Assessing Ability-Based EI with Situational Judgment Tests

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What will I say today?

1. Brief background on EI
2. Assessment development
   – Situational Test of Emotion Understanding (STEU)
   – Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM)
3. Downward extension of STEM
4. New idea – study how EI relates to appraisal biases, coping, affect
1. Background to Emotional Intelligence (EI)
EI is a mix of constructs – character traits, emotion-related abilities, motivation, beliefs, etc.

EI is a set of abilities involved in processing and manipulating emotional information.
Two **Measurement Models** for EI

### Self (or observer) Rating Scales

How strongly do you agree with these statements from 1 (Strongly disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree)?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1) I know when to speak about my personal problems to others.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(2) I find it hard to understand the non-verbal messages of other people. (R)</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3) I know why my emotions change.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Schutte self-report scale, Schutte et al., 1998*

### Ability Scales

*Many rating scale instruments*

*not the focus on this talk*

*Many fewer ability-based instruments*

**ONE** that is widely used – the MSCEIT

*Need for more instruments:*
- generalise findings across instruments
- non-commercial alternatives for research

*MSCEIT Test of Emotional Intelligence (“Managing Others” test item)*
Best-Known EI Test: The MSCEIT

• **Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test**

• 8 ability measures (2 for each branch)

1. **EMOTION PERCEPTION:**
   - FACES + PICTURES

2. **EMOTION FACILITATION**
   - FACILITATION + SENSATIONS

3. **EMOTIONAL UNDERSTANDING**
   - BLENDS + PROGRESSIONS

4. **EMOTION MANAGEMENT**
   - MANAGEMENT + RELATIONS

So commonly used that there may be MONO-METHOD BIASES in research findings on EI
2. Assessment Development: STEU and STEM
The Situational Test of Emotional Understanding (STEU)

- Theoretical basis for item development + scoring = Roseman's (2001) appraisal theory
- **ITEM**: An unwanted situation stops. The person involved is most likely to feel? (a) Regret; (b) Hope; (c) Joy; (d) Sadness; (e) Relief
- ADD CONTEXT
  - **PERSONAL LIFE** (An irritating neighbour of Eve's moves to another state)
  - **WORK LIFE** (A supervisor who is unpleasant to work with leaves Alfonso's workplace).
- Three items for each of 14 emotions = 42 multiple-choice items

Situational Test of Emotion Management (STEM)

• Situational Judgment Test (SJT) developed in three steps:
  1. **Situations generated**: Semi-structured interviews to elicit everyday emotional events ($N = 51$, ½ students)
  2. **Responses generated**: Free response “best” and “worst” answers to 138 situations ($n = 30$ for $3 \times 46$ items each)
  3. **Scoring key generated**: 12 experts (1 excluded) answer items – score = proportion of experts rating that option

• **44 multiple-choice items**

Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out. What action would be the most effective for Clayton?
(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

## Reliability of the STEM and STEU

### Cronbach’s Alpha Reliability

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STEU: .71 [19-item .63]</th>
<th>STEM: .68 [18-item .84]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

MacCann & Roberts, 2008
Allen et al., 2014;
Allen et al., submitted

### Short Forms

- Short forms developed using 3PL IRT models
- Sample for STEU = 822 (55% female)
- Sample for STEM = 900 (56% female)

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Validity Evidence for the STEM and STEU: Correlations with EI Tests

- **CORRELATIONS WITH MSCEIT**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STEU</th>
<th>STEM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation</td>
<td>.39**</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
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<td>Understanding</td>
<td>.61**</td>
<td>.45**</td>
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<td>Management</td>
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<td>.38**</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSCEIT</td>
<td>.54**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
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</table>

In prep. (N = 119 undergraduates)

- **STEU**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>.70**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stories</td>
<td>.40**</td>
<td>.18**</td>
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</table>


- **STEM**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>STEM</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STEM</td>
<td>.33**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JACBART</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
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Validity Evidence for the STEM and STEU: Discriminant Validity Evidence

