Emotional quotient: predicting and teaching for future success of students

Denise A. Hale

University of Northern Iowa

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Emotional quotient: predicting and teaching for future success of students

Abstract
Emotional Quotient (EQ) involves virtually every aspect of a person's life and plays a more important role in predicting success for students than the traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Emotional intelligence involves recognizing one's emotions, thus having a sense of self-awareness, managing and controlling one's emotions, motivating oneself to achieve a set goal, responding with empathy, and handling interpersonal relationships with appropriate social responses.

Many children today are deprived of natural opportunities to develop a healthy EQ. Through modeling and continued reinforcement starting in the early elementary grades, EQ can be taught. Teachers can provide literature experiences as the basis of discussion to promote the development of EQ concepts.
Emotional Quotient: Predicting and Teaching for Future Success of Students

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Denise A. Hale
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6/5/98
Jeanne McLain Harms
Date Approved
Director of Research Project

6/10/98
Marcus Yoder
Date Approved
Graduate Faculty Adviser

6/5/98
Jeanne McLain Harms
Date Approved
Graduate Faculty Reader

6/21/98
Robert Muffoletto
Date Approved
Head, Department of Curriculum and Instruction
Abstract

Emotional Quotient (EQ) involves virtually every aspect of a person's life and plays a more important role in predicting success for students than the traditional Intelligence Quotient (IQ). Emotional intelligence involves recognizing one's emotions, thus having a sense of self-awareness, managing and controlling one's emotions, motivating oneself to achieve a set goal, responding with empathy, and handling interpersonal relationships with appropriate social responses.

Many children today are deprived of natural opportunities to develop a healthy EQ. Through modeling and continued reinforcement starting in the early elementary grades, EQ can be taught. Teachers can provide literature experiences as the basis of discussion to promote the development of EQ concepts.
The term "emotional quotient" was developed by Peter Salovey at Yale University and John Mayer at the University of New Hampshire. Howard Gardner lists emotional intelligence as a part of his description of seven intelligences. When either of the terms "emotional quotient" or "emotional intelligence" is mentioned, a reference is made to Daniel Goleman. Goleman is also considered to be one of the leading experts in the studies of emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995).

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is a nontraditional means of measuring how intelligent a person is capable of being. Those studying this concept of intelligence believe that it is as important as the traditional intelligence quotient (IQ). An intelligence quotient is measured numerically by a standardized test, whereas an emotional quotient is a non-quantifiable measurement of emotional maturity. Upon comparing intelligence quotient with emotional intelligence, Goleman (1996b) states, "It's a different way of being smart." (p. 49)

Conventional methods of predicting a student's future success rely primarily upon an IQ score. Studies show that IQ contributes to approximately 20 percent of the factors that determine success leaving 80 percent to other forces. These other forces make up what is called emotional intelligence: abilities such as getting along with others, self-motivation, persistence, controlling impulses, empathizing, and regulating one's mood. An
emotional quotient affects every aspect of a person's life from predicting future success in school and work to a lasting marriage.

Individuals with a well developed EQ are capable of controlling their impulses and emotions and of possessing an understanding of acceptable social graces. These emotionally intelligent individuals are able to maintain a sense of hope and continued determination during a setback. They can also identify their own emotions and alter them to fit a given situation as it arises (O'Neil, 1996).

Goleman (1996b) summarizes Salovey's emotional intelligence into five essential elements. First, knowing or recognizing one's emotions refers to a sense of self-awareness. This element is considered the keystone to developing a strong emotional intelligence.

Second, managing emotions is a person's ability to appropriately control one's feelings. This element builds upon the first element of self-awareness. A person is considered emotionally intelligent if he/she is capable of managing feelings, especially distressing ones. Studies have shown that up to one-half of the children who in the first grade demonstrated through their actions problems with managing their emotions, such as disruptive behavior, disobedience toward authority figures, and inability to get along with their peers, became delinquents
sometime during their teenage years. Furthermore, girls in the sixth grade who had problems distinguishing between anxiety and anger and boredom and hunger were the ones who would most likely develop eating disorders in their teen years (O’Neil, 1996; Goleman, 1996a).

Third, motivating oneself involves being confident and productive as an individual and focusing one’s enthusiasm toward achieving a goal. O’Neil (1996) found that children who are unable to focus on learning were found to be anxious, depressed, or angry.

Fourth, achieving empathy, or the ability to recognize other people’s responses that indicate their needs and wishes, is another essential element of emotional quotient. These needs may be subtle; people do not always want others to be aware of the fact that they are in need. Thus empathy may be the hardest element to develop (Goleman, 1995).

