

The role of emotion and aesthetics in workplace learning

A case study of introductory
courses at Tetra Pak

Matilda Mettälä

Supervisor
Bosse Bergstedt



Abstract

Type of work:	Bachelor's Thesis, 15 credits
Number of pages:	36
Title:	The role of emotion and aesthetics in workplace learning – A case study of introductory courses at Tetra Pak
Author:	Matilda Mettälä
Supervisor:	Bosse Bergstedt
Date:	2012-05-30
Summary:	<p>In today's globalized and complex world there is a need for openness to the kind of learning which is incorporated with the individual's process of change. There is an increased awareness to the importance of engaging the whole person with cognitive, affective and experiential elements rather than one part in learning situations. This qualitative study from an ethnographic approach explores and presents a case that involves these dimensions; an overview with a theoretical outline covering cluster introductory courses for new employees at Tetra Pak facilitated by Rolf Viberg. It also highlights some variables that were used and which scholars have recognized that influence our learning which includes emotions and aesthetics and their role in workplace learning. Although this study may not be extensive, it will exemplify the importance and the role emotions and aesthetics play in learning and why these elements together with a more holistic and integrated approach should be considered in organizational learning. Thus it shows the relevancy of further studies and the need for more empirical cases.</p>
Key words:	Workplace learning, organizations, emotion, aesthetics, arts, rationality, social interaction, cluster introductory courses

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Preface

Have you ever asked yourself how you perceive the world and how you learn? Have you ever wondered why some teachers can affect you more than others and help you understand things better? During my career as a music teacher I have had these questions regarding how we learn. Recent years I have also worked in various projects and companies with the purpose of developing people, since I believe that the inner resources of human beings may be developed and enriched by music and aesthetical elements. That's why the opportunity to study Rolf Viberg's work up close through the immense data which he has collected during his six years of cluster introductory courses for Tetra Pak; offered me a chance to get a deeper understanding of different learning theories and perspectives.

I am glad to have completed this Bachelor's thesis. Within the interesting area of learning and different influential parameters, I have gained much knowledge and also discovered an issue that I would like to work with in the future. I wish to thank Rolf Viberg, facilitator for Tetra Pak, for giving me the opportunity and support to carry out my assignment. I would also like to thank employees at Tetra Pak who have been involved and for their support. Furthermore, I would like to show special gratitude to my supervisor during this assignment: Professor Bosse Bergstedt for contributing valuable and stimulating advice and feedback on my work.

Introduction

Learning involves thought, action and feelings; each one has complex singularities in themselves and each one is well studied and written about. Many would agree that learning is about the whole person rather than one part (Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p.13) that the individual never stops growing and developing in – body, mind and emotions. Therefore, to be able to improve learning in workplaces in a more complex world we need to consider a more holistic, integrated approach (Evans, Hodkinson, Rainbird & Unwin, 2006 p. 163-168). I wish to reason that emotionality and rationality coexist in organizational settings (Tran, 1998) and they are the co-creators of organizations (Russ, 2004). Yet organizations and organizational life including learning is usually studied from a rationalistic perspective and still no major developments in understanding the role of emotions in organizations has occurred, something that obviously needs to be considered. Besides the role of emotions there is also an increasing awareness of the role aesthetics and the arts can play in educational settings. With this in mind I ask myself; where do trainings with emotive and aesthetic elements fit in? Many would argue that in these elements there is a lack of structure and significance but I wish to argue on the contrary; the more I study about contemporary human learning the more I understand that there are some key variables that are of great worth in workplace learning.

Hence, the opportunity to study this case from Tetra Pak, examining their cluster introductory courses facilitated by Rolf Viberg offered me a chance to get a better understanding of some of these aspects. Vibergs course evaluations have received high scores throughout the years by the participants which led questioning what factors can have contributed to the positive reactions. It is not my intention or the purpose of this study to investigate these course evaluations but rather to try to look for variables that can indicate this kind of positive outcome. Thus in this bachelor's thesis I will present this case from Tetra Pak; giving an overview of Rolf Vibergs cluster introductory courses with a theoretical framework. By so doing highlight some variables that have been used during these trainings and which scholars have recognized influence our learning which include; emotions and aesthetics and their role in workplace learning.

Research objective

Thus by providing a case from Tetra Pak; an overview of cluster introductory courses for new employees facilitated by Rolf Viberg with a theoretical framework my objective of this bachelor's thesis will be to highlight some of the variables that have been used during these trainings and which scholars have recognized influence our learning, which include emotions and aesthetics and their role in workplace learning.

My study will focus on describing and interpreting these trainings (Rienecker, 2010, p. 21-22). I realize the complexity and extend of learning processes and that there are several factors that need to be considered while discussing learning. In this study I have chosen to focus on certain questions:

- What role do emotions play in learning?
- What role do aesthetics and the arts play in learning?
- Is it significant to consider emotion in workplace learning?
- Are aesthetical components important in training situations?
- In what way can emotion and rationality be connected and developed?

Theoretical framework - on learning, the role of emotions and aesthetics

In this section an account for the research review is given followed by a discussion of the theories that have been identified as relevant for my research objective from the reflections from the empirical data. The central themes that will be part of the analysis will be presented here, which are emotions and aesthetics and their role in learning situations. These theoretical perspectives form the basis for my analysis conducted later in this study.

Research review

In order to complete my work with a theoretical framework I have used Lund University's internet search engines, accessed by the library website. These internet links offer access to academic journals, thesis and dissertations. The two most efficient sites have been ESBCO and EMERALD; there I have been able to find pre-reviewed research publications. The literature that I have used in this study has been selected according to its academic validity. I started outlining my work with a theoretical basis and contemplating on my objective which is that by providing a case-study covering introductory courses at Tetra Pak I wish to highlight two variables and their role in workplace learning; emotions and aesthetics. As I initially searched for case studies and research reports I realized that there are hardly any empirical studies on this matter. With this notion I searched instead for theories supporting the consideration of emotions in learning and the role of aesthetics and the arts in learning situations; which eventually proved to be easier task than finding empirical cases. As my searched commenced and broadened on the two themes namely emotions and aesthetics, I discovered that it is almost impossible to discuss the one without relating the other. Thus I will present theories and scholars that have influenced my thinking and are part of this theoretical framework.

Learning

In this theoretical section learning, emotions, aesthetics and how they interact will be brought up. My starting point will be on learning and what it means as well as theories from contemporary scholars that emphasize a holistic and constructivist perspective.

One important definition that I can initiate is *pedagogy*; which preferable is given by Peter Nilsson at the Department of Education, Umeå University, Sweden. Nilsson explains that pedagogy is not just about teaching methods but a collective term for various studies and theories about advocacy and change. These processes are studied in different settings and contexts such as individual, group, organizational and social level (Nilsson, 2005).

We know that people learn in different ways. Some learn better visually, others orally, while others by listening and others by being actively involved. One can say that anyone who acts is guided or influenced by some sort of theory or philosophy. We act for reasons, and generally have some understanding of how and why we act the way we do, but also the consequences thereof. It is clear that just like there are many concepts of learning, there are also different schools of thoughts regarding the nature of learning. There has been a lot of research in the way people learn and certain theories have been influential on developments in all areas of education. Knud Illeris, Professor of Educational Research at Roskilde University, Denmark, outlines a concept of learning which is constructivist in nature, signifying that the learner actively constructs his/her learning. He says that learning will always have three integrated dimensions; the cognitive with knowledge, skills, understanding resulting meaning and functionality, the emotional with patterns of emotions and motivation, attitudes resulting sensitivity and mental balance and finally the social-societal with potentials for empathy, communication and cooperation resulting sociality; elements that are of great importance in workplaces (Illeris, 2003). With this notion it is urgent to get a deeper understanding for learning and Illeris' model of learning shows how the two different processes of learning are essential: first the external interaction between the learners' social, cultural and material environment together with the internal psychological impulses and second the cognitive, emotional and the social dimensions (Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p. 87-99).

