Prologue

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Introduction

> *We were out for a stroll in the downtown area with our five-year-old daughter. As we walked along we chatted and observed the buildings, the shop windows, and especially the people around us who were doing the same. After entering an ice cream shop, we ordered a strawberry milkshake and a chocolate ice cream cone. A little boy beside us looked carefully at the chocolate cone our daughter held in her hand. And she said to us, "This boy is going to ask for the same thing". We all laughed.*

We human beings are gifted with this capacity to sense what others are thinking or wishing, but we do it so constantly and automatically that we are not aware of the complex process of mental inference that takes place. It seems *natural* that our daughter would infer that the boy wants a chocolate cone and not the strawberry milkshake. We have to come across some dysfunction in the process in order to appreciate the huge psychological effort involved in doing this correctly. If our daughter, for example, had had Asperger syndrome, the inference would not have been so easy for her, and she might have asked us why the little boy was looking at us (Baron-Cohen, 2005).

Dr Temple Grandin is one of the most well-known autistic persons in the world. She achieved a degree in Psychology and a doctorate in animal science, in addition to writing books which have become bestsellers. Thanks to her academic training, Dr Grandin has contributed a well-documented record of the mental life of an autistic person, combining the phenomenological perspective with the scientific perspective. She has collected in an explicit form the emotional and social rules which undergird personal relations, in order to orient herself in the complex social world. For example, for the case of the ice cream and similar situations, she might create the rule: *If a person looks at one object out of many for a longer time (more attentively), then he or she is (probably) interested in it.*

The case of Temple Grandin is an exceptional case of how we can consciously learn emotional and social rules which underlie daily interpersonal relations (Grandin & Johnson, 2006). However, the effort in reflection made by Professor Temple Grandin and many other persons with autism or Asperger syndrome is similar to what those of us who do not have

these disorders do when we find ourselves in a culture with different implicit rules, or simply in a different or more complex professional or personal context.

This monograph, "Emotional Intelligence and Education", is dedicated to that possibility of going beyond our natural abilities, and of learning, developing, and explicitly teaching EI in different contexts. What for? So that our daughter and the boy who looked at her ice cream and we ourselves might be emotionally balanced citizens, might know how to generate positive emotions in others, find satisfaction in our lives, and even be happy.

The structure of the monograph "Emotional Intelligence and Education"

This monograph is organized around three perspectives, which are structured into two sections: academic and professional empirical studies, and theoretical reviews and professional practice.

Six empirical studies are included in the monograph, four of which discuss IE characteristics of different group profiles, and two others which discuss the positive effects of applying an emotional education program. Specifically, Professor Ajibola Olusoga Ogunyemi of Olabisi Onabanjo University (Nigeria) presents research on the effects of two different emotional education programs on the EI level of Nigerian adolescents. Results show that the programs used, in comparison to an equivalent control group, significantly improved EI levels in the adolescents. These data support the relevance and usefulness of including EI in the school curriculum.

From the University of Murcia, Professors Maria Dolores Prieto, Carmen Ferrándiz, Mercedes Ferrando, Marta Sáinz, Rosario Bermejo and Daniel Hernández present a cross-cultural study of the characteristics of emotional intelligence in students with high ability (gifted and non-gifted) in two samples from two countries: Spain and the U.K. Results indicate differences and interactions according to participants' nationality, whether gifted or not, and gender.

Professors María Alicia Zavala, María Dolores Valadez, and María Carmen Vargas (University of Guanajuato and University of Guadalajara, Mexico) analyze the relationships

between EI and social skills in adolescents with high social acceptance, as compared to a natural (control) group. Results show significant differences in EI (the BarOn EQ-i:YV was used for measuring) in favor of the group with high social acceptance over the natural group. However, the high social acceptance group had low scores for the social skills which were evaluated, with the lowest being the skill of making requests. In addition, relationships were found between factors of EQ-i and the Social Skills Scale.

Professors Juan Luis Castejón, Maria Pilar Cantero and Nélida Pérez from the University of Alicante analyze the profile of socio-emotional competencies characteristic of students from each of the large academic arenas at university: law school, social sciences, education, humanities, science and technology, and health. The study was performed on a sample of 608 university students from 14 degree programs at the University of Alicante, using different measures of emotional intelligence such as TMMS and EQ-i.

