

Emotional Intelligence and Social Work Students

Implication for Education and Practice Effectiveness

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence (EI), hypothesized as important in making evaluative judgments and decisions, may be significant to social work education. EI scores of students entering BSW, advanced standing-MSW and 2 year MSW programs were explored. Group scores were within the average range, Interpersonal scores were higher than the normative score, and the results reflected a gender difference, with women scoring higher than men. ASP-MSW group score, suggests having a BSW may not equate to higher EI. Research is needed to determine the value/feasibility of increasing EI within a social work curriculum and EI's relationship to academic performance and practice effectiveness.

Keywords: Emotion, Behavior, Emotional Intelligence, Academic Performance, Practice Effectiveness, Professional Competence

Introduction

BY NATURE WE are "sentient" beings, translating our needs and desires from feelings/emotions through interaction with various external elements in the social environment into meeting those needs and desires (Goleman 1995; Mayer & Salovey, 1993). Emotions are an integral and significant aspect of human nature and behaviour and are critical for social communication and verbal expression, as well as for influencing motivation, memory, attention, concentration, imagination, and creativity (Kusche & Greenberg, 1998). Furthermore, our emotions provide us with information to use in making evaluative judgments and decisions (Clore, 1994; Kusche & Greenberg, 1998, Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999).

The concept of emotional intelligence (EI) or the ability to understand one's own emotional state and the emotional state of others has been hypothesized to be critical for appropriate and effective connection with others (Bekenhams, 1997; Goleman, 1995; Justice, et al., 1998; Saarni, 1999). Social workers in all practice settings deal with clients and non-clients who present with a variety of psychosocial issues that are emotionally based and are manifested in behaviour symptomatology. Incumbent within the process of social work practice is the need for information from a variety of sources to accurately assess client functioning and to make appropriate decisions for the provision of client services. One source of such information may be revealed emotionally through both verbal and non-verbal means. In order to understand the impact or influence on their practice and to benefit from emotional information,

however, social workers should be aware of their own emotional development and processes. Furthermore, social workers should also be in tune to the emotions of their clients in order to provide optimal assistance.

Literature Review

Gardner (1983) described intelligence as a "set of problem-solving skills, enabling the individual to resolve genuine problems or difficulties he or she encounters and, when appropriate, to create an effective product" (p. 60-61) and suggested it included a broad range of intelligences that support a variety of human abilities and human talents rather than a master intelligence. The range of intelligences includes Logical/Mathematical, Verbal/Linguistic, Spatial, Body-Kinesthetic, Musical, Intrapersonal, and Interpersonal.

Schaefer (1994) argues that "if emotions play a role in human behaviour, there must exist some mechanism for the interface between the internal state of the individual (physiological and psychological) and the external behaviour or expression" (p. iii). Emotional intelligence (EI) may be that "mechanism." The term EI was first used in 1990 by two psychologists, Salovey and Mayers, and later popularized by Goleman (1995). They define emotional intelligence in terms of being able to monitor and regulate one's own feelings, understand the feelings of other's, and use that "feeling" knowledge to guide thoughts and actions. Goleman's construction of EI includes five functions or skills necessary for the effective use of one's emotions. These skills include 1) Self-Awareness or knowing what you are feeling;



2) Handling Emotions or being able to manage those feelings well; 3) Self-Motivation or analysing thoughts, being able to delay impulsive actions, and maintaining hope and optimism despite set backs; 4) Empathy: taking the other's perspective; and 5) Social Skills or interacting harmoniously with others. These five skills reflect one's ability to engage effectively in interpersonal and intrapersonal interactions with sufficient emotional and behavioural meaning and competence when dealing with and on behalf of other people (Goleman, 1995).

