

When "Smart" Students Fail: Emotional Intelligence and Academic Success

James D. A. Parker, Ph.D.
Canada Research Chair in Emotion & Health,
Trent University

1

Overview

- models of emotional intelligence (EI)
- predicting academic success
- EI & academic success
- EI & retention
- EI & intervention

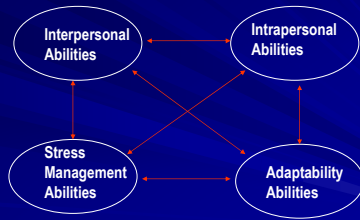
2

Emotional and Social Competency: *Historical Overview*

- | | |
|---|--|
| □ Thorndike (1920):
<i>"social intelligence"</i> | □ Gardner (1983):
<i>"multiple intelligence"</i> |
| □ Wechsler (1940):
<i>"non-intellective
abilities"</i> | □ Sternberg (1985):
<i>"practical intelligence"</i> |
| □ Sifneos (1973):
<i>"alexithymia"</i> | □ Salovey & Mayer
(1989): <i>"emotional
intelligence"</i> |

3

4-Dimensional model of EI



4

Intrapersonal Dimension



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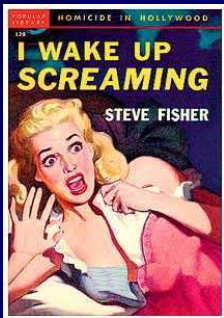
- being aware of and understanding one's emotions
- being able to express one's feelings

6



Interpersonal Dimension

- understanding how others feel
- establishing mutually satisfying relationships with others



Stress Management Dimension

- ❑ managing and controlling one's emotions

10



Adaptability Dimension

11

- ❑ coping and adapting to change
- ❑ generating effective solutions to stressful problems

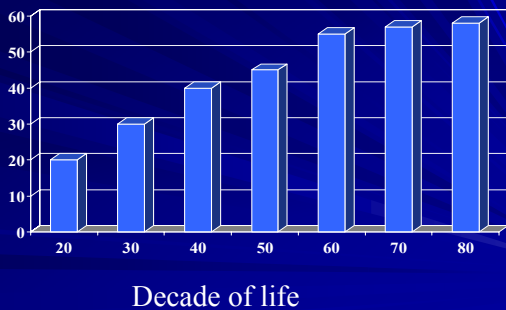
12

EI (continued)

- EI is a set of non-cognitive competencies and skills (i.e., not related to IQ)
- emotional intelligence develops over time
- changes throughout life

13

EI across the life-span



14

When does EI change? (the importance of transitions)

- from elementary school to high school
- high school to the workplace
- high school to university
- from single to being married
- transition to parenthood
- losing a job (changing jobs)
- from marriage to divorce

15

EI (continued)

- can be improved through training and intervention programs
- can be used to predict a number of "success in life" variables

Predicting Post-Secondary Success

- trends in the research literature
- or what have we learned after 100+ years of research?

Trends in the Research Literature (continued)

How has success been defined?

- academic achievement (e.g., GPA)
- retention

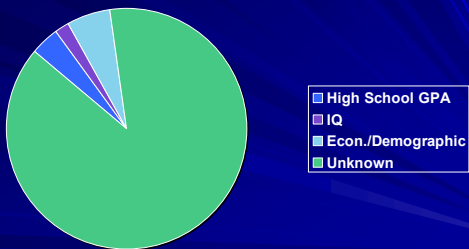
Trends in the Research Literature (continued)

Favorite predictors?

- previous school performance (i.e., high school marks)
- cognitive ability (IQ)
- economic/demographic variables

19

How good are common variables for predicting success or retention?



20

Impact of Emotional Intelligence?

- growing interest in a possible link between academic success and EI



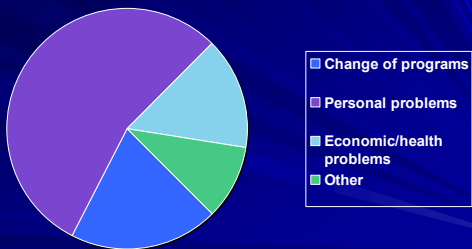
21

Why students withdraw?

