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#14 - Block Design &
Similarities ✓

I know I'm going to try to keep winding back to Digit Span, and Arithmetic and Information as they relate to the other tests. It's going to get more and more complicated.

The performance, or what happens on the Block Design test is quite confusing in a sense to attempt to explain. Much of the performance I have to talk about by inference, but the major hypothesis as far as the PAS is concerned is that the Block Design test, such as it is, requires essentially that an individual be prompt, non-involved and imitative in a relatively rapid way because you're giving them the series of blocks to put together without any particular explanation of why it's necessary to do this particular kind of task. The kind of individual that the PAS refers to as an R is essentially the individual who responds rapidly, quickly, without any particular questions, without any particular concern with why someone is asking him to do this particular task. That's one aspect of the performance on the Block Design.

The second is that as the tasks become more complicated, they become harder to be imitated, that makes it a power test in the sense that it begins to measure the complexity with which individuals can perform on certain kinds of mechanical, procedural, literal type tasks. Also it's the sort of thing that in terms of the natural response state, the R, what the PAS refers to as an R, the R individual actually

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has more rapid capacity to be able to do a mechanical task of this particular nature. Now as a matter of fact if you look at his performance on all of the block designs over a period of time, with the people of normal levels 12, 13, 14 or thereabouts, the primary difference between an R individual and an F individual is that the R individual does the task that is performed at a faster rate than does the F individual. And because there are time credits given in terms of the scoring as it comes out in relationship to this, this results in a general tendency for the person who does it the fastest to get the highest score, therefore resulting in what is in a sense the differentiation of the R and the F individuals. You also in terms of the performance on the part of the F individual, the F individual tends to be a little bit more questioning and in many cases quite a bit more questioning in his initial response state. And characteristic at least after the fact to differentiate the F from the R is that the F individual has much more α of a tendency to ^{want to} understand what he's doing before he does something, whereas the R individual has much more capacity to do something and then be able to understand it afterwards, or try to understand it afterwards. Therefore the F individual approaching the Block Design test is one more cautious. He's cautious because to a certain extent, he keeps trying to figure out something about why he's being asked to perform this particular kind of task. As a matter of fact, it's my own personal opinion that the Block Design for the WB-1 for example is better than the block design for the WATS because one of the things that they change in

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the WAIS, the WAIS changed from the original Kohs box (because the block design is a modification of the test devised quite a long time ago by Kohs) and the Kohs box~~x~~ represented four colors on the box. There is a red, a white, a blue, and a yellow, there is a ~~quite~~ side, a blue, ~~xxxx~~ a solid white and a solid red and so on. However, the WB-1 block design test requires that the individual only use the red and the white, and the same way when they developed the WAIS, the blocks are all painted red and white. Now one of the things that made the block designing a little bit better for differentiating the F and the R, was the fact that the F individual was much more inclined to be confused about why you had these other colors on the desk and never used them. That would have a tendency to slow down the performance of the individual who is working on them. Now certainly the primary thing in healthy individuals, the primary thing is that the healthy R takes his instructions literally, works very rapidly, and has very little curiosity or concern about why you're asking him to do the task. The R individual is much more inclined as he gets into the heavier, harder complex box to begin to move into the direction of again, in characteristic of the R personality in the PAS, to do what I consistently and constantly refer to as perseveration. And perseveration in the R individual in the box design is that as he gets in the complex box rather than giving up on the box, and any R and anyone who gives the test over a period of time will know that many an R on the hard blocks, if you don't stop him, will keep working over and over again in an attempt to try to put the blocks together and is likely

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again to perseverate and make what are in effect stupid, repetitive mistakes. This is likely to occur again at the higher level.

The F individual is much more inclined even to move into the direction on the basis of making a statement before they even start, "I haven't played with blocks since I was a kid." A defensive reaction on the basis of which it represents a task that is somewhat threatening to them anyway, the F individual not having the innate kind of initial mechanical ability that is required in terms of this, has a tendency to move away from doing the blocks, again resulting in the lowering of the score, and the lowering of the score which is essentially the differentiating between the F and the R individual.