Bar-On (1997a) makes a distinction between cognitive intelligence (IQ) and non-cognitive intelligence or emotional intelligence. EI addresses the personal, emotional, social, and survival dimensions of intelligence, which are more important for daily functioning than are the cognitive aspects of intelligence. While IQ is more calculated, EI is more purposeful. EI helps predict success because it reflects how a person applies knowledge to the immediate situation. What is most important in comparing EI to IQ is that IQ is static (Goleman 1995). That is, IQ does not change over time, while EI can. Likewise, human behaviour and human interaction are rarely static; they are fluid, dynamic, and very complex in context, content, perception, and meaning (Saxton, 1996). Goleman (1998) confirmed that while IQ peaks at about the age of 21, EI grows from childhood into the late 50s and reaches its peak from one's mid-40s to mid-50s. This potential for changing over time presents interesting implications for social work education.

Liff (2003) states that an educational system for children that does not take affective learning into account cannot be truly effective. According to Goleman (1995), the goal of emotional learning programs is to raise the social and emotional competence in children as part of their regular education – not just as something taught remedially to those who falter or who are identified as troubled but as a set of skills and understandings essential for every child. Therefore,

"Emotional literacy programs improve children's academic [author's italics] achievement scores and school performance... Beyond these educational advantages, the courses seem to help children better fulfil their roles in life, becoming better friends, students, sons, and daughters – and in the future are likely to be better husbands and wives, workers and bosses and parents, and citizens" (Goleman, 1995, pp. 284-285).

Early research regarding emotions and EI was confined primarily to the fields of business, human resources, management, administration, and leadership (Goleman et. al., 2002). Jaeger (2003) writes that

few graduate programs and curricula adequately address the emotional and interpersonal skills of their students by addressing EI as a means of developing the intrapersonal and interpersonal capabilities of students even though these are capabilities prospective employers want most in their employees and employers find most useful. This work has been expanded recently by studying the connection between EI and success in various college programs. For instance, the results of seven studies by Schutte et al., (2001) involving samples of U.S. college students found EI was connected to interpersonal relations, self-awareness, empathy, and emotional competence and to interpersonal skills (Kerfoot, 1996; Martin et al 1999; Wentzel, 1999) and to empathy (Nerdum & Lunquist, 1995). Further, EI has been determined to be a significant factor in freshman achievement, motivation, satisfaction, and retention (Barchard, 2003; Downey, 2003; Grossman et al., 1990; Kusche & Greenberg, 1998; Lam & Kirby, 2002; Nelson & Nelson, 2003; Wentzel, 1999).

Specific attention has also been focused on the role of EI in professional programs, including education (Cherniss, 1998; Pool, 1997), social work and counselling (Patrick, 1984; Deal, 2000; Gardner, 2001; Grossman et al., 1990; Holden et al., 2002; Martin et al., 1999; Nerdum, & Lundquist, 1995), and nursing (Barker, 1999; Cadman & Brewer, 2001; Kerfoot, 1996; Watkin, 2000).

Of special interest to the present paper is the relationship of EI to the educational process for social work students. In her study of social work students and self-awareness, Gardner (2001) concluded that an important and implicit element in the approach to learning is the capacity to be reflective with reflection being the term for those intellectual and affective activities in which individuals engage to explore their experiences in order to develop new understanding. Goldblatt & Buchbinder (2003) studied the use of narratives with social work students who worked with battered women to reveal how such encounters shaped their experiences in current intimate relationships, gender attitudes, and family of origin concluded,

"Becoming a professional helper in partner violence may demand an on-going self-reflection of the worker on her/his emotions and attitudes, along with empathic responses to past and present experiences of the clients" (p. 271).

These authors also concluded that when encouraged by their academic instructors and field supervisors to reflect on their personal emotions regarding battered women, the social worker perceived these processes as empowering resources.

Because the social work profession requires helping clients understand, resolve, and reframe their

emotional lives, issues, interactions, and perceptions, it would seem prudent for schools and programs of social work, as part of an overall educational curriculum for professional competence, to research the potential of EI to enhance academic performance and the effectiveness of social work practice. Understanding emotions should be a goal of social work curriculum because critical thinking can be enhanced through empathic (emotionally connected) thinking. Cove & Love suggests that cognitive and emotional developments are inseparable, "A growing literature base reinforces the fact that cognitive, social, and emotional processes are inextricably linked" (p. 2). And implication may also suggest that emphasis on one to the exclusion of the other leads to diminished learning in both academic and job performance.

