

## School Change and Emotional Intelligence

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**ABSTRACT** Educators are under considerable pressure to implement the unprecedented array of change initiatives that came with the advent of the new political dispensation in South Africa which seriously influences their emotional well-being. The complexities of the change initiatives coupled with the changing dynamics of human relations during the change process heighten the advantage of educators who have the ability to acknowledge and manage their emotions at school. This study, conducted in South Africa, is an exploration into the Emotional Intelligence (EI) that educators should possess and how emotions should be managed in a changing school environment. Although the original research followed a triangulation design, a convergence model in which both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently in the Eastern Cape Province and the Gauteng Province respectively, this article reports only on the quantitative data component. The investigation focused on participants' perceptions of the change process and the impact of EI on their management of change. The researchers distributed a questionnaire among the educators at those schools. The study reveals that, as a precursor to change, EI, if aptly managed, is considered an indispensable tool to educators. Educational change can only be successful if educators perceive themselves and their role positively and feel that they are valued contributors to the process of change.

### INTRODUCTION

Educators face the challenge of being skilled in a multitude of areas and, accordingly, the educator's role is often characterized by tension and negativity. Change initiatives at school may be one of those areas where some educators do not want to venture for fear of being unskilled to deal adequately with the demands made on them in this environment. Leaders instituting change initiatives at schools should therefore take into account that educators have natural emotional reactions to change. Jordan (2005) argues that EI will promote the use of constructive change strategies to cope with changes within the school and diminish the likelihood of negative behaviour emerging.

As Duke (2002) points out, educational change may be regarded as any intentional

change designed to improve teaching and learning. More specifically, this is a change intended to alter the goals of education and to improve what learners are expected to learn, how learners are instructed and assessed, and how educational functions are organized, regulated, governed and financed (Duke 2002).

This article argues that, in dealing with educational change, emotionally intelligent educators are more likely to identify and manage possible negative emotions, stress and anxiety during the process with a positive outlook.

The process of educating is a profoundly emotional activity. Hargreaves (2004) states that when writers consider educational change in general, most of them ignore or underplay one of the most fundamental aspects of teaching and how educators change: the emotional dimension. Emotions are virtually absent from the literature and advocacy of educational change. Literature on strategic planning, cognitive leadership, problem-solving, educator reflection, higher-order thinking and standards-based reform, have virtually nothing to say about emotion. It is as if educators think and act; but they never feel.

Data collection occurred by means of a quantitative survey aiming at exploring the impact

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EI has on educators' ability to manage change at secondary schools. The research was guided by the following research question: To what extent do educators as managers utilize EI to effect change at secondary schools?

The proposition is advanced that change is an inherently emotional process; therefore the concept of EI and how it can complement the educator's ability to manage the process of change positively are explored. We argue that it is significant for educators to acquire emotion management skills, specifically to respond to the educational setting's emotional displays and ensure that change initiatives succeed. The results of this research could provide the educator with possible tools to respond to the demands brought about by change in the educational setting. In so doing, the educator would then be better equipped to meet personal expectations and goals and align these with the goals of the school.

### Conceptual Framework

The research philosophy that underpins this article as it reports on the quantitative data component of the original study, reflects the principles of positivism in the sense that it advocates research that exists independently of the feelings and opinions of individuals, limiting such research to what can be examined and computed (Wellman et al. 2005; Babbie 2010). Therefore, a questionnaire formed part of the quantitative research phase that formed the backbone to this article, as the researchers were interested in determining the participants' perceptions on EI and workplace success.

### Leading Change with EI

Traditionally, the ability to express emotions adequately in the school environment is not recognized and/or taught. In view of this, the emotional dimensions of the educator's experiences at school have largely been ignored, making it salient that educators should be assisted in the development and expression of emotions to deal adequately with the process of change.

James (2004) notes that in educational institutions, emotions and the feelings they engender flow back and forth, sometimes even dangerously. For school leaders and educators as managers, emotion signifies how power is

experienced and interpreted within the school system. Over time, the author states, the continual flow of power and the experience of emotion create ways in which the work is then done. They could either create the impression of a school that is stable, permanent and enduring positive emotions or entrap those who work there, blocking creativity and neutralizing the passion required to undertake good educational work. Such institutions become resistant to change.

