



## Research Snapshot

# Emotional intelligence: The new answer for improving teacher efficacy and well-being



### What is this research about?

Teaching is a demanding profession and teacher efficacy plays a crucial role in achieving successful student and classroom outcomes. Teacher efficacy comprises a wide range of cognitive, social, and emotional skills. These skills help to cope with challenging situations and provide a positive learning environment in classroom settings. However, when teachers perceive that their own skills and external resources are not sufficient to manage their professional demands, their psychological health is jeopardized. This can result in high levels of stress, job dissatisfaction, and burnout. Emotional Intelligence (EI), which encompasses emotional competencies that support positive teacher efficacy, has been linked to the effective management of stress, development of resilience, and lower rates of teacher burnout. The research suggests that EI programs improve psychological well-being, decrease stress, increase teacher efficacy, and positively influence student and classroom outcomes.

### What did the researchers do?

Researchers conducted a literature review of teacher efficacy related to EI with the following objectives:

1. Illustrate how EI contributes to lower levels of stress and improved stress management.

### What you need to know:

Emotional intelligence (EI) training may improve teachers' psychological health, increase teachers' efficacy, decrease their stress and job dissatisfaction, and promote positive student outcomes.

2. Highlight the relevance of EI in facilitating effective teaching, building resilience, and promoting positive factors comprising teacher efficacy.
3. Confirm that EI can be developed through specific EI program training.

### What did the researchers find?

EI leads to low levels of occupational stress, more effective stress management, and better psychological and physical well-being. Further, EI promotes resilience against increased stress. EI also shows a strong positive relationship with teacher efficacy factors such as leadership, conflict management, motivation, positive communication strategies, and empathy.

Individuals with higher levels of EI reported:

- Higher likelihood of desiring success, working harder, leading an effective team, and higher satisfaction in working with peers.
- Greater empathy, better communication and interactions with students, and more effective management of their own emotional responses.
- Positive appraisal and interpretation of their job demands, which helps them to manage negative affective experiences more effectively.

The researchers also found that certain emotional competencies such as self-regulation, relationship management, and responsible decision-making can be learned or enhanced through evidence-based training programs. Some examples of evidence-based EI training programs are the mindfulness-based EI training, the Emotionally Intelligent Teacher, and the RULER (recognizing, understanding, labelling, expressing, and regulating emotions).

### How can you use this research?

School boards should know about the positive impact of EI on teachers' professional and personal development. There is a necessity to implement evidence-based EI training interventions for teachers to improve their efficacy.

Teachers and other education professionals could gain insight from understanding the benefits of enhanced EI. This could improve their sense of efficacy and improve their self-regulation competencies to cope with stressful situations.

Policymakers should note that further research is needed to examine the influence of EI on teachers during their professional development. Innovative EI programs need to be implemented at all levels of teacher schooling (i.e., a requisite during teacher's undergraduate education and during teachers' professional development).

### Original Research Article:

For a complete description of the research and findings, please see the full research article:

Vesely, A. K., Saklofske, D. H., & Leschied, A. D. (2013). Teachers – the vital resource: The contribution of emotional intelligence to teacher efficacy and well-being. *Canadian Journal of School Psychology, 28*, 71-89.

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**About this Summary:** This summary was written by Lilia A. Rodriguez, PhD Candidate at Western University. For further information about Western's Centre for School Mental Health, visit [www.edu.uwo.ca/csmh](http://www.edu.uwo.ca/csmh).