Another scholar who also has a holistic approach is Peter Jarvis a professor of Continuing Education at the University of Surrey. He discusses about *Experiential Learning theory*, says "From the time of Pavlov, it has been recognized that learning is associated with behavior [...] more recently, learning theory has focused on human experience" (Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p. 5-6).

As Jarvis explains about experiential learning he also clarifies David Kolb's experiential learning theory. Kolb who builds his theories on earlier work by John Dewey tries to clarify how different people can learn by integrating their concrete emotional experiences with reflection. Kolb has also been influential in describing how learning takes place through his learning cycle which approaches the idea of learning as experiential (learning by doing). Kolb suggests that ideas are not fixed, but are formed and modified through the experiences we have and by our past experiences. Kolb believes that experiential learning is a process and shows this concept with a model of the "experiential learning cycle" in four stages: -Concrete experience- Reflective observation- Abstract conceptualization- Active experimentation (Kolb, 1984, p. 41-42). However Jarvis argues that even though Kolb's idea about how learning can start from experience or from an abstract idea or theory has some truth, it may not really explain the learning process and that it is obvious that knowledge is still at the center of Kolb's thinking rather than the person. Jarvis gives his definition of learning:

The combination of processes whereby the whole person-body (genetic, physical and biological) and mind (knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, emotions, beliefs and senses) – is in a social situation and constructs an experience which is then transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (or through any combination) and integrated into the individual's own biography (Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p. 6-7).

There are other scholars currently that agree to the obvious way of learning with both internal and external aspects; the individual mental processes and the interaction processes. Olga Dysthe is one who says that interaction and learning is interconnected, in other words, that learning is communication processes that are contextual. Her work is influenced among others by John Dewey (Bergstedt & Herbert, 2011, p. 170-176, Lauder, Brown, Dillabough & Halsey, 2006, p.91-100) and G.H. Mead (Herbert & Bergstedt, 2008, p.105-106, Bergstedt & Herbert, 2011, p. 16-17) who claimed that the social group is the starting point for individual learning, meaning that learning cannot be localized to the individual consciousness, but must be seen as part of the social consensus (Dysthe, 2010). This new approach to constructivism is the humanistic, learner-centered practice that assists learners in reflecting on their experiences in order to construct new knowledge. It also enables the learner to engage in social activities through which they develop skills and acquire concepts, instead of lectures and presentation.

It is based on the principle that through activity students discover their own truths and the teachers' work is to facilitate that discovery (Cooperstein, 2004, Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p. 107-108). The facilitator is someone who guides a group of people to understand their common objectives and assists them in their training and achieving goals. I prefer Kaner's description: the facilitator's job is to support everyone to do their best thinking and practice. To do this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility (Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk & Berger, 2007). For example instead of telling, you ask questions or ask to solve a problem or work on a case. Although this idea is often criticized of being unstructured, it is notable that this kind of teaching requires even better structure to deliver satisfying result. It's notable that the idea that we construct our knowledge and that learning should have contextual and functional aspects is part of organizational learning (Abrahamsson, 2010, p. 241-242).

Another view is that of Charles Bingham and Alexander M. Sidorkin (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004). Their focus is on the relationship in teaching. How good teachers understand the importance of; creating relationships with their students and in this way increase interest in a topic and facilitate the learning process of students. It is about motivation and consideration to strengthen the individuals' self-confidence which can result in better performance.

Gert Biesta is a professor of Educational theory in the School of Education and Lifelong Learning at the University of Exeter, England, explains likewise how learning takes place in the interaction between the teacher and the learner, meaning that that education is basically a relationship between an educator and the one being educated. John P. Kotter, one of the world's leading experts on business leadership, claims as well that to help people see the right connections one needs to use a sincere communication (Kotter, 1995). Of course one aspect to this is that one needs to consider that a good relationship is always based on *trust* (Tetra Pak, p. 17). Biesta says that one reason why the "sender-receiver" model of communication does not always work is because it basically is a black-box model. "It describes the input and output of communication, but doesn't provide an explanation of the process itself" (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004, p. 12-21).

Emotions

As stated earlier people learn and process knowledge differently, consequently diverse approaches in learning styles are required. It is noticeable that the mentioned scholars are only few amongst many that agree to the apparent way of learning with cognitive, emotional and social aspects. The constructivist view enables the learners to reflect on their experiences and to engage in social interactions, hence an understanding that cognitive skills alone cannot teach without involving emotions. When discussing about emotions we need to include intuition as this brief overview will show that the primary role emotions play is to enhance our learning abilities and that most of our daily knowledge that we encounter is implicit which is connected to our intuition.

The traditional view of emotion is that emotion and thinking are on opposite ends of the spectrum. But the new view says that emotions are adaptive and functional. They organize our thinking, they help us know what to pay attention to and they motivate behavior. One of the reasons why this view is becoming popular is because evidence from the study of the brain suggests that our emotional system and our cognitive system are actually in close contact, constantly communicating. Research reveals that our thoughts, beliefs, assumptions about the world, and the subconscious all directly affect our emotions (Olsson, 2007 p. 131-145, 237).

Recent observations on the history of business, Peter Drucker points out that while the context of organizations and leadership has changed, human nature has not (Wieland, 2002). Thus, human emotion has gained increased attention over the past decade which has resulted in the conceptualization of the term *emotional intelligence* (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Although one of the emphases of this study is; the role emotions play in learning I wish to approach it from the term emotional intelligence which has been used on occasional basis in the academic literature from the mid-1960s and forward. Yet it wasn't until 1990 when the term was formally defined and developed by the work of John D. Mayer and Peter Salovey. Their theory involves four broad classes of abilities: perception, integration, understanding, and management of emotion (Mayer & Cobb, 2000). It took another five years before the concept was popularized by Daniel Goleman in his best-selling book *Emotional Intelligence* (1995).

And it was through his work the link between emotional intelligence and education was provided; the influence emotions have in learning. While Mayer and Cobb refer intelligence to “a capacity to learn”, most policy experts seem to be discussing that emotional knowledge can be taught. Mayer and Cobb maintain that although the concept has been criticized it is still firmly supported by studies, and this kind of educational policies should be implemented for further studies and more importantly despite of the increasing interest in the subject matter there is still lack of empirical reported studies on whether these programs are effective or not (Mayer & Cobb, 2000).

Carol Hall who is Head of the School of Education and Director of the Centre for the Study of Human Relations at the University of Nottingham, reasons also about the usefulness of the emotional intelligence concept as a developing humanistic approach to a holistic learning, she says that the experiential way of learning is a way to “educate the emotions” (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 139). According to Hall this learning gives; “powerful tools for accessing personal feelings which may be just out of the conscious awareness of the learner” and that to be able to educate the emotions means ultimately to “educate the mind” (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 152). To be able to develop this kind of holistic learning experiences for students teachers need to have sufficient self-knowledge, understand what affects others, spontaneity, flexibility of mind, resilience of heart, reflective and compassionate (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 154). Emotions should be considered as part of educational programs since they play part in learning, creating, retaining and reproducing new knowledge or behavior, whether it is implicit or explicit. According to Stephen Fineman, “splitting cognition from emotion serves the notion that learning can be rational, importantly, ‘managed’, [...] a place where ‘unwanted’ and ‘undesirable’ emotions may be suppressed or marginalized and learning readily systematized. But, we may conclude, emotions are still present in shaping thoughts, actions and learning-routines“(Fineman, 1997).