The term *EI* entered the mainstream with Goleman (1995) arguing that Intelligence Quotient (IQ) contributes only about 20% to success in life, with other forces contributing the rest. He remarks that although EI is a new concept, existing data imply that it could be as powerful as IQ and sometimes even more so. Moreover, at least, unlike what is claimed about IQ, some crucial emotional competencies could be taught and improved in children and adults.

Bar-On and Parker (2000) posit that a shortcoming in Goleman's use of the term EI lies in his attempting to capture almost everything but IQ. The Emotional Quotient (EQ) framework outlined by Goleman includes *emotional awareness, accurate self-assessment, self-confidence, self-control, trustworthiness, conscientiousness, adaptability, innovation, achievement, drive, commitment, initiative, optimism, understanding others, influence, communication and cooperation*. This framework, the authors argue, stretches the definition of intelligence beyond its acceptable limits. Under this definition, it is likely that much of the residual variance beyond IQ would be accounted for by EI, because by definition it seems to capture all the residual factors within the individual which includes personality traits and motivation (Bar-On and Parker 2000).

### Defining EI

EI is described as the intelligent use of one's emotions. It is the application of emotions in such a way that thinking and behaviour enhance abilities such as accurately perceiving, judging and expressing personal emotions; accessing feelings of understanding on demand; understanding emotions and the knowledge that is derived from them; and regulating emotions in order to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Möller 2002).

In the educational context and particularly in

South Africa, schools traditionally provided the intellectual capital, literacy, numeracy and scientific understanding, while the family provided the social capital. Today's changing times - characterized by change in employment patterns, the breakdown of traditional family groupings, the decline of religious practice and the growth of consumerism - have impacted on the social capital supporting the child. In turn, these changes affect many schools so that they now need to provide the social, emotional and the intellectual capital for learners (Davies 2004). In these circumstances, emotionally competent educators should provide the emotional support that will ultimately become the responsibility of the entire school community.

This article argues that, in order for the school to survive, the challenge, especially for today's secondary schools, is to be sites of emotionally intelligent interactions. Zins et al. (2004) refer to the theory of EI that encompasses the four basic abilities of perceiving emotions, understanding emotions, using emotions in thought and managing emotions.

Coon (2005) points out that people who excel in life tend to be emotionally intelligent. The researchers agree with the authors that the costs of poor emotional skills can be high and that a lack of EI can ruin careers and sabotage achievement within the school. For educators specifically, having poor emotional skills could contribute to stress, inability to cope with the daily demands of school-life, depression and an inability to cope with the process of change. These are possible consequences resulting from a lack of EI as possible threats to a stable, safe and changing school environment.

Ultimately, to be emotionally intelligent in the school environment means to manage personal, social and school change effectively by coping with the immediate situation and solving problems realistically and flexibly. To do this, educators need to manage their emotions so that they work *for* them and not *against* them, and it is imperative that they are sufficiently optimistic, positive and self-motivated (Bar-On and Parker 2003).

As pointed out by Moss (2005), EI is widely accepted as fundamental in getting along with others in the workplace, as well as being a primary managerial and leadership competency. Vermeulen (2004) reiterates that EI calls attention to the necessity of emphasizing the human component in business, seeing that it is the only

Western ideology to capture the essence of the ancient African tradition of *ubuntu* (human dignity). This translates into a deep-rooted knowledge of the fact that survival and success depend on the support, care, help and understanding of other people (Vermeulen 2004).

### **The Role of Emotions during Educational Change**

Hartel et al. (2005) are of the opinion that EI focuses on an individual's ability both to interpret internal and external information, and to manage it in an adaptive manner. Most importantly, EI is an ability that allows people to regulate their emotions better, compared to others.

Self-discipline is closely linked to emotional competence, or to what has in recent years been termed *EI*. The latter refers to skills such as recognising emotions in oneself and others, regulating emotions, motivating oneself and handling relationships (Bear et al. 2005). It is highly integrated with social and moral competence, thus it is difficult to separate the social, emotional, and moral elements in responsible behaviour, self-control, sympathy, fairness and caring (Bear et al. 2005).

EI, or skills for social and emotional learning, are therefore those skills that underlie elements for everyday classroom and school life (Elias et al. 2005). These are communicating effectively; participating actively, genuinely and cooperatively in group work; expressing and regulating emotions and impulses appropriately; resolving conflicts thoughtfully and non-violently; living a life of sound character; and bringing a reflective, learning-to-learn approach to all domains of life.

