

Loevinger J & Wessler R. *Measuring ego development. Volume 1. Construction and use of a sentence completion test.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970. 245 p. [Washington University, St. Louis, MO]

This book presents the concept of ego development and how its stages are reflected in sentence completions. Also presented are steps in constructing the scoring manual,¹ its evaluation, instructions for raters, and self-training exercises for new raters. [The *Social Sciences Citation Index*[®] (SSCI[®]) indicates that this book has been cited in over 310 publications since 1970.]

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When I completed work on the Family Problems Scale,² an objective personality test, I did not intend to construct another test. However, a graduate student, Elizabeth Nettles, decided to validate the Family Problems Scale's interpretation in terms of ego development, using a sentence completion test. I warned her that she was getting into a hornet's nest.

To complete her project, we needed a tentative scoring manual. We postulated four levels of ego development that could be measured by sentence completions; these almost corresponded to what we now call the Impulsive, Conformist, Conscientious, and Autonomous stages.³ The first manual consisted of one page for each sentence stem; each page had examples of each stage on it. We mimeographed the manual, but one more look convinced me that it was useless for rating a new set of responses. This *exemplar manual*, which was like many manuals for other projective tests, was discarded because it provided no clue as to why a response was rated as it was.

The next version was the *categorized manual*. All responses at the same stage for one stem were grouped into categories. The name of the category brought out the common element that determined the rating. Later, we added a statement for each stem and for most stages of most stems explaining the rationale behind the assignment of the categories to that stage. Also, we added cross-references to categories at different stages that were most easily confused with the given one.

The published version is a *rationalized category manual*, though for most categories the final placement was decided by a method of internal consistency. Theoretically, the empirical and the logical placement should coincide. In most cases they do, but critics have argued that some of our empirical scoring decisions are not logical enough. This was probably the first scoring manual for any projective test to attempt both logical and empirical justification of ratings.

The use of data to ratify rating of responses is made possible by grouping responses into categories; this is a second use for the categories. No data can help with rating the unique, nonreplicated responses that clinicians love.

The third use of the categories is to further theoretical insights. When enough data about enough sentence stems given to enough different kinds of subjects are amassed, some general conclusions begin to emerge.⁴ One result has been refinement of the ego development scale, which now has about 10 points instead of the original 4.

The book was turned down by several publishers. The current use of the test reflects its good reliability when used by trained raters in many studies and its satisfactory validity.⁵ The test's popularity may result from its giving a more or less quantitative index to an aspect of personality as a whole.

1. Loevinger J, Wessler R & Redmore C. *Measuring ego development. Volume 2. Scoring manual for women and girls.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1970. 457 p. (Cited 95 times.)
2. Loevinger J. Measuring personality patterns of women. *Genet. Psychol. Monogr.* 65:53-136, 1962. (Cited 10 times.)
3. *Ego development: conceptions and theories.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976. 504 p. (Cited 260 times.)
4. Construct validity of the sentence completion test of ego development. *Appl. Psychol. Meas.* 3:281-311, 1979.
5. On the self and predicting behavior. (Zucker R A, Aronoff J & Rabin A I, eds.) *Personality and the prediction of behavior.* New York: Academic Press, 1984. p. 43-68.