Marta van de Mond

EPSE 421

February 17, 2013

Summary and Reaction to Woodcock-Johnson Third Edition, Tests of Achievement

Practice Assignment

Charlie Chaplin and I met at Westview Secondary School on February 17, 2013. It was Sunday and I chose the newly renovated classroom with minimal distractions. I even turned off the computers to get rid of the humming white noise. Charlie had a good breakfast prior to his arrival and we began the testing about 10 am.

Charlie began the testing with interest and cooperation. During the Test 1 – Letter-Word Identification he attempted all the words and was interested in meaning of the ones, he did not recognize.

During the Test 2 – Reading Fluency Charlie was surprised by more pages to come, but not discouraged. He verbalized through the test saying yes and no as he answered the questions.

The Test 3 – Story Recall did not seem to create much struggle at all.

By the Test 4 – Understanding Directions, even though Charlie did well, he was more fidgety and yawned frequently. Following this test Charlie took a walk and got a Fresca pop from the vent machine.

Test 5 – Calculation was more challenging. Charlie began the test with a mistake of subtracting instead of adding, but then he was fine, so I could easily established his basal. As he kept on working, he drank more and wondered how far he had to go with the test. The real frustration began following question # 17. Charlie was encouraged to try and skip the ones he was struggling with. He managed to do two more questions after that, but was frustrated to the point of pulling his hair. His last answer was # 23 before reaching six consecutive ceiling points.

The lowest score was Test 6, Math Fluency. Charlie did not make any mistakes, but got as far as 28 answers. He was still recuperating from the previous challenge.

During Test 7 – Spelling Charlie sometimes drew heavily on the paper while being frustrated if he did not know the correct spelling; otherwise, he did fairly well.

During Test 8 Writing Fluency, Charlie was mostly angry and although he used capital letters and punctuation in the sample questions, he did not seem to care about them during the testing. Again, fluency was not his strong suite.

Despite of previous stress, Charlie could focus on the passage comprehension for his Test 9 – Passage Comprehension. Following the test he was asking how much longer we have to do testing.

He did well in Test 10 – Applied Problems as well – he scored fairly close to his actual age. Charlie had a challenge sitting up. He was quite restless at times. Although pencil and paper were provided later, Charlie chose not to use them – he used fingers and his head for counting, figuring the questions out.

The Test 11 – Writing Samples proved to be a breaking point of Charlie’s patience. By then he worked for about three hours already and struggled a number of times with fatigue and workload. Not to mention that I made a mistake, which I will describe later in this summary. By # 16 we interrupted the test because the content of Charlie’s writing and his general mood were deteriorating quickly. Charlie had a cry, chocolate bar, and water in this order and sat in the beanbag chair for a few minutes to regain his sanity. Although he did better upon his return, by # 20 he started hitting himself and we stopped the test. He was resting his head on the table during much of the test while writing.

Test 13 – Word Attack went well – I think Charlie found pronouncing “weird” words interesting.

Test 14 – Picture Vocabulary – also was quite successful.

Test 15 – Oral Comprehension was fine; Charlie complained about feeling cold at some point.

Tests 16 – Editing, 17 – Reading Vocabulary, 19 – Academic Knowledge went well.

Test 20 – Spelling of Sounds was a little more challenging in results, but fine and Test 21 – Sound Awareness was a successful ending.

I made a few mistakes in administration. For Test 11 I missed the boxed criteria for the age bracket. I originally thought Charlie had to complete the whole test and found in time that that was not the case. At that point my test subject was beyond frustrated though. Another mistake I made was in Test 10 – Applied Problems, during which I did not start Charlie up with paper and pencil, but gave it to him when things became more difficult – he never used them. Also, for marking Test 11, I scored it again, since I think originally I was too generous.

Despite of my subject’s stress, I kept calm and tried to follow the directions of what I was allowed to do (say) and not to do by the tests’ requirements. Overall, Charlie was very cooperative even though the effort and the length of tests were sometimes excruciating. The environment was quiet, free of distractions, and we did not see/hear anybody in the building – there were no interruptions.

I would never do the entire test in one session – Charlie witnessed a child abuse to some extent. The test took about five hours. Even adults cannot stand this kind of pressure and effort much of the time.

I also would begin with more challenging tests based on the knowledge of the child to make sure that he is not too tired and the time/effort consuming tests are not left to the very end of testing. Would I be able to juggle the test order?

Overall, the Woodcock-Johnson III testing is a comprehensive tool. I can see how the environment, a child’s mental and physical well being, and a tester’s patience and attitude could alter the results. Charlie’s strength is writing. I understand that he is an amazing, creative writer, so some scores from this test tested Charlie’s fatigue, not abilities. He surely scored well in fatigue level. I may add that Charlie ended up sick following that Sunday and it took him over a week to feel better again. This test should be split to at least seven sessions.

I do feel ready and more aware of testing procedure in general. Thank you for letting me to participate in this interesting project.