A Non Verbal Personality Test for Young Deaf Children

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Most standard methods and techniques of objective psychological testing are verbal, which make them unsuitable with young deaf children (Graham and Kendall, 1969; Levine, 1969, pp. 215-226; Myklebust, 1954, p. 317; Myklebust, 1961; Myklebust, 1962; Zeckel, 1942; Zeckel, 1937). This investigation is an attempt to fill this gap in testing by providing some preliminary normative data on the Missouri Children’s Picture Series Test (MCPS) with deaf children ages nine to fifteen. Vogely’s (1971) studies have already provided these norms for deaf children ages ten through fifteen. Vogely’s work compared the scores of deaf children to a standardized group of normal hearing children which included 100 boys and 100 girls at each age level from five to sixteen. Her results indicated no significant personality differences between her deaf sample and the hearing population.

Vogely’s results contradict the generally held assumptions that deaf children are socially immature, emotionally underdeveloped and poorly adjusted (Vogely, 1961; Hess, 1969). These assumptions were often based on results involving the use of verbal tests. Such tests tend to measure the deaf child’s language limitations rather than his actual personality characteristics (Levine, 1969; Vernon, 1970). Even as a non-verbal test such as the MCPS the communication factor may not be fully controlled. Another variable is considered in evaluating past work is the experimenter bias. It may or may not be present in a non-verbal test with deaf children if the examiner is not fluent in communicating with deaf youngsters. It is most important for the examiner to be fluent both in manual communication and psychological testing for the purpose (Vernon, 1970).

Procedure

Forty-five deaf subjects were tested, five girls and five boys at each age level from five to nine, with the exception of age 6 where there were no deaf girls available. Six were tested on an individual basis with use of a sign language interpreter to explain instructions. Two 3 1/2" x 5" cards, one with a smiling face and the word “fun” on it, and the word “not fun” on it, were placed on opposite sides of the table in front of the child. The instructions were: “Look at the picture. If it looks like something which is fun to do, then place the picture here [on the smiling face]. If the picture does not look like fun, put it here [on the other browned card].” The child then separated the 238 cards into two piles of fun and not fun pictures. As the child responded, answers were recorded behind a screen to avoid distraction to the child. After each child was tested his cards were reorganized consecutively to allow for easier recon
FIGURE 1. Mean subtest 'T' scores for each of the eight subtests of the MCHS for 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9-year-old deaf boys. Normal performance is indicated by the line at 'T' score of 50.
FIGURE 2

Mean subtest ‘T’ scores for each of the eight subscales of the MCPS for 6, 7, 8 and 9 year old girls. Normal performance is indicated by the line at ‘T’ score of 50.
The MCPs seems to be a reliable and useful test for deaf children. It is objective, uses a minimal amount of communication and explanation between the examiner and subject, and is simple and fast enough to avoid overtaxing the subject. Modification in the application of the test for the five and six year olds is recommended to test half of the test at a time. Also, there is a possibility that many five year old deaf children do not understand the concept of the word "yes." To insure greater reliability, however, the use of the test should be expanded to a greater population of young hearing impaired children.

References