As we go further we are bound to see the connection between emotion and intuition. Since, “constant, intuition-based innovation is required to respond to discontinues change, without it, no business can succeed in the 21st century” (Adler, 2006). Peter Gärdenfors who is a professor in cognitive science at Lund University, Sweden emphasizes that emotions are closely connected to implicit learning.

Meaning that the primary role that emotions play is to enhance our learning abilities and that most of our daily knowledge that we encounter is implicit which is connected to our intuition (Gärdenfors, 2005, p. 77-85). Other scientists that have reasoned much about intuition are Hubert Dreyfus', professor of philosophy and Stuart Dreyfus' professor of industrial engineering at Berkeley CA; they claim that computers are not reasoning machines that can match human intuition and expertise (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. xvii). There extensive and crucial research about computer technology and human intuition is unique and fascinating. They write in *Mind over machine* that "intuition must not be confused with irrational thinking; intuition is a sort of ability we all use every day" (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. 29).

The work of Peter Salovey, John D. Mayer and David Caruso was reinforced by neuroscientists' interest in showing how emotional responses were integrated to rational thinking; one is Antonio Damasio, Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Southern California who also describes intuition very clear:

The quality of one's intuition depends on how well we have reasoned in the past; on how well we have classified the events of our past experience in relation to the emotions that preceded and followed them; and also on how well we have reflected on the successes and failures of our past intuitions (Damasio, 2006, p. xix).

Damasio also explains the role that intuition and emotion play in the overall process of making decisions and points out how logical thinking and an analytical ability are necessary attributes (Damasio, 2006, p.187-189). As we continue elaborating the significance and the role emotion, including intuition play we need to ask, in what way emotion and rationality can be connected and developed?

According to Biesta intuition can be discovered by different communication approaches (Bingham & Sidorkin, 2004, p. 12-21). The relevancy and importance of communication in organizations have been central for over hundred years, likewise the link between behavior and emotions in workplaces (Abrahamsson p. 51, 54-56). One communication that has great impact is through non-verbal communication which leads us to the second theme that I have chosen to focus this study on; the role of aesthetics in learning and how it is connected to the emotional dimension.

Aesthetics and the Arts

It is essential to emphasize that my perspective and notions about aesthetics and the arts in workplace learning is not about students or employees developing artistic talents or skills to be able to learn and participate in training programs but simply to take aesthetic elements into consideration. For example the use of arts, music, poetry and literature but also play as non-verbal communication; when planning trainings since it can supplement traditional and rational workplace teaching (Eisner, 2004). A number of scholars have recently suggested that aesthetics and the arts have a great importance for organizations and suggest that by recognizing the aesthetic qualities organizations increase their possibilities; since the function and role of the arts and aesthetics in industry offers variety in improving individual and collective performances. Recent studies show for example that the importance of including the arts in education indicates some improvements in medical schools.

The concept of aesthetics in business is used here in a rather broad manner since there are not many studies showing the actual use of aesthetic skills and competencies in organizations. In general there is an interest for various forms of creativity in industry and public administrations and the ability to combine aesthetic skills with market thinking is a highly attractive combination (Nixon, 2005). Therefore the idea to stimulate the mind of the employees is and should often be considered essential in every business strategy (Romanowska, Larsson, Eriksson, Wikström, Westerlund & Theorell, 2010). The word creativity is very common today yet it is difficult to define it since it may be used in different contexts. A preferable definition is: “creativity is the ability to combine ideas in new ways to solve problems and exploit opportunities” (Bruce & Bessant, 2002). Hence, relevant skills can be defined as the ability to think creatively, generate alternatives and engage in divergent thinking (Shalley & Gilson, 2004). Many describe creativity as a subconscious process without the ability to actively influence it; they focus on the individual person and do not take into account the influence of collaboration. However working together in a group and communicating with other people may be important and will help in generating new ideas (Buss, Westendorf & Zedan, 2009). Consequently, if creativity is a much sought after attribute we need to explore sensible perception.

One of the pioneers to the concept of integrating the aesthetics in cooperate development is Antonio Strati who is a professor of sociology of organization at University of Trento, Italy. Strati points out that aesthetics is “knowing in the basis of sensible perception”, while the original meaning of art according to him is “the transformation of raw materials with ability and intelligence” (Strati, 2000). He shows from empirical studies the need of sensible knowledge and aesthetic understanding in organizational learning and exemplifies the importance of our senses in workplaces; how our senses give rise to interaction and construct social relations. He maintains that it is difficult to study learning in organizations without taking aesthetic considerations (Strati, 2007).

Eliot Eisner, a retired professor of education and of art at Stanford University is one of the foremost scholars in the field of arts and education. In his book *the arts and the creation of mind* he argues for the inclusion of the arts in all education because they signify a central task, a nuanced development of mind that the most complex and refined forms of thinking take place when students have an opportunity to work meaningfully (Eisner, 2002, p. xxi). In other words the arts contribute a cognitive development (Eisner, 2002, p.35) by improving skills and attitudes needed in the workplace (Eisner, 2002, p. 33). He discusses the lessons the arts teaches; how “there can be more than one answer to a question and more than one solution to a problem; variability of outcome”, (Eisner, 2002, p. 196) importance of imagination, (Eisner, 2002, p. 198) flexibility in one’s work (Eisner, p. 205) and reflection (Eisner, 2002,p. 207). Strati and Eisner have been influenced by the work of John Dewey, an American philosopher and educator who delivered lectures at Harvard in 1932 and discussed the importance of the relationship between the intellectual to the aesthetic; that the aesthetic cannot be separated from the intellectual for the intellectual to be complete it must bear the stamp of the aesthetic, with focus on interaction, continuity and growth (Dewey, 1934, p. 35-36, 51). Aesthetically engaged learning experiences through; interactions, active engagement, sensory experiences, perceptivity, risk-taking and imagination can generate meaning-making and creativity, elements that are sought for in workplaces. However, there is still the lack of empirical studies that examine whether these variables can lead to potential outcomes (Uhrmacher, 2009; Pink 2006).

Mead and Dewey maintained the importance of the creative element in learning. Dewey explains how playfulness is a more important consideration than play and explains the distinction between play and work: “In play activity, it is said, the interest is in the activity for its own sake; in work, it is in the product or result in which the activity terminates. Hence the former is purely free, while the latter is tied down by the end to be achieved.” Dewey clarifies the differences that to be playful and serious at the same time is likely; and it expresses the ideal mental condition with intellectual curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness and faith in the power of thought” (Dewey, 1997, p. 162, 164, 217). A comprehensive study that discusses this is Per Apeldoorn at the Umeå University, he gives a description of a postmodern approach describing the central role *play* has which includes the nonverbal communication, both in relationship and in the social context, for human development (Apeldoorn, 2008) through various expressions such as music, art, poetry, literature, etc., we can therefore communicate symbolically.

Professor Nancy Adler at McGill University in Montreal, Canada is enthusiastic about the future function and role of art and aesthetics in industry and offers a variety of examples of how art is used to improve individual and collective performance. For example she explains how researchers at Yale Medical school have “already found that by introducing medical students to art, through an introductory art history seminar, the student-doctors’ diagnostic skills improve significantly” (Adler, 2006). Humanities in medical trainings have fully gained recognition the past decades. Arts are often included in medical schools to facilitate the exploration of non-scientific elements of medicine, such as communication, social, political, emotional and spiritual issues (De la Croix, Wildig & Willson, 2011). Research show areas of teaching that illustrate the added value the arts and humanities provide to educational programs, how the humanities can complement traditional clinical teaching in medicine (Kirklin, 2003). It also shows that the students consider that their professional development is enhanced by taking time to study the arts while studying medicine (Lazarus & Rosslyn, 2003). Although some evidence show that arts-based approaches may improve medicine students learning skills there is still a need for further studies to evaluate art-based interventions in terms of their effects on attitudes and behavior (Perry, 2011). There is also little research reported on students’ experiences and the long-term effects of the arts in the curriculum (De la Croix, Wildig & Willson, 2011).