The purpose of the present research project was to explore the levels of EI of students entering academic social work programs at the University of Wyoming (UW). It was posited that social work students would manifest at least an average level of EI entering the program(s). It was also posited that these students, based on their interests and experiences in social work or related fields, might have higher scores on certain subsections of EI than the general population. Additionally, literature suggests differential emotional socialization based on gender (Roopnarine, 1986; Power & Parke, 1986; Stern & Karraker, 1989; Fabes et al., 1994; Goleman, 1995; Almeida et al., 1999; Saarni, 1999). Accordingly, this research project posited that male social work students would report lower EI scores than female social work student in the same population. The significance of these propositions for social workers, social work education and practice could be in the development of new and potential more effective teaching and practice methods and skills for not only students, but instructors, programs, and clients.

Method

Instrument

The research design was an exploratory descriptive study of the relationship between entering social work students and their emotional self-awareness using an instrument developed to measure emotional intelligence. It is assumed that students in a program of social work will require some level of emotional awareness and connectedness upon which the educational process can build and from which students can be successful in their academic performance. The purpose of the design was to determine the level of emotional intelligence of students entering a program of social work. For this study, the individual's "emotional intelligence as Goleman (1995) defined it, might allow students to understand and evaluate their emotion and behavioural process - the

emotion itself, the precipitating event, and the perception of it. Then, using that self-monitoring, enhance their intrapersonal interaction with teachers, client's and others, toward positive academic and practice outcomes and consequences. The variable of emotional intelligence was operationalized and measured using the Bar-On EQ-i.

The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) (Bar-On, 1997) was selected for the study. It was developed and tested through 17 years of research by Dr. Reuven Bar-On, an Israeli psychologist and for the purpose of this research, it seemed less complicated and less time consuming than other instruments. At the same time, it measures many of the factors other instruments attributed to emotional intelligence.

The Bar-On EQ-i was normed on a large worldwide population. The Bar-On EQ-i makes an effort to address the infrastructure underlying emotion and expression and to address what leads to and supports those reactions. At the same time, the Bar-On suggests it can point out areas within the emotional dimensions of an individual that can be improved. The EQ-i alone is said to be a method to give a balanced and broader view of the person being assessed (Bar-On, 1997, p. 11). This instrument also provides a practical foundation to program development, in a wide variety of settings corporate, educational, clinical, medical, research and prevention programs. The EQ-i was chosen also because its administration requires little special training beyond a professional familiarity with the principles of testing, psychometrics, "normal" human behaviour and psychopathology (Bar-On, 1997, p. 12). Dr. Bar-On stated, "the Bar-On EQ-i attempts to satisfy the need for an empirically developed multifactorial and theoretically eclectic test of emotional intelligence" (p. 7). The Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (Bar-On EQ-i) is composed of 133 questions, each using a 5-point self-rating Likert scale (1 = "Very Seldom or Not True of Me" to 5 = "Very often True of Me or True of Me"). The test is designed to measure 16 factorial components in five functional areas:

1. Intrapersonal (emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, self-regard, self-actualization, independence);
2. Interpersonal (empathy, interpersonal relationship, social responsibility);
3. Adaptability (problem solving, flexibility, reality testing);
4. Stress Management (stress tolerance, impulse control); and
5. General Mood (optimism, happiness).

