EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE (EI) &

STUDENT ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, BEHAVIOR & GRADUATION
Student behaviors and decisions -- influenced by their emotional intelligence (EI) -- such as amount of study time, alcohol consumption, and involvement in social activities, often better predict ultimate graduation than traditional academic predictors. And, since emotional intelligence can be taught, you can accomplish two important goals on your campus: 1) enhance retention and graduation, and 2) achieve your mission to help students grow and improve in all phases of their development.

Student Grades

- Mann and Kanoy (2010) found that first-year college GPA could be predicted by the following EI scales: optimism, independence (negative predictor), self-regard, impulse control and problem solving. They divided students into three groups based on GPA and found
  - The highest-performing students (>3.34) scored higher on the EI skills of assertiveness, stress tolerance and problem solving and lower on independence than middle-performing students (GPA of 2.50-3.34) and higher on assertiveness, stress tolerance, impulse control and problem solving than the lowest-performing students (<2.50).
  - Mid-performing students scored higher on social responsibility and impulse control than the low-performing students
- Sparkman and colleagues (2012) in a five-year longitudinal study found the EI skills of self-actualization, social responsibility, and happiness were positive predictors of cumulative GPA and that independence and interpersonal relationship were negative predictors of cumulative GPA.
- Parker and colleagues (2005) found the EI skills of adaptability, stress management, and interpersonal abilities were strongly correlated with academic success in over 1400 first year students (Parker et al., 2005).
- Scores on a test of optimism in 500 UPENN freshmen were a better predictor of grades during the first year than SAT scores or high school grades (Schulman, 1995).
• Significant positive correlations ranging from 0.29 to 0.39 between EI and GPA (p<.05) were found in 304 first-year students from various cohort groups (honors, athletes, transitions, first-year college) at one NC institution (Jaeger, 2004).

• Song and colleagues (2010) found that both general mental abilities and emotional intelligence contribute in unique ways to the predicting academic performance. Emotional intelligence, but not general mental abilities, also predicted the quality of students’ social interaction.

• Evenson (2008) found that students on the Dean’s List had higher emotional intelligence scores than students on academic probation.

• Berenson, Boyles, and Weaver (2008) found that the most significant predictor of grades in online courses was emotional intelligence.

Retention and Graduation

• Kanoy (2011) in a longitudinal study of entering students and graduation four years later found that first-year students who were not retained were lower in impulse control and optimism than first-year students who were retained. Seniors who graduated four years after enrollment were higher than non-graduates on 7 EI skill areas as first-year students including: self-regard, self-actualization, independence, social responsibility, reality testing, impulse control and happiness. There were no differences related to entering academic ability as measured by grades and HS GPA.

• Sparkman (2012) in a longitudinal project involving 783 college students studied over a 5-year period found social responsibility, followed by impulse control, and empathy were the three strongest positive predictors of graduation. Flexibility was a negative predictor of graduation.

• Incorporating emotional skills content in a College Transition Course enhanced student retention (Schutte & Malouff, 2002).

Student Behaviors & Decisions

• Deniz and colleagues (2009) found that students with higher emotional intelligence were less likely to procrastinate their academic work if they scored higher on adaptability and coping with stress.

• In two different years, students who participated in a 10-hour emotional intelligence training program reported better psychosocial adjustment than students who did not participate in the program. (Ruiz and colleagues, 2012)

• College students were more likely to engage in more frequent heavy episodic drinking and have more alcohol-related problems if they had lower emotional intelligence (Schutte, Malouf, & Hine, 2011)

• EI scores were significant predictors of alcohol and marijuana use (Claros & Sharmos, 2012).
EI and Preparation for Career Success

- The National Association of Colleges and Employers conducts a study every year with employers to query them about skills they most desire in college graduates. Those skills have been virtually unchanged for 10 years with the 2010 top five including:
  - communication skills (assertiveness, emotional expression)
  - analytical abilities (problem solving)
  - teamwork (social responsibility, interpersonal relationship)
  - technical skills (not EI related)
  - strong work ethic (self-actualization, self-regard, impulse control)
- The remainder of the top 10 usually includes interpersonal skills, flexibility and adaptability, honesty and integrity, motivation, and organization (NACE 2010).

- Successful school psychology graduate students, based on graduate school GPA and intern supervisor ratings could be predicted by higher emotional intelligence scores (Feldman, Aper & Meredith, 2011).
- Students' service-learning experiences tapped and fostered the personal and social emotional intelligence competencies associated with professional effectiveness (Manring, 2012).
- Samples and Regent (2010) found that emotional intelligence was related to academic success of students planning to go into the ministry while their level of spiritual maturity did not predict academic success.

References


