SYNTHESIS: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER
AHAF/AAHA Conference 1992
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I. INTRODUCTION

   A. SYNTHESIS (Dictionary definition provided on handout, "Improving Report")

      1. A process of **Measuring, Interpreting**, and **Reporting**

      2. Emphasis is on the comprehensive written or oral report (not checkchart/traitlist)

      3. Like **recipe**, must know ingredients and mix them in correct amounts and in order. Tastes vary. A mixture of erroneous or unrelated ingredients ruins the recipe.

   B. PERSONAL OBSERVATIONS

      1. Can measure and attach indiv. meanings but weak on patterns & reporting.

      2. Evident in our products: Journals, Certification exams, Texts, Lectures, Lack of acceptance/recognition by the public and other profession.

        Will provide specific examples from these later.

      3. The majority of graphologists, as indicated on the Educational Survey, want a specified program of quality education with more attention given to **basics, synthesis**, and **applications**.

      4. Main problem with non-graphologists is a closed mind.

      5. Main problem with graphologists is lack of education and experience.

   D. SYNTHESIS OR FINAL REPORT - ANSWERS THE CLIENT'S QUESTIONS AND FULFILS HIS OR HER OBJECTIVES.

   E. REVIEW OF MAJOR TEXTS (HANDOUT) - ESP. BARUCH LA-ZEW-NIK

II. IMPROVING THE HANDWRITING REPORT (SYNTHESIS) - Will discuss each point on HANDOUT and then apply them to a client analysis.

   A. PSYCHOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK - METHODS OF DEFINING & PREDICTING BEHAVIOR

      1. Felix Klein emphasized this in his workshop at AAHA Conference in 90.

      2. Graphology is one of the best **tools** for identifying personality characteristics; it is not a psychological theory or framework.

         a. It provides insight. A SPOKE, NOT THE WHEEL

b. Charts, graphs, and other displays do not necessarily represent a psychological framework. More a collection of measurements. The interpretation of the display comes from the framework.

c. Other tools include interview, observation, dream interpretation, psychological and aptitude testing.

3. GRAPHOLOGIST ROLE IN HELPING PROFESSIONS

a. Provide information to others who are engaged in helping professions (e.g. consulting, counseling, teaching, medicine, law)

b. Provide helping service ourselves.

c. In #1 need graphology training; In #2 need applicable training.

d. Knowledge of PERSONALITY THEORIES **or framework** neces in either case.

e. Psychology and Sociology - primary disciplines concerned with individual and group behavior.

f. Enriched by own area of interest and experience - art, history, business, engineering, medicine, education, etc.

g. Psychological framework like a framework of a house. Each room represents a speciality or theory and there can be one big room or many rooms. Each door can have a different label--psychologist, arbitrator, graphologist--depending on the speciality chosen. Each room is part of the overall framework.

It takes considerable talent, training, and experience to occupy several rooms.

h. It is through our framework that we interpret and report upon what we find in the script. OUR FRAMEWORK AFFECTS THE ANSWERS WE GIVE TO THE CLIENT. THE ANSWERS MUST MEET THE CLIENT 'S OBJECTIVES AND BE UNDERSTOOD BY THE CLIENT. (**Three Worlds of Therapy**)

i. Personal Framework - Each has own. Agree with B.R. Hergenhahn, author of **An Introduction To Theories of Personality**, there is value in each.

j. An inadequate framework results in statements like:

"Yet she has great promise of personality and mentality to give her strength in the future."

"He is able to see both sides of an issue, which gives him an advantage over gullible people. This allows him to be deceitful and conniving. For him this is a defensive reaction. (later) He is a self-reliant person and he uses caution where emotions are concerned."

"Utilizing strong goal direction while maintaining your own viewpoints are helping to keep a moderate amount of control that is necessary in your life."

B. KNOWLEDGE OF GRAPHOLOGY.

1. Students face the dilemma of sorting through conflicting, outdated, often inaccurate materials in both texts and courses. Task is to identify what is accurate and will work.

2. Graphology, like much of human behavior, is based primarily on experience or **empirical proof**. Some proofs are accurate and valuable, others lack consistency and validity. **Scientific research** in the U.S. is limited in amount and quality.

3. As a minimum, graphologists should:

   a. Be able to identify major graphological indicators and their meaning.

   b. Use a standard terminology that expresses meaning clearly.

   c. Know the requirements for an adequate sample. Saudek covers in detail.