- possible role of EI comes from research on why students drop-out or withdraw from post-secondary programs

22

Reasons students withdraw



23

Most common “personal problems”

- problems making new relationships
- problems modifying existing relationships (e.g., living apart)
- difficulties learning new study habits
- problems learning to be independent

24

Trent Academic Success & Wellness Project (TASWP)

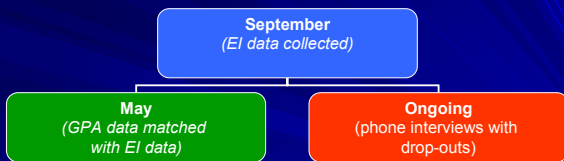
- phase 1 started in Sept. (1999) at Trent University
- initial goal was to develop an assessment protocol to identify 1st-year students at risk for “failure”
- focus was on full-time students coming to Trent within 24 months of graduation from high-school

25

Assessing EI *EQ-i: Short (51 Items)*

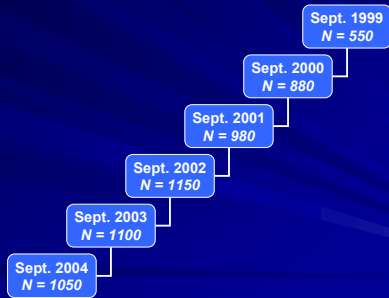
- Intrapersonal
- Interpersonal
- Adaptability
- Stress Management
- Total EI
- Inconsistency Index
- General Mood

26



27

TASWP (Trent participants)

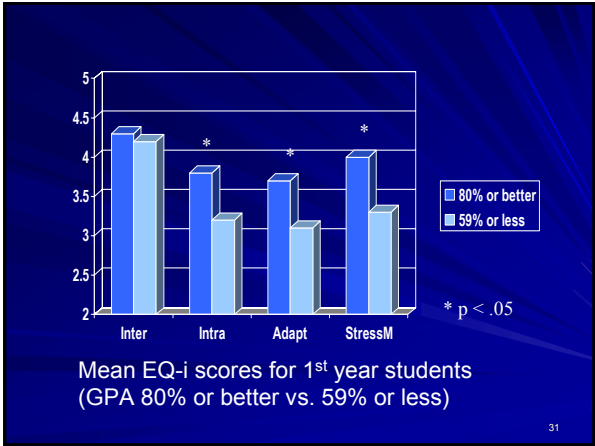


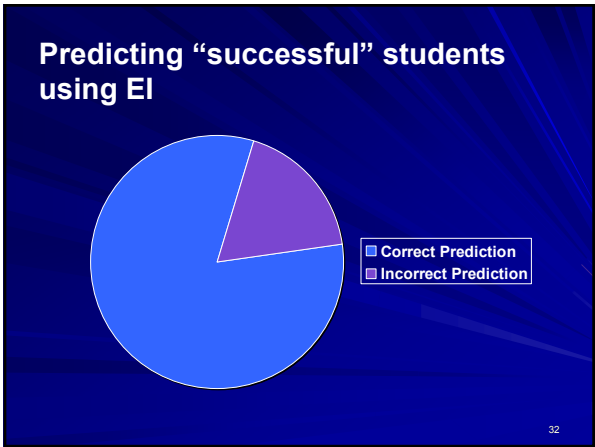
TASWP (predicting academic success)

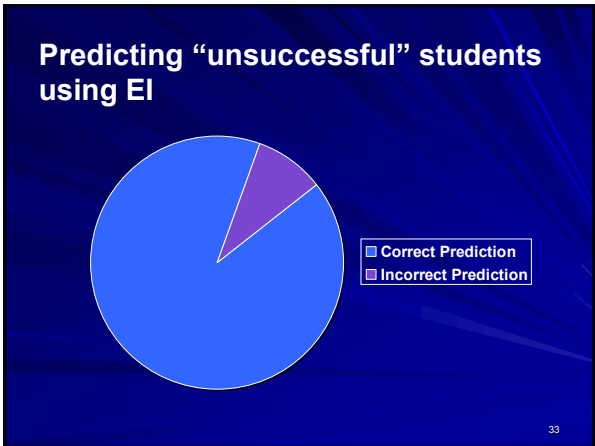
- 2 groups of particular interest:
 - "successful" students (1st-year GPA of 80% or better)
 - "unsuccessful" students (1st-year GPA of 59% or less)