Methodology

This part I describe my methodological choices regarding my research design, method and quality matters. It ends with a discussion concerning the conduct and methodology of the research.

Qualitative research design

Naturally, numerous methods are based on varying assumptions about reality, and there are various traditions and scientific paradigms upon which they are founded. After a careful consideration I recognize that my personal outlook and assumption about how we perceive the world around us, namely my ontological view lies in the social constructivist paradigm; that knowledge is created in social situations (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 5, 33). Thus, the way an individual perceives the world and creates personal understanding is influenced by actively constructing meanings out of social situations, interactions and handled through interpretive processes (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 107-108).

My epistemological view is interpretative, meaning I believe that knowledge about humans and the social reality only can be accumulated through interpretations, and not by using rationalistic approaches associated with the natural sciences (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011 p.6, 33). Which means that in the nature of qualitative research is the element of subjective interpretation. This includes that I cannot make any pretenses of understanding the whole truth about the issue at hand. The interpretative approach is continuous and involves a constant understanding of theory and material (Fejes & Thornberg, 2011, p. 23-24). Thus a qualitative research design has been chosen to explore this case study at Tetra Pak, which focuses on understanding the local experiences of people as they engage in their everyday worlds for example; meanings, actions, attitudes, intentions and behaviors (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.219). On trying to find a method responding to the nature of this research in focus and in order to study people and their context I've turned to the ethnographic approach since it provides qualitative methods for looking carefully at how social and contextual variables interact with cognitive variables (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 33-34).

Qualitative research with ethnographic approaches was developed in education in the late 1970s as a consequence that questions important to education were left unexamined by the dominant paradigms (Olsson & Helmstad, 2007). The ethnographic method “is concerned with the world of everyday life” and looks for consistencies in social behavior and structure; to be able to find “diversity, variability, creativity, individuality, uniqueness and spontaneity of social interactions” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 19, 222). Within this field of research an inductive approach is customary, since a researcher preferably should approach the research problem without any previous knowledge or prejudices in order to completely adopt the viewpoint of the respondents (Fejes & Thornberg, 2009). Therefore in this study data was first collected before turning to theory. Aiming to grasp the meaning of a phenomenon ethnographically requires thorough information on the matter. A statistically generalization is not a goal nor a necessity in qualitative research, but an aim based on the assumption that one wishes to explore, understand and gain insight about a phenomenon. It is therefore important selecting in a way that guarantees learning as much as possible about a certain state and not general opinions (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 220-221). In an ideal world a researcher would be able to study a group in its totality but that is not possible since a group is hardly isolated. Consequently one is bound with the matter of sampling, which is to decide for example; contexts, issues, and data sources that are important for the study. Especially, in the ethnographic approach where, “sampling is recursive and ad hoc rather than fixed at the outset; it changes and develops over time” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 229). Moreover I found it difficult to try to do this analysis based on statistics and measurements since it involves human behavior and emotions, and revolves around realism. Measures do not cover the whole of an event. You can ask people to rate their joy or fear, but how much will that tell you about what they are actually feeling? How do you measure something as like or dislike? Therefore by using a qualitative method I will present the cluster introductory trainings that Rolf Viberg has facilitated for Tetra Pak during the last six years for over 500 employees and focus on some variables that are clear in these trainings which scientists have presumed that influence our learning, which include emotions and aesthetics. By so doing provide an overall idea of his didactic and emphasize the central idea of how he got the participants involved and engaged while conducting these trainings.

Tetra Pak

To get a better understanding I wish to give a brief presentation of the company Tetra Pak and the facilitator Rolf Viberg. Tetra Pak with its origin from Sweden is a world leading food processing and packaging solution company. They operate in more than 170 markets divided in clusters covering; Central Europe, Central & South America, East Europe & Central Asia, Greater China, Greater Middle-East, Northeast Asia & Oceania, North America, North Europe, South Europe, South & Southeast Asia, and Sub-Sahara Africa. Tetra Pak has over 20 000 employees and their site in Lund has approximately 3000 employees. Rolf Viberg the facilitator, is a chemical engineer, has been an employee for 38 years with several different positions and projects. The last ten years he has been situated in Lund while facilitating different employee trainings. He has been part of the project group that developed the Crash course and has trained approximately 2000 persons over the last ten years. The last six years he has been travelling to their clusters all over the world to facilitate Tetra Pak's introductory courses for new employees. These trainings have all the same design and structure with the purpose to introduce the company's origin, identity, strategy and the essential elements of the business. The trainings that are offered to the employees in the clusters have so far been conducted in Argentina, Brazil, Japan, India, Mexico, Singapore, Thailand, Turkey and USA. The sessions have approximately 25-35 participants and cover all departments such as finance, marketing, sales, IT, technical service, development, HR. The last six years Viberg has trained over 500 employees and received high evaluation scores based on Kirkpatrick's evaluation model, level 1 namely the employees immediate reaction to the training (Kirkpatrick, 1967). As mentioned in the introduction, the intention of this study is not to focus on these evaluations but to focus on some factors that I believe can have contributed these results. Kirkpatrick's model (Kirkpatrick, 1967) as I have understood is classic and very popular hierarchal model of training outcomes with four main levels. Although the four levels include the participants immediate reactions (level 1) what they've learned (level 2) the extent the new learning is transferred to the job and result in forms of behavior and work (level 3) and the extent which the new behavior results in improving individual and organizational performances (level 4) it can still be difficult to get accurate evaluations since these results do not provide in-depth understanding of the effectiveness or otherwise of the trainings.

Nevertheless, examining the participants' reactions to the trainings and trying to understand the factors that affect their reactions can be of great value for future trainings.

Data

Before presenting the data which this work is built upon, I wish to emphasize that parts of it covers material from 2002-2011 which has been collected and saved by the facilitator Rolf Viberg, while the interviews and sampling of the empery was conducted at Tetra Pak during March-November, 2011. The data consists of approximately 1,400 pictures taken at the Cluster introductory courses and places the facilitator visited while traveling. Pictures "have a central place in educational research" since they describe significances that words cannot (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.529). By studying them carefully and looking for these meanings I have found them to be essential in my work. Another important record is a film clip from a training in Singapore 2011, showing an activity that the participants are engaged in which provided me a possibility to observe actions and reactions. A central material has been my notes from my interviews and discussions with Rolf Viberg during March-October 2011. They were held informally at Tetra Pak in Lund, and for the main purpose to be able to transcript his own words as he described and explained how these trainings were conducted. From these manuscripts I have tried to find patterns and relevant information to base my analysis on. Other relevant material includes; course evaluations from 2010-2011, facilitators personal notes from 2002-2011, international newspaper clips, magazines, brochures that were collected by Viberg. Notes to the facilitator from the participants from 2010-2011. Also for a better understanding of Tetra Pak I have studied internal written material such as magazines and information folders covering the years from 2002-2011, research articles and newspaper articles.

The research process

On starting to create an empirical foundation, I initially realized that choosing a methodology for analyzing this case was not obvious. I needed first to get an overall idea of Vibergs pedagogy, the course objective and his perspective on the trainings. Therefore I decided to have three informal interviews and study parts of the material that I had received such as pictures and documents covering the training sessions.

