DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 120 CS 512 345

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TITLE English Teaching in the 21st Century: Empathic Intelligence and Brain-Based Research.

PUB DATE 2003-07-00

NOTE 23p.; Paper presented at the Biennial Meeting of the International Federation for the Teaching of English (Melbourne, Australia, July 5-8, 2003).

PUB TYPE Information Analyses (070) -- Opinion Papers (120) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.

DESCRIPTORS *Brain; *English Curriculum; *English Instruction; Higher Education; Interpersonal Communication; *Literature; Models; Postmodernism; *Student Needs; Technological Advancement

IDENTIFIERS *Empathic Learning; Reflective Thinking

ABSTRACT

This paper puts forward an argument for re-thinking the nature and function of English and English Education, especially the teaching of literature, and proposes a model of empathic intelligence, which helps to formulate how much re-shaping might occur. The paper states that English literacy educators have relied for far too long on a hybrid theory of English Education pedagogy, borrowing from allied disciplines, such as literary criticism, philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics, and other disciplines. For the paper, the focus is on enabling feelings such as enthusiasm, joy, awe, excitement, and at times, dread, to be managed, shaped, and transformed through reflective thought, through talk with others, and through various embodied, symbolic experiences. According to the paper, it is timely to reconsider priorities in the light of postmodernism and technological advances and to reaffirm what is fundamentally the core business of English teaching in contemporary contexts. The paper does not represent a call for a return to old orthodoxies, but a call to consider the worlds of current students and to attempt to hypothesize what skills, abilities, and attitudes they need to function effectively in a global, increasingly dynamic world. It argues for a call to re-energize the teaching of literature and multi-literacies by mobilizing a particular dynamic between thinking and feeling. (Contains 147 references.) (NKA)

ENGLISH TEACHING IN THE 21ST CENTURY: EMPATHIC INTELLIGENCE AND BRAIN-BASED RESEARCH

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IFTE Conference, July 2003

Conference strand: Professional identity and change: the role of English Literacy Educators in the 21st Century

This paper puts forward an argument for re-thinking the nature and function of English and English Education, especially the teaching of literature, and proposes a model of empathic intelligence which helps to formulate how such re-shaping might occur. I believe that English literacy educators have relied for far too long on a hybrid theory of English Education pedagogy, borrowing from allied disciplines such as literacy criticism, philosophy, psychology, sociology, linguistics and other disciplines.

It is timely for English educators to re-shape the focus of their approaches to the teaching of English, and indeed, literacies, to reflect the revitalisation of reading evident in the Harry Potter phenomenon, and brain based- research as it demonstrates the inter-connection between thought and feeling (Damasio, 1994, 2000, 2002, Carpenter, 2002, Davia,2000).

This paper puts forward an argument for re-thinking the nature and function of English and English Education, especially the teaching of literature, and proposes a model of empathic intelligence which helps to formulate how such re-shaping might occur

For this paper, the focus will be on enabling feelings such as enthusiasm, joy, awe and excitement, and at times, dread, to be managed, shaped and transformed through reflective thought, through talk with others, and through various embodied, symbolic experiences.

Such a re-shaping of priorities in the teaching of English, might actually mean a return to some key values and potential outcomes of learning embedded in transformative practices of teaching of literature over many decades. It is timely to reconsider priorities in the light of post-modernism and technological advances and to reaffirm what is fundamentally the core business of English teaching in contemporary contexts.

Clearly then, this is not a call for a return to old orthodoxies. It is a call to consider the worlds of current students and to attempt to hypothesise what skills, abilities and attitudes they need to function effectively in a global, increasingly dynamic world. It is a call to identify those experiences which can uniquely happen in school learning to position students well for future worlds. It requires educators to re-imagine the inner worlds of students to empathise with their needs, aspirations, abilities, dreams and thoughts.

The argument here is a call to re-energise the teaching of literature and multi-literacies by mobilising a particular dynamic between thinking and feeling. That dynamic has always characterised English Education but it has been largely an intuitive approach, born from the positive experiences teachers themselves, and their students have had with literature. It is possible now to understand more clearly the neurological bases for some of those intuitions. Through Magnetic Resonance Imaging, it is now possible to see which parts of the brain are firing, or not, when subjects undertake particular cognitive activities (Carpenter, 2002, Davia, 2002). By understanding better the phemonenological qualities of intersubjective and intrasubjective experience, insight can inform inspiration, shaping the quality of the embedded experiences which remain in the psyche long after the real time experience has ceased. In a sense, this is an argument to acknowledge what English teachers have always known; that there is magical power in the imagination, or a special kind of wizardry in the world of Harry Potter.

