

Emotional capital, positive psychology and mindfulness developments' for Enabling's Teachers and Educators: A new way of approaching citizenship's learning and skills¹

Prof. Dr. Benedicte Gendron, Laboratoire Interdisciplinaire de Recherche en Didactique, Éducation et Formation (LIRDEF), EA3749, University Paul-Valéry, Montpellier 3, Route de Mende, 34000 Montpellier, France

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1. Context and Challenges

The European Commission works with EU countries to strengthen 'key competences' – knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed by all for personal fulfillment and development, employability, social inclusion and active citizenship. Thus, education goals and curriculum objectives are not only about knowledge but also about developing soft or life skills as social and personal emotional competencies that are vital to children and students' current and future lives as citizens. They should learn how to live together in a global and interconnected world or to live and accepting Other's differences in their close by areas. Whatever the frontiers though, those skills (sometimes called 21st century skills) matter to a French or an EU or a world citizen who has to learn to behave in a proper manner with respect to human rights and values. Therefore, classroom practices, teaching styles, active pedagogies are part of the success of empowering children and students to develop those social and personal emotional competencies that target their emotional capital and help them challenge citizenship issues.

Thus, the important challenges and variables in education are the following: a) understanding, caring for and developing strong positive

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relationships, b) creating responsible citizens who care about peace and social cohesion and are respectful of others' difference, and c) developing each person's potential.

Citizenship is a political concept, which has a broader sociological and historical meaning. The variety of rights and responsibilities in a given political community change over time as the result of social struggle, economic change and shifts in governing ideology. Thus, the idea of citizenship is built on people's equal value and equal opportunity to take part in and influence public activities. A citizen may be described as a member of a political community or a state, who has certain legal, social and moral rights, duties and responsibilities. Thus, one of the challenges of education is to identify competences, which are key for social and economic success in the 21st century —life skills or key competences for learning to learn and for citizenship. The OECD report (2001) refers to “key competences” as ones that are indispensable for the good life. They are defined as a multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and values that all individuals require for their personal fulfillment and development, and for their social inclusion and employment. These competences are conceived as a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes adapted to individual circumstances and closely interlinked together. According Crick (2008), it requires the accumulation of one's personal identity, motivation, values and attitudes, the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding in order to become competent in a particular domain: “... a competent citizen may have a particular sense of identity, and desire for participation. He may be disposed to participate, and have a set of values, which mean that participation is important to him. On this basis he may develop the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to engage productively in community, and public life – and to be fully competent he will be drawing on all of these in developing the practical know-how and wisdom about how, when and where to engage.” (p. 314).

These competences include critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration and creativity and innovation and are essential for success in today's world.

Students can build these skills by applying them through regular school subjects. And pointing out these skills will actually increase students' grasp of what they're learning, as well their overall engagement in their own education. Thus, transmitting knowledge and developing life skills at the same time, are two perspectives that can be reconciled. Vocational Education and Training (VET) as a form of professional education is the ideal place to embrace such an issue and to empower students with this global citizenship responsibility. This challenge has to be taken as a great opportunity, and VET constitutes the ideal channel with a new pedagogical and teaching philosophy. VET is not only about developing professional

and technical skills but remains a great challenge and stake for the economy and society development in order to grasp the perspective of lives in its all for a better understanding of the world and sustainable future.

2. Questions, Theory and Methodology

2.1 Questions

Teachers and educators need to provide students with the behaviors, knowledge & skills to become responsible global citizens who can take action to solve a problem either individually or with others. How can schools and universities (in this context of a ‘post truth’ world challenging dominant conceptions of citizenship) support “enabling” teachers or educators to be equipped to respond to this challenge in their mission and work at preparing every child and student to become active citizens of the world? How can they prepare them and which innovative programs should they implement to respond to these challenges?

Citizenship education is about educating people in citizenship and human rights through an understanding of the principles and institutions, through learning to exercise one’s judgement and critical faculty and through acquiring a sense of individual and community responsibilities. These three objectives correspond both to educating the individual as a subject of ethics and law, and to educating citizens. It rests upon four major relations: 1) the relations between individuals and society (i.e., individual and collective freedoms, and rejection of any kind of discrimination), 2) the relations between citizens and the government (i.e., what is involved in democracy and the organization of the state?), 3) the relation between the citizen and democratic life, and 4) the responsibility of the individual and the citizen in the international community.