What became clear during this reflective process was Vibergs view that “nothing is greater than the individual and nothing is more important than to affirm and affect the individual” and his belief in “living and teaching in actual contexts”. It was with this perspective that I chose my methodology. The following act was to learn more about organizational facts, such as organizational history, strategy and goals, which are part of the course objective. Once the research design was agreed my work commenced. I decided to first outline his trainings and by so doing get an overall picture of what might get the participants involved and engaged. At the same time highlight some possible factors that contributed his high evaluation scores. As these variables became clearer which included; creativity, intuition, reflective thinking and emotional intelligence. I chose to present these trainings as a case study by highlighting two central themes; emotions and aesthetics. By organizing the data, including transcribing the interviews it enabled me to deepen my knowledge about the subject and recognize some general patterns. This work was noticeably important since categorization of data depends on the purpose of the study and in this case study focus lies on describing and analyzing a phenomenon (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 415, 426-427). Thus I’ve tried to interact with the data, reflecting on what is important to the participants by examining material, activity, semiotics (meaning-carrying) and the social dimensions of the training course. By so doing I do not seek to generalize from this specific case, rather provide in-depth descriptions that lead to general patterns.

Interview

Interviews enable discussions concerning interpretations of the world and perspectives, this means that “the interview is not simply concerned with collecting data about life: it is part of life itself, its human embeddedness is inescapable” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 409). Data was collected through qualitative interviews, these interviews were unstructured from which I extracted relevant topics concerning the current subject. This method allowed Rolf Viberg to move in different directions during the interview and express and emphasis areas he regarded as important, which left me with diverse descriptions of the studied phenomenon (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 81-85). Two attributes were my constant guide in these interviews; *trust* and *curiosity*.

I rarely experienced a lack of need for interrupting his flow in describing certain issues on the matter in study. This resulted in him often leading the interviews while I was gripping and transcribing the information supplied, which provided me to clarify and follow up with questions in a more natural way. I tried to focus on his perceptions of these trainings, since my aim was to identify and gain insight into his intentions and beliefs in this particular teaching context (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 410). I have taken an active part in the production of information when interviewing. The material taken out from interviews, upon much of which I construct this thesis, involves a certain preference due to my own way of questioning, reinforcing and interpreting the information. In this way, it is to be considered valued or subjective. This strategy gave me an opportunity to look at all the different aspects of the training sessions and its context to find that which is unique.

Quality

Designing a research study the way I have done involves implementing a critical attitude toward it. This becomes even more important in this case study as it is built upon the narratives of one person, the facilitator in the study from a subjective outlook. Since my point of departure was the ethnographic paradigm, it was inclined to produce qualitative data which meant that validity needs to be high. This can be attributed to the fact that data collection and analysis is focused on attaining as much as information as possible to analyze and provide clarification to the research question (Patel & Davidson, 2011, p. 106-107). In qualitative research there are many different types of validity and it is defined in different ways. One is *internal validity* which seeks to demonstrate a particular event or issue that can be sustained by the data presented. For instance by following and keeping information clearly, it is possible for the ethnographer to reduce opposing explanations of the issue in research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p.185). Validity can be described as the amount of precision with which research accounts impart and how a researcher has conducted their research and has drawn conclusions, “validity, then, should be seen as a matter of degree rather than as an absolute state” (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011, p. 179). This allows the reader to draw own conclusions as to whether the research is credible or not. I have tried to apply this in my work and hope that my awareness has been the key to my work in terms of producing quality.

Methodology discussion

An obvious problem is that though positive and high evaluation scores can be presented from these trainings, there is still the lack of identifying and specifying outcomes of a certain settings and teaching methods. The learning process is particularly problematic. Usually the teacher defines what is to be learned. However, the learner often learns things not intended by the teacher and often this unintended learning is more valuable because it is relevant to the learner. Thus the problem for current teaching evaluations is that it may miss the real worth of the learning experiences because what is valuable for the learner is defined by the learner and may have nothing to do with the teachers' intention.

I am also aware that producing an overview based on years of training might have some errors; especially of the simplification or taking too much previous knowledge for granted. Viberg built his trainings based on years of experience in the field of leadership and human resource. Even though he understands the relevance of following different approaches in training situations he sees the danger of how sometimes theories might get in the way of developing intuition or reflecting skills as a facilitator. The different ways of understanding the nature of experience and how it is related to learning is vast. However I wish to delineate my work by focusing on few theories and approaches which can have relevance as I outline his training approach. It is essential to note that these theories may be seen more as references and in a broader context. However interpretative methods are always running the risk of being colored by a researcher's previous knowledge and prejudices since it is in the nature of the research methodology. A researcher is, just like the respondents, a subjective individual who constructs and interprets the reality based on his or her previous understanding. Though, by taking methodological, ethical, and quality concerns into serious consideration and by making a thorough account for these processes I hope that readers will be well equipped to make their own judgment considering the trustworthiness and authenticity of the research outcome. I am mindful of the fact that case studies require the researcher as being the most important instrument for collecting and analyzing data, which demands certain qualifications for carrying out the research (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). This means scientific knowledge is somewhat specific because of the social nature of the process and because we do not have identical experiences or purposes for learning.

This does not mean that we do not, and cannot have similar understanding of scientific knowledge; what it does say is that knowledge creation is somewhat an individualized process and that situational factors influence how we come to understand scientific knowledge.

Hence I wish to emphasize that this is not an expert treatise, but a case study which I have relied on my observations through questioning, watching, and listening, with the attempt to provide the reader with some background material and hopefully a deeper understanding of how Viberg conducts his trainings. I have chosen to base my analysis with the assumption that human activities are socially organized, thus from the outset, is committed to examine patterns of interaction and collaboration. Therefore it is not about replacing or against traditional active teaching methods, but rather to show the benefits to why such an approach should be considered as part of education programs in organizations.

Result

The Cluster Introductory Courses

Before proceeding with discussion and analysis I will give an overview of the Cluster introductory courses facilitated by Rolf Viberg. The overview is a summary and a result from my interviews with Viberg and the material which has been collected. (Detailed data is found in the method section)

From the facilitators account on the trainings

I am aware that although my account based on Vibergs narrative is based on his personal outlook and reflections it may be noted that as there are different ways of learning there are as well different preferences in how we learn. In other words, although the aim of this study is to highlight emotional and aesthetical elements in workplace learning it does not disregard the fact that there may be participants that would not prefer learning with these aspects. Yet it is of great worth to see these variables as elements that can add value when included in traditional trainings.

“Nothing is greater than the individual” and “nothing is more important than to affirm and affect the individual”, two fundamental views that Viberg discusses about as he describes his trainings. He explains that soon after the clusters for Tetra Pak were introduced it was decided that the clusters should take the responsibility for the introductory trainings of their new employees, something that in the past had been offered by the Global Training and Development organization. By that time it was agreed that Viberg should give support for this type of training on request from the clusters. During the last six years he has trained over 500 employees and received high evaluation scores based on Kirkpatrick’s evaluation model, level 1 namely the employees immediate reaction to the training (Kirkpatrick, 1967). The cluster introductory course objective is to “give an overall understanding of the Tetra Pak origin, identity and strategy, and to give the essential elements of Tetra Pak’s offer and business from an external and value chain perspective and more...” more stands for; creativity, communication, the individual and the social interaction in a group.