Unsurprisingly, my own research and scholarship in the development of a theory of empathic intelligence, has been strongly influenced by particular experiences as an English and Drama Educator. The power of interpersonal dynamics and the phenomenon of significant transformative moments, are a primary scholarly interest. Another way to describe it is to think metaphorically about the ways significance is created in the spaces and silences, along with the overt engagements, of inter-subjective and intra-subjective experiences,

To support this argument for the significance of creating a dynamic between thinking and feeling, especially as they re evident in the function of imagination, I cite the evidence of some brain-based research. For example, Steven Rose, a practising scientist working at the forefront of medical research, describes his experience of discovering that his feelings interfered with his game of chess, a game which he previously believed involved 'purely cognitive and logical skills '(1993, p.36). From his scientific work and his reflections upon his own learning experiences, he argues that 'cognition cannot be divorced from affect, try as one might' (1993, p.36). He continues,

The problems that it (the link between affect and cognition) *illuminates are fundamental to my research strategy, just as much as their resolution. However, even today I find myself frequently in danger of forgetting that lesson, though it ought to be fundamental to a strategy for living.* (1993, p.36)

Some time ago, Howard Gardner, arguing for a more complex view of intelligence that commonly prevailed, remarked

the roots of a sense of self lie in the individual's exploration of his (sic) own feelings and in his emerging ability to view his (sic) own feelings and experiences in terms of the interpretative schemes and symbol systems provided by the culture (1985, p.294).

The work of Antonio Damasio (1994, 2000, 2002) demonstrates how consciousness arose out of the development of emotion, and how that human consciousness is actually a consciousness of the feeling and experiencing of self. As Damasio argues,

Contrary to traditional scientific opinion, feelings are just as cognitive as other percepts (1994, xvii)... (Emotion and feeling)
provide the bridge between rational and non-rational processes, between cortical and subcortical structures (1994, p.128).

Many English educators work tacitly in sympathy with these neurological insights but it is affirming and encouraging to professional practice to understand why certain processes are effective. Laboratory work on brain-based research has shown that emotion is integral to the processes of reasoning and decision-making. As Damasio says

The neurological evidence simply suggests that selective absence of emotion is a problem. Well-targeted and well-deployed emotion seems to be a support system without which the edifice of reason cannot operate properly... These (results) *also made it possible to view emotion as an embodiment of the logic of survival* (2000,p.42).

Embedded in his arguments, there is, I believe, support for the fundamentally important role of reading and writing, poetry experiences, multi-literacies and the functioning of imagination. It is within the inter-subjective and intras-subjective experience of imagined worlds that feeling and reason can psychically engage, deepening one's sense of self and consciousness of others. Tellingly, Damasio illustrates his scientific explanations of the nature of consciousness and the interrelatedness of thought and feeling, with case studies from his own neuro-medical practice. He tells the dramatic story of Phineas Gage (Damasio, 1994) to illustrate a point about the function of the frontal lobe in influencing the nuances of thought needed for effective social functioning. Gage suffered extreme damage to the frontal lobe when dynamite exploded prematurely when Gage was working on construction of the railroads in the American West in 1848. Although Gage seemingly recovered well from the accident, the damage to his frontal lobe affected his respect for social conventions, his ability to thinking speculatively and to anticipate the effects of his behaviour upon others. In other words, although he had a certain capacity to function cognitively, the nuancing of his judgements was lacking because his frontal lobe (through which feelings are processed) was damaged.

Damasio (1994) also illustrates the story of Elliot whose brain damage affected his normal ability to generate response options to social situation and to consider spontaneously the consequences of particular options. Damasio remarks that when treating Elliott

I began to think that the cold-bloodedness of Elliot's reasoning prevented him from assigning different values to different options, and made his decision-making landscape hopelessly flat (1994, p.51)

And further

My investigation of neurological patients in whom brain lesions impaired the experience of feelings has led me to think that feelings are not as intangible as they have been presumed to be
(Damasio, 1994, xvi).

The intra-subjective and intra-subjective aspects of the dynamics between doctors and patients, and teachers and their students, need to be analysed to appreciate the complexities of literacy experiences. It is significant, I believe, that in this engagements with his patients, Damasio demonstrates what I would call, and empathically intelligent approach. He is able to employ his own subjective and objective thinking and feeling processes, or his acute and highly developed consciousness, to the dynamics of the situation. For example, Damasio says of Elliot's case

I found myself suffering more when listening to Elliot's stories than Elliot himself seemed to be suffering. In fact, I felt I suffered more than he did just by ***thinking*** *of those stories* (1994, p.44).