So, how can one develop those skills in order to prepare students for what they will need to know and be able to do in school and college, at work and throughout all aspects of their personal and civic life as well as their responsibility as today’s students face higher expectations in both school and the workforce? So what are the important skills, behaviors, and attitudes that students need to become contributing global citizens? How can one develop these skills while students study core subjects?

2.2 Theoretical frameworks

Through an innovative course program Idefi « Emotional Capital, Well-being and Performance » founded by the French National Research Agency, implemented toward future teachers and educators at the University of Montpellier 3 in France, we try to develop those crucial 21st century and citizenships skills via their emotional capital. The “Emotional Capital is the set of resources -social and personal emotional competencies- that is inherent to the person, useful for personal, professional and organizational development, and participates to social cohesion and has personal, economic and social returns” (Gendron, 2004c).

Inspired by the Nobel Sen macro-approach of capabilities, our approach and program at developing “enabling” education aims at empowering students and children to be citizens of the world by developing their emotional capital. This is what, in this paper, we will discuss through the experimental research action started in 2014 on future teachers and educators in France and its outcomes. Based on active positive pedagogy, heutagogy (Gendron, 2018), using the project management and mindful educational program, ACT (Acceptance and Commitment Training), both combined, outcomes show that the emotional capital develops and empowers potentials and capabilities serving in an innovative way, citizenships skills and learning, respectful of the richness of identities.

The main objectives of the IDEFI program is to help freshmen students, future educators or future teachers, enrolled in the first year of sciences of education in South of France at the University Montpellier 3, to perform in their studies by working on their career guidance and by developing ad hoc skills referring to key competences, life and citizenship skills. Among them are creative thinking, problem solving, collaboration, communication, empathy and ethics. Creative thinking is a skill that comes naturally to a lot of children and can help in the engagement of learning throughout life. This can be tied to meaningful tasks that challenge them in an imaginative way. Thus, being a creative thinker – the ability to ‘think outside the box’ is an important skill for students to have because it will prepare them for a world that is in a constant state of change.

Problem solving is the ability to solve problems independently and with others. Being a problem solver is critical for the future when facing many challenges that need out of the box thinking to solve. These complex problems that are currently unimaginable will be abundant, and the more the skill of finding effect solutions to real-world problems is developed, the more successful the young generation will be.

Collaboration is the ability to work with others and be sociable. Thus, being able to collaborate is an essential skill to help students learn and support their emotional well-being, especially in a time of constant change. To do so, we used “collaborative learning” pedagogy which refers to a teaching method through which students at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal. The students are responsible for one another’s learning as well as their own. Thus, the success of one student helps other students to be successful. Proponents of collaborative learning claim that the active exchange of ideas within small groups not only increases interest among the participants but also promotes critical thinking.

Communication is the ability to communicate effectively. It incorporates interactions that are both verbal and non-verbal. So it is essential for students to understand the diverse nature of this skill. Being adept in communicating with technology (using both digital media and interacting on a personal level) is essential. Thus, being able to communicate effectively in the digital world they live in means to communicate in the most appropriate way depending on the course of action required.

Social awareness, empathy and ethics are the ability to be selfless, caring and helpful and respectful of others religions, cultures, races, and genders and to do the right thing. Social awareness refers to how people handle relationships and awareness of others’ feelings, needs, and concerns. The social awareness cluster contains six competencies: empathy (to read, be sensitive to and influence other people's emotions; this is how sensitive we are to people, both their feelings and their potential i.e. sensing others' feelings and perspectives, and taking an active interest in their concerns), organizational awareness (reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships), service orientation (anticipating, recognizing, and meeting people' needs). Thus, being social aware, ethical and empathetic are one of the most critical skills that a 21st-century learner will need to move to a world that is safer, more harmonic and more respectful in every way.

As the old philosophers advice “knowing yourself”, the IDEFI program has been set up with a special approach to make student learning about themselves by themselves but also by and through others. Already in this guidance unit of education, students in groups had to discover a range of jobs in their field of sciences of education and to learn from this variety of jobs and then to create a serious game involving the job information that would make the latter be discovered by the other groups’ of students during a half-day festival performance organized in team workshops.

