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Assessment Report

NAME:
AGE:
SEX: Female
DATE OF BIRTH:
EXAMINER: Kurt Andrew Weber, Ph.D.
REPORT DATE:

Tests Administered:

Clinical Interview
Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children -- Third Edition (WISC-III)
Woodcock-Johnson III (WJ-III)
Nelson-Denny Reading Test

REASON FOR REFERRAL FOR TESTING:

Y's parents requested the current psychological assessment because of continued concerns about her ability to perform in academic environments. Y is to begin high school in the fall, and current assessment was desired to generate a better sense of her current level of functioning in preparation for entering the new phase in her academic career.

Prior to her previous psychological assessment (performed in November of 1997), Y's elementary school teachers reported that Y appeared somewhat limited in her motor skills as well as in her ability to read basic sight words, spell words effectively, and express herself in writing in sequential order. Despite these apparent difficulties, Y's grades and behavior were described in the original report as being very good, and no evidence was provided to contradict this in the time since the last assessment.

Y lives with her mother and father in a family that includes her brother. Her mother is a professional woman, and her father is a businessman. Her parents report no occurrence of outstanding trauma or stress in the routine functioning of the family. Outside of the concerns identified in the earlier assessment, there exists no family history of learning problems.

According to the earlier assessment, Y's mother developed gestational diabetes during pregnancy. Her birth weight and delivery were within normal parameters. However, when Y was sixteen months old, she developed otitis media, which required the implantation of drainage tubes in her auditory canal.

Y is a delightful young lady who appeared to be invested in the assessment process. She was able to establish rapport with the examiner easily.

Results

WECHSLER INTELLIGENCE SCALE for Children -- THIRD EDITION (WISC-III)

Subtest Scores			
Verbal Subtests			
	SS		
Information	14		
Similarities	11		
Arithmetic	10		
Vocabulary	12		
Comprehension	13		
Digit Span (optional)	5		
Performance Subtests			
	SS		
Picture Completion	11		
Coding	9		
Picture Arrangement	12		
Block Design	10		
Object Assembly	10		
Symbol Search (optional)	12		
Mazes (optional)	11		
Scale	IQ	PR	Description
Verbal	112	79	High Average
Performance	103	58	Average
Full Scale	108	70	Average
Index Scores Summary			
Index	Index Score	PR	
Verbal Comprehension	114	82	
Perceptual Organization	105	63	
Freedom from Distraction	87	19	
Processing Speed	104	61	

Y's IQ scores, as measured by her Full Scale IQ (FSIQ) of 108, show her general cognitive ability to be in the Average range of intellectual functioning. Her verbal reasoning abilities, as measured by the Verbal IQ score, are also in the Average range. Her high scores on the Information and Comprehension subtests suggest that these are her strongest attributes among the profile of verbal reasoning abilities.

Her lowest score was on the Digit Span subtest. The Digit Span subtest does not contribute to the Verbal IQ Scale but does contribute to the Freedom from Distractability index. Her low score suggests that there is reason for concern in organizing and maintaining information which is received via auditory pathways in short-term memory stores. This can be manifested in an inability to retain complicated auditory information (e.g., directions concerning instructions on how to perform a series of algebraic procedures to obtain the correct response) for even a short period of time.

Y's scores on the Verbal Comprehension Index (SS = 112) are in keeping with her FSIQ of 108. Her nonverbal

reasoning abilities, as measured by the Performance IQ, are slightly lower than her Verbal IQ scores. Her Performance IQ scores fall in the Average range.

The highest scores achieved in the series of tests that comprise the Performance IQ were on the Picture Arrangement and Symbol Search subtests. These indicate potential strengths in perceptual organization and processing speed. However, her Coding score, which is also a measure of processing speed, may indicate a relative weakness in her ability to process information quickly. The two subtests differ in that on the Coding subtest, the subject is required to choose from a series of ten symbols to match the given digit; this requires the examinee to actually create responses rather than simply recognizing them. A lower score on the Coding subtest may indicate concerns with motor skills, and may be manifested in a less-than-expected ability to copy written material quickly and accurately from a chalkboard or other visual source, and perhaps may result in the inaccurate recording of letters, numbers and symbols through transposition. On the Symbol Search subtest, the subject's task is to choose whether either of two symbols is present in another group of five symbols, thereby requiring solely recognition rather than creation of responses. This suggests that the Coding subtest measures different skills than the Symbol Search subtest; her results indicate that she may be able to generate responses at a slower rate than she is able to recognize correct responses from a prepared list.

