Increasing Emotional Intelligence in Online RN-BSN Students: Is It Possible?

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Increasing Emotional Intelligence in Online RN-BSN Students: Is It Possible?

Abstract
Emotional intelligence (EI) is an essential component to nursing practice and research suggests it can be increased through targeted teaching strategies (Cherry, Fletcher & O’Sullivan, 2013; Freshwater & Stickley, 2004), yet no research has been done within the setting of online RN-BSN education. The purpose of this non-experimental pretest posttest pilot study utilizing retrospective data was to examine the impact EI education has on the EI levels of online RN-BSN students enrolled in a nursing program in the Midwest. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF) was used as the pretest and posttest tool. The pretest was completed during an orientation course to the online RN-BSN program and the posttest was completed at the end of the first nursing course. The educational strategies in the first nursing course included a unit on EI, reflective discussions and journaling, and a service project with reflective writing. Data analysis of a consecutive sample (N = 14) demonstrated the difference between the means of the pretest and posttest scores were not statistically significant with a \( p \leq .05 \). Although the mean scores were not statistically significant (\( p = .218 \) two-tailed), the majority of the students increased their EI scores between the pretest and posttest. Recommendations for future research and implications for nursing practice and education are discussed.

About the Author
Karie Stamer brings extensive teaching experience to Northwestern’s nursing faculty, including a strong background in the development and delivery of online courses. She previously taught at Northwest Iowa Community College for seven years. Stamer also worked for the Orange City Area Health System for 11 years as a nurse manager and floor nurse. She has worked in medical/surgical nursing, ER, obstetrics and mental health.

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Abstract

Emotional intelligence (EI) is an essential component to nursing practice, and research suggests it can be increased through targeted teaching strategies (Cherry, Fletcher, O’Sullivan, & Dornan, 2013; Freshwater & Stickley, 2004), yet no research has been done within the setting of online RN-BSN education. The purpose of this non-experimental pretest-posttest pilot study utilizing retrospective data was to examine the impact EI education has on the EI levels of online RN-BSN students enrolled in a nursing program in the Midwest. The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire - Short Form (TEIQue-SF) was used as the pretest and posttest tool. The pretest was completed during an orientation course to the online RN-BSN program and the posttest was completed at the end of the first nursing course. The educational strategies in the first nursing course included a unit on EI, reflective discussions and journaling, and a service project with reflective writing. Data analysis of a consecutive sample (N = 14) demonstrated the difference between the means of the pretest and posttest scores was not statistically significant with a p ≥ .05. Although the mean scores were not statistically significant (p = .218 two-tailed), the majority of the students increased their EI scores between the pretest and posttest. Recommendations for future research and implications for nursing practice and education are discussed.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, nursing education, RN-BSN, online learning

Introduction & Problem Statement

- Increased need for BSN prepared nurses (IOM, 2011).
- Online environments lack personal connections. (Reilly, Gallagher-Lepak, & Killion, 2012).
- Education lacks inclusion of affective & cognitive learning (Gallagher-Lepak, Reilly, & Killion, 2009).
- Emotional intelligence (EI) increases personal connection (Gallagher-Lepak, Reilly, & Killion, 2009).
- EI increased through education (Cherry, Fletcher, O’Sullivan, & Dornan, 2013; Freshwater & Stickley, 2004).
- No research on online RN-BSN students and EI. This project was a non-experimental pretest-posttest pilot study utilizing retrospective data to examine the impact emotional intelligence education had on the EI levels of online RN-BSN students enrolled in a nursing program in the Midwest.

Results

n = 14 student
Shapiro-Wilk test, Normal Q-Q Plot
Paired-samples t-test, mean scores of pretest/posttest
p = .218 (two-tailed)

Conclusion & Significance to Nursing

- Pilot study: sample size small, time frame short.
- Cannot reject null hypothesis.
- 9 of 14 improved score, not statistically significant.
- Lowest pretest score lower than lowest posttest score.
- Reflection assignment indicated students felt an increased EI even if not demonstrated in TEIQue-SF score.

Nursing

- Online community (Perfetto, 2015) = ↑ satisfaction & retention (Rankin, 2013).
- Targeted interventions ↑ EI (Cherry, Fletcher, O’Sullivan, & Dornan, 2013; Gallagher-Lepak, Reilly, & Killion, 2009).
- ↑ EI levels important to profession:
  - enhances health, reduces stress (Ball, 2013).
  - ↓ nurse burnout.
  - development of therapeutic relationships (Kaur, Sambasivan, & Kumar, 2013).
- improves relations with employees, increased morale, and optimism among workers as well as decreased perceived stress levels, and increased job performance and productivity (Morrison, 2008).
- EI has proven fundamental to nursing practice (Akerjordet & Severinsson, 2013; Bellack, 1999).

References


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