

# Suggestions concerning Modification of Standard Techniques in the Use of the Lowenfeld Mosaic Test in the study of Non-Western Peoples.

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## Objective

Since the constituent parts of the L.M.T. have been made up of materials familiar to Western peoples, certain assumptions in regard to them will be implicit in all Western users. It is unlikely that any of these would be spontaneously present in non-Western peoples, except through their contact with the West.

In order, therefore, to make sure that the response of the non-Western subject will be spontaneous, certain modifications in technique are essential. Analysis of the development of the response to the L.M.T. in Western children (i.e. subjects who, because of their youth, cannot already have had experience of this type of material) has shown that there is a regular series of developmental steps which occur in practically all children. It is impossible in the present state of our knowledge to know whether these stages are the manifestation of immaturity as such or of unfamiliarity with the material, and it is this which these notes are designed to enable investigators to test.

## Suggested Modifications in Technique of Administration

### Stages in response

(Stages (1), (2) and (3) refer to handling the pieces only)

1. In the ordinary mode of administration for Western people this stage is precluded by the fact that instructions concerning the pieces are given by the investigator before the subject has any opportunity to handle the pieces. Only the individual judgement of the anthropologist at work can therefore decide with each individual piece of investigation whether it is wise and desirable merely to present the box and the tray without saying anything about them at first, in order to give the subject the opportunity of taking out the pieces, examining, biting them, etc., or not.
2. It is probably unwise to use the double box with non-Western subjects, as this kind of material can be rather overwhelming. It is suggested that, instead of replacing the special pieces used in explaining the test in the box, these might be laid in the lid, so as to serve as examples of the shapes to be found in the different racks.
3. Experience has shown that there is a very definite semantic difficulty in being sure that the words used in the definition of the goal 'make something' will really convey to the subject that an entirely spontaneous result is required, which need not conform to any standard of excellence. It is suggested, therefore, that a pilot trial be made using different words, and that the completed designs then be presented to fresh persons of the same group with an enquiry as to what word they would use to describe it.
4. Owing to the point raised under (1) it seems probable that the practice factor will be more powerful with non-Western than with Western peoples, and the writer feels

that it would be unsound to draw deductions from single samples of designs from any culture hitherto unstudied by mosaics.

5. In work with new groups, careful note of the method by which the result is arrived at is even more important than with Western peoples, as owing to the inherent geometric relations of the pieces, juxtaposition can arise by chance which, looked at from the point of view of the completed design, appear to have coherence which is quite illusory.

#### 6. **Representational designs: Kite, Fox, and Rhinoceros reactions**

##### **Kite reaction.**

The subject picks up one or more pieces and places them on the tray. His eye is caught by a resemblance between the shape of the piece or a pile of pieces and some other object, and he puts a name to this resemblance, calling a single diamond 'kite' (Jamaica) or a pile of square pieces: 'hankies' (English child).

##### **Fox reaction**

Other subjects use the pieces for the area, and without any attempt at fitting them closely together deliberately arrange them to produce the effect of an external object. This is called the 'fox' reaction from an excellent example of this kind made by a five year old Swiss child.

##### **Rhinoceros reaction**

Western subjects now and then make use of the materials with full exploitation of the form, colour and geometric possibilities so as to produce the photographic presentation of some object. This is called the 'Rhinoceros' reaction after a particularly successful representation of this kind made by an Englishman.

It is important in work with new peoples to distinguish between the 'kite' and 'fox', as considerable error has occurred in some instances through a subject's feeling that some name should be given to what has been produced in answer to questions about it, and either an arbitrary name being chosen, or a chance similarity being seized upon, which is not included at all in the actual process of response. (This reaction is particularly noticeable in Western subjects among mental defectives and schizophrenics.)

#### 7. **Traditional patterns and magic**

The writer is particularly keen to discover whether, on the one hand, it will occur to non-Western peoples to use these materials in the production of patterns traditional to the culture and, on the other, whether reluctance to make use of the materials is in any way connected with the feeling of magic.  
(cf for example the sand pictures of the Navajo).