It is our view that what needs to be considered are the emotional investments that educators make in their relationships with their learners, the parents of these learners and one another, and the role of the school leaders when providing strategic direction and development of the school. The challenge for educational change leaders is therefore to define what core competencies exist at their school, as well as which need developing.

### **RESEARCH METHOD AND DESIGN**

The researchers aimed at highlighting practising educators' understanding of the concept EI and the extent to which they utilize EI to affect change at secondary schools. It amounted to

considering a quantitative study, as Cramer (2003) points out that this would be the preferred choice when a researcher wants to expand clarifications of different characteristics of human behaviour. With McMillan (2008) indicating that non-experimental research would be the option when the researcher does not aim either at having express influence in or manipulating the research process, the researchers of this article decided on non-experimental quantitative research. The only aspect left was to decide on whether the non-experimental should be descriptive, comparative, correlational or causal comparative in nature. Based on the discussion McMillan (2008), the choice fell on conducting non-experimental *descriptive* research as the latter would imply gathering data that would indicate focussing on the regularity or amount that something happens.

The choice of conducting research descriptive in nature, also supported by Leedy and Ormrod (2005), was firstly motivated by the aim of providing a summary of an existing occurrence by using numbers to characterize individuals, and to assess the nature of an existing condition (McMillan and Schumacher 2006). Secondly, there is a connection between non-experimental descriptive research and the chosen conceptual framework, positivism (McMillan 2008).

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), survey research refers to almost any form of descriptive, quantitative research; therefore data were captured in this phase by means of a questionnaire that was distributed among educators at the participating schools.

### Data Collection

The researchers were guided in the construction of a closed questionnaire by a literature survey of primary and secondary sources on EI and educational change. The questionnaire aimed at obtaining information concerning the following aspects:

*Section A:* Biographic information of the teachers.

*Section B:* The 71 questionnaire items probed educators' viewpoints concerning their roles as managers of change, EI and workplace success at healthy schools.

*Section C:* The 35 questionnaire items probed educators' viewpoints concerning EI and change management.

The Likert-scale questionnaire items were

constructed randomly according to the aforementioned parameters. These items provided ordinal measures of the participants' viewpoint as to whether they *Strongly agree*, *Agree*, *Disagree* or *Strongly disagree* with the statements in Section B and C.

The questionnaires were handed out to the participants personally for completion and collected later.

### Sample

To achieve the aims of this study, a representative sample of educators at the identified six schools was purposively selected: one previously disadvantaged school (Township), one mixed (racially) and one ex-Model C (previously White) school in the Eastern Cape Province and the Gauteng Province. With regard to the biographic data, more female participants were at the two ex-Model C schools (78%) and the two disadvantaged schools (59%) in both provinces. However, the situation was reversed at the two mixed schools where 72.5% were male. According to Welman et al. (2005), purposive sampling is the most important type of non-probability sampling. Researchers rely on their experience, ingenuity and/or previous research findings to obtain units of analysis in such a manner that the sample they obtain may be regarded as being representative of the relevant population.

Strydom and Delport (2005) point out that, in purposive sampling, a particular case is chosen because it illustrates some feature or process that is of interest for a particular study. In purposive sampling the researcher must first think critically about the parameters of the population and then choose the sample case accordingly. Clear identification and formulation of criteria for the selection of participants is, therefore, of critical importance.

## RESULTS

To analyse the data, the Statistical Consultancy Services used the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to compute descriptive and inferential statistics, scheduled in tabular and graphic form.

### Reliability and Validity of the Questionnaire

According to D'Agostino (2005), reliability

typically refers to the consistency of test results, but has at least two relevant factors: consistency of results over the testing period (assuming no change on the latent variable) and consistency among scores on component parts (such as the internal consistency of test items).

Muijs (2004) states that whenever researchers want to measure something, there is some element of error called *measurement error*. Reliability then refers to the extent to which test scores are free of measurement error.

### The Pilot Study's Role

To test reliability for this study, a pilot study was conducted at three secondary schools in the Eastern Cape (Port Elizabeth district) and three secondary schools in Gauteng (Sedibeng East and West, Districts 7 and 8). Schools that were piloted were not included in the actual sample that was used in conducting the research.