Of her index scores, Y's scores on the Verbal Comprehension Index (SS = 114) show above-average ability on verbal tasks. However, her Freedom from Distractibility Index (SS = 87) appears to be the element of the results of the WISC-III that is most worthy of notice. It is below what might be expected from her other intellectual abilities, and falls nearly one and one-half standard deviations below her FSIQ score of 108. This suggests some concerns with remaining on task for extended periods of time, and may indicate a need for testing in quiet, private settings in which distractions will be at a minimum.

Y also underwent a WISC-III in November of 1997. The results are similar to her previous administration. At that time, her Perceptual Organization Index score was measured at a scaled score of 100, while her Freedom from Distractibility index was measured by a scaled score of 93. Since not all of the optional tests were administered, no comparison can be made between her Symbol Search and Mazes subtest scores and her Processing Speed Index.

It should be noted that Y's scores are generated after being compared with others at her age level. The following assessment measures, the Woodcock-Johnson III and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test, generate standard scores on the basis of comparison with others in the same grade.

WOODCOCK-JOHNSON III Tests of Cognitive Ability

Her Woodcock-Johnson III scores were compared with those of her grade level (8-6). The complete report of her Woodcock-Johnson III scores is found at the conclusion of this report.

Cognitive Tests	SS
Verbal Comprehension	102
Visual-Auditory Learning	116
Spatial Relations	93
Sound Blending	90
Concept Formation	101
Visual Matching	94
Numbers Reversed	90
Incomplete Words	99
Auditory Working Memory	107

It appears that some of her results on the subtests are in keeping with her FSIQ of 108. However, some are more

than one standard deviation below what would be expected.

Verbal Comprehension

Her Verbal Comprehension score, which reflects the ability to generate vocabulary words from pictures, synonyms from words presented verbally, antonyms from words presented verbally, and to complete correctly verbal analogies such as “eye is to see, as ear is to...” The verbal analogies are presented visually as well as orally. Her score reflected a competence in these skills appropriate to her grade level. However, she seemed to start slowly, responding incorrectly to two of the first five items, which included relatively easy questions such as synonyms for “begin” (for which she replied “first”) and “we” (for which she supplied the antonym “they”).

Visual-Auditory Learning

Visual-Auditory Learning is a test that measures long-term storage and the ability to retrieve information about associations made between pictographic images and words. In the Visual-Auditory Learning test, the examinee is to identify a word after being presented with a verbal cue and a symbol. At first, the symbols roughly resemble crude stick figures of the word in question, but become more vague over the course of the test.

Her score on Visual-Auditory Learning is her highest on any of the cognitive tests. She performed extremely well on this test, even after a thirty-minute delay. This suggests that her ability to keep things in long-term memory is sound, and represents a cognitive strength, provided the information is clearly and precisely presented in multiple modalities (verbally as well as visually) and its meaning is made clear.

Spatial Relations

In the Spatial Relations test, the examinee is asked to identify two or more pieces that comprise an image. The image remain available to examinees while they determine which elements are incorporated in it. Y's score suggests a slight inability in visuospatial skills.

Sound Blending

Perhaps of greatest concern is her score on Sound Blending. In the Sound Blending test, the examinee is presented with auditory stimuli in which complete words are presented one phoneme at a time. The examinee is to synthesize the word, and say back the entire word to the examiner. Her low score suggests that she lacks the ability to do this effectively, which may be manifested in an inability to rapidly sound out, conceptualize and understand new words and experience difficulty in spelling. A low score on this test is also associated with reading disorders, especially dyslexia.