      (1) Information about writer - health, writing maturity, educ. level
      (2) Writing situation - instrument, paper, surface.
      (3) Samples over time.

   d. Be able to recognize and explain conflicting indicators:

   Examples: *"He tends to be conservative and reserved...He shows an uninhibited and carefree attitude."*

   "Your tendency is to maintain a low profile. You may be modest or shy and prefer to remain behind the scenes and avoid socializing." 6 Lines later, *"Usually you are a good mixer who can easily make contact in social situations and maintain relationships on a common sense basis."*

   e. Have a basic knowledge of empiric and scientific evidence that supports graphology.

   f. Be aware of the reliability and validity of their findings. How accurate? What feedback do you receive that verifies your findings?

   g. Question statements and data that appear inaccurate.

      (1) Saudek questioned and disagreed with Klages.

      (2) Questionable Areas - Zonal theory, Determining dishonesty, Various definitions and terms (felon's claw, shark's tooth, secondary width and pressure)

C. REPORT BASED ON THE SAMPLES PROVIDED.

D. BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT WRITER - WHAT IS THE SITUATION?

1. More info obtained, the better able to meet client goals.

2. Methods mentioned above (h/w, **interview**, tests)

3. Info from significant others.

E. TAILOR REPORT TO MEET CLIENT'S OBJECTIVES

1. Recognize own views influence. Report may tell more about the analyst.

2. If the objective is not clear, ask. Help client clarify.

F. ORGANIZE REPORT - BEHAVIORAL PATTERNS

1. Sections follow a logical sequence and support objectives.

2. Content properly placed in each section.

3. Sentences support theme of paragraph and sections.

G. USE LANGUAGE CLIENT CAN UNDERSTAND

1. Client's backgnd info indicates level.

2. Use simple language. Avoid jargon and pretentious abstractions.

Example: *"Furthermore, the dominantly lower zone writer will feel that dominant upper zone and middle zone writers cause 'Tension of Promise' (the anticipation of excitement) and the 'Return of Nothing' (the lack of delivering upon the promise), although the former will consider 'Returns', i.e., the fulfilment of promise, as having been met with abstrat and ethereal properties, and the latter will view 'Returns' as having been met when his actions served himself."* 70 words of confusing gibberish.

3. Avoid overused phrases and sentences (e.g. *heavy pressure -you remember emotional experiences for a long time.*)

4. Avoid mixture of unrelated subjects: "*You are generally modest and not over materialistic.*" or "*His tastes are simple and his imagination and fantasies are conservative.*" (also contradictory statement)

5. Meaningless statements: *"Your loyalities are strong where your faith has been earned."* or *"He operates mainly from habit."*

6. Incomplete sentences: "Instead just criticism of a negative nature."

7. Watch Killer Phrases - overusing negative. Charles Thompson in **What a Great Idea** notes: (Harper Perennial, NY 92)

   a. Parents use 18 neg statements to 1 pos, Teachers 12:1, National Media 6:1

   b. Defined **Seagull Mgt**: Swoops down on unsuspecting, dumps unpleasant information, then flys away.

   c. **Seagull Consultant**: Swoops in, eats your food, dumps on you, then flys away.

H. USE CORRECT GRAMMAR.

   1. Spelling - Computer spellcheck

   2. Use a dictionary and thesarus.

I. PROFESSIONAL FORMAT

   1. Typed - clear print - quality paper.

   2. Cover letter - Distinguish between what goes here and what in a report.

   3. If lengthy, expensive report, place in binder.

J. CRITIQUE YOUR WORK - Let it sit for a day.

   1. Have it proofread by another person.

   2. Run it through a computer grammar program.

INTRODUCTION

In my lecture at the joint AAHA-AHAF 1992 conference in Denver, I noted ten ways in which an analyst could enhance the synthesis process (see Table 1). Synthesis, according to the Random House Dictionary, is the combining of the constituent elements of separate material or abstract entities into a single or unified entity or complex whole. It is one of three basic tasks that is accomplished in compiling a report (the other two are measurement and analysis). After grading numerous certification exams, reading many texts and newsletters and listening to speakers over the years, I'm convinced that synthesis is the weak link in most reports. Dr. Baruch Lazewnik's text, **Handwriting Analysis, A Guide to Understanding Personalities**, is the only one I've seen that is devoted entirely to synthesizing trait-stroke with the global aspects of handwriting.

I believe that the most accomplished graphologists combine technical skills, such as those noted in Table 1, with their personal artistry to fulfil a client's objectives. Synthesis is an art to a large extent because it reflects the unique personality or style of the analyst. The technical skills, which underlie the artistry, can be learned by anyone with average intelligence and common sense. The artistry of graphologists such as Roman, Saudek, and Michon may be imitated, but I doubt that it can be mastered.

TEN INGREDIENTS FOR IMPROVING THE ANALYSIS.