Professors Jose-María Augusto, M. Carmen Aguilar-Luzón and María Fe Salguero from the University of Jaén analyze the predictive validity of perceived emotional intelligence (evaluated using the TMMS) and of dispositional optimism/pessimism in social problem solving among Social Work students. Results from the study indicate that future social workers with high emotional clarity and who show optimistic attitudes are better prepared to cope with and resolve social problems.

From the University of Lleida, Professors Gemma Filella, Anna Soldevila, E. Cabello, L. Franco, A. Morell and N. Farré present a study which evaluates the influence of an emotional education program on improving emotional awareness and regulation in a group of penitentiary inmates. The program offers inmates emotional regulation strategies that would be useful for them at the penitentiary and at the same time would facilitate their future social inclusion. In comparison to the control group, results reveal that intervention through the emotional education program contributed to improved emotional awareness and regulation in the trained group of inmates.

To conclude this first section, Professors Mario Pena and Elvira Repetto from the National University of Distance Education (Spain) gather the principal empirical contributions from Spanish researchers who deal with this construct in the educational arena. They present first those studies which deal with the nature of EI and its instruments of measure, as well as

criterion validity regarding variables related to the scholastic world. They also mention the main lines of work which have been pursued from within Educational Guidance, with preference given to the design, application and validation of programs focused on developing EI skills or competencies.

The second section comprises six articles addressing different aspects of theory and conceptual review. The purpose of this section is to organize the extensive literature on EI and education and to identify the importance of socio-emotional competencies for the present and future of our educational system.

First, Professors Pablo Fernández-Berrocal and Desiree Ruiz of the University of Malaga offer a critical review of EI research in the school context. They first examine the debate which has appeared in several countries about educational policies for helping young children get a better start in life and develop EI skills. Second, they present theoretical models of EI and describe the Mayer and Salovey (1997) model in detail. Third, the authors summarize the research relating EI to interpersonal relationships, academic success, and personal and social adjustment. Finally, they conclude with some recommendations for developing EI at school and some implications about future educational policies in Spain.

Along this same line of thinking, Professors Raquel Palomera (University of Cantabria), Pablo Fernández-Berrocal (University of Malaga) and Marc A. Brackett (Yale University) defend the inclusion of emotional competencies in basic competencies at school, and in the objectives of pre-service teacher training which is currently being designed in the framework of the European Space for Higher Education (ESHE). To do so, they review the more important research on the paramount role of emotional competencies and EI in the personal, social and academic functioning of students, as well as in teacher effectiveness and well-being (Mayer & Salovey, 1997).

Professors M. Trinidad Sánchez (University of Castilla La Mancha), Pablo Fernández-Berrocal (University of Malaga), Juan Montañés and José Miguel Latorre (University of Castilla La Mancha) analyze and offer an explanation about gender differences found among the main factors which comprise EI, from the perspective of Mayer and Salovey's (1997) Skill Model. To do so, they review norms of emotional socialization which parents use as a func-

tion of their children's gender, and how these impact the differential development of emotional competencies, comparing these with research results in the area of EI.

Professors Macarena Blázquez and Juan Manuel Moreno from the University of Extremadura put the basic EI skills under review in terms of how they relate to domestic violence, through compiling and analyzing material gathered from 42 psychology journals, over their entire period of publication. This theoretical review identifies a broad range of psychological and behavioral symptoms which are consistent with domestic violence and are associated with several dimensions of EI.

From the *Autónoma* University of Madrid, Belén López-Pérez, Irene Fernández-Pinto and María Márquez-González address the structure of basic content and procedures to be included in an emotional education program aimed at the adult population, taking into account their particular characteristics and needs in its design. This constitutes the study's principal contribution: providing a useful working outline for this population group which to date has received less attention in the area of emotional education, and which could amply benefit from it.

Finally, Professor Juan Carlos Pérez-González (National University of Distance Education, Spain) emphasizes the urgency of evaluation research regarding the validity of programs which seek to improve EI. To facilitate this task, he presents an assessment scale with 29 indicators for evaluating socio-emotional education programs. This assessment scale permits systematic quantitative and qualitative evaluation of any socio-emotional education program in its three basic aspects: design, process and results.

References

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