Two groups not significantly different on:

- high school GPA
- age
- course load at start of year





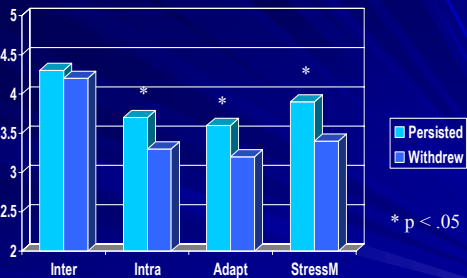


TASWP (predicting retention)

- 2 groups of interest:
 - students who withdrew at some point before the start of 2nd year
 - 2nd-year students at Trent (randomly matched with the 1st group on age, gender, and year starting at Trent)

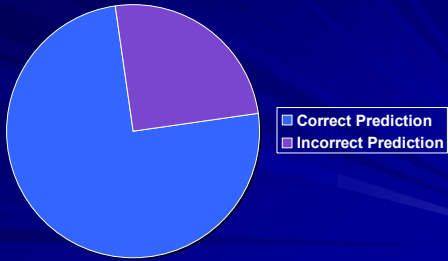
Two groups not significantly different on:

- high school GPA
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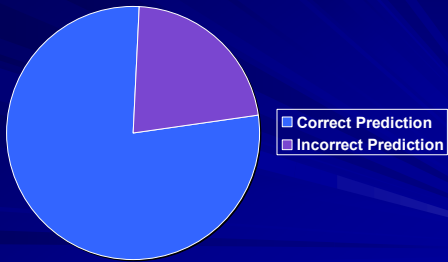
Mean EQ-i scores for 1st year students (persisted vs. withdrew)

Predicting students who persist using EI



37

Predicting students who withdraw using EI



38

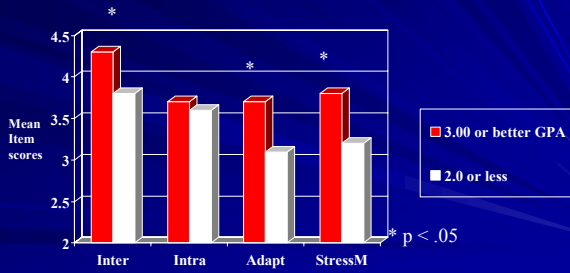
Is there something unusual about Trent University?

□ 2002: US Pilot Project (N = 1,426; Parker et al., 2005)

- UNC Charlotte, U. Charleston, Georgia Southern U., U. Southern Mississippi, West Virginia U., Fairmont State College

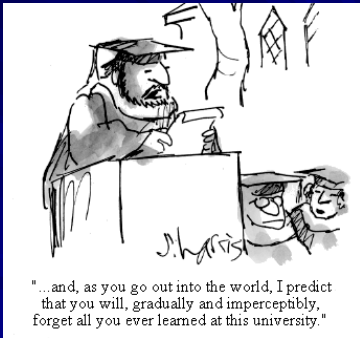
39

US Pilot Project (n = 1,426)



40

EI and Intervention



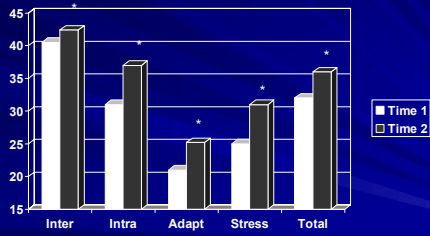
41

EI and a post-secondary education

- from the TASWP a random subset of students (N = 238) completed the EI measure a second time
- testing situation was approx. 32 months after the 1st testing session

42

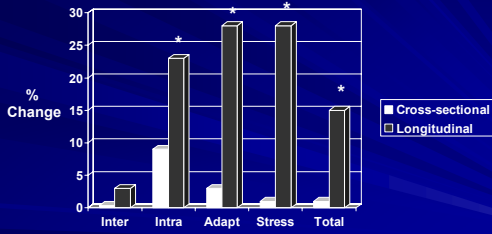
EI scores (time 1 vs. time 2)



Note: * $p < .05$

43

Change in EI (cross-sectional vs. longitudinal samples)



* $p < .05$

44