Damasio's own philosophical and ethical commitment to both understanding and enhancing the lives of his patients, even those whose mental functioning is very minimal, reflects a professional functioning applicable widely in professional practice. His willingness to engage in a sensitive and feeling way to his patients provided a source of significant scientific insights. He embodies the capacity to create and to understand a dynamic between thinking and feeling, in a climate of care. The care is characterised as 'intelligent caring' for the well-being of the patient and for the realisation of the truth of the situation. Further, it suggests that the phenomena of each individual experience are created uniquely in each particular context. Hence the challenge, risk and excitement in such phenomenologically based practice.

The heart of empathic responsiveness to others is imagination. Maxine Greene argues passionately, and persuasively for the role of imagination in education. She says,

One of the reasons I have come to concentrate on imagination as a means through which we can assemble a coherent world is that imagination is what, above all, makes empathy possible. It is what enables us to cross the empty spaces between ourselves and those we teachers have called "other" over the years...of all cognitive capacities, imagination is the one that permits us to give credence to alternative realities (1995, p.3).

For the purpose of this paper, I will focus on those aspects of the theory of empathic intelligence most relevant to English teaching, namely the nature of empathy, the function of enthusiasm and engagement, and the role of attachment and mirroring. These aspects of pedagogy (especially in reading, writing, speaking and reflecting) can inform and shape the phenomenological experience of that potentially dynamic interface of teacher and student, student and text, student and student, including all the multiple complexities emanating from such tripartite engagements.

What is empathy?

Empathy is an ability to understand the thoughts and feelings of self and others. It is a sophisticated ability involving attunement, decentring and introspection: it is, fundamentally, an act of thoughtful, heartfelt imagination.

In professional practice empathic intelligence is characterised by

•Enthusiasm
•Expertise
•Capacity to Engage
•Empathy

Enthusiasm
•En – theos = God/Spirit within
•A personal energy conveyed to others
•Motivated by belief and hope

Expertise
•Mobilises imagination/perspective taking/hypothesising
•Theoretically informed and effective in practice
•Can recognise both regressive and developmental states – spiralling development
•Can see the universal, particular and affective characteristics of different symbolic systems (eg. art, design, language, mathematics, dance), expansive repertoires
•Can model best practices and can tolerate own and others' mistakes

Engagement
•Ability to attract and hold students' attention through centered purposeful interactions
•Ability to channel/teacher-power/authority/charisma for the benefit of students' learning
•Communicates a vision beyond the here and now
Empathy
•An act of thoughtful, heartfelt imagination

Definition of Empathic Intelligence

Empathic intelligence is a sustained system of psychic, cognitive, affective, social and ethical functioning derived from:

•An ability to differentiate self-states from others' states ("who owns what")

•An ability to engage in reflective and analogic processing to understand and mobilise a dynamic between thinking and feeling in self and others (self narrative)

•Attunement to meaning and integration created through that dynamic

•A superordinate intelligence involving inter/intra subjectivities, values enactment and integrity

•A commitment to the well-being and development of self and others

How Narrative Can Promote Empathy

Many children learn more from reading than we expect or realise at the time. They make interpretations beyond the literal. The primitive theorising of children faced with the wonders of the world and seeking to understand such wonders, illustrates that the capacity to observe, deduct and generalise is the precursor to the development of intellectual life (Bruner,1986, 1990) In the early stages of intellectual development, myths and narratives can serve an important function of making sense of the world, particularly if that sense is fuelled by imagination and fantasy (Chukovsky, 1963, Hardy 1977, Meek,1977). In time, logical thinking demands that generalisations and hypotheses be tested against reality. But in the meantime, stories invite children to match their own experiences against those in the story. Just as importantly, when children compose their own stories, they can explore possibilities and extend the realities of time and place. It must be powerfully liberating for children to discover that imagination allows them to transcend time and place. It also allows them to relate to the feelings of others, a precursor to empathy. Arguably, imagination not only liberates, it also humanises. The American educational philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1997) argues that three capacities, above all, are essential for the cultivation of humanity in today's world:

First is the capacity for critical examination of oneself and one's traditions- for living what, following Socrates, we may call "the examined life"...(Second) Citizens who cultivate their humanity need...an ability to see themselves not simply as citizens of some local region or group but also, and above all, as human beings bound to all other human beings by ties of recognition and concern... The third ability of the citizen, closely related to the other two, can be called the narrative imagination. This means the ability to think what it might be like to be in the shoes of a person different from oneself, to be an intelligent reader of that person's story, and to understand the emotions and wishes and desires that someone so placed might have. (pp.9-11)

There can be a special intimacy and trust created between a story-teller and a listener. To hear another's story is to share something personal and revealing. The phenomena of individual experiences can be encapsulated in personal narratives which resonate beyond the telling. I am reminded of an encounter with an elderly woman in a long checkout queue in a supermarket. I engaged in a desultory conversation with this stranger with a strong Irish accent. I assumed, wrongly, from her accent that she was a recent arrival. I asked her what brought her to Australia. She laughed and said,

You'll think I am mad if I tell you. I have been here fifty years but I came here because of an experience in primary school. We were asked in a test to draw from memory the map of a country in the world. I always liked the shape of Australia so I drew that. Most of the others drew Ireland. I won the prize and that's why I decided years later to come to Australia.

At one level it seems remarkable that a simple experience in primary school might have such a significant outcome, yet if you are sensitive to the impact of personal experiences on decision-making, that outcome is not so remarkable (Stern, 1985). If that story engages you and makes you wonder about significant moments in life and how we learn, behave, make choices, think and feel, the argument here invites you to cherish and understand such moments. It invites you to think about them and consider education as a process of leadership, of encouraging others to experience the phenomena of existence in order to develop a mindful, meaningful life. In that model, educators engage in a lifelong, dynamic

process of developing and transforming themselves and modelling for others how to do likewise.

The cultivation of humanity, according to Nussbaum
(1997, p.14), means 'learning how to be a human being capable of love and imagination'. Further, she argues that when a child and a parent learn to tell stories together, sharing a sense of wonder,

the child is acquiring essential moral capacities...stories interact with (children's) own attempts to explain the world and their own actions in it. A child deprived of stories is deprived, as well, of certain ways of viewing other people. For the insides of people, like the insides of stars, are not open to view. (1997, p.89)... The habits of wonder promoted by storytelling thus define the other person as spacious and deep, with qualitative differences from oneself and hidden places worthy of respect (1997, p.90).

The reading of literature can be considered as part of the process of attachment to the wider world of others and their stories. As the child sits listening to a story in the comfort of an adult's presence, or even reading alone, he/she is learning how to attach safely to both the created and the real world. At the same time, a sense of self is experienced and enlarged through the engagement with text, characters and stories.

Barbara Hardy (1977) famously argued that

narrative, like lyric or dance, is not to be regarded as an aesthetic invention used by artists to control, manipulate, and order experience, but as a primary act of mind transferred to art from life. The novel merely heightens, isolates, and analyses the narrative motions of human consciousness. (p.12)

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The idea that narrative might be a 'primary act of mind' caught the imagination of educators in the late nineteen seventies, increasing confidence in a centuries-old method of acculterating citizens and stimulating imaginations. Untestable though the idea is, it suggests something of the mystery and importance of narrative in human consciousness. Perhaps even more importantly, it accords with the intuition and life experience of reflective people, motivating scholarship and research into what is now a respected discipline, narratology. Interestingly, Hardy(1977) did not elaborate upon the affective aspects of narrative as a primary act of mind, albeit she acknowledges she,

take(s) for granted the ways in which storytelling engages our interests, curiosity, fear, tension, expectation, and sense of order (pp.12-13).

It is that imaginative aspect of narrative which reflects its analogical function: whether as spectators of events in stories, or as participants in their creation, we can use narratives to match, expand or create templates of reality against which to consider our own existence. There is a natural relationship between empathy and narrative. Through the function of imaginative, empathic engagements with stories and their characters, we can project beyond the known and transparent. Arguably, our sense of self and our sense of others grow through engagements with cultural and social life, modulated by a capacity for reflection, imagination and vicarious experience.

Narratives, including written and multi-media texts, are mentioned as an introduction to the concept of empathic intelligence because they function in personal, social and cultural life to encode valuable experiences and to engage people in vicarious experiences. Fundamentally, empathic intelligence requires the ability to think and feel both in real time and vicariously. Complex stories, including fairy tales, do not separate human experience into discrete either/or categories but, democratically, give parity of esteem to the varieties of ways humans process, evaluate and make sense of life's experiences (Bettleheim, 1978). Rarely do two people interpret a story the same way or respond with the same thoughts and feelings all the way through. Rather, the story engages us, or not, according to current emotional predispositions or concerns. Fundamental to the reading and viewing act is a commitment to living vicariously within a world created by another. Such commitment is fuelled by curiosity about that world.