Fifth, handling interpersonal relationships with appropriate social responses involves such abilities as cooperation, negotiation, leadership, and teamwork. Children who are socially inept will not be able to interpret signals sent by others. As a result, they will likely be distracted from learning. Students who are rejected by their peers are two to eight times more likely to drop out of school (Goleman, 1995).
One of the most important aspects of a sound emotional quotient is the ability to delay gratification in the quest for reaching a larger long-term goal. A study of delayed gratification called the "marshmallow" study was conducted with preschool-aged children. Each of the children was given a single marshmallow and told if they could wait to eat it until a researcher returned from running an errand, they would be given a second marshmallow. About one-third of the children ate the marshmallow almost immediately; another third waited a short time. The remaining one-third were able to wait the 15 to 20 minutes for the researcher to return. Fourteen years later the researchers tracked down the children who had participated in the study and found the results of the study to be a valid indicator for predicting success in school. The children who ate the marshmallow before the researcher returned were still unable to delay gratification. These children tended to be emotionally unstable: They were more likely to get into arguments and fights, crumbled under stress, were more irritable, and were not as well liked by their peers. On the other hand, the children who were able to wait for the second marshmallow were more emotionally stable than their peers. They were better liked by their peers and teachers and could still delay gratification while trying to reach a long-term goal. The most amazing discovery was that these children scored an average of 210 points higher on the SAT test.
than those who could not delay gratification (Gibbs, Epperson, Mondi, Graff, & Towle, 1995; Mirsky, 1997; Pool, 1997; O’Neil, 1996).

Nowicki & Marshall (1996) identified several characteristics to consider in identifying socially-troubled children: They may be socially immature as compared with their peers, lacking tact in responding to others, appearing insensitive toward peers, and not grasping an understanding of the rules. Many will be incapable of recognizing dangerous situations; they will follow through with inappropriate actions even though they know a punishment will result from that action. Some socially-troubled children will seem sad and display signs of bewilderment, confusion, loneliness, and anxiety. They are often unable to perceive nonverbal language expressed by others and may be ineffectual in expressing nonverbal language toward others. (Nonverbal language includes facial expressions, posture, tone of voice, gestures, personal space of others, loudness of voice, grooming and dress.) Children who are incompetent in reading negative nonverbal signs displayed by others will be confused by the rejection they receive from their peers.

The encouraging news is that emotional intelligence is learned. Newborn babies may have variances when comparing temperaments but are otherwise found to have few differences.
They are extremely moldable and are capable of developing any level of emotional intelligence (O’Neil, 1996).

Instructional Programs to Promote Emotional Quotient

No test is available that will assign a specific score to a person’s emotional quotient nor has a set curriculum been developed to teach children how to raise their emotional quotient. Nevertheless, it has been shown that it is possible to teach children how to raise their emotional quotient. For example, at Nueva School in Hillsborough, California, educators have created an instructional program called Self Science. The goal of this program is to help students focus on developing emotional abilities. The first ability that is focused on is self-awareness, or the ability to observe oneself while recognizing one’s own feelings and becoming aware that there is a connection between thoughts, feelings, and reactions. Also the process of building a vocabulary for feelings and naming feelings is part of the instructional program (Goleman, 1996b).

Personal decision-making is another ability taught in the program. This ability involves reflecting on one’s actions and being aware of their consequences, recognizing whether thoughts or feelings are controlling one’s decision-making process, and being able to apply these insights to troublesome situations.
Another ability taught is managing feelings. This process involves monitoring inner talk and diminishing self put-downs. Many children today are deprived of the opportunities to develop a healthy emotional quotient as compared to children of three or more decades ago. One of the factors that contributes to a less healthy emotional quotient is both parents working outside of the home and working longer hours, thus creating less time for parenting. Another factor is that neighborhoods today are not as safe for children to play outside unless supervised by an adult. Both of these factors have prompted children to spend more time than ever watching television or working on a computer. The social abilities reflected in an emotional quotient are naturally learned from parents and relatives and by interactions with others especially through play (Goleman, 1996a; O'Neil, 1996).

Goleman (1996b) says that it is never too early for teachers and parents to nurture children's emotional intelligence. The National Center for Clinical Infant Programs reports that children's school success is not predicted by their reading ability or their factual knowledge but by their emotional and social aptitudes inclusive of confidence, curiosity, self-control, communication skills, and cooperation.

