

## **Developmental Profile of European Mosaics**

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People often speak of children as developing individuals, as being mature or immature for their age. How do we know this? How do we make judgements about this? How closely do our judgements agree with reality? For us to be able to make that kind of judgement at all we need to hold in our minds, at least an idea of what is the norm, or what is appropriate, for any particular age.

From what experience do we usually form such ideas? Why should we, why do we think about something Real? What makes some behaviours Abnormal? Do the same Norms of behaviour apply across Cultures and throughout history? Is there an agreed body of knowledge about this?

It does not take much reflection to deduce the fact that our personal experience of ourselves and the adults and peers who surrounded our childhood form the fundamental data on which every one of us base our images and ideas, of both normal development and maturity. It does not, however, take too much further thought for us to realise that, these images and notions, by its very nature would be idiosyncratic to the individual who espouses them, seeing that our personal experiences, and also what we have made of them, are truly personal to us and processed individually through our protosystem thinking.

And yet we have this nagging feeling that a generality must underpin such images and thinking. Somewhere in us we have a natural ability to generate theories from our personal experiences, and Lowenfeld has proposed the Theory of Protosystem Thinking and how this functions, to account for how this might be achieved.

We can perhaps see this idea of development more clearly in our physiological selves. No one has been known to run before they can stand, for instance. But within these gross

limitations, we can see that all round us every adult can usually stand up and if they can't there would be something wrong with them! This and other similar physiological developments, like that for the digestive system or sexual development are now becoming clearer. When it comes to mental processes, like emotional development and the development of verbal facility, the complexities are multiplied. On the one hand we have the assumptions in the mind of the beholder; on the other we have the diversity of behaviour of the child we are beholding.

Now the Lowenfeld Mosaics can be a valuable tool to assist us in forming a more objective assessment of a child in terms of its development. [Just to recap on the main features of the Mosaics] The Mosaic material is simple to use, requiring the minimum of skill; it is limited, to five shapes and six bright colours, which tend to appeal particularly to the younger child. The five shapes are interrelated in such a way that could be demonstrated visually or described at different levels of comprehension. For instance, children below the age of three should be presented with the opened box, without any emphasis on the tray, with encouragement to explore but without any explanations being given.

There is already in existence a developmental profile culled from large numbers of children's mosaics - this profile is described in detail in Lowenfeld's Mosaic book. The two diagrams showing the stages of response, up to age fourteen, have been reproduced for you. The Handbook by Anderson and Hood-Williams, have already been distributed to you and we shall be doing some work using the examples from this Handbook.

To quote Lowenfeld, "For successful use of the [Mosaics], emphasis must therefore be placed on a detailed knowledge of the [Mosaics] itself and extensive practice in reading the responses, rather than, as with many other Tests, upon statistical evaluation of large numbers of Designs" (p 106).

If you have not brought the Mosaics you have been collecting so far, perhaps you will include them in your assignment for next time, with your own comments re the placement of these within the developmental profile that you have been given today. If you have brought them, we shall discuss these alongside some which I have collected during my own student

days and throughout and parallel with my clinical career.

To return to the Mosaics: it is important for me to emphasize at this point that the information you get from the Mosaic is not like what you might obtain from other developmental tests. It is the same as what one would obtain when it is presented to adults. One should be looking at the Total Response, remembering that there is no wrong response. Any response is accepted for what it is, there should be neither expectation nor failure. If you can hold onto this view, that every response is an achievement, then this is the best conditions under which any reading of the Mosaic can be made. You are free to respond directly to the Mosaic communication and make your judgement according to the Total Response. Here it is important to emphasize that whilst administering the Mosaics, as in watching someone make a World, you must remember your own Mosaic response. your own personal likes and dislikes, and consciously lay it aside, so that you may better concentrate on observing and recording the Total Response.

The age of a child has been considered an essential element within any assessment process. This is no different when one is using the Lowenfeld Mosaics. However, it is the age up to fourteen which makes a difference. And as we are often dealing with children of this age range, we need to take into account the fact that there is a kind of progression related to the child's stage of general development. After this age, it was Lowenfeld's opinion that there is no perceptible difference compared with adult responses, apart from that between individual persons. Lowenfeld is keen to emphasize that we should not view the age of the child merely as a matter of chronology. I think she would be more inclined to think in terms of development as a process. And like the physiological processes, there is not one line of development either.

First let us look more closely at what the child is responding to. What strikes us about the Mosaics is not necessarily what strikes children when they are presented with the box of coloured tiles. Where adults are more interested in the shades of the six colours presented, young children in particular, are much more likely to be attracted by the brightness in the colours. So, these children are more likely to respond sensuously to the physical qualities of the Mosaic pieces.

The very young child may simply grab handfuls, shove them into her mouth, the mouth being the normal organ "through which a young child makes contact with and evaluates the outside world" (p 110).

This is STAGE ONE in Lowenfeld's profile.

