

There is a great deal of disagreement as to whether a workshop alone can upgrade emotional intelligence competencies.



Demystifying the EI Quick Fix

By Laurie A. Carrick

Are leaders born or made?

In 2006, Warren Bennis said, “The most dangerous myth is that leaders are born—that there is a genetic factor to leadership, that people have certain charismatic qualities or not. That’s nonsense. Leaders are made rather than born.”

Daniel Goleman introduced emotional intelligence (EI) as the new yardstick for leadership success, and there is an emerging consensus that EI competencies can be developed. Improving EI competencies has become a major topic of interest in leadership development. As early as 1997, the ASTD *State of the Industry* report found that four out of five companies were trying to promote EI with their employees through training and development, when evaluating performance, and in hiring practices. Studies regarding the effectiveness of just-in-time learning initiatives such as half-day training programs are absent from the literature. Given this, it is unclear to what extent these initiatives play a role in improving EI competencies within organizations.

Who is right? The people who believe that it can be developed over time or “the hucksters who claim that they can turn emotional dunces into emotional Einsteins in an afternoon?” Cary Cherniss, Daniel Goleman, Robert Emmerling, Kimberly Cowan, and Mitchel Adler posed this question in a technical report issued by the Consortium of Research on Emotional Intelligence in Organizations.



LISTEN TO THIS FEATURE
at www.astd.org/TD/TDpodcasts.htm

In what way, if any, does a half-day corporate learning program affect the development of EI leadership competencies? This question was the essence of my exploratory study, which was conducted as a field experiment, designed to assess and analyze the impact of a four-hour cognitive learning initiative on EI competencies. The data was triangulated using the pre- and post-self-assessments, pre- and post-behavioral event interviews (BEI), pre- and postfield notes or observations by the researcher, and an email survey.

Specifically, this study included pretest quantitative Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) assessments and qualitative behavioral event interviews. The participants completed the EQ-i assessment before participating in the one-hour interviews that took place 30 days prior to the learning initiative. The participants attended the training class (learning initiative), which included the distribution of the EQ-i pre-assessment results. Six weeks after the learning initiative, each participant received a 90-minute critical incident interview session combined with a 30-minute coaching session and program evaluation.

Three months after the learning initiative, the participants completed an EQ-i self-assessment post-test. The retest intervals were timed so there was only a minimum risk of a memory factor contaminating true variance. The triangulation of qualitative, quantitative, and observational data was analyzed using SPSS software and

an Emotional Competency Indicator (ECI) coding scale.

The following research findings are applicable to thousands of public and private commercial organizations that either use, or are considering using, a classroom-based learning program to improve EI competencies. This study concluded that EI competencies could be significantly improved with a half-day workshop when combined with a post-training coaching session. A post-training coaching session is critical to the development of EI competencies.

Design and objectives

A cognitivist theory of learning was used to design this learning program. To learn EI, the participants must understand the importance and relevance of EI in both their professional and personal domains. Once individuals understand and internalize the concepts, they can assimilate the various benefits of developing EI and then the competencies can be developed. The curriculum was designed as a student-focused learning model with practical activities (small group, large group, and pairs) and assessment work. The facilitator's role in this workshop is to provide data, facts, and insights to assist in the student's understanding and learning. The facilitator provides a scaffold for the learners.

The first objective of the leadership workshop is to provide feedback for each participant on his level of EI. This provides a baseline for each participant to identify areas of strengths and

opportunities for development. The second objective focuses on providing the participants with an overview of the components of EI that allows for understanding EI and its importance in the management of people. The third objective focuses on explicating how an individual's EI can be improved and further developed. Lastly, the workshop design provides individual coaching for understanding and improvement.

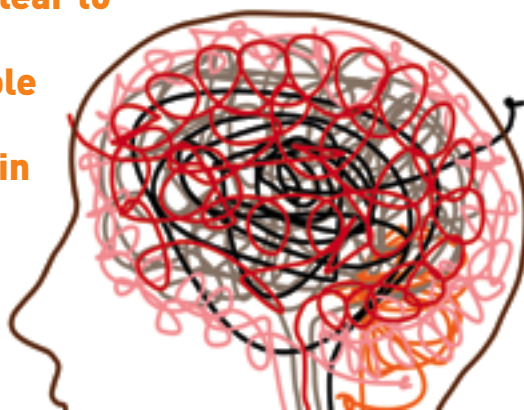
To meet these objectives, the facilitator covers cognitive intelligence and defines, analyzes, examines, and discusses EI. EI competencies, using the Baron model, are explained in detail before the facilitator examines how they are interdependent as well as how they differ. Secondly, the participants engage in a review of the EQ-i assessment results and discuss its application to their work and personal lives. Finally, the participants set individual goals and objectives to develop specific EI competencies.

This workshop, including the post-training coaching, has been delivered to various clients, including GlaxoSmithKline, Jarden Consumer Solutions (Sunbeam), Drexel University faculty and Executive MBA's, Kennedy Health System, Raritan Bay Medical Center, University of Pennsylvania, and XL Group.

Classroom findings

The half-day classroom-based learning program had a minimal effect on the development of EI competencies. The majority of the participants gained awareness of the competencies and learned skills to develop the competencies based information in the workshop, the activities, the large group discussions, and the EQ-I assessment results. The post-BEI's showed that three of 11 participants improved on one or more EI competencies. This represents a minimal impact on the participant competency development within six weeks of the learning solution. Only 27 percent of the participants achieved improvements on less than one-third of the competencies. Seven, or less, of the 18 ECI competencies showed improvement.