An act of submission is involved in experiencing that world, even vicariously. Those who choose not to watch movies or read books which either bore or over-stimulate them, choose not to submit. Knowing ahead of time that viewing the controversial film, *Hannibal*, would involve watching an actor (pretending, presumably) eat the cooked brains of another, still-alive human, gave informed movie-goers a choice not to submit to an unwanted experience. Arguably, the self-caring, self-aware reader/viewer can imagine the act depicted in the film and can imagine the feelings likely to be aroused. Such imagined anticipation defuses curiosity in the regular sense of the word and gives pre-eminence to (self) care. The imagined response of disgust precludes the need to actually visualise a potentially disgusting filmic scenario.

It may not be accidental that empathic intelligence comes to the fore now. The past decade has seen renewed interest in emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996, Mayer & Salovey, 1995) reigniting arguments about the role of feelings in intellectual and corporate life (Goleman,1998, Little 1999). The dual concepts of care and curiosity add to both cognitive and emotional intelligence, an important social and psychological dimension: that the development of persons is not solely self-interested. Foucault's (2000) comments on curiosity are pertinent:

I like the word (curiosity); it suggests something quite different to me. It evokes "care"; it evokes the care one takes of what exists and what might exist: a sharpened sense of reality, but one that is never immobilized before it; a readiness to find what surrounds us strange and odd;... a passion for seizing what is happening now and what is disappearing;...I dream of a new age of curiosity (p.325).

Foucault suggests something of the attention, focus and preparedness for risk-taking which can characterise the empathic stance. In that stance, there is a heightened awareness to possibilities and willingness to move beyond the known. In that sense, too, the empathic stance is both self-caring and other-caring, since both parties are crucial to the dynamic. The curious educator is likely to evoke students' curiosity, in both the attuned and caring sense of the word as it is elaborated here. Further, it requires something of an imaginative and poetic frame of mind to accept the crossing of boundaries evoked by this discussion of care and curiosity; a suspension of literal meaning in favour of provoked meaning.

It requires mental agility to be empathically intelligent; not unlike the mental agility needed to tell stories and to engage with them. Logic alone will not explain the most complex phenomena of life or the concept of empathic intelligence; rationality and emotion have to cooperate in that endeavour.

This paper, with its focus on a concept of 'empathic intelligence', argues for promoting both cognitive and affective ways of interpreting experience since each contributes shape and quality to the process of making sense of the world and relating effectively and affectively to others. What is literal, quantifiable, scientific and linear is valuable in its place. Alongside these there exist equally important mental strategies which are metaphoric, variously shaped and potentially quantifiable. What we now realise is that the boundaries between these broad distinctions are actually blurred.

There is benefit in encouraging people to accept broader definitions of intelligence, science, art, and education, for example, than prevailed in the twentieth century. As knowledge and understanding expands, words and concepts develop to reflect change. Sometimes such words and concepts work to promote change. In that sense, empathic intelligence could be thought of as the meeting place of science and poetry.

In such a metaphorical meeting place, empathic intelligence can seem paradoxical at first. It can be both confronting and liberating. The confronting part may require readers to reflect on deeply held beliefs about education and interpersonal and professional life. The liberating part is the affirmation this concept may give to ideas that professionals know intuitively, even though the reasons are not yet clearly articulated or understood. For explanatory purposes, empathic intelligence is grounded here in a context of personal narratives or histories because they play a formative role in the development of personal, interpersonal and professional life. The nature of professional practice is patterned for each individual practitioner by the phenomenon of lived, professional experience. Like stories, reflective practitioners blend theory and idiosyncratic experience into meaningful structures to stabilise the flow of phenomena.

The role of early emotional experiences in self development

The work of Daniel Stern (1985) on the role of empathy in infancy illuminates the importance of empathic attunement in early learning, emotional development and socialisation. Stern writes about the development of 'inter-subjective relatedness', that ability to experience one's self as a separate being from others, but as a dependent being too. The process by which the mother's empathic responsiveness evokes, stimulates, validates and maybe names the infant's emotional and physical state, ensures that her underlying affective response is encoded in the baby's brain.

