

School Change and Emotional Intelligence

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ABSTRACT Educators are under considerable pressure to implement the unprecedented array of change initiatives that came with the advent of the new political dispensation in South Africa which seriously influences their emotional well-being. The complexities of the change initiatives coupled with the changing dynamics of human relations during the change process heighten the advantage of educators who have the ability to acknowledge and manage their emotions at school. This study, conducted in South Africa, is an exploration into the Emotional Intelligence (EI) that educators should possess and how emotions should be managed in a changing school environment. Although the original research followed a triangulation design, a convergence model in which both quantitative and qualitative data were gathered concurrently in the Eastern Cape Province and the Gauteng Province respectively, this article reports only on the quantitative data component. The investigation focused on participants' perceptions of the change process and the impact of EI on their management of change. The researchers distributed a questionnaire among the educators at those schools. The study reveals that, as a precursor to change, EI, if aptly managed, is considered an indispensable tool to educators. Educational change can only be successful if educators perceive themselves and their role positively and feel that they are valued contributors to the process of change.