Another factor which is a complicating one in relationship to the test, in that we won't talk about factors in referring something like factors isn't really of the kind that Saunders was talking about in Picture Completion the other day. It's my hunch that there are three or four factors in this Block Design test, or at least there are three or four different things that can have some particular effect upon the person's performance on the Block Design task. One of the primary ones that has been demonstrated over and over again that since the WAIS and the Wechsler are the norms or at least the determination of the IQ's on the Wechsler and the WAIS, they determine that the Wechsler and the WAIS have an age factor involved in them, in terms of age makes a contribution to what the IQ is and Block Design is one of the primary tests in which it has been demonstrated over a period of time that there is a rather marked difference between an individual's ability

to do the Block Design test when he is young as opposed to when he is older. So consequently whatever is involved in this, whether it is the tendency on the part of the R individual to be literal and imitating more comfortably when he's twenty-one years old than when he's forty five years old which may be one of the things that contributes to it, there is still a tendency for people past forty-five, maybe forty to forty-five, to begin to have a drop in their ability to perform the Block Design task. Now again this is reflected much more not by the thing that I talked about earlier in the healthy twenty to thirty-five year old -- R and F differentiating on the basis of which an individual is likely to get every design equal to his Normal Level correctly but not necessarily as quickly. You begin to get the phenomenon of the older testee to be much more confused by the Block Design task. He felt a certain amount of incapacity to be able to really put the blocks together efficiently or correctly. So one of the primary factors involved in this is age.

A second one and this is another one that has been demonstrated rather conclusively over a period of time that block design performance is in some way related to organicity. One of the effects of the Kohs blocks initially partly were designed in an attempt to try to ~~xx~~ get some kind of indications of organicity. But certainly many of the studies that have been done over a period of time have indicated that there is some kind of a relationship between capacity to perform on the Block Design task and certain kinds of organic difficulties. Now we haven't got this worked out in the score in the way that I would

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like to do it, but somewhere in us; theoretically at least, we all have some kind of a system in terms of this, that a person gets a different score for missing a block design than he gets for doing it rapidly.

Mainly because there are two different things involved in this: one, ability to do the box itself in some cases may be a function of age, and it may actually be the organic function of age, in that a person becomes a little bit more arteriosclerotic or a little bit slower or other things. There is some distortion of his capacity to do the Block Design himself. Now in terms of trying to determine organicity and this is one thing that the Wechsler can't except by very complicated inferences anywhere along the line is that there is an awful lot of difference between the person who at the age of twenty-five is able to do the block design at an R level and who at the age of thirty suddenly has a deterioration of his ability to do the block design. Because it is the R individual who does poorly on the blocks that is organic. And in many instances you are likely to test what looks like an F individual, but is really an R who is under a considerable amount of confusion because of organic problems.

One of the primary hypotheses and one of the primary dynamic aspects of the meaning of R and F as a PAS variable is that in an initial response state an F individual has early experience with being confused. Now if you will think back a minute to what I said in terms of the reason why I think they do well on the block design, one of the things I said in terms of this is that the R individual has a tendency

to follow directions unquestioningly and to a certain extent without any particular tendency to be cautious, being cautious that they become imitative and precise. Now this is in a way relating to the general idea hisotyr, the R individual is the kind of a person because he has a tendency to be able to learn rapidly without any particular confusion or anything else in terms of this. He started out ~~with~~ ^{as} a person who has relatively little early experience with being confused and they may have to learn over a period ~~x~~ of time that he should be more cautious or that he should be more careful or various things in terms of this, the F individual right in the beginning has a considerable amount of capacity of being confused and that again in dynamic terms one of the reasons for this, as far as I'm concerned, is that the F individual because he has a capacity to be able to respond at any particular given time to a wider range of stimuli, for example, the EF is likely to be able to respond to all kinds of distractible things on the outside and because he cannot focus and respond to any particular one thing he's confused because he is getting bombarded with a number of things that he has to learn to sort them out. If it's internalized, the ideational, the autistic, the internal stimuli, he's being bombarded with a lot more in terms of this and has to learn in the direction to keep his tendency to be so responsive down to the place that it narrows to a more manageable way. So this is what I mean when I say that the F individual in a sense has a tendency to start out in a relatively confused way and his primary compensatory direction or controlled direction is in the direction of learning to control confusion whereas

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the R individual almost has to learn how to be confused, in the sense he has to learn not to become so ~~fixed~~ focused and so fixed on one particular stimuli that he loses his awareness of many of the things that are going on around him. So again one of the differentiators between the R and the F individual is that you see that the F individual is sensitive and again this sensitivity that I'm talking about is sensitivity to a lot of things going on, not the emotional sensitivity. You've got to be ~~be~~ very careful about this because R individuals emotionally can be quite sensitive, but this is not the same kind of sensitivity that ~~is~~ I'm talking about that the F individual has of being sensitive to a lot of things going on. The R individual is insensitive in the sense of having a certain kind of tunnel vision. And this tunnel vision has to be widened and the R individual in this sense if he's going to make the best adaptation, he's going to have to move in the direction on the basis of which ~~is~~ he is aware that he must be more aware and more responsive to other things that are likely to be going on around him.