This scale has been converted to normalized scores based on gender and age, with a mean of 100 and standard deviation of 10 (Bar-On, 1997b). Based on

the worldwide norming, validity and reliability studies, the interpretive guidelines state that scores in the range of (90-109) are considered average-ad-equate emotional capacity. The average Cronbach's alpha coefficients for all sub-scales range from .69 (Social Responsibility) to .86 (Self-Regard), with an overall internal consistency coefficient of .76 (Bar-On, 1997, p. 95). These results would seem to indicate adequate reliability. Test-retest reliability refers to the stability of an instrument over time. In one study, the average stability coefficient was .85 after 1 month and .75 after 4 months. The student's responses (raw data) were scored by Multi-Health Systems (MHS), the researcher and publisher of the instrument. Although the Bar-On EQ-i takes approximately 30-40 minutes to complete, there are no imposed time limits. The reading level of the Inventory in English has been assessed at the North American sixth grade level. "Subjects from a prison population sample were able to understand and complete the inventory with no apparent problems; approximately one third of the subjects had a formal education ranging from the fourth to the ninth grade, with an IQ ranging from 70-85" (Bar-On, 1997, p. 80). It was developed to be suitable for individuals 16 years of age and older. Emotional intelligence is operationalized by the five factors that make up the Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i). An overall participant group score of emotional intelligence will be compared with the normative sample scores of the Bar-On EQ-i.

Participants

Three (3) different groups of participants were included in the present study. The Bachelor of Social Work (BSW), group consisted of sixty (60) students enrolled in a Human Behaviour in the Social Environment course offered by the Division of Social Work at UW – fall 2003. Although non-social work majors may enrol in this course, it is designed specifically for social work students and is taken concurrently with the Foundations of Social Work course. Therefore, the majority of BSW participants were taking their first semester of social work courses and were of junior standing (these are student with 60-90 credit hours). These students were enrolled in either the main campus or a distance campus. The BarOn EQ-I instrument was administered during their first class meeting, which occurred within the first two weeks of the semester. The students completed the survey instrument during the first 30 - 45minutes of this first class.

A second group of students included in this study consisted of thirty-two (32) students in the Master of Social Work (MSW) Two-Year (58hr) program for the fall of 2003. A third group consisted of thirty-

one (31) students enrolled in the MSW Advanced Standing Program (ASP) also enrolled for the fall 2003. These students were enrolled in classes on the main campus in Laramie. And as with the BSW students, students in the MSW groups were given the questionnaire during their first face-to-face meeting within the first two weeks of the start of the 2003 fall semester. There were ten (10) students for which no group identification was noted and thus were coded as missing data.

An Informed Consent form was given to each student to sign inviting them to participate in the study. They were told that the study was designed to collect information on the several aspects of emotional awareness of social work students before and as they complete a semester of study. They were informed that participation in this study involves filling out a questionnaire, which would take about thirty (30) minutes to complete and a demographic questionnaire. They were informed there were no foreseeable risks to participants. And that the only personal benefits to them may be the personal insight they may gain by completing the questionnaire, and the knowledge gained from their participation will help me learn more about the characteristics of people taking social work courses. They were told that the study was voluntary and whether or not they participated will have no effect on their student status, or grade and that they could quit at any time. This study was reviewed and approved by the UW Institutional Review Board for the study of Human Subjects. For those volunteering to participate a Subject Instruction sheet was pass out and read prior to the participants taking the survey.

Results

All 133 students in the BSW and MSW programs at the UW participated in this study. (This includes ten (10) students who failed to indicate their program.) The majority of the participants were women (79.3%). The age range was 19-53 years, with a significant difference across the three groups, $F(2,110) = 3.1$, $p < .05$ (BSW = 30.7, MSW 2 yr = 34.9, MSW ASP = 32.83). The group had limited ethnic diversity, with Caucasians comprising 61.7% (82), Hispanics 1.5% (2), African-Americans 1.5% (2), Asian-Americans .8% (1), and 4 (3%) classifying themselves as "other." Marital status was also recorded, with 39.1% (52) reporting they were single, 38.3% (51) married, 19 (14.3%) divorced, and 2 (1.5%) with a partner. There were 94 part-time (70.7%) and 35 full-time (26.3%) students with 4 students (3%) not indicating their status.