Studies regarding the effectiveness of just-in-time learning initiatives such as half-day training programs are absent from the literature. Given this, it is unclear to what extent these initiatives play a role in improving EI competencies within organizations.



The design and facilitation of the workshop affected the development of EI competencies by producing awareness of the competencies and how they can be improved. Awareness is crucial for any long-term change to occur. Awareness is always intentional. This awareness comes with a choice to continue managing your emotions the way you are or experiment with using emotions in a different way. The participants set individual action plans during the learning initiative; however, the workshop alone was not enough to significantly improve EI competencies.

Coaching session findings

The combination of the learning program and postcoaching session positively affected the development of the EI competencies. The individual coaching session was a critical component in the design of the learning experience because it enabled greater understanding and development of the participant's EI competencies. Feedback and development plans are important tools for improving competencies. Several empirical studies on developing manager behaviors found that feedback and goal setting were better than feedback alone. The coaching session specifically focused on follow through of the action plans that were set during the learning initiative.

The triangulated data analysis identified that the learning program, when complemented by the coaching session, significantly improved assertiveness, emotional self-control (ESC) or impulse control, problem solving, emotional self-awareness (ESA), accurate self-assessment (ASA), initiative, self-confidence, achievement, adaptability or flexibility and optimism. The pretest and post-test data showed that the emotional self-control or impulse control competency significantly improved for all of the participants. Improving impulse control was a common goal for most of the participants during the sessions.

Stress management and emotional self-control are critical competencies to be developed because occupational stress is rapidly becoming one of the most important organizational

concerns in the Western world. In 1990, the overall cost of stress was more than \$150 million per year for American organizations. A Gallup Organization well-being study in 2009 identified the cost to be \$14 billion a year just in wages. Emotionally intelligent individuals who are flexible, adaptable, and can cope with stress have an advantage in the changing dynamic environment. There is a benefit for the individual and organization to develop personal resiliency to stress and improve impulse control.

The individual coaching session was a critical component in the design because it enabled greater understanding and development of the participant's EI competencies. The one-on-one coaching sessions provided an environment for more specific participant transparency on the topic that may not have been evident on a large group format based on the coaching transcripts and email survey.

According to Gary Yukl and Richard Lepsinger, one can increase the likelihood of real behavioral change from feedback by having a facilitator explain the feedback and help managers to use it to their advantage. The qualitative interviews and survey results identified that the workshop and coaching session are almost equally important in the development of the competencies. The participants stated that the assessment, workshop and coaching session were important for understanding and improving the competencies.

Intentional change finding

Most participants did not intentionally work on their action plans that were developed in the learning program until after the coaching session. The qualitative behavioral event interview post data revealed that the nine of the 11 participants did not intentionally work on their action plans before the coaching sessions even though three participants did improve their competencies.

INTERESTED IN ORDERING E-PRINTS?

Would a digital version of this article be a great fit for your next course, presentation, or event?

Are you interested in e-prints of several T+D articles on a specific topic?


Visit astd.org/TD/eprints for more information.

At the end of the learning initiative, all participants were asked to discuss an impact that they learned from the session and an action that they will take to improve their specific competencies. Everyone participated in the activities during the workshop. However, there is little proof that action was intentionally taken to improve the competencies based only on the post-qualitative coaching sessions.

Conclusion

The learning initiative raised participant awareness of the EI competencies, and the individual coaching sessions guided the participants through the intentional change process needed for EI competency development. But the key lesson learned is "if you are not providing post-training coaching reinforcement, the participants are not improving EI competencies."

Laurie A. Carrick is founder and president of Carrick & Associates; laurie@carrickassociates.com.



Holy Cow!

LeaderGuide Pro™

Seeing is Believing!!

- LGPro 7 Plus
- LGPro 7 Solo
- PGPro 7 Solo, and
- George 2

Free trials at
www.leaderguidepro.com
www.george4ppt.com

Get: ▪ Consistency
▪ Productivity
▪ Reusable Content

With: MS Word & PPT & Excel

www.leaderguidepro.com
info@leaderguidepro.com
239-389-2000

LeaderGuide Pro™

T+D

TRAINING + DEVELOPMENT

YES!

I would like to subscribe to **T+D** magazine—12 monthly issues that keep me at the forefront of workplace learning and performance.

- Individual rate \$150 (\$216 outside the U.S.)
- Institutional rate \$300 (\$366 outside the U.S.)

Order Information

TD0833

Name: _____

Title: _____ Company: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State/Province: _____ Zip/Postal Code: _____

Country: _____ Email: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

- Check One:**
- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$150 (Individual USA) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$216 (Individual Outside the US) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$300 (Institutional USA) | <input type="checkbox"/> \$366 (Institutional Outside the US) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> VISA | <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Amex | <input type="checkbox"/> Discover |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Check (USD)
(Payable to T+D) |

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____

Signature: _____

Fax this form to 1.205.995.1588 OR Mail to:

American Society for Training & Development

Subscription Office, P.O. Box 11806
Birmingham, Alabama 35202-1806, USA

Order online at store.astd.org

Phone: 1.866.802.7059

Orders processed within three business days.

If you have questions, please contact td@subscriptionoffice.com

Prices valid through 12/31/2010. If you should wish to cancel your subscription for any reason, you will receive a refund on all unmailed issues. Your subscription to T+D may be a tax deductible business expense. Please allow 6 to 8 weeks to receive your first issue.

T+D is published by the American Society for Training and Development (ASTD)

090938.63250