Teachers can nurture children's strong emotional quotient. Children in the lower elementary grades can be guided to acknowledge and name their feelings. Teachers can help children
develop this strategy for responding to school experiences: First, calm down before reacting to a situation, think before acting, contemplate different solutions to a situation, and consider all the possible outcomes of their actions. Children who are taught negotiation abilities, beginning at an early age, can prevent episodes of yelling and hitting. If teachers consistently model these techniques, it will appear to be a natural part of the daily school atmosphere (Goleman, 1996b).

Some schools such as the Nueva School have added a separate class to their curriculum, Self Science, to teach the basic concepts of EQ. Goleman (1995) believes emotional and social abilities are better taught through integrating these instructional experiences into the existing curriculum. A team of psychologists headed by Eric Schaps in Oakland, California has created a model program for this approach, called the Child Development Project (CDP). This project offers a prepackaged set of literary materials that fit into the existing curriculum.

**Literature Experiences to Promote Emotional Quotient**

Teachers can tailor their literature program to fit the needs of their particular class and also teach the five dimensions of EQ. Through experiences with picture books teachers can effectively demonstrate EQ concepts. Picture books can be read by the teacher to the members of the sharing circle and then
discussed as a group. Also, individual students can read and then report to the sharing circle on a specific book.

According to Schilling (1996), the sharing circle is the best strategy for facilitating EQ awareness. Sharing circles can be integrated into any classroom. By providing specific discussion topics, students can be guided toward an understanding of each concept of EQ. Sharing circles when used with a group of 10 to 15 students, can provide a secure environment for students. These sessions allow students frequent opportunities to recognize their strengths, positive qualities, and possible abilities. Teachers listen to students when they share their feelings, and, in turn, students learn to listen to others and to understand the feelings of others. Through this understanding, students develop self-respect which is the foundation for respecting others.

After reading the picture book *Peppe the Lamplighter*, by Elisa Bartone, illustrated by Ted Lewin (New York: Lothrop, 1993) a discussion about the development of responsibility and self-respect can be conducted. Peppe was relied upon by the entire community to provide light, but he longed for the respect of his father. Students can also be led to consider Peppe’s strengths, values, relationships, and cultural heritage.

Other picture books that can be used to help students to recognize their emotions are:
Managing Feelings

The picture book *Mrs. Katz and Tush*, by Patricia Polacco, (New York: Bantam, 1992) is an excellent book to provide discussion of managing feelings. In the book Larnel, an African American boy, provides Mrs. Katz, a lonely Jewish widow, with a runt kitten. A lasting relationship develops between Mrs. Katz and Larnel as she shares her Jewish heritage with Larnel and he makes Mrs. Katz a part of his family. How Larnel's actions led to a lasting relationship with Mrs. Katz, and what thoughts and feelings each were experiencing as the relationship developed, can be discussed.

Other picture books that can nurture the element of managing feelings:


**Motivating Oneself to Focus on a Goal**

The picture book *Mirette on the High Wire*, by Emily Arnold McCully, (New York: Putnam, 1992) deals with motivation and emotions. After meeting a tightwire artist who no longer performs because of his fear of falling, Mirette is determined to learn the skill of tightwire walking for herself. Through her consistent efforts, she masters this skill and performs with the artist. Students can share on situations in which they have been motivated by emotions to master a skill.

Other picture books to help students with motivation and emotions may include:


**Responding With Empathy**

Reading the picture book *How Smudge Came*, by Nan Gregory, illustrated by Ron Lightburn (Red Deer, Alberta, Canada: Red Deer College, 1995) dramatically illustrates feelings. Empathy is demonstrated through the Hospice patients' actions toward the Downs Syndrome young adult who finds a puppy but must give it up because of the group home's regulations. A discussion can focus on the young mentally disabled woman's response: Why did the puppy mean so much to her? and on the residents of the home for physically disabled people: Why did they care so much for the young woman's problem?

Other books to nurture empathy are:


**Engaging in Effective Interpersonal Relationships**

The picture book *The Memory Box*, by Mary Bahr, illustrated by David Cunningham, (Morton Grove, IL: Whitman, 1992) is an excellent book to provide discussion of effective interpersonal relationships. In this book Zach and his grandparents prepare for his grandfather’s battle with Alzheimer’s disease by collecting memories. After reading this book students can take turns describing favorite possessions they may have and explain why each possession is held with such high emotional value, and why one person’s emotional responses may differ from another person’s.


Summary

Individuals with a strong emotional quotient are more likely to experience success in all aspects of their lives. Emotional quotient skills are learned. They are learned through experiences and interactions with others. Parents have the first opportunity to teach emotional intelligence skills since it is never too early for children to begin to learn them. By sharing a large selection of picture books and related activities with children to enhance a child’s emotional intelligence, parents and teachers can help children to develop their emotional quotient.
References