2.3 Methodology, Research and IDEFI Interventions Objectives and Methods

Based on a plural theoretical framework of active pedagogy, positive psychology² and successful learning as described, we organize the training in two phases according two tools: project managements and meditation. The IDEFI interventions are articulated around two phases of training. First, we started with the part “knowing yourself through Others” with 3 workshops of 4 hours using the action learning pedagogy based on Dewey’s work by using “PIA2 – Project Management as an Instrument with Respect to Labor Market for Development and Assurance of Teaching Quality in Vocational Education” set up by Gessler & Uhlig-Schoenian (2013). The main objective for students working in groups on a common project is to learn about themselves and each other, to evaluate properly and to work together collaboratively. Using a variety of exercises, we facilitated students’ commitment to their projects of discovering jobs in their career field. This way, students become actors of their projects where team spirit had an important place. In order to create the groups, a short questionnaire was administered to students where they were asked to identify their profile choosing from four categories: manager, visionary, analyst, and collaborator. More, through this approach, each member has responsibilities which alternate and specific duties, which contribute to the team’s performance. Each team uses “a board notebook” in order to manage a project’s progress and, this way, each student learns to control him/herself and to develop his/her deductive, inductive, analytic, synthetic and critical spirit. By using a guidebook, students define and analyze the stakeholders and associated risks regarding their serious game suggested for the festival. The professor/tutor has an important role as a coach, which is to help and encourage students to continue and to persist in order to achieve the team objectives. From the first session until the end of the project, students complete tests and identify their emotional, social and personal competencies, using an evaluation scale.

In the second phase, the part “knowing yourself by self” in the IDEFI program has been approached by a Mindfulness program called ACT’- Acceptance and Commitment Training. Based on psychology and positive education approaches (Kabat Zinn, 1982 and Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson in 1999), ACT’ objective is to help students to find a psychological flexibility and to stop fighting against their painful

² Positive psychology is the scientific study of human strengths and virtues or according to Martin Seligman– one of the fathers of positive psychology– the positive psychology is the “study of what constitutes the pleasant life, the engaged life, and the meaningful life.”

thoughts, emotions, memories and perceptions, or to learn how to cope with disagreeable thoughts, emotions and sensations, in order to work at breaking down the barriers of useless or counter-productive behaviors for the learner and to reset themselves in action for things that really matters. The 12 hours ACT' workshops envisage the development of psychological flexibility through six sessions articulating six central cognitive processes: cognitive diffusion, acceptance, contact with the present moment, observing the self, values, and committed action. In traditional guidance courses, no conceptual framework has been advanced to guide the work of practitioners and researchers, and values are widely ignored by both practitioners and researchers. But, in our IDEFI Emotional Capital Program, "Values" have been a part of the ACT program in helping students to define their values which are the most important guiding principles that help set priorities in students' career and life. Precisely, the cognitive diffusion is the learning method to reduce the tendency to reify thoughts, images, emotions, and memories. Acceptance allows thoughts to come and go without struggling with them. Contact with the present moment which works on the awareness of the here and now, is experienced through openness, interest, and receptiveness, by observing the self by accessing a transcendent sense of self, a continuity of consciousness which is unchanging, defining values i.e., and discovering what is most important to one's true self. Committed action is about setting goals according to values and carrying them out responsibly.

The experimental research protocol was based on traditional evidence-based design: two groups (one experimental and one control groups with two phases of testing – pre-post-tests and the control group for deontological motives) received the training after the end of the research data collection, after the end of the courses with the experimental group. This program has been running since 2014 and more than 400 freshmen students of sciences of education have been trained since then. The sample population in this paper consisted of a total of 132 students, (valid data: 97 students). All the participants were split into 8 groups, 4 groups as experimental groups (XP GP) and the 4 others as control groups (Ctrl GP). The students groups were not set up in a random selection but according their schedule availabilities.

Research linking coping and emotional competencies with students' achievement and wellbeing has mainly employed self-report Likert-type rating scales of emotional intelligence or emotional quotient. In our current research, we use different scales and Likert-type self-ratings to measure freshmen students EK progress related to the instruments and tools: the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), the

Emotion Regulation Profile-Revised (ERP-R); ACT measurements and Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) predictive of, a variety of self-regulation and wellbeing constructs; The Acceptance and Action Questionnaire 2 (AAQ 2); Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale (DASS); the Academic Motivation Scale – AMS scaling three types of intrinsic motivation (intrinsic motivation to know, to accomplish things, and to experience stimulation), three types of extrinsic motivation (external, introjected, and identified regulation), and amotivation, and the Generalized Self-efficacy Scale which assesses a general sense of perceived self-efficacy. A qualitative data collection has been implemented to get a comprehensive overview of the added value of the IDEFI program for students regarding their professional work engagement and involvement. Statistical data were analyzed with the SPSS software program using T-test and analyses of variance (ANOVA) in order to identify differences between experimental and control groups and participants' score changes after the training program (before the training T₁ and after T₂).

