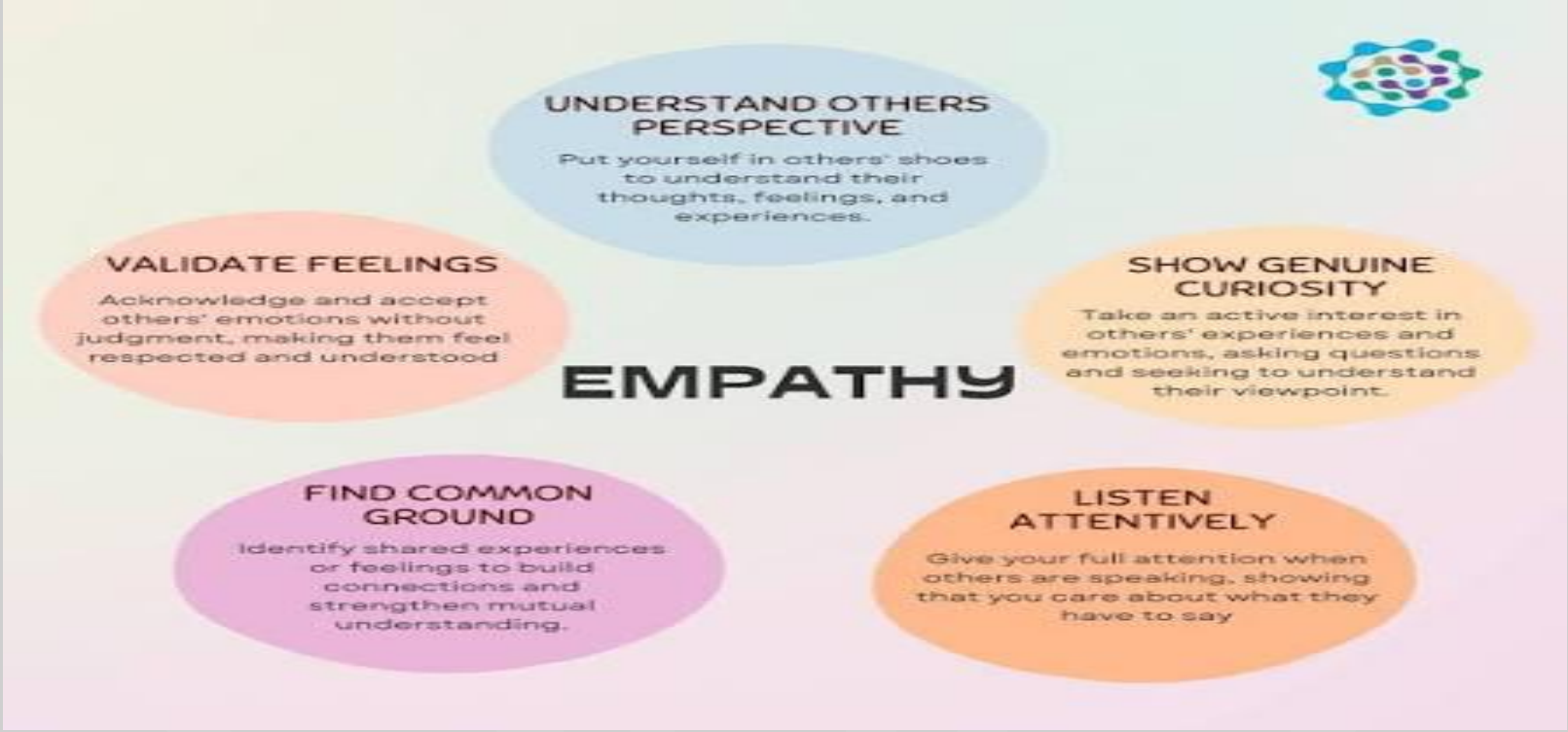
Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the skill of identifying, comprehending, controlling and utilizing emotions in both the self and others. According to Mayer and Salovey Ability Model, EI is a collection of emotional skills that enable successful thinking and behaviour (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004). The Mixed Model by Goleman goes further to incorporate other competencies that comprise self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy and social skills (Goleman, 1995). Some of the challenges that students may face in university group projects are breakdowns in communication, conflicting views, unequal participation and time pressure. By learning to develop emotional intelligence, students may cope with such challenges in a better way, enhance cooperation, solve conflicts in a constructive manner and help the team achieve positive results. As such, EI has been identified as a key competence towards academic and future workplace achievement.



