

A Study on The Strategies to Enhance Foster Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

The skills of emotional intelligence, such as recognizing emotions in the self and others, understanding the causes and consequence of emotions, and effectively regulating the experience and expression of emotional responses, are essential for children's success in school and life. Yet, many children arrive at school lacking these skills, which can impede them from reaching their full potential. This chapter describes RULER, a Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) SElect approach, to illustrate how the teaching and learning of emotional intelligence can be integrated into the core academic curricula. RULER uses multiple tools to nurture five interdependent skills: recognizing, understanding, labeling, expressing, and regulating emotions. Focuses primarily on emotion regulation skills and on how the tools that RULER uses foster their development. The promise of formative assessments to enhance the teaching and learning of emotional intelligence is also discussed.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, youth, connections, success, resilience, relationships, well-being, academic achievement, personal development

1. Introduction

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is a metacognitive process that involves conscious critical thinking and working on the thought process involving emotions and regulating them according to the environment. If the world was perfect, all individuals would be mentally and emotionally healthy but that is not the case. Mental health in the youth is declining as the years go by. The rising numbers in the percentage of youth being anxious and depressed personally and in different social situations are unfathomable (Englander, 2021). Emotions play a vital role in individuals as they are primitive. College or university students are in a transitional stage where they experience change in their physical, emotional, cognitive and social selves. At this pivotal juncture, they are expected to make crucial decisions regarding their worldview, attitude towards life and values. Many factors including education, career advancement, and social expectations, might cause them to experience stress, which can manifest as emotional and relational discord within themselves (Feng and Zhan, 2015) and others. EI is increasingly recognised as a significant predictor of academic success, particularly among college students. Emotional intelligence has also been linked to improved psychological health (Austin & Egan, 2005), academic success (O'Boyle et al., 2011), and physiological well-being (Martins et al., 2010) in students. Research on Emotional Intelligence has evolved and is viewed as one of the prominent research topics in the past few decades. Different techniques and methodologies have been developed to measure and provide empirical evidence on emotional intelligence.

1.1 Psychology of Emotional Intelligence

The ability to recognise our emotions or difficulties and deal with them skilfully, both alone and in collaboration with others, is known as emotional intelligence. In social situations, one needs to empathise with the people around them and figure out how to have a positive impact on them. It is evident that there is a need for interpretation and that a person's angry outburst could be a cry for help or a loud laugh could be an emotion that has been pushed down in their mind. A person's emotional intelligence revolves around feelings like love, rage, worry, and also professional aspirations. People who have emotional intelligence do not rely on





their initial sensations or inclinations. They are aware that rage may sometimes be a sign of melancholy and that hatred can disguise love. Additionally, it separates individuals who are demoralized by failure from those who can view their surroundings' problems with sorrow. Emotionally educated people see the usefulness of controlled pessimism in the larger framework of a healthy existence. Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be acquired. It may be developed by understanding oneself, the sources of one's emotions, the influences of one's upbringing, and the best ways to deal with one's fears and desires. Ben-Ze'ev (2001), claims that emotion may be described in terms of four common attributes: intensity, shortness, partiality, and instability. Emotional intelligence can be defined as the capacity to recognize, comprehend, and control one's moods and feelings and other people as well. However, one line does not sufficiently make sense of the value of the ability to understand people on a profound level unless studied intensively.

1.2 Definition and Components

EI can be identified as "the ability to perceive accurately, appraise, and express emotion; the ability to access and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth" (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional Intelligence is a skill set that contributes to one's expressing, regulating, and using emotions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). It is the ability of an individual to process emotional information (Mayer et al., 2008). Many different definitions of emotional intelligence have been given by many authors based on its model. Conflicts over conceptualization and measurement have hampered research on emotional intelligence. Some adhere to a theoretical concept in which emotional qualities make up emotional intelligence (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 1999) and others believe that emotional intelligence comprises several different emotional talents as well as parts of the personality (Bar-On, 1997; Goleman, 1996). Emotional Intelligence is comprised of two theoretical approaches which are different but interconnected; Ability Emotional Intelligence (Mayer & Salovey, 1997) and Trait Emotional Intelligence (Petrides et al., 2007). Ability Emotional intelligence is a skill set that allows one to make constructive use of one's feelings, whereas trait emotional intelligence is a cluster of self-perceptions related to one's capacity to regulate one's emotions. Emotional intelligence has gained popularity among researchers in the past few decades, and there is a plethora of research studies on the emotional intelligence of people in different age groups and different settings (Furnham, 2014). The meta-cognitive processes of emotional intelligence have various aspects.