According to Pietersen and Maree (2007), the coefficient that is used to measure the internal reliability of an instrument is called *Cronbach's Alpha coefficient* and is based on the inter-item correlations. If the items are strongly correlated with one another, their internal consistency is high and the alpha coefficient will be close to one. If, on the other hand, the items are poorly formulated and do not correlate strongly, the alpha coefficient will be close to zero.

The two reliability coefficients were higher than 0.9: 0.96 and 0.98 (Table 1). These high values indicated sound internal consistency among the items. The inter-item correlations revealed acceptable results (0.15-0.5).

Validity was arrived at by considering face, content and construct validity. Face validity is underpinned by the fact that the questionnaire items contained relevant content: the questionnaire thus measured what it was set out to measure. The content validity is supported by the fact that the specific questionnaire items were constructed strictly according to the definition of each section. The construct validity is underpinned by the fact that although the questionnaire focused on different sections, they all dealt with aspects which were important in determining

the impact of EI on the educator's role as manager of change. Moreover, the researchers were convinced that what the literature revealed corresponded well with the content covered in the questionnaire, therefore providing a sound measure of the concept EI.

### Internal Validity

As pointed out by Welman et al. (2005), the term *internal validity* describes the degree to which changes in the dependent variable are indeed due to the independent variable rather than to something else. Internal validity is therefore crucial to experimental research designs and may be obtained by using at least two groups that are equal in respect of both the dependent variable and all nuisance variables.

To test the internal validity for this study, the questionnaire was distributed for completion among colleagues at the North-West University.

### External Validity

Suter (1998) states that educational researchers reserve the term external validity to refer to how well the findings in a sample can be generalized to a larger population. If a study lacks external validity, one is not confident that the findings can be applied beyond the narrow confines of the study. One especially common threat to external validity is lack of random selection. When the sample does not represent the population fairly, external validity is lacking (Suter 1998).

The strategy used in this article in order to pay special attention to its external validity, was that of the representative sample.

## DISCUSSION

The data analysis reflects on the role of the educator as manager of change, as well as on educators' viewpoints on EI and workplace success. By computing the educator perceptions through adding specific response categories in the section that follows below, the researchers of this article at the same time aimed at reflecting the

**Table 1: Calculated values for educator participants in this study**

<i>Population category</i>	<i>Sections</i>	<i>Cronbach alpha</i>	<i>Inter-item correlation</i>
Educators	Section B	0.954966	0.250513
	Section C	0.983726	0.438554

**Table 2: Educators at an ex-Model C school in the Eastern Cape outline their role**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Disagree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Missing</i> <i>f (%)</i>
B31	Learning takes place in a non-judgemental environment.	1 (6)	11 (65)	5 (29)	0 (0)	0 (0)
B42	I feel free to contribute to the school in ways that are meaningful to me.	8 (47)	8 (47)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (6)
B32	The principal fosters a positive learning environment where change is likely to occur.	4 (24)	12 (71)	1 (5)	0 (0)	1 (6)
B44	The leadership at school convinces staff, parents and learners that change is necessary and achievable.	2 (12)	12 (71)	2 (12)	0 (0)	1 (6)
B45	The level and extent of the imposed change in recent years have increased levels of	11 (65)	2 (12)	3 (14)	1 (6)	0 (0)
B46	Leaders at the school allow staff to grow as individuals. anxiety for educators at this school.	5 (29)	9 (53)	2 (12)	0 (0)	1 (6)
B67	I am encouraged to bring my personal as well as my professional self to the classroom.	7 (41)	8 (47)	2 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C76	The principal assists educators in understanding what change really means.	1 (6)	11 (65)	4 (24)	0 (0)	1 (6)
C83	Before implementing any change initiative, the principal first gains acceptance from educators.	4 (24)	10 (59)	2 (12)	0 (0)	1 (5)
C92	The school has an effective school development plan which integrates staff development, instructional development and curriculum development.	4 (24)	11 (65)	2 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)

role of that emotions could play during educational change. Table 2 reports the quantitative data that were gathered as part of the original study, by indicating the frequency with the percentage in parenthesis: The item numbers refer to the original questionnaire items.

In Table 2, when combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, most of the participants (71%) indicated that they felt learning took place non-judgementally. However, in view of the literature (Hargreaves 2004) that points out that the education process is a profoundly emotional activity, it is disconcerting that 29% of them disagreed with this statement.