- With personality – **reasonable**
- With vocabulary – appears high (possibly some construct-irrelevant variance)

Only relationship with personality is for Agreeableness (.16 for STEU, .23 for STEM)

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STEU</th>
<th>STEM</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>.49**</td>
<td>.40**</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Validity Evidence for the STEM and STEU: Relationship to Emotion-Related Criteria

- **STEM correlates with:**
  - **psychological well-being:** $r = .54$
  - **net positive affect** (from day-reconstruction method): $r = .15$ to $.44$


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>STEU</th>
<th>STEM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>-.25**</td>
<td>-.27**</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depression</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>-.26**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Similar Test (in German): Theory-Based Test of Emotional Understanding (TBEU)

- Theory Based Test of Emotional Understanding (TBEU)
  - Susan Hellwig and Ralf Schulze at Uni Wuppertal
- Uses Roseman’s theory as the base
- Uses direct speech
- Uses “likely/unlikely”
- 25 scenarios with 5 to 6 items paired (138 items in total)
- Alpha = .76 (for 82 best items = .84)

Ralf: “Next week I have a feedback conversation with my supervisor. It's about a project that I finished a few days ago. It was very difficult and I cannot predict how she will evaluate my work this time.”

What emotions might Ralf feel in this situation? Tick for each option, whether it is likely or unlikely.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>unlikely</th>
<th>likely</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Joy</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Pride</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Fear</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Anger</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Distress</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Hope</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/jrp

Brief Report

Emotional intelligence and the eye of the beholder: Comparing self- and parent-rated situational judgments in adolescents

Carolyn MacCann a,⁎, Lijuan Wang b, Gerald Matthews c, Richard D. Roberts d
Self- & Parent-Reports on STEM-Youth

• STEM-Youth was developed as a **downward extension** of the STEM suitable for 12-15 year-olds

• Several changes
  1. Change situation frame to mimic school environment
  2. Typical performance instructions ("what would you do")
  3. Include a **parent-report** version
SELF-REPORT FORMAT

You and James sometimes help each other with homework. After you help James on a difficult project, the teacher is very critical of this work. James blames you for his bad grade. You respond that James should be grateful, because you were doing him a favour.

What would you do in this situation?

a. Tell him from now on he has to do his own homework
b. Apologize to him
c. Tell him “I am happy to help, but you are responsible for what you turn in”
d. Don’t talk to him

PARENT-REPORT FORMAT

Your child and a classmate James sometimes help each other with homework. After your child helps James on a difficult project, the teacher is very critical of this work. James blames your child for his bad grade. Your child responds that James should be grateful, because helping him was a favour.

What would your child do in this situation?

a. Tell James that from now on he has to do his own homework
b. Apologize to James
c. Tell James “I am happy to help, but you are responsible for what you turn in”
d. Don’t talk to James
• **Typical** vs **Maximum** instructions = Different results
  – **Typical** = \( r \) with personality, not intelligence
  – **Maximum** = \( r \) with intelligence, not personality

• **ALL** SJTs use **self-ratings**

• Use **OTHER RATING**S for Management SJT?
  – Appropriate for people for whom the text-based format might be a problem (E.L.L., children)
  – **NOT** fakeable by the target

• Other-ratings of **personality**
  – More reliable than self-ratings
  – Correlate \( \sim .5 \) with self-ratings
  – Highest for E, lowest for A

• General Aim of Current research = **Examine OTHER-RATING**S on SJTs
Method

Sample
• 382 eight-graders from 5 regions of the U.S. (49% female)
• 372 parents/guardians (83.3% mother)

Procedure
• Students complete proctored online sessions
• Parents complete paper-and-pencil version in separate room
• Paid for participation

Assessments
1. STEM-Y
2. Vocabulary (Levels test; Schmitt et al., 2001)
3. Maths (NAEP items)
4. HEXACO Personality (adapted from Saucier, 2007)
5. Grades (1st PC: Parent + Self-reports of English, Maths, Science, Social Studies)