1. Emotional Awareness: Mayer and Salovey propose a model of emotional intelligence that includes the ability of a person to accurately perceive and understand emotions, known as emotional awareness. This concept is further supported by other researchers such as Bar-On (1997) and Goleman (1996)

2. Emotional Regulation: Gross (1998) identified strategies for the regulation of emotions, such as reappraisal and suppression, which involves modifying one's emotional experience

3. Emotional Reflection: Emotional reflection or self-reflection involves analysing and contemplating one's emotional experiences. This process allows individuals to gain insights into their emotions, triggers, and underlying reasons for their emotional responses.

4. Emotional Flexibility: It refers to the ability to adapt and adjust emotional responses based on situational demands.

The first domain that has focused on improving EI in adults is that of organizational leadership and performance. This is because EI has been shown to play a role in effective leadership (Côté & Miners, 2006; Rosete & Ciarrochi, 2005; Sy, Tram, & O'Hara, 2006) and professional success (Côté, Gyurak, & Levenson, 2010). Since then, EI has also entered into the curriculum of many other sectors. One such sector is that of medical education: many of the core



competencies of medical professionals are related to interpersonal skills associated with patient interaction (e.g., empathic communication; Evans & Allen, 2002; Grewal & Davidson, 2008; Ruckdeschel & van Haitsma, 2004) or intrapersonal skills involved in managing delicate and stressful situations (e.g., emotion regulation). EI is targeted as a key ability in a medical resident's curricula (Arora et al., 2010; Taylor, Farver, & Stoller, 2011). For example, EI appears to be important in training obstetricians and gynaecologists to improve the patient–doctor relationship and to increase patient satisfaction (Pilkington, Hart, & Bundy, 2012). In the public sector, EI is related to the efficiency and social skills of public managers in local governments (Berman & West, 2008). EI also appears to be an important skill in the training of academics, as it underlies academic interpersonal and intrapersonal capabilities critical to teaching and interacting with students (Oberst, Gallifa, Farriols, & Vilaregut, 2009). In the judicial sector, EI abilities are considered to be crucial for effectively representing a client, due to the importance of developing trust, cooperation, and collaboration (Reilly, 2005). Ultimately, EI is seen as being integral to numerous professions, which has led to an increase in research examining EI enhancement. In the next section, we will critically review the existing studies on EI improvement.

Results

The analysis of the EI development literature shows that the number of studies has increased in the last few years: of the 46 studies we unearthed, 30 were published in the last 6 years. Overall, 39 out of 46 studies report significant results, on at least one dimension of an EI measure. That being, the proportion of significant results does not give an accurate overview of the field. We will now review the strengths and weaknesses of the studies and start by addressing an important point, that is, the question of the definitions of EI itself.

The question of whether EI is an ability (Salovey & Grewal, 2005) or rather an emotional personality trait (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007) is an ongoing debate in the field of EI. These different viewpoints have consequences for the measurement of EI: ability would be measured with a performance-like test (e.g., the Mayer–Salovey–Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test [MSCEIT], Salovey & Grewal, 2005), a trait would be measured with a questionnaire, of which there are many (e.g., the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire [TEIQue], Petrides & Furnham, 2003; or the Bar-On Emotional Intelligence Inventory [EQ-i], Bar-On, Maree, & Elias, 2007).

Conclusion

Emotional Intelligence is a critical factor in the psychological, professional and academic success of college students. Investing in the emotional intelligence of youth is crucial for their holistic development and long-term well-being. By nurturing emotional intelligence, the youth are empowered with the skills and resilience needed to navigate life's challenges and thrive in their personal and professional pursuits. This article has provided an overview of emotional intelligence in youth, highlighted its importance in various areas of their lives, discussed factors influencing emotional intelligence, and proposed strategies for enhancing emotional intelligence in different settings. By prioritizing the cultivation of emotional intelligence among youth, fostering a generation that is empathetic, self-aware, and equipped to build a brighter future for themselves and society at large, they can improve their academic performance, mental health, interpersonal relationships and overall well-being, paving the way for success in their personal and professional lives.

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