Thus, besides practical information and knowledge about the company's mission, vision, strategy, value-chain and its core values; he finds it crucial to put this understanding in a context that makes sense for the actual group. This is done by various ways of activities, experiments and also visits to stores and factories (for a detailed program, see the Appendix). He says that "before training sessions I try to get an overall idea of the environment and culture I am in". To do this he; reads local newspapers, visits museums, art centers and sometimes attends a concert or an exhibition. Most important of all he walks around the city and tries to get the actual atmosphere of the city and the people. The material and information he collects from the places he visits are relevant for his understanding of his current time and place. The purpose with the material is also to use them during the trainings; articles that cover news and ideas that can influence the thinking and reflecting ability. "For example, he shows me an article which he brought home from Singapore last fall. It tells me about an artist Shirazeh Houshiary who speaks of how we can have boundaries of perception. A quote from the artist fascinates me as it sums up my view of my own experiences as an artist and musician, "because the condition of being an artist means you have no limitations. You are allowing the openness of the universe to enter-the art of the past and present" (Murray, 2011). This kind of sincerity is exactly what Viberg emphasizes during our discussions and how interaction with sincere communication is needed in learning. Another article he shows me is about cultural medallion award recipient Iskandar Jalil who held an exhibition at the time Viberg was in Singapore. Jalil says in an interview: "I have always reminded my students that they are not engineers. A god piece of art has to come from within you" (Shetty, 2011). Here we learn how the artist shows respect and care for the process of creation. These articles illustrate how Viberg finds the artistic process relevant and can use these examples as metaphors. Other articles he shows me are about; how market and consumer research in Asia is changing, the importance of bringing the consumers in to the product development rooms and that insight managers combine many sciences like "human psychology, sociology and marketing with creative disciplines like intuition, acuity, lateral thinking" (Shankar, 2011).

As we discuss about his planning and preparation he tells me a metaphor that explains the importance of “setting the right stage” and in this case a creative learning environment. Viberg describes the planning that is required when one has a party and what needs to be considered. That often besides, food, drinks, and music one also considers “how the room is decorated”, something that one tends to forget in learning situations. Therefore, he always gets there in time to make sure that the room is “decorated in a certain way”. For example, small tables for 5-6 persons, this makes it easier when communicating and working together. The table cloths are in different colors since he considers that colors influence and affect just like various ornaments and pictures as symbols for non-verbal communication. As soon as the participants enter the room they are “surprised and inspired”. They are asked to sit as diverse as possible since the group consists of new employees from different countries but the same cluster. Initially each one is asked to draw something they like. “It’s about creating a comfortable and trusting environment”. I think we can agree that no one can avoid the impressions we are surrounded by in our daily lives. Most of the time we are more affected than we realize. Our senses are active and reacting to that which is around us. A creative environment can enhance and be effective in many ways depending on the individual, the group and situation so on (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996, p. 127-147). Contemporary technologies for seeing the brain at work have allowed for a number of discoveries about perception. For example, new evidence suggests that your brain is constantly reacting to stimuli for which you have little conscious awareness. It also shows that the brain does not simply react to unconscious input but it also uses the input in meaningful ways that bear on you judgments and behavior. Observations of these perception-action brain systems are also consistent with research presenting that an individual is best at perceiving aspects of their environment that has direct behavioral relevance: one perceives the world in terms of that they can do with it (Rosenblum, 2010, Olson, 2007, Pickren & Rutherford, 2010). Therefore when planning for an effective learning environment, creativity should be central but also a surrounding that encourages playfulness.

When discussing if anyone has inspired his thinking Viberg says; “one that has had a significant influence in my way of thinking is Professor Ingeman Arbnor. He explains that he became acquaintance with Arbnor 1992 while attending his training sessions at Kunsakademien in Österlen and how inspired he was while attending those courses;

amongst other the fact that arts such as music, art and poetry can affect the learning process. Several years ago he also participated at a facilitation competence development program that was based on the accelerated learning method which inspired him. The program aimed to work with the concept of “both sides of the brain” and to stimulate all five senses, by so doing enhance learning. Viberg says that; “over the last years, some ideas have crystallized from some vague feelings into more clear notions; the fact that all human beings are inspired by art, music and poetry. Why aren’t we using this knowledge and power, even though these elements are not possible to measure?”

He continues; “I try to work with all senses, tell stories, use symbols and use all non-verbal communication, for example by creating a wall of Tetra Pak’s history and core values”. For instance he has a picture illustrating a young girl working in a store 1910. Viberg tells me the story he usually tells during trainings, “this was a time when Ruben Rausing (the founder of Tetra Pak) was a young man and maybe he knew her? Maybe they went dancing every Saturday...But what’s important is that Rausing later became part of an innovative idea...” By presenting a historical context with pictures, quotes and articles in a narrative way and by using non-verbal communication he gives thinking free admission as it forms an experience that can bring about the possibility of something new for example play. Studies show that the process of play enhances the ability to capture and learn from feedback. Most of all, the concept of play enables the link between ideas and action, a medium between thinking and doing (Dodgson, Gann & Salter, 2005, p. 107-138).

One part of the training is to get an understanding of the Value-chain and the best way is “by experimenting with the different raw materials; paper, aluminum, milk and so on”. He says; “To test and discuss each step of the production process in a playful way engages the participants better”. As I watch these pictures which illustrate the participants holding together big pieces of plastic, aluminum and paper I cannot help but to observe cheerful faces, curiosity and fascination. The pictures also exemplify Meads and Dewey’s argument of the creative element in learning; through play.

Dewey explains that to be playful and serious at the same time is likely and it expresses the ideal mental condition with intellectual curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness and faith in the power of thought” (Dewey, 1997, p. 162, 164, 217). The partakers can experience each step of the value chain from the raw material to the factory with processing and packaging to the food manufacturing and retail stores and finally visiting a store and meeting the consumers. “This way they are part of their own reality and society” says Viberg.

Instead of presenting Tetra Pak’s core-values he lets them read a letter from the CEO Dennis Jönsson and asks them how they can implement these thoughts in their everyday life and work, and what the values actually mean to them. When the groups are working and experimenting there is always music prepared for the sessions. “It gives a more relaxed feeling”. He continues to define his purpose with using the arts; “to learn and understand something one needs to describe it in another way, and the best way is expressing with aesthetics. Just imagine how one group created a song describing the values, or another showing how to recycle a Tetra Brik with a dance”. During the training there is also room for studying Tetra Pak’s magazines and other information while time for reflection and discussion is set. As the pictures illustrate how the participants are engaged in activities with aesthetical expressions such as coloring, drawing, role-playing and even taking some dance steps during the trainings it provides resources to stimulate the participants’ senses (Strati, 2000) and thinking. Since the arts in training situations are important and can improve thinking through variety, flexibility, imagination and reflections (Eisner, 2002, p.196-207).The fact that they are offered time to reflect is also crucial since thinking comes along when there is a break which compels us to come up with a different way of seeing the world. Aesthetic expression can therefore be considered as a practice that brings these moments of break and creation in combination an idea. Research confirms that reflective thinking is generated by activities in social settings. Consequently, “people in interaction build their thinking together, influence each other, and provide resources for each other” (Moore, 2007). Viberg clarifies the importance of trying to plan the trainings so that by stimulating all five senses the group can also enhance their ability to use their imagination and intuition: to do this he uses amongst others art, music, poetry and colors.

He defines his work; “it’s simply to get people involved by action learning”. He believes that to improve learning, the primary focus should be on engaging the participants in a process that includes feedback on their efforts, since “learning primarily occurs in the context of social relations and as a result of complex interactions, which are profoundly influenced by both individual and collective emotions” (Vince, 2001).