According to Stern, and others, the degree to which the major affect states (interest, joy, surprise, anger, distress, fear, contempt, disgust and shame) are encoded in the baby's brain influences the development of their core relatedness. That sense of core relatedness is the basis for the development of inter-subjective relatedness. Stern argues that in the pre-verbal stage infants seek to share joint attention, intentions and affect states with significant others. The process of organising the affect responses of the mother to the infant, and indeed, possibly, the infant's own physiological responses also, Stern refers to as the laying down of templates into Representations of Interactions that have been Generalised (RIGS) (Stern 1985:97). It is the mother's (and others') empathic responsiveness to the infant which influences the integrations of 'agency, coherence, and affectivity' to provide the infant with a unified sense of a core self and a core other: 'the existential bedrock of interpersonal relations' (p.125).

It might help to think of the significance of this concept of RIGS in the following way. Reflect upon a very affecting experience in your own personal history. It might be a serious bereavement, or a divorce, or a major career disappointment. It could even be something less extreme such as 'loss of face' in a humiliating situation. As you reflect upon that experience, more than likely you suffer not only the pain of the present circumstances, but a resurgence of other, similar experiences which your mind has codified under a certain pattern, or RIG, in Stern's terms. It is sometimes difficult to disentangle the present experience from the past experiences, so persistent is the brain's ability to codify experience in apparently manageable ways. The trick is to apply an empathic method to your own case. You can do this by noticing, analysing and reflecting upon the thoughts and feelings aroused by the present situation and disentangling these from those factors which belong to the past.

Through a process of introspection it is possible to determine what belongs to the experiences of the past, and what appropriately belongs to the present experience. It requires some skill and perseverance to do this effectively. As postulated at the beginning of this book, past and present are not always neatly categorised separately in the mind, particularly where events are emotionally charged and meaningful. Even if it becomes difficult to determine the dynamics of current events, the knowledge that they are influenced and nuanced by personal histories is important.

Stern's notion of early affective experiences being laid down as emotional templates with their own powerful and enduring psychic force has parallels with the concept of 'transference' in psychoanalytic literature and practice. Both concepts are important in understanding interpersonal life as they can function wherever one person is engaged in influencing, or being influenced by, another. Because the concept of transference has its own particular definitions and controversies in other disciplines, particularly psychoanalysis, for the purposes and audiences of this paper, the term 'emotional templates' will be used to indicate the influence of early-life experiences on current intra-psychic, interpersonal engagements. Intra-psychic engagements are the thoughts and feelings which come into play as you try to make an important decision, for example, or as you reflect upon your ambivalent reactions to a situation. Because we are all influenced in our psychic development by significant others in our life- parents, siblings, teachers, friends- we carry around in our heads things we have been told by them, and the emotional aura of the telling.

Of course an infant or young child, prior to the development of a reflective capacity, has no control over the kind of template laid down in the brain. Experiences will be recorded as primarily affective and unconscious, and therefore, largely undifferentiated. It is possible to see, even with this simplified version of affective development and the development of a sense of self, how an infant's sense of well-being and ultimately sense of self-worth can be positively influenced by the emotional responsiveness of others. The infant who sees a mother's joyful look feels good inside because that look stimulates pleasurable physiological reactions. Likewise, a look of distress from a mother, or other, evokes discomfort inside. If the mother notices the infant's expression of discomfort in response to her expression of distress, she may respond empathically and soothe the discomfort by talking reassuringly.

While the mother's empathic responsiveness is helping the infant's coding of affects, it is also creating certain meanings for him/her. It is not the case that the mother always mirrors back the infant's affects. She makes decisions about responding and sometimes wisely invalidates an infant's particular response. For example, the baby might squeal with delight at the sight of a deadly spider, at which the mother might gasp with fright and grab the infant. The mother's function is not merely to empathically validate the infant's emotional reactions, sometimes it is to educate through her own reasoned reactions. She modulates the infant's affects and behaviour through mirroring, soothing or intensifying them. Later the child engages with others and with toys which can also function as self-soothing or exciting objects.

Clearly, empathy continues to be important in the develop of interrelatedness, but as the child develops physically, cognitively, linguistically, socially and self-reflectively, other people, events and experiences can serve subjective and cognitive needs. Since the mother's empathic responsiveness in the first nine months or so is crucial in the development of the core self, it is easy to imagine that at a significant, albeit an unconscious one, empathic responsiveness from adults and learning/socialisation experiences are closely aligned in children's minds. Of particular relevance here is the child's internalised sense as self as a competent learner.