Concept Formation

In Concept Formation, examinees are to determine what rules govern the inclusion or exclusion of images that differ in size, color, shape and whether they are presented individually or in pairs. The Concept Formation test measures the ability to shift concepts and to make logical categorizations. Y scored as might be expected on the basis of her FSIQ and grade level, suggesting no current concerns in these areas.

Visual Matching

The Visual Matching test is a speed test, in that examinees are asked to perform a relatively easy task, and are not expected to complete all of the items within the time allotted. Examinees are to identify the identical numbers from within a set of five; the task becomes progressively more difficult as the numbers progress from single-digit to two-digit and finally to three-digit numbers. Visual Matching is in essence a test of processing speed in which the examinee is presented with numbers.

Y's standard score is moderately below what may be expected given her FSIQ and Processing Speed Index from the administration of the WISC-III. This may be due to the progressively more difficult nature of the task. In addition, the Visual Matching test requires a three-minute response time, as opposed to the two-minute response times in the Symbol Search and Coding subtests of the WISC-III, which comprise the Processing Speed Index score.

Numbers Reversed

Her score on the Numbers Reversed test confirms the concerns identified in the Digit Span subtest of the WISC-III. In the Numbers Reversed test, the examinee is asked to listen carefully to a series of numbers and restate them in reverse order to the examiner. While she fared slightly better on the Numbers Reversed test than on the Digit Span subtest, her scores continue to indicate concerns in effectively processing auditory information in short-term memory.

Incomplete Words

In the Incomplete Words test, the examinee is presented with auditory stimuli in which one or more phonemes are omitted from words; the examinee is to complete and say the word to the examiner. The test measures auditory processing, phonemic awareness and phonetic coding. Her score on this test indicates some mild concerns in these skills.

Auditory Working Memory

Auditory Working Memory is a test that measures short-term memory span and can be understood as a test of working memory and of divided attention. The examinee is presented with a series of digits and words, and is asked to present the information by stating the words in sequential order and then the numbers in order.

Her high score on this test appears to confound other scores that measure short-term memory, such as the Digit Span test from the WISC-III and the Numbers Reversed test from the WJ-III. The Auditory Working Memory task appears to be more difficult than the Digit Span subtest, which consists solely of numbers. An essential difference in the tasks is that on the previous tests, examinees are to present information in reverse order; this may provide some insight into the disparities on her performance in similar tasks.

WOODCOCK-JOHNSON III Tests of Achievement

Achievement Tests and Clusters	SS
Tests	
Letter-Word Identification	87
Reading Fluency	80
Story Recall	116
Understanding Directions	101
Calculation	108
Math Fluency	83
Spelling	90
Writing Fluency	95
Passage Comprehension	89
Applied Problems	99
Writing Samples	101
Word Attack	78
Handwriting	98

Letter-Word Identification

The Letter-Word Identification test requires examinees to correctly pronounce words that are presented on a page, devoid of context. It is a test of reading decoding ability. Her standard score of 87 represents a deficit when compared to her WISC-III Full Scale IQ of 108.

Reading Fluency

The Reading Fluency test is a timed speed test that requires individuals to read simple sentences quickly and determine if the statement is true or false by circling the word yes or the word no. It is a measure of reading speed, the degree of automaticity of the examinee's reading skills, and the rate at which the examinee takes tests. Her standard score of 80 suggests a deficit in these skills.

Story Recall

This test requires examinees to listen to a story and recall the basic elements that comprise it. Skills in both receptive and expressive language are required to perform the tasks. Story Recall measures linguistic competency, listening comprehension, semantic memory, and the development of basic language skills. Y performed very well on the test, suggesting strengths in these abilities.

Understanding Directions

The test requires examinees to listen to a specific sequence of audiotaped instructions and then follow the directions by pointing to elements of a colored image depicting a scene. The test measures the ability to listen and attend to directions as well as basic language development. Her score on the Understanding Directions test suggests that she performed at the level that would be expected given her FSIQ of 108.

Calculation

The Calculation test requires examinees to perform basic mathematical skills that are seen as fundamental to higher mathematics ability. The test is untimed. Her score of 108 is also in keeping with her general intelligence level.