There are also other facilitators from the clusters, presenting and participating in the activities and discussions. Viberg emphasizes the important role these facilitators play and that without their cooperation and sense of team working the trainings wouldn’t be possible. “It’s interesting to be part of a group where different perspectives and ideas are shared openly and with spontaneity”. As stated earlier the facilitator is someone who guides a group of people to understand their common objectives and assists them in their training and achieving goals, someone who supports the participants to do their best thinking and practice by encouraging full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility (Kaner, Lind, Toldi, Fisk & Berger, 2007). When the groups are sent out to visit different stores they have an assignment to prepare a presentation of one particular step in the value chain, this is done the second day. Presentation of findings from the store they visited, comments from consumer interviews and observations of damaged packages. This is an example of visiting the real world outside conference rooms, and also an example of learning more by sharing. On the final day when the groups are presenting their work, focus is on “Our future” and how to reach strategic goals together; expressed by drawings, pictures, story-telling and role-plays, this reminds me of “without a constant and alert exercise of the sense, not even plays and games can go on [...] Sense-perception does not occur for its own sake [...] but because it is an indispensable factor of success” (Dewey, 1997, p. 190). The session always ends with time for reflection by listening and watching a slide-show with beautiful pictures of nature, quotations and music. This was given to Viberg as a gift when he was training in Brazil. He believes that sharing is a very important aspect throughout the training as well as his intention to stimulate “both sides of the brain” by using all five senses so that the whole person is engaged in the learning process. “This involves a learning environment with creative measures and circumstances that allows intuition, fantasy, reflective thinking and emotional intelligence, flexibility and playfulness”.

Analysis & discussion

An analysis and discussion of my overview of the trainings in relation to the theories presented earlier in this study together with the empirical data proceeds here. My own reflections will then support to provide an overall picture of my interpretations of this section.

I have now presented the case from Tetra Pak covering an overview of Rolf Vibergs cluster introductory courses for new employees by emphasizing some parts of these trainings which include selected elements that I found to be of importance and that were reoccurring patterns in these trainings. As mentioned, data was first collected before turning to theory since I first wanted to look for consistencies in these trainings pertaining activities and structure to be able to find variability and that which is unique. I found variables such as emotions and aesthetics that I now wish to highlight. My choice of theories and scholars is based on my view in how I perceive the world which is a more holistic and constructivist view where knowledge is created in social situations and handled through interpretations. Yet I understand the complexity and extend of learning processes and that there are several factors that will not include in this study or analysis since I am bound with the issue of sampling. However even if I chose not to base my analysis on statistics and other measurements since it includes emotions and revolves around realism I have tried to be cautious to not generalize my conclusions rather focus on the mentioned variables in a descriptive way. I believe that I can contribute a relevant discussion and analysis from these theories together with my own reflections.

As stated earlier we learn in different ways and there are numerous learning concepts. One approach that has been relevant in this work is the constructivist view with three integrated dimensions that both Knud Illeris and Peter Jarvis support. An humanistic, learner-centered practice that assists learners in reflecting on their experiences in order to construct new understanding, but also enables learners to engage in social activities through which they develop skills and acquire concepts, instead of lectures and presentation (Jarvis & Parker, 2007; Cooperstein, 2004). The fundamental aspect from this case together with Illeris' and Jarvis' theories is that; cognitive skills alone cannot teach without the considerations of emotion.

Meaning to educate the whole person rather than one part we need to approach workplace learning from a holistic view by connecting emotion with rationality through social interactions (Jarvis & Parker, 2007; Illeris, 2003). Therefore as it has been Vibergs objective to train the whole person by connecting “both sides of the brain” he plans and includes several activities so that the participants can interact and construct their own experiences and learn by these actions. Most importantly he provides time for reflection since the experiences which are obtained from the activities need to be transformed and processed cognitively, emotionally and practically. Thus by using aesthetics and the arts during these trainings Viberg offers the participants opportunities to process new knowledge and experiences in a stimulating way and from another perspective which leads to a notable point; the inclusion of aesthetic considerations in learning processes (Strati, 2007). Besides enhancing engagement it provides opportunities for other skills, attitudes and expressions that are of relevance in workplaces to develop (Eisner, 2002, p. 33). Thus a central question follows; are emotional and aesthetical components significant in workplace learning?

We live in a globalized world and in the ‘age of human capital’ were one key issue amongst many is education. The increasing demand for learning from corporations and global consumers are growing and as the universities are getting closer to the demands on the market there are clearly new questions that are rising. Underlying these economic and social movements a new understanding of the nature of the learner and of learning is taking place (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, Halsey, 2006, p. 42-57). This new interest in the concept of learning has to do with the orientation towards a lifelong learning which is an important factor in the global competition between nations and companies (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 87). But also the fact that there is an increasing awareness of how to manage human capital in companies since it is a crucial aspect for success (Lauder, Brown, Dillabough, Halsey, 2006 p. 292-294). Hence, there has been a fast development in designs about the sort of learning that is necessary and desirable since the expectation in education, work as well as social life is “a complex totality of traditional and up-to –date everyday knowledge, orientation and overview, combined with professional and everyday skills and a broad range of personal qualities such as flexibility, openness, independence, responsibility, creativity” (Jarvis & Parker, 2007 p. 87-88).

In response to increasing complexity in business where skills such as creativity and empathetic thinking are sought after (Adler, 2006) researchers and practitioner support learning with both internal and external aspects; the combination whereby the whole person- body and mind in social situations constructing experiences which is transformed cognitively, emotively or practically (Jarvis & Parker, 2007; Illeris, 2003; Scott, 2004). Something to be considered when planning and designing educational programs for the different individual learning needs (Jarvis & Parker, 2007, p. 32-42).

Neuroscience holds evidence of how our two brain hemispheres communicate and collaborate in varied ways. Different functions are situated and specialized in their own ways; meaning no one can separate their thinking or acting into one side of the brain but merely distinguish different areas to different functions (Pink, 2006, p. 15-23). Subsequently traditional view of emotion is to separate emotion from rational thinking while new evidence suggests the contrary. We need emotions to organize our thinking and motivate behavior (Fineman, 1997). In other words, it is becoming evident that emotions are connected to our daily lives and are inseparable from our rational thinking; consequently the primary role emotions play is to enhance our learning abilities (Gärdenfors, 2005). Emotions do play part in learning, creating, retaining and reproducing new knowledge (Fineman, 1997). This includes intuition, something that Viberg is very conscious of and says that he always tries to remind the participants of its importance and how it is necessary to learn to trust ones intuition even at work something that is part of implicit learning (Gärdenfors, 2005). The idea of practical learning derives from the experiential learning theory, something which is very central and basic in Vibergs trainings as well. He explains that to get people involved one needs to consider action learning by including various ways of activities and experiments. But also through social activities and interactions the participants are provided opportunities to reflect on their experiences. Most of our daily knowledge that we come across is implicit which is connected to our intuition and thinking (Gärdenfors, 2005, p. 77-85) this enables us to understand, to speak, and to cope skillfully with our everyday environment (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986, p. xx).

The opportunity to reflect on work experiences and new knowledge was rather obvious for me as it has always been part of my artistic process to include reflective thinking; since the process is non-linear and involves partly rational and cognitive, and partly irrational, emotive and intuitive skills (Schön, 1983). Yet as we know innovation takes time – time to dream, time to reflect, time to learn, time to experiment and time to invent. But if an employee is not working with R&D but is occupied everyday with e-mails, meeting and so on where does this individual find the time to reflect or experiment? This might be a problem since however creative one might be most of the creativity will remain sleeping. To be able to take time to reflect and ask questions in training situations is therefore very important. Viberg comments that a person needs time to think and reflect which enables him to cooperate better in a group. Dewey clarifies the educator's role in training the student to think well and that knowledge is strictly relative to human interaction with the world, therefore he considers the need for thought training (Dewey, 1997, p. 78). Hence the social group is the starting point for individual learning (Dysthe, 2010) as it enables the learners to reflect on their experiences while engaging in social interactions. Social collaboration may also help in generating new ideas (Buss, Westendorf & Zedan, 2009). In other words, since learning together is an emotive experience (Russ, 2004) the experiential way of learning is a way to train the mind and the emotions (Jarvis & Parker, 2007).