Aim
Compare correlations with voc, math, personality for self versus other-ratings
### Descriptive Statistics and Correlations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>α</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Parent</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Descriptive Statistics</strong></td>
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<td><strong>STEM-Y (Self)</strong></td>
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<td>.71</td>
<td>42.32</td>
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<td><strong>STEM-Y (Parent)</strong></td>
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<td>.19**</td>
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<td><strong>Honesty/Humility</strong></td>
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<td>.84</td>
<td>60.74</td>
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<td>.14 a</td>
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<td><strong>Conscientiousness</strong></td>
<td>189</td>
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<td>52.97</td>
<td>9.65</td>
<td>.32**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
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<td><strong>Openness</strong></td>
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<td>5.04</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.29**</td>
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<td>57.34</td>
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<td>.16**</td>
<td>-.02</td>
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<td>.85</td>
<td>86.69</td>
<td>11.64</td>
<td>.19**</td>
<td>-.02 a</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Grades</strong></td>
<td>324</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.29**</td>
<td>.24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlations with STEM-Y**

- Self-Rep > Parent-Rep ($d = .41$)
- Correlation between measures is LOW

Both self and parent-reports show:
- Small $r$ with Stability
- Small – Moderate $r$ with C, H
- Different levels of $r$ with E and A (nonsig with O)

Only self-reports relate to cognitive ability (nonsig for Math)

Both self- and parent-reports relate Grades
Results Summary

1. Self- and parent-ratings not strongly related
2. Self- but NOT parent-rated STEM-Y relates to A & cognitive ability
3. Parent- but NOT self-rated STEM-Y relates to E
4. **Both** predict school grades, but effect is mediated by covariates

- Different information used to make judgments about self VS judgments about others
  - Observable traits *(Extraversion)* used more often by OTHERS
  - Less observable traits *(Agreeableness)* used by SELF

- Self- and other-report SJTs seem to be capturing *different aspects* of the construct.
4. Integrating EI with Research on Appraisals, Coping, and Emotion: An Experience Sampling Approach

**Background: Integrating Transactional Model of Coping + Appraisal Theories of Emotion**

- **Transactional Model: Appraisals determine coping behaviours**
  - Primary appraisal (importance/relevance) → attend to situation
  - Secondary appraisal (controllability) → more task-focus, less avoidance
- **Appraisal Theories: Appraisals determine the emotional state**
  - E.g., other-cause → anger; unfairness → anger
  - E.g., loss → sadness; unexpectedness → surprise
  - Many different theories, large body of research
- **There are individual differences in:**
  - appraisals, coping, and emotional states
  - the *within-person* appraisal/emotion contingencies

Background: Emotional Intelligence and the Appraisal/Coping Process

- **EVIDENCE AND RATIONALE:**
  - EI (esp emotion management) predicts coping
  - EI (esp emotion management) predicts ↑positive affect, ↓ negative affect
  - But we do not know the mechanisms or processes behind these relationships

- **BASIC QUESTION**
  - Why do people with high EI use different coping mechanisms and experience different emotions?
  - Does EI affect the within-person relationships among *appraisals, emotions,* and *coping*?

1. Different appraisals?
2. Different behavioural responses to appraisals?
3. Different emotional responses to appraisals?

---


PROCEDURE AND AIMS

• Using Experience Sampling, we test five hypotheses.
• Does EI (emotion management) predict:
  1. the coping behaviours people use?
     • ↑ task-focus, ↓ avoidant, emotion-foc
  2. levels of positive and negative affect?
     • ↑ positive affect, ↓ negative affect
  3. situational appraisals?
     • Higher EI: ↑ control; ↑ importance
  4. within-person appraisal/coping contingencies?
     • Higher EI: ↓ controllability → high task-focus, low avoidant
  5. within-person appraisal/emotion contingencies?
     • Higher EI: ↓ other-blame → anger
     • Higher EI: ↑ expectancy → positive affect
Emotional Intelligence