Math Fluency

In the Math Fluency test, another speed test, the examinee is to solve simple problems involving addition, subtraction, and multiplication at their best possible rate. Her performance may indicate concerns with a lack of automaticity in mathematical ability or a slow processing speed.

Spelling

Quite simply, the Spelling test measures the examinee's ability to spell words correctly. Her standard score of 90 suggests concerns related to phonological coding as well as to orthographic coding.

Writing Fluency

The Writing Fluency test is a timed speed test that requires examinees to generate simple sentences with appropriate English syntactical skills. The test measures skills in processing speed. While her Writing Fluency standard score was above that of Math Fluency or Reading Fluency, it still falls short of expected levels when seen in light of Y's FSIQ.

Passage Comprehension

In the Passage Comprehension test, the examinee reads a passage silently and provides a missing word that will make sense in context. It is a measure of reading comprehension and linguistic knowledge, and requires the examinee to use clues of syntax and meaning to comprehend contextual information. Her score of 89 suggests concerns in these areas.

Applied Problems

In the Applied Problems test, the examinee must analyze and solve practical mathematics problems. The test is a measure of quantitative reasoning, math achievement, and math knowledge. The test is specific in measuring mathematics concerns because no reading is involved. Her score on the Applied Problems test is in line with what would be expected given her FSIQ.

Writing Samples

The Writing Samples test requires examinees to generate meaningful written sentences in response to various cues. Her Writing Samples standard score is moderately below what would be expected given her intelligence.

Word Attack

The test requires examinees to read aloud nonsense words that follow regular phonic patterns. It measures phonological coding, and knowledge of the relationship between phonemes and grapheme is essential to the task. The Word Attack test was administered because of its usefulness in confirming a general diagnosis of Reading Disorder and a more specific diagnosis of dyslexia. Her standard score of 78 on the Word Attack test suggests significant concerns in her ability to perform the above tasks, and when seen in conjunction with the other tests in the battery, suggests more fully that Y should be diagnosed as a person with dyslexia.

Handwriting

Her handwriting skills show little or no concern at the present time, and are judged to have not interfered with her ability to perform the tasks in the battery,

Special Purpose Clusters	SS
Oral Language	107
Total Achievement	90
Broad Reading	82
Broad Math	98
Broad Written Language	92
Basic Reading Skills	82
Written Expression	96
Academic Fluency	84
Academic Applications	95

Oral Language

The Oral Language cluster is comprised of the Story Recall and Understanding Directions tests. Her score suggests that her ability is comparable to what would be expected in someone of Y's intelligence, and no concerns are identified.

Total Achievement

The Total Achievement cluster score is composed of nine tests in the standard achievement battery. These tests are Letter-Word Identification, Reading Fluency, Passage Comprehension, Calculation, Math Fluency, Applied Problems, Spelling, Writing Fluency, and Writing Samples. The purpose of the Total Achievement score is to provide a general academic proficiency score that represents a global perspective of the individual's overall performance across various domains.

Broad Reading

The Broad Reading cluster is made up of Letter-Word Identification, Reading Fluency and Passage Comprehension, and provides a overview of the examinee's reading abilities. Her low score suggests concerns in her ability to effectively internalize, comprehend and process reading material.

Broad Math

Calculation, Math Fluency and Applied Problems make up the Broad Math cluster score, which provides a general assessment of the examinee's math achievement level. While her score is markedly above her Broad Reading score, it still is not at the level suggested by her overall intelligence.

Broad Written Language

The Broad Written Language cluster score is made up of the Spelling, Writing Fluency, and Writing Samples tests. As in the Broad Reading and Broad Math clusters, this cluster provides a broad view of the examinee's written language achievement. While this score is also markedly above her Broad Reading score, it still represents a decline from expected levels for someone of her intelligence.

Basic Reading Skills

This cluster is composed of Word Attack and Letter-Word Identification. It measures both sight-word recognition and phonic skills, and provides useful information for diagnosing a specific reading disorder such as dyslexia. Her score, as in the Broad Reading cluster, reflects a deficit in processing reading material.

Written Expression

Writing Samples and Writing Fluency make up the Written Expression cluster. Her moderately lower than expected score suggests concerns with basic writing skills or limited reading skills.