Again if you think in terms of this, is the fact that the Block Design test, I think you can see part of the rationale at least of why the Block Design task seems to pick up a little bit of this initial or innate or beginning tendency that the R individual has, because in this situation, tunnel is exactly what you're supposed to do, you respond without question. The F individual is much more likely to be questioning, to be cautious, to be slow in the way in which they respond to it. On the other hand, now the thing in relationship to this and

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the reason why the organicity begins to be important, in terms of this, I feel quite strongly about this, that an F individual because he has a different lifetime experience with confusion has a great deal of capacity to respond to considerable confusion. It's not nearly as threatening, or disturbing or upsetting in quite the same way as it is if the R individual who has always had a particular capacity to focus, to maintain attention, something begins to come along which in a sense confuses him, that confusion is such a new psychological experience to him that it is likely to precipitate in him a rather marked behavior change. And again, I can't prove this, yet one of the things that I feel that it demonstrates in terms of this, one of the things that we know is that there is a relationship between arteriosclerosis of the brain and certain kinds of mental conditions. Also we know that there is no particular relationship to the extent of arteriosclerotic impairment. There are some people that can be heavily arteriosclerotic and show very little confusion. There are other people who can have very little arteriosclerotic and show marked confusion. Now, it is ~~theoretically~~ theoretically or it is hypothetically the PAS contention that the F individual is able to tolerate a considerably more arteriosclerotic involvement without losing as much of his capacity to adapt whereas the R individual is likely to have marked destructive, destroying kinds of things. The old R arterio-

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sclerotic is likely to become so confused that he's lost a great deal of his contact with the world. The old F arteriosclerotic is certainly going to be confused in a different way, in terms of this, but there will relatively speaking be a tendency for the F to be somewhat more intact in certain kinds of ways. So it is the rapid fall of the capacity to do the Block Design that is an organic indicator.

Now the general hypothesis is the theory again in terms of this that the R represents the kind of an individual who learns something and then has to be taught to understand it. The F individual is the kind of individual who has a certain need over a period of time to understand something before he can learn it. One of the primary things that is an indication of this particular capacity is the ability to see rapidly certain kinds of relationships to see relationship to anticipate certain kinds of events. And to anticipate these events the F individual is in his initial response state much more capable of being able to anticipate events. And as a matter of fact one of the problems that an F individual is likely to have in his life experience is because he has this capacity to anticipate events so heavily that he may move in the direction of being maladjusted because he is constantly overanticipating. Now this overanticipating carries with it the element of inferiority, insecurity. Therefore the F individual is also, as well as having early experience with confusion, is much more likely to be the kind of an individual who has very early experience with failure. He has more of an awareness or recognition of failure. An F individual, certainly in the American culture and certainly in

many of the people who come from the subcultures that we are ⁶⁰¹⁸²concerned with here are ~~iki~~ likely to be F individuals who have been forced by their life experience to learn how to overcome their tendency to be inferior, to work in that particular direction. The R individuals in the culture are much more likely to be individuals who move in the direction of beginning to learn to be more cautious, to be more anticipatory. The R individual in the early period of his life is likely to get into trouble because he is constantly moving in the direction of not trying to anticipate what's going to happen. Therefore, many of the things that happen around him are terribly unexpected. And therefore one of the adjustments that he has to make is to move into the direction of being more cautious. And you get the phenomenon, you get behaviorally the F individual who spends an early period of his time with a considerable amount of inferiority, an inferiority feeling, who as an adolescent or an adult begins to move into the direction of being strongly controlled in the direction on the basis of which he feels he has overcome this inferiority. You get R individuals who have very un-inferior experiences at various times growing up, who begin to have failure experience at the adolescent or adult periods of time in terms of this, and because they had no experience with feeling inferior, the same thing is likely to ~~happ~~ happen in the R that happens in the arteriosclerotic thing that I'm talking about. You get what I call a depressive effect. An individual who has never learned to be inferior being forced to see that he's inferior, it behoves him that he has a strong inferiority reaction.

Similarities

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To a certain extent, the old concept of an individual with an inferiority complex, an inferiority complex may be much more likely to occur in a relatively old, relatively old, I'm talking of adolescence at that particular period of time, ~~xxx~~ to occur in an R than is an inferiority complex as such likely to occur in the F individual.