Emotional Intelligence in Teamwork

Emotional Intelligence (EI) helps students to work in groups effectively as they understand their emotions and how to manage them and respond to the emotions of other individuals. The implementation of EI in group projects enhances the establishment of trust in groups, the reinforcement of communication and the elimination of challenges before they impact performance. The concept of self-awareness will enable students to understand how their emotions are causing their behaviours, whereas self-regulation will enable students to stay calm and act constructively whenever they argue instead of responding out of impulse (Goleman, 1995). Motivation will help the students to stay focused on common goals despite failure or time pressure to achieve better resilience and dedication (Miao, Humphrey and Qian, 2021). Empathy will help the team members to see other points of view, thus eliminating misunderstanding and encouraging respectful interactions. Also, social skills, such as active listening, positive feedback and conflict management, enhance a teamwork and positive working relationship (CIPD, 2023). As an illustration, in case of a conflict regarding task distribution, a highly emotionally intelligent student becomes a good listener of every team member and he or she takes into account various opinions and cooperates to find a reasonable solution. Likewise, emotionally intelligent students will pause and respond to negative feedback in a manner that is reflective and with feedback as a learning opportunity instead of defensively. With these emotional intelligence skills, students can be in a better position to deal with conflict, achieve deadlines and make positive contributions towards group success.



Understanding Others' Emotions

Empathy refers to the capability to identify, empathise and act accordingly to the feelings of other people and hence it is an important aspect of Emotional Intelligence (Goleman, 1995). Empathy in university group work enhances communication and helps students respond more considerably to various viewpoints to minimize misunderstandings and increase the level of trust in the team (CIPD, 2023). When students are aware of the sentiments of their colleagues, they will be more supportive whenever stressful events arise thus providing a team work atmosphere of inclusion. Compassionate behaviours like active listening, perspective taking and constructive feedback enhance team performance and build up collaboration. Active listening means listening to speakers and focusing all their attention on what they say, asking clarifying questions and taking their opinions into consideration, and perspective-taking helps students to recognize other points of view and working styles. Constructive feedback is aimed at making respectful and solution-oriented proposals that are not harmful to relationships and promote better results (Wang, Xie and Guo, 2022). As an illustration, when one of the team members seems to be uninterested because of a school burden, an understanding student will first get to know the cause of the problem before making conclusions. The group will be able to allocate work temporarily or provide support, which will allow not only to support the personal wellbeing but the project in general. Through showing empathy and understanding of others feelings, the students are able to communicate better, solve conflicts through team effort and get better team results.

Managing Your Own Emotions

Being able to identify and deal with emotions is crucial to the productivity and stress reduction in group projects. Self-awareness allows students to recognize emotional triggers like approaching deadlines, unequal workload or critical feedback and before these emotions can have a negative impact on their behaviour (Mayer, Salovey and Caruso, 2004). It is after these emotions are identified that the students will be able to apply self-regulation procedures to respond in a considered manner as opposed to reacting in an impulsive manner (Goleman, 1995). The strategies of emotional management that are effective are mindfulness, reflection, stress management and pausing to react. Mindfulness enables students to stay mindful of the moment, thus alleviating anxiety when they are under a lot of academic pressure (Galante et al., 2021). Reflection can help students to analyze their emotional reactions and find more positive ways to deal with future challenges. Equally, waiting to react to criticism or disagreement enables time to objectively process feelings, which lessens unwarranted conflict and enhances decision-making. Prioritisation of tasks and setting of realistic goals and taking breaks also help the students to be focused and resilient during the project when managing stress. As an example, an emotionally intelligent student will pause to think before responding when the team member offers a critical feedback, objective consideration and then respond to the feedback in a way that adds value to the contribution, instead of being defensive. Through awareness of emotional triggers and the right regulation strategies, students will be able to have positive relationships, less stress, and make themselves more productive to achieve positive group results.



Reflection

In order to create this poster, I have collected material on peer-reviewed journal articles published in 2021-2026, as well as on established theories of Emotional Intelligence, Goleman (1995) and Mayer, Salovey and Caruso (2004). I too thought about my personal experiences in university group projects and noted the usual challenges like communication problems, lack of equal participation and time schedule. The comparison of these experiences to the academic literature enabled me to comprehend how Emotional Intelligence can enhance teamwork, conflict and stress management. The process has enhanced my skill to use emotional intelligence strategies, such as active listening, emotional regulation and empathy in my subsequent group projects and work environment.



Conclusion and Recommendations

Thel is crucial in assisting students to work in groups effectively because it enhances communication, conflict management and positive relationship building. By fostering the ability to develop important EI skills such as self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, motivation and social skills, students will be productive even when faced with pressure and they will be able to contribute to successful team results. In order to make emotional intelligence stronger, the students must be able to engage in active listening, reflect on their emotional reactions, wait to act in difficult situations and give constructive feedback to their teammates. Emotional regulation and resilience can also be enhanced by engaging in regular self-reflection and mindfulness. With the strategies implemented regularly, students are able to increase their cooperation, lessen stress and improve academic and professional performance.

References

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