Where we might be more interested in the interrelationship of the shapes, very young children (Lowenfeld says European children from approximately eighteen months to two and a half years) may only see the tiles in the box in clumps. She will grab at these blocks of tiles, pick them up and let them drop, a sort of game with objects, we have seen countless children play seated in their high-chairs, demanding that the game be endlessly repeated.

This is STAGE TWO (p 110)

STAGE THREE (p 111) is when the child begins to pick up single pieces, examine them by sight and touch rather than with lips or tongue (p 111). Interest is mainly focused on the pieces; the tray being only dimly perceived, if at all.

Lowenfeld says that "A rudimentary perception of space ushers in STAGE FOUR". (p 111) Scattered pieces. mostly falling within the tray space and disposed in such a manner as to suggest an awareness of the separateness of the pieces. And from this stage onwards, different lines of development in Individual children begin to appear.

STAGE FIVE, (at about three to four years of age) four, main lines of development have been identified so far. *(But if you find that a child's Mosaic which does not conform to the lines of development proposed, do not Immediately think you have not understood the categories properly, at least entertain the notion that, fifty years on with the arrival of television and new design tools, other lines of visual design development can now emerge.)* These 4 main lines of development are stated in columns A, B, C and D in Table One. Stages Five to Ten (up to age six), like Stages One to Four can sometimes be traversed at one sitting, so it is necessary to be alert for this possibility. For a quick guide to Mosaic terminology and examples of either a particular stage or type (e.g. a term like pre-fundamental), please refer to the handbook by

Ville Anderson and John Hood-Williams. The two Tables included in today's handouts give the developmental profile from Stage Five to Age Fourteen when, according to Lowenfeld, the Mosaics become indistinguishable from adult responses (see also p 114).

Please note that what is stated against each Stage or Age Group, is the first appearance of that particular category. This means for example, that with the Mosaics one might be able to tell the level of visual thinking the child has reached as well as the ability to perceive space. I would like to emphasise again the importance of the TOTAL RESPONSE. When watching a child do a Mosaic, particularly of young children up to the age of five years, it is in the observation of the MANNER of the response as well as the consideration of the Mosaic product that makes the Mosaics such a sensitive instrument for assessment.

First of all, I would like to identify some actual examples in the Handbook so that you can make some visual connections to what we have been talking about; examples that you can study at leisure later on.

I am now going to show you a series of 22 Mosaics made by different children, both boys and girls, at different ages, from aged three and a half to fourteen and three quarter years old. Please have the two sheets of the developmental profile as well as the Handbook in front of you, so you can refer to them directly when you are viewing the Mosaics. We are only going to look at the Mosaics. For the moment we shall not be considering the other aspects of the TOTAL RESPONSE.

[(As each slide is displayed, course participants are requested to try to identify the type and Stage/Age of the Mosaic on the Tables, using the Handbook for visual identification of the terms used in the Tables.)]

<b>Slides</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Stage</b>	<b>Description</b>
1A G	3yrs 6mos	V – VI	Wavering lines, pairs & scattered pieces

2(1) B	3yrs 9mos	Fox reaction	Giraffe
3(3) B	4 yrs	VII – IX	Prefundamental & Fundamental patterns
4(4) G	4yrs	VIII – IX	Pairs in an irregular group & scattered pieces
5(7) G	4yrs 6mos	VIII – IX	Pairs in irregular group
6(8) G	5yrs	VIII – IX	As in (4)
7(9) G	5yrs 6mos	X – 7	Elaborated fundamental with frame, not central
8(11) jumping B	5yrs 9mos	→ 9 Rep.a	A man
9(14) G	6 years 7mos	6-7 Rep: Simple scene	Grass, sky, flowers
10(20) G	7yrs 1mo	6-8	Large agglutinations / slab
11 (21) G	7yrs 2mos	8 Rep: Flower & Balanced & variegated	Flowers & leaves
12(26) B	8yrs 1mo	6 – 10	Collective pattern incl fundamentals: deliberate use of colour independent of form; interior space in collective patterns; seen a w flower garden afterwards

13(27) B	8yrs 2mos	9b: Simple rhinoceros	Letter "a" unusual perception of space
14(30) B	8yrs 6mos	10 – 11 scene	Aeroplane flying over NY (note the empty space at the centre of the scene: this could be significant)
15(35) G	9yrs	9b – 10 Simple rhinoceros / Scene	Totem pole & stones
16(39) G	10 yrs 9mos 10->		Original, centralised, compact, filling the tray
17(41) G	11 yrs 7 mos 10->		Original, centralised, compact, filling the tray
18(43) G	12yrs 3mos 11->		Interior space, including hollow centre
19(45) B	12yrs 9mos 13a		Cruciform
20(46) B	14yrs 9mos 13a		Cruciform
21(47) B	14yrs 9mos 12->	Adult	Proliferation of one shape filling tray, with suggestion of movement, light & airy pattern
22(48) B	14yrs 9mos	Abstract, intermediate, Cruciform: started with red centre, changed it because he thought it was "too inner centred"; the back was used to "link to the outside"	