Assuming that a mother and significant others have done a 'good enough' job in promoting a child's sense of emotional well-being and psychic development, to borrow Winnicott's (1965) empathic and insightful comment about parenting, we can assume that memory traces, or RIGS, are laid down in our psyches of the powerfully affective contexts in which early learning occurred. The linguist Michael Halliday (1975) theorised that early language development occurs in part because infants recognise what language does for them in inducting them into human society. It is plausible and timely to theorise now that the empathic attunement of significant others to the infant's efforts to speak is also an important trigger to language development.

Kohut warned that empathy is not just an intuitive capacity: "I do not write about empathy as being always correct and accurate... empathy is a value-neutral mode of observation...attuned to the inner life of man (sic)", which should be "examined and evaluated in an empirical context as a mental activity" (Kohut, 1982:396-397). Needless to say, in engaging with an infant in an empathic way, or engaging with a student later in life, parents and educators essentially need to be sufficiently well adjusted themselves to be able to attend sensitively to the child's and student's needs. In collaboration with the child or student, they need to be somewhat self-sacrificing and capable of introspection in order to determine appropriate reactions. Significantly, infants and children are well capable of signalling their needs, well

beyond the early phases of spontaneously crying to attract attention. In all kinds of symbolic and linguistic ways, psychic states, intentions and needs are signalled, as well as readiness to learn and be challenged.

While Stern's work comes out of studies of infants and Kohut's work comes from his psychotherapeutic work, their concepts are helpful to educators wishing to understand the role and nature of empathy in education. In educational settings the teacher's empathic awareness is an important precursor to understanding, explaining, question-asking, reinforcement of students' efforts, scaffolding of challenging tasks and the establishment of a conducive learning environment. While educators might feel daunted by the prospect of responding empathically to a room full of energetic, or even disaffected, individuals, empathy can be a powerful learning tool and a source of satisfaction and soothing for the educators who employ it. Part of learning in normal development involves modifications of those generalised interactions laid down unconsciously and consciously throughout early childhood and life as a learner. The Piagetian notion that learning is a process of increased cognitive differentiation now needs, ideally, to be subsumed within a concept of learning as a dynamic between cognitive and affective processes in the service of increased differentiation in both. It is that concept which underpins empathic pedagogy.

Narrative as Vicarious Experience

Narratives serve a psychic organising function in emotional development (Bettleheim, 1978) and they reflect a need to think by analogy or through comparisons. By structuring events and observations on life within a narrative framework, a perspective is created with which readers (or listeners/viewers) can connect and compare their own points of view. Sometimes the narrative (or other symbolic work) can be absorbed or internalised so strongly it becomes part of the reader's or viewer's identification and perspective. Analogies, metaphors, and artistic works can function for their spectators (and their creators) as an affective and cognitive form of analogy: a way of expanding one's psychic boundaries. An ongoing process of integrating experiences and developing a sense of an individual self which is functioning coherently in a purposeful, though challenging world is one facet of life's educative function. An outcome of that process is the increased sense of life's complexities and ambiguities, and a confidence in the capacity to function within such parameters. Increased differentiation of thought and feeling as a measure of intellectual development- can be promoted through analogic processing of experience.

Depending how deeply readers or listeners engage with narrative, a process occurs by which what is familiar in the narrative reinforces the known, while what is new, or beyond immediate mapping with existing templates of experience, is reached for tacitly. In that sense, narratives (and metaphors/ symbolic experiences) can function to differentiate or develop thought and feeling. It is important to hypothesise connections between narrative as analogic experiencing and empathic intelligence as high order analogical processing because it is a promising route to understanding holistic cognitive, emotional, social and moral development.

In telling our own stories we feel an affinity with our past and in hearing the stories of others we can feel an affinity with them. Story lines connect individuals across time and space. They can inspire the young and affirm the old, providing imagined role models for all kinds of endeavours, while reminding us that experience endures beyond our own mortality. Their

endurability is a comfort and a source of inspiration. It is no accident that they are older than civilisation.

In a story, the surface meaning and deeper meaning can exist in a pleasurable, contradictory tension between reason and fantasy. Of course, 'once' in a story means more than 'only ever'. We know from experience that whatever happens in a story refers to the past, but it could happen again. Stories, gossip, anecdotes and reflections create a pattern to human experience. Past experiences can inform our present decisions and our view of the way the world functions. That knowledge is comforting. That's why we want to listen to stories or turn the page and read on, even if the story does not have a traditionally happy ending. As readers or listeners we are poised in expectation, hoping to make sense of the world by our vicarious engagement in the story.