In a disturbing result, when combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, most of the participants (77%) indicated that they strongly agreed that the level and extent of imposed change at their school in recent years increased the degree of anxiety for the educators at the school. Only 14% of them disagreed with this statement. In view of the literature (Jordan 2005), we are reminded that educators' EI would support them in applying constructive strategies when coping with educational changes especially.

When the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories are combined, then 84% of the educators indicated that they feel free to contribute to the

school in ways they deem meaningful and 88% indicated that they were encouraged to bring their personal as well as their professional self into the classroom. What is encouraging to note, is that school principals endeavour to create a stable emotional climate at the school, as is evident from the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* responses that indicated that 89% of the educators agreed that the school had an effective school development plan which integrated staff development, instructional development and curriculum development. Yet 12% disagreed with this statement.

Although the leadership of the school apparently tries to convince staff, parents and learners that change is necessary and achievable, with 71% of the participants agreeing with the statement, only 12% strongly agreed and 12% disagreed.

While 65% of the participants agreed that the principal assisted them in understanding what change means, a disturbing 24% of them disagreed with this statement.

Educator questionnaires at the ex-Model C school in the Gauteng Province were declared void by the Statistical Services as the educators only completed Section A of the questionnaire.

Table 3 reports the data by indicating the frequency with the percentage in parenthesis as the

participants at a disadvantaged school in each province responded. Gauteng Province results appear first, with the Eastern Cape Province just below.

From the responses gleaned, when combining the *Strongly disagree* and *Disagree* categories, the participants emphasized the importance of emotions at the workplace with 75% of the participating Gauteng educators and 55% of the Eastern Cape indicating that the ability to express emotions is *not* a sign of weakness. However, 25% of the Gauteng participants and 36% of the Eastern Cape participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, with 25% of Gauteng and 18% of the Eastern Cape also disagreeing about being able to express personal emotions. In the *Strongly disagree* and *Disagree* categories, 25% and 36% indicated that they were not able to remain positively focused under pressure and when combining the results of the two provinces, 34% indicated that they did not allow learners to express their feelings. These negative responses do not augur well for educators' ability to manage school changes effectively.

Two disconcerting results were those of all the participants indicating that worrying and anxiety were two frequently experienced problems, and 75% of the Gauteng participants

disagreeing that learners were encouraged to build collaborative relationships with peers. The latter does not correlate well with all the Gauteng participants agreeing that learners were encouraged to be open with their educators about school life. The correlation between these two statements is higher concerning the Eastern Cape results. In view of the literature (James 2004), worry and anxiety could entrap educators and cause creativity and passion to become blocked. Eventually this could result in harbouring resistance to school change. What we need are educators who are emotionally intelligent so that the continuous experience of emotion would help create a stable school environment, specifically concerning managing change.

When combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, all the participating Gauteng educators indicated that their principal created an organizational culture that recognized the legitimacy of emotions at the school, while 27% of the Eastern Cape participants strongly disagreed in this regard. When combining the *Strongly disagree* and *Disagree* categories, the latter Eastern Cape response correlates well with 37% of these participants also indicating that their principal did not develop interventions to allow educators to deal with emotions. In view of the

**Table 3: EI and workplace success at two disadvantaged schools**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Disagree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Missing</i> <i>f (%)</i>
B5	Expressing emotions is a sign of weakness.	0 (0) 1 (9)	1 (25) 3 (27)	3 (75) 5 (46)	0 (0) 1 (9)	0 (0) 1 (9)
B12	I am able to express my personal emotions.	1 (25) 2 (18)	2 (50) 7 (64)	1 (25) 2 (18)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B16	When I am under pressure, I have the ability to stay positive and focused.	2 (50) 1 (9)	1 (25) 6 (55)	0 (0) 2 (18)	1 (25) 2 (18)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B17	I allow learners to express their feelings.	1 (25) 5 (45)	2 (50) 5 (45)	1 (0) 1 (9)	2 (25) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B18	Learners are encouraged to build collaborative relationships with peers.	0 (0) 4 (36)	1 (25) 6 (55)	3 (75) 1 (9)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B20	Learners are encouraged to be open with their educators about how they experience school life.	0 (0) 7 (64)	4 (100) 4 (36)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B22	The school encourages active learner involvement	0 (0) 6 (55)	4 (100) 5 (45)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B15	Worrying and anxiety are two of the most frequently experienced emotional problems for educators.	1 (25) 5 (45)	3 (75) 6 (55)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)	0 (0) 0 (0)
B56	The principal develops specific interventions in order to permit educators to deal with emotions.	1 (25) 1 (9)	3 (75) 5 (45)	0 (0) 1 (9)	0 (0) 3 (28)	0 (0) 1 (9)
B57	The principal creates an organizational culture that recognizes the legitimacy of emotions.	4 (24) 0 (0)	11 (65) 6 (55)	2 (12) 2 (18)	0 (0) 3 (27)	0 (0) 0 (0)

literature of Möller (2002), educators who use their emotions intelligently would manage personal intellectual growth, which could, in turn, lead to managing school change effectively.