Overall, participants entering the social work programs at UW had EQ-i scores within the adequate-average range of the normative, general pop-

ulation data as measured for all five functional areas. The Total EQ-i mean score was = 101.24, SD +/- 12.11, and all mean domain scores were between 99.6 (Adaptability) and 105.2 (Interpersonal). Taken as a whole, the EI Total and the EI domain scores were compared to the normative score of 100, using a one-sample t test. The social work students' scores

differed from the norm only for the Interpersonal domain, $t(132) = 4.81, p < .01$. The mean score for all entering social work students on this domain scale was 105.2. The mean scores for EI-Total, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales for each social work program group are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Emotional Intelligence and Social Work Students. – Program Results

	Results		
Program (123)	EQ-i Total	Interpersonal EQ-i	Intrapersonal EQ-i
BSW (60)	103.1 +/- 1.24	106.9 +/- 1.40	102.8 +/- 1.46
MSW 2Yr (32)	99.4 +/- 2.31	102.1 +/- 2.30	98.6 +/- 2.5
MSW ASP (31)	99.6 +/- 2.70	105 +/- 2.51	97.6 +/- 2.85

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare the EQ-i Total scores across programs. Gender was used as a covariate rather than a grouping variable due to the uneven distribution of men across programs. Part-time vs. full-time status was also included as a covariate. There was a significant difference across the programs, with the highest scores found for the students entering the BSW program, $F(2,103) = 3.45, p < .05$. A gender effect was also determined in that the women's scores were significantly higher than the men's, $F(1,102) = 7.83, p < .01$.

Multivariate analysis of variance was performed, comparing the five domains across programs, again

using gender and part-time/full-time status as covariates. Significant differences were found across programs for the Intrapersonal domain, with the BSW students recording the highest scores, $F(2,103) = 3.8, p < .05$. A gender effect was found for the Interpersonal scores, with women's scores higher than men's, $F(1,103) = 11.6, p < .01$. The mean scores for EI-Total, Interpersonal and Intrapersonal scales as it relates to gender are presented in Table 2. No significant differences were found for General Mood, Adaptability, or Stress Management for program or gender.

Table 2: Emotional Intelligence and Social Work Students – Gender Results

	Results		
Gender	EQ-i Total	Interpersonal EQ-i	Intrapersonal EQ-i
Women (92)	102.2 +/- 1.17	107.8 +/- 1.12	100.5 +/- 1.38
Men (23)	97.2 +/- 2.90	99.6 +/- 2.62	98.5 +/- 3.61

Discussion

The present study has determined that students entering the University of Wyoming's social work programs present with at least an average level of EI. Indeed, their scores on the Interpersonal Domain scale are significantly higher than the "normative" score of 100. It is important to note that this effect is not attributable to the age or gender composition of the sample, since all scoring is completed using normative data adjusted for age and gender. Therefore, this finding is more likely to be related to the type of student entering the social work programs. According to Bar-On (1997b), the Interpersonal domain contains items related to empathy, social responsibility, and interpersonal relationships. It is not surprising that students entering a social work program would have higher scores in these areas as a process of self-selection into a field that is strongly

associated with caring for and about others. It is assumed that due to the nature and purpose of the social work profession, students would have some level of emotional connectedness based on a willingness to be exposed to and experience the emotions and emotional situations, problems, traumas, and expressions of other people or they would have chosen another and less emotionally salient educational discipline or profession. Thus, social work programs overall may attract students who have a level of emotional competence or intelligence on which to build and mould for academic performance and practice effectiveness.

A second significant finding of the present study is the gender difference found for EQ-i Total, with the women scoring higher than the men. This is in contrast to the North American normative sample analysed by Bar-On, in which no gender difference was found for total EI. The only domain score that

was significantly different for men and women was the Interpersonal domain. Bar-On (1997b) notes,

"[F]emales seem to have stronger interpersonal skills than males, but the latter have higher intrapersonal capacity, are more adaptable, and better at stress management. Women are more aware of their emotions, show more empathy, relate better interpersonally, and act more socially responsible than men; men appear to have better self-regard, are more independent, solve problems better, are flexible, cope better with stress, and are more optimistic than women" (p. 81).