**THEORETICAL MODEL**

- **Appraisals**
  - Current Emotion
  - Future Emotion

- **Coping**
  - Greater problem-focused, less avoidant

**Emotional Intelligence**

(mainly Emotion Management)

- **situational appraisals**
  - (high EI = ↑ control, importance)

- **appraisal/emotion contingencies**
  - (↑EI = ↓ -ve reactivity, ↑ +ve reactivity)

- **appraisal/coping contingencies**
  - (↑ EI = match bw situation and coping)

- **coping**
  - (greater problem-focused, less avoidant)

- **more effective coping**
  - (how much emotions change)

- **greater positive and less negative affect**
Pilot Study: Experience Sampling

• 77 (ongoing) psych students complete the MSCEIT, personality, demographics

• Sent 24 text-messages linking to mini-surveys over a 5-day period (10am-5pm)
  – Answer 2 to 24 (median = 18, 90% answered >10)

1. What is the MAIN TASK you are doing right now?

2. 6 appraisals [How much is this task...]:
  – **Controllable** (Controllable by you?)
  – **Important** (Important to you?)
  – **Other-cause** (Caused by someone else?)
  – **Expectancy** ( Likely to turn out the way you want?)
  – **Desirable** (Undesirable to you?)
  – **Self-cause** (Caused by you?)

3. 9 emotions [How much do you feel ...]
  – 3 PA; 6 NA (incl 2 anger “irritated” “frustrated”)

4. 3 coping strategies [How much are you ...]
  – Task-focused, emotion-focused, avoidant
Preliminary Analysis: Intra-class Correlations

- There are *differences between people* on emotions, coping, and appraisals
**Between-Person (Level 2) Regressions**

- **H1**: EI predicts **appraisals** of importance and control
  - **YES**
  - Emotion management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Emotion</th>
<th>Avoid</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Perception</td>
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<td>-.44*</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
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<table>
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<td>Management</td>
<td>.32*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.07</td>
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- **H2**: EI predicts **coping**
  - **YES**
  - But not task-focus

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>-.34**</td>
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<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **H3**: EI predicts **affect**
  - **YES**
  - Emotion management
**H4**: EI predicts appraisal/coping contingencies
– **NO**

Appraisal/coping relationships differed across people for:
(1) Control/Task-focus (S1)
(2) Control/Emotion-focus (S2)
(3) Importance/Avoidance (S3)

• **NONE of these three within-person relationships was predicted by EI**
• EI did predict avoidant and emotion-focused coping
• **H5 (test 1):** EI predicts appraisal/emotion contingencies
  - **YES (for other-cause/anger)**
  - Emotion management predicts *less* anger
  - Emotion management predicts *less* reactivity to other-cause appraisals

WITHIN-PERSON MODEL

```
control  -.10**
importance  ns
Other-cause  .41**
```

BETWEEN-PERSON MODEL

```
Emotion Management  -.858**
```

```
Anger  -3.542**
```
• **H5 (test 2)**: EI predicts appraisal/emotion contingencies
  
  – **YES (for expectancy/positive affect)**
  
  – Emotion management does not significantly predict positive affect
  
  – Emotion management predicts *stronger* expectancy/positive affect relationship

People high in emotion management are MORE reactive to expectancy appraisals
Yet to be examined
Conclusion

• EI *does* affect emotions and coping through its effects on the different appraisals people make

• This research links EI with affect and coping research – tells us about the **processes** that differ for high and low EI people

• High EI people:
  – Appraise events as more controllable and important
  – Are less reactive to negative appraisals (other-blame) but more reactive to positive appraisals (expectancies)
  – Do not differ from low EI people in their appraisal/coping matches

• If we understand the processes underlying EI, can develop evidence-based training
  – E.g., target appraisals?
Future Directions

• Are differences in appraisals or in the situations people experience? (i.e., *low EI people might have uncontrollable lives*)
  – Test for replication in vignette data
  – Now undertaken – management → controllability (*but not importance*)

• Model the effect of coping on emotion over time

• Consider **other appraisal/emotion relationships** that EI might moderate

• Expand the coping/emotion regulation strategies space

• Test these models in other contexts/populations
The End

Thank you to great team of collaborators...