Academic Fluency

The Academic Fluency score provides a measure of the automaticity of reading, writing and math skills. Her low score suggests concerns in her processing speed.

Academic Applications

Her score on Academic Applications, a measure of her ability to apply academic knowledge, is somewhat below what would be expected in someone of her intelligence. The Passage Comprehension, Applied Problems, and Writing Samples tests comprise this cluster score. This suggests that she has a deficit in applying her knowledge on tasks that are a part of standard academic environments.

NELSON-DENNY READING TEST

Form G

Regular Administration

	Raw	PR	Std Score	GE	Stanine
Vocabulary	24	27	91	6.9	4
Comprehension	48	78	111	12.9	7
Total	72	60	104	9.7	6

Extended-time	Raw	PR	Std Score	GE	Stanine
Vocabulary	32	38	96	7.9	4
Comprehension	58	70	108	11.1	6
Total	90	54	102	9.3	5
Reading Rate	232	90	119	n/a*	8

* 'n/a' indicates that the authors of the Nelson-Denny Reading Test provide no grade equivalent scores for reading rate, and not the absence of relevant data.

The extended-time administration was performed in the following manner. At the point in the administration where the standard administration was to have concluded, her place on the answer sheet was indicated. When the test was completed, raw scores for both the Vocabulary and Comprehension scores under both standard and nonstandard parameters were then generated. This was done to be able to make comparisons between the standard and nonstandard administrations of the Nelson-Denny without having to administer the test a second time, thereby allowing for spurious data that are affected by her taking the same inventory multiple times.

Her Vocabulary scores improved somewhat when administered under the extended-time parameters, increasing by an entire grade level. However, her Comprehension scores were diminished by an entire grade level, suggesting little or no benefit to granting of extended time for improving her ability to comprehend written material. In addition, Y completed the Comprehension section with eight minutes and 44 seconds remaining in the extended-time administration of the Nelson-Denny.

Concerns exist about the reading rate score generated by the administration of the Nelson-Denny, which appears to be in excess of what would be expected when compared with other measures of reading fluency from other elements of the psychological assessment. It is possible that, in an attempt to appear more competent than she felt she was appearing, she reported that she had progressed further in her reading at the one-minute mark, at which time the reading rate is recorded, than she actually had. Other measures that record rates of processing require the examinee to provide objective measures of progress, unlike the self-reported reading rate generated in the Nelson-Denny.

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

Scores generated from the administration of the Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children -- III, the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Cognitive Ability and Tests of Achievement, and the Nelson-Denny Reading Test are also taken into account, clear patterns emerge that do warrant the diagnosis of a learning disability. The specific disorder is characterized as a Reading Disorder, specifically dyslexia. The low scores on tests and subtests that identify concerns in reading decoding ability and phonological processing (specifically the WJ-III tests of Word Attack, Sound Blending and Letter-Word Identification), when seen in conjunction with her ability patterns as

identified by Y's parents and teachers, describe a pattern of deficits characteristic of individuals with dyslexia.

This diagnosis is made in light of individual test and subtest scores as well as in consideration of specific cluster scores. In addition, elements from her past history indicate the chronic nature of her concerns.

The formal diagnosis, according to the criteria set forth in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of the American Psychiatric Association, Fourth Edition (DSM-IV) is

315.00 Reading Disorder

RECOMMENDATIONS

(1) Her diagnosis of Reading Disorder, when seen in conjunction with other tests that measure fluency and processing speed on academic tasks, qualifies her to receive one and one-half the normal allotted time for examinations and in-class assignments.

(2) In addition, her tests should be administered in a separate room, in an environment that allows her the most freedom from distraction. This will also provide her with a place to read test material aloud to herself without distracting others or attracting undue attention to herself.

(3) Y should also acquire her textbooks and all other reading materials as far in advance of due dates as possible. Her high school teachers can help in this manner by providing reading lists for upcoming semesters at the earliest possible date.

(4) Because of her reduced ability to read aloud effectively, Y should be given advance notice of upcoming requests for oral reading. These advance notifications should be made one day prior to the actual expected oral reading itself.