3. Outcomes, Analysis and Discussion

3.1 Outcomes

From the data analysis, several positive changes occur among students. Using group work as a methodology of learning subjects, it allows not only knowledge transmission but also develops students social and self-awareness, self-confidence, social collaboration and the acceptance of the other; competencies that are more and more required in different learning environments but above all in the work place as well as citizenship responsibilities. Particularly, emotional regulation and management have been linked with better social relationships, and with students who are better able to maintain their social relationships as required for effective group work (Lopes, Salovey, & Straus, 2003). It came out that students up-regulate more positively their emotions' irruption and increase their empathy, but even they demonstrate a higher score of anxiety and stress on the T₂ test. As found in previous research, it means that students start to know themselves better and their resources. Thus, according to this accurate knowledge, they face more realistically stressful situations and then might be able to handle their level of stress in a more efficient way and to manage it properly. It confirms the importance of coping strategies through which a person removes, reduces, or manages threatening events or situations or appraised as challenging or stressful (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). ACT works at modifying cognitive appraisals of potentially stressful stimuli which are critical in coping processes, as are the resulting emotions. Ideally, adaptive coping must lead to a permanent problem resolution

with no additional residual outcomes, while maintaining a positive emotional state. Precisely, evaluation-focused coping, in problem solving, exercised in ACT, is a strategy of choice when the source of stress is unclear or when little can be done to eliminate the stressor or when there is a lack of knowledge on how to modify the stressor (Lazarus, 1993). Previous research suggests that emotional self-awareness and regulation are clearly linked to academic achievement and more serene behavior. Precisely, as Pekrun and al. (2004) and MacCann and al. (2011), we observe in our research that students who know how to regulate their negative emotions, seem to be less impaired by negative emotions in assessment and learning situations. Depending on the degree of emotional regulation competencies they master, such students seem to be able to generate positive emotions that facilitate performance and easier social relationships.

Table 1. Main significant outcomes

Variables	N	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference	Z	Sig.
ERP_TOTAL	60	17,9	20,01	2.1	2,767	0.006*
ERP_POSITIF	60	13,15	14,3	1.15	2,284	0.022*
ANXIETY	60	10,55	12,84	2.29	2,194	0.028*
STRESS	60	12,07	15,62	3,55	2,702	0.007*

Namely, the ERP-R not only provides information about how a person regulates his/her emotions, but it also highlights the regulation strategies used. Statistical analysis identified that after the EK training program (T₂), students from experimental group have a higher score referring to a better ability (m=20,02) than those from the control group (m=17,9) on up-regulating positive emotions (Z=2,284, p=0,022) and on concentrating on the positive side of the situation even if there are some obstacles (Z=2.851, p=0,004).

For the experimental group, we also identified a positive correlation between up-regulating positive emotions ability and the subscale optimism of TEIQue (r= 0,306; p= 0,018). This correlation confirms the outcomes on optimism from positive psychology research: optimists are people who expect good things to happen to them and the difference between optimists and pessimists is the way they approach and cope with adversity. Optimism defined, as the persistence in pursuing goals despite obstacles and setbacks, is not only a state, but can also be learned and developed. In TEIQue, optimism is linked to wellbeing, albeit in a forward-looking way. High scorers look on the bright side and expect positive things to happen in their life. Low scorers are pessimistic and view things from a negative perspective.

They are less likely to be able to identify and pursue new opportunities and tend to be risk-averse. Along with happiness and self-esteem, this scale reflects students' general psychological state at this point in time.