The Similarities subtest, which is the next one that comes in line in relationship to this, the Similarities subtest is essentially a test which calls for a person's capacity quickly to be able to see relationships and to see relationships very quickly and very adequately.

Now it is the hypothesis again in the PAS that the Similarities subtest as such is a test which in a sense is a natural test for the F individual. Everything else being equal, the internalizer if he's paying attention, will do well on the information subtest, because the Information subtest represents a test which is a natural test for the Internalizer. The information is a natural test for the Internalizer. The Similarities is a natural test for the F individual. He is likely to be able to perform on this if he's paying attention with relatively little effort.

On the other hand, the R individual, once the R individual is given that particular kind of a task, the task represents something he is going to have to work harder at in order to achieve on it. Now again you can see in relationship, you get a difference in the way the R individual and the F individual might perform on the Similarities subtest, and I think anybody who gives the test sees the differentiation over a period of time. "In what way are a dog and a lion alike?"

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The F individual is likely to say right off the bat, "They are animals." And ~~when~~ he's comfortable, it's easy, he goes no farther. The R individual is likely to start out in terms of saying, "Well, let's see. They both have tails, they both have four feet and they're both animals." Now again, the processes going in terms of this, is that the R individual is doing somewhat the same thing to the Similarities subtest that I said the F is doing to the Block Design subtest. He is approaching it cautiously in the sense, that he wants to be sure that he gives you all those possible answers, and in a sense the R individual in the test situation is likely to move into the direction of trying to get some kind of reassurance that he has given you the right answer. And the R individual will have a characteristic in his test behavior on the basis, "They have four feet? They're both animals?" Again, expecting you at a particular point to be able to reassure him. Now as a matter of fact, there is some contamination of what can be an R or F differentiation in terms of this because the instructions in terms of the Wechsler, I guess it's true with the WAIS, the instructions say in terms of that, first of all "How are an orange and a ~~banana~~ banana alike?" And if you say "They both have peelings." You say to them "That's true, but what else?" And again in terms of this you have indicated that you're not willing to quite accept the peelings, you want something better and want that they say "fruit." and as a matter of fact, the instructions say, if the person says "I don't ... I mean, peeling." Well you could say "They're both fruits." [It is the R individual that you have to get the idea of what

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it is that the test wants you to perform. } But in any event, the Similarities subtest, the R individual is a person who has learned over a period of time that it is necessary to work very hard in the process of beginning to try to understand. This represents a clear compensation for the initial R tendencies. The R individual who works at doing the Similarities subtest and in working at doing the test actually comes to the direction of being able to do well in it. This is the indication at least that the individual is making some kind of compensation against his ~~xxx~~ initial R state tendency. A failure to do that begins to be an indication that the individual is not doing very much about his initial state. And one of the things that you can put in terms of this if you've got an R individual that does very well on Block Design and then does very poorly on Similarities, one of the judgments at least certainly it's a PAS judgment, that ~~xxxxxxxx~~ can be made in relationship to this is that this is a R individual who probably can learn a great many things in relatively rote way but you better be careful because this person may not understand all that he has learned. Because the R individual does have the capacity and it is a capacity that on one hand is one of his greatest abilities and on the other hand is one of his greatest liabilities in that he has a tendency to be able to rapidly learn something and because most people begin to think that because you can demonstrate you can do something that means that you understand it. You've got the possibility that there will be some R individuals who will grow up being able to

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do certain things and looking as though they understand them when in reality they only have learned to do them. (More about his later)

On the other hand, if he begins to move up on the Similarities subtest it is an indication that he is beginning to develop a certain kind of cautiousness, a certain kind of care. Now then, we begin to move because the Similarity subtest is essentially an F individual's test. Doing well on the similarities subtest in and of itself, it not necessarily an indication of any compensation. It is an indication of exploitation. The individual is continuing to be F if he is cunning on the Similarities subtest he does them rather efficiently, rather well and pretty/up to his Normal Level. On the other hand if you've got the F individual and you're sure that it's an F individual and he begins to do badly on the Similarities Subtest, doing badly on the Similarities subtest theoretically at least it takes effort for the F individual to do badly on the Similarities in the same way that it takes effort for the R individual to do well on the Similarities. Therefore in the compensatory direction, that is in the direction of somebody reacting against or compensating against F tendencies a lowering of the Similarities is more likely to indicate a compensation against the R tendencies than it is a heightening. Now that's the reason that when you get the score and of getting the formula in relationship to this there is an R line and an F line for Similarities because there's a difference in direction that you've got to take into account in order to get some kind of an idea of how the person is operating.