In the interest of space, I will only discuss four of the more important items from Table 1. While organization, format, grammar and language are important elements of a professional report, helpful materials on these subjects are abundant. Examples in Table 2 illustrate the consequences of neglecting these areas.

1. Tailor the report to meet the client's objectives. In most cases, the purpose of the report is evident (e.g., vocational, compatibility, interpersonal issues); however, if the objectives are unclear, I help the client to clarify them. For example, when a client (see Figure 1) first requested an analysis to help her "find her correct path in harmony with her nature" and to help her find her "true identity," I asked her several questions to help her elaborate on these themes. I inquired about the primary purpose of the analysis, how she viewed her true identity and the circumstances of it being taken from her, her health, current vocation, family relationships, and whether there were any other specific issues or problems that she would like addressed. Her responses enabled me to prepare a report that was directed to these concerns. She has graciously permitted me to share her handwriting with you.

2. Obtain as much background information about the client and the situation as possible. Interviewing the client is the best way to obtain information vital to the report. The content of the sample also provides helpful clues. While the content of the sample in Figure 1 was the result of questions to my client, I would certainly use unsolicited information of this nature in a report. The analyst should also note how the content can affect the handwriting. For example, in this sample the lines of the final paragraph descend as she speaks of her father's death and of being taken care of by three sitters who spoke English, German, and Polish and then by her new grandmother, who spoke Czech/Slovak, at age four.

In addition to the interview, I use two psychological profiles: The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) and the Performax Personality Profile System (PPS). If applicable, I request that other family members take these profiles. It is also useful to have each spouse fill out the PPS as to how they see the other spouse. Comparing these with profiles of how they see themselves may reveal significant data about the relationship.

3. The analyst must have a solid, psychological framework. In his 1990 AAHA Conference workshop, Felix Klein said that at least 50% of the graphologist's knowledge must be in psychology. I maintain that graphology is a tool for providing insight into the psychological framework; *it is not a psychological framework itself.* A psychological framework involves a comprehensive theory of personality that describes such things as personality development, motivation, drives, communication processes, mental illness, defenses and compensations, and therapy methods. Graphs and devices (e.g., psychogram) are useful for plotting graphological measurements and for organizing data during the analysis, but they do not represent a psychological theory or framework. Without this framework, a tool such as handwriting analysis may not only be irrelevant, it may be harmful.

In her letter, my client states, "From what I understand, you get your identity in the years from 2-4." In answering her concern about her "true identity," it was helpful to have a knowledge of several major psycho- logical theories.

For example, I could offer Carl Jung's view that the individual is born whole, and remains so, to counter the depressing thought that her identity was either established or taken from her at this early age.

4. Have a thorough knowledge of graphology. Obviously we must know our business; however, learning it is often a haphazard process for the new graphologist. There is not a graphology curriculum or degree program that parallels those found in our colleges. It is a challenge for the student to find accurate, reliable materials and qualified, knowledgeable teachers. A few things the graphologist must know include: the history and physiology of handwriting, how writing developed, copybook systems, how writing is taught in our schools, the cause and indication of writing disorders, the major graphological indicators and their meanings, the requirements for an adequate sample, how to accurately measure all elements of the script, how to recognize and interpret conflicting indicators, the empirical and scientific evidence supporting graphology, and how to compile a report.

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1. Tailor the report to meet the clients objectives.
2. Obtain as much background information about the client and the situation as possible.
3. Have a solid, psychological framework.
4. Have a thorough knowledge of grapology.
5. Base the report on the samples and information provided. Assume nothing.
6. Organize the report according to the client's objectives.
7. Use language that the client can understand.
8. Use correct grammar.
9. Present the report in a professional manner.
10. Review your work.

Table 1. SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVING THE SYNTHESIS

MEASUREMENT AND ANALYSIS

I usually follow Klara Roman's approach since most measurements can be classified under Arrangement, Form, and Movement. I note exaggerations, areas of neglect and special items such as the PPI, signature, numbers, and content. I am careful with subjective measurements such as pressure, rhythm, fluency, and pastosity. The objective measurements in this sample, such as size, spacing and slant, can be easily made. I classify the rhythm as average; it flows smoothly and then hesitates occasionally (e.g., unfinished LZ loops, breaks, mending, retracing). This push-pull will also affect the speed. The pressure is light with some displacement to the upstrokes and horizontal strokes. The writing is sharper than pastose and more flexible than rigid. The style is modified copybook.

For me, analysis involves associating the graphological findings with psychological traits, characteristics, attitudes and behaviors. I note the supporting and conflicting indicators and I begin to compare the handwriting with the results of the MBTI, the PPS, and with the information provided by the client. As I measure and analyze the handwriting, I begin to identify patterns of behavior that fit within my psychological framework. In this case, both the handwriting and the two profiles pointed to a sensitive, "people-person."