Richard D. Roberts
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Amirali Minbashian
ASB, UNSW,
Australia

Caroline Fielden
Alex Godwin
Alice Gillam

Veleka Allen
Otsuko pharmaceuticals
Princeton, USA
e.g., Relief occurs when an event/stimuli is appraised as:
- Motive consistent
- Motivation = aversive
- Certain
- Circumstance-caused

In ordinary language, relief occurs when an unwanted event [definitely] ceases [not due to oneself or another].

ITEM STEM:
An unwanted situation stops. The person involved is most likely to feel? [correct answer = relief]
Test Development Issue:
Response Format
Response Format: What is the test-taker asked to do?

- Pick the best (MCQ)
- Pick the best and worst
- Rank them
- Rate each option
- Free response
- Allocate “points” among the options

**SCENARIO**
Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out.

**OPTIONS**
(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

MSCEIT (and many tacit knowledge SJTs)

STEU and STEM
Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out. 

*What action would be the most effective for Clayton?*

(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

**MULTIPLE CHOICE**

**RATE-THE-EXTENT**

Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out. 

*Rate the effectiveness of the following actions*

1 = *not at all effective*
5 = *extremely effective?*

(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

- **Less** internally consistent
- **Stronger** associations with valued outcomes

- **More** internally consistent
- **Weaker** associations with valued outcomes
Study 1 (MacCann & Roberts, 2008)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>( \alpha )</th>
<th>STEU</th>
<th>Stories</th>
<th>Vocab</th>
<th>SWLS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Multiple choice ((N=112))</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.70</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate-the-extent ((N=91))</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>.41</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.18</td>
<td>.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Study 2 ($N = 69$): Short Form of STEM

**Correlations of MCQ and Ratings-based formats with Criteria**

Cronbach’s alpha for **ratings** = .860
Cronbach’s alpha for **MCQ** = .718
More on Rate-the-Extent Items: Ratings of Poor Emotion Management Strategies

- Rate-the extent formats involve an evaluation of **poor emotion management strategies** as well as **good emotion management strategies**
  - MCQ just assesses whether you know the BEST thing to do
  - Knowing **how bad the worst options are** may be important
  - Elliot et al. (2011) interpersonal skills SJT: the poor options distinguished between experienced vs inexperienced teachers

- Is this true for the MSCEIT and other ratings-based tests?
  - Are ratings of the poor responses more important for social/emotional functioning?

Correlations with Criteria:
MSCEIT “Effective” vs “Ineffective” Emotion Management Items

- “Effective” options (expert rating < 3/5)
  - 13 items; M = .41 (SD = .07), α = .59
- “Ineffective” options (expert rating > 3/5)
  - 16 items; M = .35 (SD = .09), α = .67

N = 115
(Australian undergraduates)
Response Format: Conclusions

• Multiple choice may be preferred over ratings-based assessment
  – Stronger evidence of validity
• If a rate-the-extent response format is used, assessments should include options representing poor choices
  – Ratings of ineffective strategies for emotion management seem **more important** for predicting valued outcomes
  – It might be that **avoiding the worst** behaviours are more important than consistently enacting the best
  – Replication is needed (ongoing)
Test Development Issue:
Maximum versus typical performance instructions
Typical versus Maximum Performance

Typical Performance

Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out.

What WOULD YOU DO in this situation?
(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

Maximum Performance

Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that Clayton feels left out.

What SHOULD Clayton do?
(a) Nothing – it will sort itself out soon enough.
(b) Tell his family he feels left out.
(c) Spend time listening and getting involved again.
(d) Reflect that relationships can change over time.

- Behaviour (with reporting biases...)
- Higher reliability
- Stronger correlations with personality
- Lower scores, greater variability
- Can “fake high” (i.e., turn it into a knowledge test)

- Knowledge
- Slightly lower reliability
- Stronger correlations with cognitive ability
- Higher scores, less variability
- Cannot “fake high” (need to know the answers)