As creating an organizational culture that recognizes the legitimacy of emotion is of vital importance to creating a successful school, principals need to direct urgent attention to this aspect. In executing change successfully at schools, principals will have to take into account the emotions of their educators and learners and provide mechanisms for them to cope with the imposed changes.

This part of the data analysis reflected on the educators' viewpoints on dealing with EI and change management. Table 4 reports the data by indicating the frequency with the percentage in parenthesis as the participants at a mixed school in each province responded. Gauteng Province results appear first, with the Eastern Cape Province just below:

When one looks at items B65, C91, C93 and C100, it becomes evident that, on average, 14.5% of the Eastern Cape participants disagreed with the statements that reflected on sensing shared responsibilities concerning support and learning from one another, a supportive open climate, strong positive leadership at the school and being prepared to face the challenges of change. At the school in Gauteng, a disconcerting 38% of

the participants disagreed that educators share a sense of responsibility for supporting and learning from each other. A probe into the culture and values of the school seems imperative to determine where and how this belief came about. In view of the literature (Davies 2004), with South African schools needing to provide social, emotional and intellectual capital for their learners, what we require are emotionally competent educators who could provide these kinds of support.

On the positive side, when combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, the results reflect that most of the Gauteng (63%) and the Eastern Cape participants (81%) agreed that they had a shared responsibility for supporting and learning from one another. Contrary to this response, when combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, 76% of the Gauteng and 87% of the Eastern Cape participants indicated that they held the viewpoint that the values, understanding and actions of the educators at the school needed to change. This result is noteworthy given the fact that in both provinces all the participants indicated their belief in the role that they have to play in shaping how the school is run.

With change being a process that educators have to cope with and manage, it is noteworthy that, when combining the *Strongly agree* and

**Table 4: EI and change management at two mixed schools**

<i>Item</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Strongly agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Dis-agree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Strongly disagree</i> <i>f (%)</i>	<i>Missing</i> <i>f (%)</i>
B65	Educators have a sense of shared responsibility for supporting and learning from each other.	3 (38)	2 (25)	3 (38)	0 (0)	0 (0)
B72	I believe that I have a real role to play in shaping how the school is run.	1 (6)	12 (75)	3 (19)	0 (0)	0 (0)
B73	The educators at the school are committed to the change process.	3 (38)	5 (63)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
B74	There is a need within the school to change the values, understanding and actions of educators.	4 (25)	12 (75)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C78	The principal recognizes educators' expertise by involving us in leadership.	4 (50)	4 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C91	The principal creates a supportive open climate for all.	5 (31)	11 (69)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C93	The school is successful because it has strong positive leadership.	3 (38)	3 (38)	1 (12)	0 (0)	1 (12)
C95	The ultimate success of the school depends on the quality of the role the principal plays.	2 (12)	12 (75)	2 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C100	Management prepares educators to face the challenges of change.	4 (50)	1 (12)	3 (38)	0 (0)	0 (0)
C107	The leadership manages the emotional responses of educators and learners.	3 (13)	12 (75)	1 (6)	0 (0)	1 (6)
		4 (50)	4 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		5 (31)	8 (50)	2 (13)	0 (0)	1 (6)
		4 (40)	4 (50)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		5 (31)	9 (57)	1 (6)	0 (0)	1 (6)
		4 (50)	3 (38)	0 (0)	1 (12)	0 (0)
		3 (18)	8 (50)	2 (13)	1 (6)	2 (13)
		3 (38)	4 (50)	1 (12)	0 (0)	0 (0)
		6 (37)	7 (44)	1 (6)	0 (0)	2 (13)



*Agree* categories, in both provinces all the participants indicated that educators were committed to the change process. Yet once again this response is in contrast to the Gauteng 76% and Eastern Cape 87% who indicated that they held the viewpoint that the values, understanding and actions of the educators at the school needed to change.

