

More Than a Feeling: Fostering Emotional Intelligence in California SBAE Teachers

Ashlee Pike, Graduate Student
Agricultural Education & Communication
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
ampike@calpoly.edu

Erin Gorter, Assistant Professor
Agricultural Education & Communication
California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo
1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407
ekthomps@calpoly.edu

More Than a Feeling: Fostering Emotional Intelligence in California SBAE Teachers

Introduction/Need for Innovation or Idea

Emotional Intelligence (EI), or the recognition of and management of emotions and feelings (Goleman, 2005), plays an important role in the mitigation of workplace challenges, develops resilience, enhances well-being, and reduces stress (Slaski & Cartright, 2003). However, there is observably little to no explicit work done to incorporate EI strategies into school-based agricultural education (SBAE) teacher training in California, where early career teachers are faced with many professional demands (Roberts et al., 2020). This innovative idea seeks to implement training specifically designed for early career (years one through three) SBAE teachers in California to learn about and assess their own EI.

How it works/Methodology/Program Phases/Steps

Implementing an EI workshop for early-career SBAE teachers has three phases: Onboarding, group debriefing, and individual coaching. These phases are broken down into six steps total (Table 1), allowing for group interaction and individual reflection for action.

Table 1

EI Workshop for California SBAE Teachers-Phases and Steps for Implementation

Phase	Step	Description
<u>Onboarding</u>	Recruiting Participants	Recruiting teachers to participate in the EI opportunity via email. This email should include details on the assessment, links to provide context for EI, as well as how much time each participant will be expected to participate in the training.
	Administer Assessment	A certified EQi 2.0™ will administer the assessment using the participants' email addresses. After the assessments are scored, they will need to be printed to bring to the debriefing session.
<u>Group Debrief</u>	Debrief Session	A 60–90-minute group debrief session will include all participants. During this session, the certified practitioner will lead the teachers through an overview of what EI is and how to read the EQi 2.0™ report, before handing out the assessments. Allocating approximately 25 minutes for individuals to read their reports is ideal, followed by time for questions and a final reflection prompt. An outline of the session as well as sample reflection prompts will be provided with the final poster.
<u>Individual Coaching</u>	Schedule Coaching Sessions	Participants will schedule a 30-minute one-on-one coaching session using a preferred calendaring system, such as Calendly. These can be scheduled in person or over a web-based meeting platform like Zoom.
	Hold Coaching Sessions	During the coaching sessions, the person acting as the coach will lead the teacher through a discussion focusing on thoughts surrounding their results since the group debrief session. This will lead to the creation of individualized goals based on their assessment results.
	Coaching Session	After the coaching session, the individual acting as the coach will send a follow-up email to the teacher that outlines the goals they discussed. A sample of a follow-up email will be included with the final poster.
	Email	

Results to Date/Implications

Eleven SBAE teachers participated in an EI training modeled on this innovative idea from November 2024 to February 2025. These teachers were in their first through third year of teaching agriculture in California and took part in the training as a scheduled workshop offered at a conference focused on early-career SBAE teachers. While all teachers completed phases one and two, only nine completed all three phases and moved forward with their coaching goals. Implications, while anecdotal, included observed positive impressions from participants concerning the value of what they learned about themselves and the time they had to reflect on how that knowledge impacted their job performance. There was also specific mention of how the results may affect their well-being and general satisfaction with life and their career. A potential implication may also be how this type of training could enhance intra-department dynamics as three of the participants were from the same four-person department. They expressed an interest in having their fourth teacher, later in their career, participate in EI training so they could all use the same language when discussing department issues and conflicts.

Future Plans/Advice to Others

Future plans include seeking human subject research approval to enable rigorous scholarly follow-up with the participants in this EI training. Lines of inquiry may involve, but are not limited to, learning more about how the training has impacted participants' teaching, their programs, student rapport, and individuals' work-life balance. Exploring more systematic ways of offering this type of training or embedding other EI touchpoints in regular SBAE teacher professional learning opportunities is also of interest to the faculty implementing this training. This training only focused on early career SBAE teachers in California, and there is space to implement the training with more seasoned SBAE teachers, including across entire departments. There is also space to follow up with those who did not complete the individual coaching phase.

This opportunity was more lightly attended than initially planned. Because of this, future advice would include having a more aggressive marketing plan for the training, including multiple points of contact and reaching out to teachers individually. Overlapping the debrief session with an already scheduled teacher professional learning event can help capitalize on the number of teachers present to participate in the session. Additionally, while not all teachers elected to follow up with their coaching session, this was largely due to scheduling conflicts, so having flexibility in scheduling is advised. Also, some teachers wanted an additional follow-up meeting to discuss progress toward their goals and to hold themselves accountable. Providing this as an upfront option would be ideal.

Costs/Resources Needed

This innovative idea was funded by the California State University Agricultural Research Institute (ARI). Costs associated included the EQi 2.0™ assessments (13 at \$76 each = \$988) (Multi-Health Systems, 2023) compensation for a licensed EQi 2.0™ administrator (donated by a faculty member as part of the project); additional faculty compensation for their time hosting the individual coaching sessions (6.5 hours at \$56/hour = \$364); and transportation costs (no charge for use of department vehicle) for a total of \$1,352. Specific resources necessary, which may result in additional costs, are access to a licensed EQi 2.0™ administrator, transportation, and other travel-related expenses. Access to Zoom, or another teleconferencing platform, is necessary for the remote follow-up coaching sessions, and scheduling these sessions with web-based scheduling software, like Calendly, is also useful.

References

- Goleman, D. (2005). *Emotional intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*. Bantam.
- Multi-Health Systems. (2023). *Emotional Quotient-Inventory 2.0*®.
<https://storefront.mhs.com/collections/eq-i-2-0>
- Roberts, R., Wittie, B. M., Stair, K. S., Blackburn, J. J., & Smith, H. E. (2020). The dimensions of professional development needs for secondary agricultural education teachers across career stages: A multiple case study comparison. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 61(3), 128-143. <https://jae-online.org/index.php/jae/article/view/2333/2178>
- Slaski, M., & Cartwright, S. (2003). Emotional intelligence training and its implications for stress, health and performance. *Stress and health*, 19(4), 233-239.
<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/smi.1425/epdf>