This case exemplifies the idea that to really involve and engage people one needs to consider the importance of using both sides of the brain: the analytical, clear thinking left hemisphere together with the creative, intuitive right hemisphere (Hydbom, 2009). By using aesthetical elements and the arts the participants are engaged in different activities.

Concluding reflections

Based on these selected theories, concepts and Viberg's training overview, I draw the conclusion at this time that learning is a complex interaction between teachers and learners, but also how the content and purpose of the learning situation is understood. Every learning context produces a set of significant differences in terms of environment, content, process and intent. Learning is a process involving an interaction between the learners' individual intentions, experiences and reflections, but also professional knowledge, cultural, social expectations, and the individuals' own particular interests.

However just like there is still lack of empirical studies that can confirm the relevancy of emotional and aesthetical elements in training situations it is as difficult to actually know if and how the participants were effected by this approach. Regardless, the study indicates the significance of the whole brain concept; that experience and cognitive skills alone cannot teach without emotion including imagination, intuition and mental processing which is needed to become meaningful and educative. This is suggested done through social interactions and the use of aesthetics and the arts in training situations.

The scholars I've mentioned are just few amongst several that claim the fact that emotion, including imagination and intuition are central for human learning and development; an open-mindedness that can be exemplified by the increasing interest of the arts and humanities in medical trainings. Consequently new questions that arise are; why emotion and aesthetical elements are not integrated in all training situations such as educational programs in corporate organizations? Why focus is mainly on the measurement of outcomes and on the ability to predict them by looking for the best methods and seek for uniformity without taking the context in consideration (Eisner, 2004). Can the reason be the difficulty of getting accurate evaluations and statistics? If this be the case then we are missing out skills that are key abilities in learning.

Implications for future research

This case shows the relevancy of further studies pertaining if and how these variables make a difference in workplace learning. Therefore to be able to get accurate evaluations we need further empirical cases.

A final approach that I would like to include in my summary which may lead way for further discussions is the new concept that has recently been discussed and encouraged in the last “Training Curriculum 2012” for Tetra Pak, the 70-20-10 principle. Morgan McCall, Robert W. Eichinger and Michael M. Lombardo at Princeton University, developed this principle from a holistic approach, meaning that to ensure that learning takes place and endure; opportunities to practice new skills on the job and in real life situations should be well thought out. Their learning and development view is built upon how individuals internalize and apply what they learn based on how they acquire the knowledge. Their formula describes how learning occurs 70% on-the-job experiences, by tasks and problem solving and 20% from feedback and from observing, finally 10% from formal training. This recent view in the company indicates that the issues that have been discussed in this study are actually in the realm of implementation in the company’s educational program, which also confirms the need of a change of perspective. Although we can all agree with John P Kotter who has his experiences of the change process that: “the most general lesson to be learned from the more successful cases is that the change process goes through a series of phases that, in total, usually require a considerable length of time” (Kotter, 1995).

So to ask the question whether Viberg’s training approach is effective and have any beneficial effects in long-term learning we need to first trust the process of learning.

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Appendix

Introductory course program

The following three countries are running a three day program; Argentina, India, Mexico, Thailand, Turkey and USA while Brazil, Singapore and Japan are running four day programs.

(3-day program) Introductory course Program

Day 1

08:30	Introduction	Rolf Viberg – Program Instructor
08:45	Our Core Values	Rolf Viberg – Program Instructor
09:45	Our Vision & Mission	Rolf Viberg – Program Instructor
10:45	<i>Break</i>	
11:00	Tetra Pak Organization & Strategy	Rolf Viberg – Program Instructor
11:30	Our History & Future	Rolf Viberg – Program Instructor
12:30	<i>Lunch</i>	
13:30	Processing	Processing New System Sales Manager TP
17:00	Debrief on Market in Hotel	Rolf Viberg
18:00	End of Day 1	
19:30	Group Dinner	

Day 2

08.00	Recap Session	Rolf Viberg
08.15	Converting Factory Presentation	Production Manager
08:45	Factory Tour	Production Manager

11:00	Marketing + TP Product Portfolio + Retail Management	Marketing Manager – TP
12:00	<i>Lunch</i>	In the factory
13:00	Technical Services	Rolf Viberg
14:00	Customer Visit – Dimes Factory	TKAM TP
17:00	End of Day 2	Rolf Viberg
	Day 3	
09:30	Tetra Recart	Rolf Viberg
10:00	Break	
10:30	TP Carton Economy	Rolf Viberg
11:30	Cluster Presentation	GME Cluster Vice President
12:30	Lunch	
14:15	Development & Engineering	Rolf Viberg
15:00	Break	
15:15	Group work our future	All
16:15	Presentation of Group Work	All
17:15	Break	
17:30	Group Picture, wrap-up and evaluation	All
18:00	End of day 3	

(4-day program)
Introductory course
Program

Day 1

07.30	Transfer from Hotel to Tetra Pak	
08.30	Core Values	Rolf Viberg
10.00	Break	
10.20	Tetra Pak – Our Vision and Mission	Rolf Viberg
11.35	Tetra Pak – Our History	Rolf Viberg
12.50	Lunch	
13.30	Tetra Pak Organization & Strategy 2020	Rolf Viberg
14.30	Capabilities 2020	xxx
15.25	Break	
15.40	Tetra Pak Process Development Centre (PDC) including Product Sampling	xxx
16.40	Group Work	
17.40	Transfer from to Dinner venue	Hotel Arrangements

Day 2

07.30	Transfer from Hotel to Tetra Pak	
08.20	Recap Session	Rolf Viberg
08.35	Supply Chain Integration	xxx
09.05	Tetra Pak Packaging Material	xxx
10.00	Converting Factory Presentation	xxx
11.00	Break	
11.20	Factory Tour (Please wear covered shoes)	
12.20	Lunch	
13.20	Value Chain	Rolf Viberg
14.00	Transfer from Training venue	

17.00	Debrief on Market Investigation at Hotel	ALL
18.15	Summing Up	
18.30	End of day's program	
	Day 3	
07.30	Transfer from Hotel to Tetra Pak	
08.20	Recap Session	Rolf Viberg
08.35	Tetra Pak Processing Systems	xxx
09.05	Technical Services	xxx
09.50	Break	
10.10	TP Carton Economy, Carton Bottle, Carton Core, Carton Gable Top & Recart	Rolf Viberg
11.00	Development and Service Operations	Rolf Viberg
11.45	Quality	xxx
12.15	Lunch	
13.15	Group Work	Rolf Viberg
14.45	Environment	xxx
15.15	Break	
15.35	Trip to Public Waste Collection Centre	xxx
17.00	Transfer to Hotel	
	Day 4	
07.30	Transfer from Hotel to Tetra Pak	
08.20	Recap Session	Rolf Viberg
08.30	Cluster Marketing Strategy & Portfolio Management	xxx
09.30	Break	
09.50	Customer Management	xxx
11.00	Experiment	Rolf Viberg
12.00	Lunch	
13.00	Group Work – Our Future	Rolf Viberg
15.00	Wrap up & Evaluation	Rolf Viberg



LUND UNIVERSITY
The Department of Sociology
Division of Education
Box 114, 221 00 LUND
WWW.soc.lu.se