For some deeply engaged readers, stories herald moments of private intimacy with the depths of ourselves. From such experiences of private intimacy, dwelling in our inner world, grows the capacity for empathy, imagination, creativity, playful and moral conjecturing about the experiences. " I wonder what it would be like to be the strongest man in the world?" "What would I do if I were held captive in a castle?" or more realistically, "How would I respond if I were tempted with fame and fortune as reward for a favour or some secret information?"

Through the stories of real and imagined life we become aware of ourselves as feeling and thinking beings who belong in a world potentially richer than our own everyday existence. The culture of narratives experienced through reading, viewing and even participating in dramas can forever stimulate our minds and hearts. Heroes, gods, fairy queens, tyrants, angels, monsters, devils, supermen and their partners, superwomen, will always exist to inspire, threaten, challenge or protect us. Stories, myths and dramas of the human condition survive in literature, mass media and computer games because boardrooms, families, playgrounds, classrooms and offices are filled with their descendants. As engaged participants in reading or viewing stories and dramas, we can choose our own identifications with characters and events, guessing or hypothesising what we would feel like in this or that role. This book invites you to recognise the roles you play, to reflect on their nature and purpose so that you can choose the stage on which you play out your life. Whether you lead or follow, and mostly we do both in life, it helps to know our own life histories and to respect those of others. It is challenging psychically to extend the boundaries of our known selves by imaginatively engaging with vicarious possibilities. Even very young children meet that challenge when they role-play imaginative or lived experiences.

The good storyteller, whether in prose, verse or conversation, demonstrates a quality of empathic intelligence: the ability to create the affecting mood which will best resonate with readers and listeners and to select from observation and reflection the appropriate information. We engage with stories to the extent that they seem to connect with or enhance our lives. The connection might be tenuous, unconscious or blindingly apparent. The experience can be psychically and aesthetically pleasurable. Some stories draw us back into the past, others project us into the future. Some illuminate the day; others take us into the darkness of human behaviour. The best storytellers lighten and enlighten the paradoxes and ambiguities of life.

In narratives, the past and present exist in a seemingly timeless realm in which human characters confront physical challenges, emotional and moral dilemmas in some form, and tacitly suggest to us as readers how we might best choose to conduct our lives. The past is a

tacitly known country. It is the geography and the architecture of our present. It can be cultivated and structured to enhance our understanding of the present. Even as we read or tell stories, we indulge in the hope of learning how to control the future. While not even narratives can achieve the impossible and foretell the future, the imaginative engagements they encourage promote speculative thinking and belief in the ineffable.

'Once upon a time' is timelessly evocative. It connects the past, present and future: memory, time and hope. Through time, memory and hope it hints at coherence between physical, mental and emotional aspects of being. It functions like an algebra of human life. In an important sense, 'once upon a time' has to be the opening phrase of a paper concerned with empathic intelligence. The phrase hints at the challenge embedded within a statement of fact; namely, that even the certainties of apparent facts can prove illusory when tested against reality and influenced by feelings. Those who are excited by that challenge are likely to find empathic intelligence a welcome concept. They are also likely to function in empathically intelligent ways, even though their professional or personal orientations might move across a continuum of scientific and poetic ways of functioning.

It is further argued here that when empathic intelligence functions well, it can inspire excellence through the quality of its processes and outcomes. That quality relies on relationships, imagination and creativity to energise the theory, methods, planning and implementation involved in most significant enterprises. Such enterprises will be those involving people working together in mutually dependent ways, whether on a small or large scale.

In conclusion, the reason for positioning English and Drama education in the forefront of new pedagogies which reflect brain-based research insights is that they, along with some other aspects of curricula, can engage students' bodies and minds in challenging and profoundly important ways. As Damasio remarks

Were it not for the possibility of sensing body states that are inherently ordained to be painful or pleasurable, there would be no suffering or bliss, no longing or mercy, no tragedy or glory in the human condition...Feelings form the base for what humans have described for millennia as the human soul or spirit (1994, p.xvii-xviii).

There is a poetic way I would like to articulate the function of English and Drama educators. As we work to help students transform their everyday experiences through the use of imagination, empathy and the insights of spirited engagement with texts, the culture and engagements with others we learn

To bind in a spell
The tale of our own creation

Students deserves the opportunity to discover their own transforming spells, to write and to read the tales of their own creation and to live in a world where Harry Potter can be both magical and real, fantasised and as common-place – just like the kid with round glasses sitting beside you in a rural classroom in the wilderness of Tasmania, Australia, in the 21st century.

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