Because of this, the Bar-On EQ-i survey has been normed to a score of 100 based on gender as well as age. Therefore, the difference found based on gender in the present study is again likely due to the sample of respondents. It must be emphasized here that the men's scores in the present study were not lower than expected; rather the women's scores were higher. Although not tested for in the present study, women are more likely to work in direct practice social work and men are more likely to work in administrative positions (Koeske & Krowinski, 2004). This difference in perspective may be related to the higher levels of Interpersonal emotional intelligence of the women compared to that of the men in this study. These results seem to be supported by research of other students in social work as well as others health sciences/care students. (Cadman & Brewer, 2001; Cove & Love, 1996; Constantine & Gainor, 2001; Garner, 2001; Grossman, et al., 1990; Holden et al., 2002; Jaeger Dec, 2003; Schutte et al., 2001).

One of the most important findings of this study is the lack of difference between the ASP students, i.e. those students who have attained a BSW and are entering the MSW program and students without any social work educational background. If EI is increased by completing a program in social work, the ASP students should have had higher EQ-i scores than either of the other two groups. However, it was found that the only difference across the programs was for EQ-i Total, primarily due to the difference in the Intrapersonal domain scores. According to Bar-On (1997b), the Intrapersonal domain is related to knowledge of the self and includes items related to self-regard, emotional self-awareness, assertiveness, independence, and self-actualization. Contrary to expectations, the students entering the BSW program, not those students already possessing a BSW, had the highest scores on this domain. This finding would seem to suggest that completing a BSW program may not, in and of itself, increase the EQ-i of these social work students. Nevertheless whether social work curricula could increase the EI in social work students remains open to further research.

Implications for Social Work Education

Because research and literature suggest high levels of EI especially in the intrapersonal and interpersonal realms are important for good social work functioning, and if as the results suggest student enter a program of social work education with an average-adequate level of EI it would seem that social work programs should strive to facilitate use of EI by social work students for academic and practice self-efficacy. Lam & Kirby (2002) quote Gardner as saying, "accurately determining moods, feelings and other mental states in oneself (intrapersonal) and in others (interpersonal) and using the information as a guide for behaviour" defines a key component of emotional intelligence (p. 139) and arguably, the key dynamic in the social work educational and practice process. This self-awareness is an important element toward what social workers call the professional use of self and the avoidance of transference issues with clients. In a study of practicing social work managers, the respondents identified interpersonal skills as the most critical for management practice (Martin et al., 1999).

In this study, as expected the sample population female students scored higher in the area of Total EQ-I, intrapersonal EQ-i and interpersonal EQ-I than did the males. Empirical observation, the literature, and research note that the emotional socialization of women has been traditionally and stereotypically for relationships; that is, the socialization of women has been and usually is with the expectation that they will marry, become mothers, and enter into other care taking relationship roles. And in these roles they must be nurturing and "feeling". A significant aspect of this socialized learning is being self-sacrificing and deferential in favour of others' feelings and needs. Through the process of socialization females may, beginning in childhood, develop a keen sense and awareness of not only their emotions but the feelings of others in order to interact effectively with them. The various roles attributed and assigned to women have an emotional context and meaning, and a woman is expected to act in that capacity with credibility. Thus, for women to have stronger EI skills than men are to be expected. There are certain roles denied to women in the mistaken and stereotypical belief that their emotional make-up renders them ineffective in situations in which objectivity and toughness are characteristics. For the same reason, the lower, but still average-adequate scores in males were also expected. Males, through the same process of emotional and behavioural socialization, are expected, taught and encouraged to stand up for their needs against the needs of others and to be aggressive, uncompromising and in control of self, condition, and situations by virtue of one's inherent strength as a male. Being taught to rely on no one,