(5) The lower than expected WISC-III Coding subtest score suggests concerns in rapid motor skills, and may impair the ability of the examinee in completing written examinations within the allotted time. Y may benefit from learning keyboarding skills that can increase her ability to generate written output quickly and effectively. These courses are available and are generally offered through the school district in which the examinee resides, or are offered commercially. In addition, because of the concern over motor skill rate, she may benefit from being allowed to complete assignments and examinations with the aid of a word processor.

Also, because of her lower scores on the tests of the WJ-III that measure fluency, attention should be given to determine if Y displays deficits in her ability to attend for longer periods of time. The WJ-III fluency tests require a greater length of time in which the examinee must remain on task. It remains the judgment of the examiner that her lower scores were related to the nature of the tests and not to specific attention deficits. However, the possibility of attention concerns must not yet be ruled out.

(6) Y should become familiar with the works of a single author to enable her to develop her reading skills. The use of a single author will help her to become familiarized with literary patterns, and the consistent use of vocabulary found in multiple works from an individual author will help her to become more familiar through repetition of new words.

(7) Y also should work to overdevelop her auditory skills through efforts at trying to decode words that are unfamiliar and through reading aloud whenever possible. In addition, Y should allow others (perhaps family members such as her mother) to read aloud to her.

(8) Y should also practice "pre-reading." This involves reading glossaries and lists of key terms first, defining

them, and making flash cards of the words before reading the actual text itself. This will enable her to have a greater familiarity with new words upon the actual reading of the material, providing for greater understanding and retention.

(9) If she has not yet begun formal educational classes in a foreign language, she should choose Latin for her foreign language requirements while in high school and beyond. Latin provides more structured declensions and conjugations than many foreign languages, forms the basis for much of present-day English, and almost certainly will not require a spoken component. All of these elements will work in Y's favor in her academic development. If she has begun formal education in Spanish or another foreign language, she should by all means continue in the same language to utilize the foundation already built.

In addition, she should take College Level Examination Program (CLEP) examinations immediately after completing her high school foreign language component. While the CLEP program has upper limits on the amount of education one can receive before attempting the examination, it does not have lower limits; students can take the exam at any point previous to enrollment in college as well as during their undergraduate years. Taking the CLEP examination as soon as is appropriate will minimize the amount of material lost or forgotten through misuse, thereby maximizing the chances of successfully being granted college credit and avoiding the rigors of college-level foreign language requirements.

(10) It is recommended that Y gain access to any and all resources available to individuals with dyslexia. She should become a member of Recordings for the Blind and Dyslexic (www.rfbd.org/Units/Texas_Unit.htm), and should advocate for her high school to become an institutional member if it is not already so. In addition, the State of Texas has specialized programs to assist in the education of learning disabled individuals. One such listing of state resources can be found at the following URL:

<http://novel.nifl.gov/nifl/ld/states/tx.html#International%20Dyslexia%20Society/TX>

(11) Perhaps most importantly, Y should take all necessary steps to obtain specialized instruction in overcoming the potentially limiting effects of her dyslexia. This involves gaining access to reading programs such as those offered through the Scottish Rite Learning Center of South Texas (P.O. Box 2239, San Antonio, Texas, 78298-2239 -- telephone: (210) 222-0133) and Baylor University. In addition, videotape- and computer-based programs are offered through private companies such as SofDesign (www.sofdesign.com/dyslexia/) and Kurzweil and may also be of benefit to Y. Such computer programs enable the individuals to read text until a word is not known; the individual can highlight the unknown word and have the computer generate its correct pronunciation. Other suggested programs include the Lindamood-Bell instructional program (www.lblp.com/), the Orton-Gillingham approach for the treatment of dyslexia (www.ortonacademy.org/) and the Wilson Language Training program (www.wilsonlanguage.com/about.html).

Y will benefit most fully from immediate efforts aimed at improving her overall reading skills. All efforts must be initiated in a prompt manner to ensure most fully that she can enter high school and be immediately effective.

Kurt Andrew Weber, Ph.D.
Examiner