The Gauteng 67% and Eastern Cape 88% of the participants who either strongly agreed or agreed that their principal recognised educators' expertise by involving them in leadership, correlate well with the 100% positive response to believing in having a real role to play in shaping how the school is run.

Sustained change is important for the success of any school. While the majority of the Gauteng (88%) and Eastern Cape (68%) participants, when combining the *Strongly agree* and *Agree* categories, held the viewpoint that management at their school prepared educators to face the challenges of change, it needs to be noted that, when combining the *Strongly disagree* and *Disagree* categories of the two provinces, 31% disagreed with this statement.

It is clear that educators would like to play a more significant role in influencing the leadership and the decision-making at their school. The leaders should therefore recognize that engaging educators in leadership activity could maximize educator and learner performance, enhance the emotional climate and lead to the ultimate success of the school.

### CONCLUSION

Change can upset people; they can become overjoyed, be overenthusiastic or shy away from it. Many educators seldom recognise their fluctuating emotional displays and consequently the effect this might have on learners' self-esteem. The change agent therefore needs to feel comfortable in dealing with interpersonal relationships, coping with conflict and ambiguity and the thousand and one different emotions that staff could display as a result of the change process itself. Jansen (2009) points out that leaders themselves are emotional subjects with the authority to shape both the emotional disposition of an organisation and those of the leaders within an organisation which has direct consequences for the health of the organisation. The change agent has to be able to facilitate those involved

through this process by taking their feelings and emotions into account, getting them to address how these emotions relate to change itself and steering the school forward (Paton and McCalman 2000).

Salovey and Sluyter (1997) state that emotions do not exist in a vacuum, and even though home values or problems are important and can never be minimized, so are the *messages* being given by the school community. Responsive educators need to keep their ears to the ground to be aware of inter-learner or learner group interactions, as well as of the behaviour of other educators at the school. This article calls for schools to become sites of emotionally literate interactions. In a context of educational change, being emotionally intelligent affords educators opportunities of managing the difficult emotions they may be experiencing. It does so by providing them with opportunities to think about how emotions influence the way they behave and by working out the principles that could guide their dealings with one another (Antidote 2003).

Emotional literacy seeks to create more harmonious interactions at schools by enabling people to understand the causes of their own behaviour and those of others. It seeks to avoid enforcing compliance in ways that restrict the energy which young people bring to learning or their openness to change and new knowledge (Antidote 2003).

The researchers acknowledge the fact and agree with the authors who warn that there is no singular approach to change. Change agents must not be too blinkered about change management. What works for one change situation would most definitely not necessarily be fully appropriate for another.

### THE WAY FORWARD

Change is an emotional activity and leaders of change should consider the emotions of participants by providing clear direction to the change process so as to reduce stress during this time. The principal as leader should therefore make change worthwhile for everyone, show that change matters and make the benefits clear.

If educators feel that they are part of the change process, this will ensure greater interaction, support and cooperation among colleagues and the success of the initiated change. Equally, if learners are equipped with the po-

wer to evaluate and direct change and to resist harmful changes, it provides for an environment conducive to learning.

Focus on the experience of change, tackle change with empathy. Educators will have to influence management structures and create a working environment where they are free to express themselves to optimize and deliver quality education.

Understanding is a necessary imperative to ensuring lasting change. School leaders should ensure that people perceive themselves to be competent to handle the process and not feel overwhelmed and confused. They should therefore provide educators with the possible tools to respond to the demands brought about by change in the educational setting.

Education departments should consider the use of assessment tools for EI in professional development programmes and as part of their recruitment process for educators and principals. Secondary schools could engage in administering the latest compulsory EI competence testing for learners starting at Grade 8 to measure the EI of the learner. This could be done the previous year during registration and the results known when the school year starts.

Educators' EI should include motivating, guiding, encouraging learners to express themselves and to know how their behaviour can affect other people and their learning. Educators should be aware that because of the nature of their role, they should know themselves and be sensitive to their manner of interaction with learners, colleagues and senior management. Educators should encourage the development of Social Emotional Learning (SEL) in learners and identify the positive benefits of improved relationships, reduction in school violence and discipline-related problems.

If educators do not reflect EI at school level, any successful educational change becomes well-nigh impossible. Moreover, the researchers argue for a stronger focus on developing EI skills in South African educators.

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