to trust no one, to be in control of one's self and have power over people and resources by virtue of maleness, and to use force when necessary or required for a goal, legal, or illegal does not facilitate effective interpersonal interaction. Emotions and behaviours, indicative of compromise, compassion, empathy, cooperation, and fairness have been socialized and are perceived as feminine and are thus symbolic of being soft, weak, and unmanly. The emotional meaning and perception of manhood and certain "male" roles demand adherence to the perceived attributes of men and avoidance of anything labelled, or assigned as feminine such as women's roles or women's work. Men as such would be more aware of and focus on their own individual needs versus the needs of others. Gender is significant to the acquisition, development, and behavioural expression of emotions. However, being male or female in and of itself or the characteristics of gender do not influence or affect emotional behavioural, and social emotional learning as it may be the individual's perception of what it means to be male or female in his or her own mind, combined with the meaning publicized in their family, community, culture, and society, that initiates emotions. Society requires women to be more emotionally aware and connected because of female role definition and expectation, and they are thus taught to be so. As noted earlier, the role definition and role expectation of men demand a focus on the other end of the emotional behavioural spectrum.

Another implication for an EI and emotional competence concerns race, ethnicity, and cultural diversity. While EI may be thought of as the knowledge and skills, emotional competencies is, according to Saarni (2000), "the demonstration of self-efficacy in emotionally-eliciting transactions. Self-Efficacy [author's italics] is used here to mean that the individual believes that he or she has the capacity and skills to achieve a desired outcome. What that particular outcome is will reflect cultural values and beliefs, but those values and beliefs will have been transformed by the self into personal meaning" (p. 68). While the number of students of color was very small, Caucasian social work students, particularly those from a frontier rural state such as Wyoming may have had little or no opportunity for face-to-face interaction with people of color and whose emotional persona is subject to second hand knowledge, EI will be significant to their ability to connect with colleagues and client of color and ethnicity. The ability to approach others with emotionally intelligent understanding can be especially important when the use of socially constructed identities, differences, and diversity based on political, social, economic, religious stratification, sexual orientation, gender, race, ethnicity, or culture prevent a quality of inter-

action and attachment among society's membership that lead to the membership's learning and growing from their common humanity. Research suggests an emotional disconnection or emotional distance prevents individuals from bonding with other people, particularly those who are different. Such disconnection or distance may make justification and engagement in biased, discriminatory, prejudicial, and unjust behaviour easier. Having an understanding of and establishing an association between emotions and behaviour presents significant implications for human relations. In light of continued prejudice, discrimination, racism, racial profiling and hate crimes, terrorism, sectarian, ethnic, religious, tribal, and other violence in an increasingly diverse world of people, and ideas, the need to have a clear picture of the emotion/behaviour link in human relations is urgent. Conceptualizing this linkage may provide societies with more effective tools for developing emotionally intelligent interaction across the socially constructed boundaries of gender, race, ethnicity, culture, religion, and nationality. As with the social construct of gender, individuals may receive a different socialization of emotions with respect to the social construction of race. Programs of social work may have to pay closer attention to gender as an issue in the social emotional learning of their students. There may need to be some focused attention on male students to bring the effects of their gender emotional socialization into self-awareness to strengthen the potential for social work practice competence and effectiveness. EI, through the skills as outlined by Goleman (1995) seems to support an empathic and emotional connection that transcends the social construct of identity and the actualization of cultural competency. Educational institutions must pay closer attention to the cultural socialization and orientation of their students and faculty (Cove & Love, 1996). Multicultural education, combined with EI and empathy modelled by not only by social workers and counselors but teachers, and professors could play an important role in a student's ability to empathize with and address the mental health concerns of culturally diverse students and thus clients. Understanding the emotions of others differentiated by race, ethnicity and culture, and or life style is essential if social work practitioners are to read social situations, problems, and issues accurately and respond to them appropriately (Constantine & Gainor, 2001; Maidment & Cooper (2002). Webb (2001) supports the development of self awareness as a way of educating students and social workers to practice in a culturally responsive way, suggesting those self reflective clinicians who have the benefit of hindsight can better determine when clinical judgments are based on assessments grounded in theory or their cultural counter-transferences. They are in a position to identify and appro-

propriately address the counter-transference issues influencing their clinical judgment. Deal (2000) found graduate social work students rating high on self-awareness developed an increased ability to address the interpersonal processes between themselves and clients, possessed increased receptive capacity, and greater differentiation between personal and professional selves.