3.2 Analysis and Discussion

The IDEFI program is based on active learning. This contrasts with a model of instruction whereby knowledge is imparted or transmitted from the teacher to students. Active learning means that learners take increasing responsibility for their learning, and that teachers are enablers and activators of learning, rather than lecturers or deliverers of ideas. Also, through its collaborative active learning approach, our Idefi program provides a way of knowing and understanding students' themselves and their preferred behavioral style with regard to how it affects the way they react to different people and different situations and their decision making and choices. It also gives them an insight into how others understand the world, allowing them to work more constructively with a range of different people. This self-understanding and self-awareness can help students make better choices about their individual approach to their learning and when working in groups. According to Johnson and Johnson (1986), there is persuasive evidence that cooperative teams achieve higher levels of thought and retain information longer than students who work quietly as individuals. The shared learning gives students an opportunity to engage in discussion, take responsibility for their own learning, and thus become critical thinkers (Totten, Sills, Digby, & Russ, 1991) involving the three components of successful learning. Indeed, cognitive, affective, and volitional components of goal-oriented motivation, defined in the learning process equation (Gendron, 2010) have developmental aspects and explain students' academic performance and career guidance satisfaction. The pedagogical approach employs meaningful and intentional activities that not only provide greater agency to students but also require thought and reflection about the learning taking place (Horton and Freire, 1990). Examples of active learning range from teams work and mind mapping to project based and learning (Russell, J.D. et al, 1995). The aim is to create a learning relationship among the student, staff faculty, lecturers, the material and the spaces that require engagement and reflection. It led to inquiry-based and discovery learning models. The main idea here is that students learn best when they can see the usefulness of what they learn and connect it to the real world. The program provides opportunities for learners to think critically about content through a range of activities that help prepare learners for the challenges of professional situations or global citizen issues.

Regarding “knowing yourself”, the meditation practice (Gendron, 2011) via the ACT mindfulness program was designed to help participants gain more insights into the workings of their mind without reacting to it. Skills that the participants learned is how to identify and classify the "inner parts" of their own psyche (for example, their "inner critics," "managers," "protectors," "helpers" or "optimists"). These may also include "happy parts," "fear parts" or "vulnerable parts". Awakening self-acceptance, self-love and self-expression makes it possible to connect consciously, honestly and deeply with the rest of life and that participates to success. Specifically, young people need to imagine possibilities in their lives, set attainable goals, plan routes to those goals, systematically and consistently put goals and plans into actions, practice self-observation, reflect on results, and manage emotions... Combined with a positive education perspective, some IDEFI exercises work at training students' mind to assess situations in a positive way. It obliges them to think about their own “values”, (areas of personal, couple, family, work values, q health, welfare, and education life). Those experiences are the most profound influence on self-efficacy, which subsequently predicts future success and wellbeing and caring. While goals associated with these latter paradigms are deeply enmeshed in schools today (e.g., basic skills, critical thinking), Barell (1995) proposes that helping students develop the conative attitudes and skills associated with self-direction and personal efficacy is one of the most critical tasks presently facing parents and educators as those skills relates to emotional capital formation which refers gather social and personal emotional competencies, as transferable and transversals skills required and strongly appraised and appreciated in jobs nowadays as to become contributing global citizens.

4. Conclusions

Knowing yourself by Self and through Others, Emotional capital and the equation of the “Successful Learning Process” are core concepts supported by the IDEFI program. From an interdisciplinary approach combining sciences of education, economic of human resources and positive psychology, our Idefi program implemented in a “guidance career course” shows that emotional capital can improve the wellbeing and performance of trainees, of future educators and teachers, that contributes to ensure sustainable and benevolence education and balanced person development as professional skills and citizenship responsibilities. Here, guidance career training has been seen as an integral part of our teaching, something that is exciting and helps unlock students' potential and helping students' resilience by developing their emotional capital which is related to transversal and transferable competencies.

Career guidance is primarily concerned with realizing the aspirations and potential of the individual. However, career guidance also offers considerable social and economic benefits for a society. To relate to the OECD definition, career guidance can have substantial benefits for the economy by supporting individuals to enhance their capacities in ways that contribute to enhanced jobs, skills, growth and global citizenship participation. It can be argued that career guidance enhances individuals' human, social and emotional capital and explore the way in which these work through the economy to impact on macroeconomic outcomes. This focus on the economic outcomes should not be seen as diminishing the wider benefits that career guidance can deliver in terms of self-actualization, job satisfaction, social equity and a range of other personal and social outcomes as society engagement.

To end, the power of the emotional capital (Gendron, 2018) is singular. It's a crucial capital in which people, institutions such as educational institutions as universities and societies should invest in it because of its economic, social and personal returns. It enables people to develop sustainability nowadays from a lifelong learning perspective, and it can lead to less individualism and toward a higher personal and individual society engagements, to the respect of the great power of education and the work values in personal-socio-economic environments (at home, communities, schools, and work). And on the macro-level, it participates in social cohesion and citizenship responsibility and commitments (Gendron, 2007). Emotional Capital is a real and effective personal, professional, social and organizational asset.

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