Since this researcher is looking at EI and SEL in social work education another implication of the results should be concern for those who would teach for EI. Educators too are not immune for low EI scores. With increasing interest in providing students with social and emotional learning, educational institutions should be equally concerned with the SEL of their faculty (Cherniss, 1998). Some educator-centered SEL programs seek to enhance faculty awareness of how the past influences the present, as well as how experiences and feelings about human diversity helpfully and unhelpfully affect educational work (Cohen, 1999). The moods (emotions) of educators can impact the education and presentation of their students (Boyatzis, 2002), reiterating the interdependence between human emotions and external sources. Caring relationships form the foundation of learning, and emotions profoundly affect how and what we learn. And given that social work students may come with an average-adequate level of emotional connectedness this would not seem to be too difficult.

Finally how might a program of social work begin to strengthen EI and education for emotional competence? Harris (1997) suggests one way for social work students to increase their self-awareness is simply to maintain a journal as a way to reflect on their responses when they interact with individuals from ethnic, racial, and cultural groups different from their own. Another would be curriculum designed to allow students to engage in self-reflection to process their thoughts and feelings and those of others (Cohen, 1999). Gardner (2001) suggests several ways to encourage the exploration of emotional, values based stimuli and the presentation of new ideas or different content in class including listening to other students talk about their attitudes and values in class, discussing their experiences a group and examining student interaction in class. Gardner also suggests fostering opportunities for informal discussion; discuss the experience of working as a student in their agency; engage in small group work, role play, structured exercises; Having students articulate their values and attitudes as a presentation using lecturers as a role model—seeing how lecturers express the values they were advocating to students. Grossman et al. (1990) suggest field instruction as a Social Emotional Learning (SEL) framework that "normalizes" subjective reactions, prepares students to anticipate areas

of emotional sensitivity, and teaches students to deal with these reactions in a manner useful to the client.

Conclusions

The significant of EI and this research suggests that EI within the context of social work education and practice could strengthen not only the knowledge base and delivery of social work education but could also expand program/practice techniques, skills, for practice outcome, work product effectiveness, and overall professional social work competence. It also suggest that through EI and SEL social work students and professionals may have a way of breaking through social constructs, such as race, gender, religion, ethnicity and connect with others who are different for effective service delivery. This study also appears to support the findings of Salovey & Sluyter's (1997) that students entering programs of social work may come with a foundation of EI that can be cultivated and strengthened. It would thus seem prudent for schools and programs of social work, as part of an overall educational curriculum, to assess/evaluate the potential of EI as a framework for developing the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills of their social work students. Enhanced EI provides the means for people to effectively meet the emotional, interactional, and relationship challenges of human existence (Mayer & Geher, 1996; Lewis & Haviland-Jones, 2000). Students should be helped to become comfortable with their own emotions, emotional socialization, and issues. They should be helped to be self-reflective, to use both cognitive intelligence and affective intelligence to understand themselves as a necessary first step to academic effectiveness and connecting with and understanding others different from themselves.

Emotions and behaviours are interactive and multidimensional and are transmitted across generations. They are also partnered with every component, issue, and quality of human existence from birth to death. Social work programs overall may attract students who have a level of emotional competence (intelligence) on which to build and mould their academic performance and practice effectiveness. If social work education is to promote academic performance that yields a fully competent practitioner and reflects effective practice skills, if social and economic justice is to be a reality, there must be increased acknowledgement of the role our emotional nature plays in education and practice. Social work educators must proactively research EI and SEL as a framework to shape future curriculum, to include teaching interpersonal and intrapersonal skills as basic social skills along with traditional ones in order to develop a social worker whose competence is as

distinctive and wide-ranging as that of the people with whom he or she will interact.

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