The data generated through measuring and analyzing the handwriting can be used to justify the graphological findings (e.g., for an examination). If required to justify the psychological findings, one should be able to cite references from his or her own studies and framework. Obviously, references to medical findings, including mental disorders, are given only if one is qualified in these fields.

SYNTHESIS: PUTTING THE REPORT TOGETHER

As previously mentioned, the report is an artistic endeavor in that it is influenced by the personality of the analyst. For example, as an efficient, sensing-thinker (MBTI), I prefer a factual, problem-solving approach that doesn't mince words, so my reports tend to be factual and direct. They may be well-received by someone with similar views, but a feeling type may find my approach impersonal. Realizing this bias, I have a very talented colleague, JoNeal Scully, review my work and make pertinent inputs.

I organize the report according to the client's objectives, so reports often differ in format. The report for this client was organized into five sections which addressed two primary issues (identity and vocation). The five sections included: Background Considerations, Personality Description, PPS Interpretation, Vocation/Interests, and Summary. I also included brief introductory remarks at the beginning of the report.

In the Background section, I acknowledged my client's concern about her identity and noted the psychoanalytic viewpoint regarding the formative, childhood years. I also compared these views with those of Carl Jung and Eric Berne (Transactional Analysis). I noted that caring, intelligent people like herself are concerned with their own identify and purpose. I stated that Jung helps me remember that I am complete at any point in my development. My purpose was to acknowledge her feelings regarding her background, to recognze her positive personality characteristics that also represent her "true identity," and to introduce her to a psychological theory that is optimistic in regards to human development.

In the section on Personality, I referred to her handwriting, a previous and current MBTI, and the PPS. In the last two years she had changed from a sensing preference on the MBTI to an intuiting one (from ESFJ to ENFJ). All three profiles pointed to a friendly, people-oriented, intuitive personality. I mentioned possible conflicts that are likely to exist between early injunctions from significant others and her own inner feelings and intuitions that are currently emerging. I inserted a nice analogy in which JoNeal described the client's life as a dance and, how as she begins to dance to her own inner rhythms, it will be harder to stay "in step" with other partners who will want her to maintain the same dance (e.g., mother-in-law, husband, son). This analogy was written from a woman to a woman and it represents the art I spoke of above and again illustrates the value of having a colleague who can complement my work.

I noted that my client's major strength is her ability to interact effectively with others. Since I had given her the booklet, **Introduction To Types**, with her MBTI, I could refer to pertinent descriptions without having to repeat them in the report. As noted above, her handwriting supports the description of the ENFJ (there are many texts describing the MBTI typology that the reader may refer to). I told my client that she had a strong self-concept regarding her nuturing role as wife and mother, but she may not be so strong when standing up for herself. She has probably been raised, and admired, for being pleasant and taking care of others. I noted that pleasing others has its value, but that it can mean self-neglect and letting others take advantage of her.

In the section on the Personality Profile System, I discussed her scores in relation to her home, work, and social situations. Her husband and son had also taken the PPS and I discussed their patterns in relation to her own. Under the Vocation/Interest section, I used the PPS, MBTI and handwriting, to identify her strengths. These included interpersonal, human relations skills which would be valuable in areas such as teaching, counseling, and consulting and occupations where she would be of service to others. In the Summary, I indicated that a main theme in her personality is cooperation and that this attitude contributes to the harmony and well-being of society. I commented on the consequences of changing roles and noted my limitations of providing insight into her life issues in a single report.

SOME CLOSING THOUGHTS

Klara Roman believed that graphology relied on principles that are an integral part of psychology and that the analyst must be knowledgeable of psychological theory. She said this implies more than using the complex terminology of psychology. She felt the student should engage in handwriting research after graduate study in general and abnormal psychology, education, or social work. She noted the need for knowledge of the physiology of handwriting and that interpretation must rest on knowledge of biological and psychological make-up of the individual. She described a qualified graphologist as a well-rounded person acquainted with all strata of existence and aware of the full sweep of life.

While Ms. Roman's requirement to be "acquainted with all strata of existence and aware of the full sweep of life" is overly ambitious, I do believe analysts must understand the human behavior of which they speak. Statements, such as those found in Table 2, not only show our ignorance, they often have profound effects on the clients. The handwriting synthesis is truly more than the sum of its individual parts.

1. Inadequate psychological framework:

   "*Yet she has great promise of personality and mentality to give her strength in the future.*"

   "*He is able to see both sides of an issue, which gives him an advantage over gullible people. This allows him to be deceitful and conniving. For him this is a defensive reaction...He is a self-reliant person and he uses caution where emotions are concerned.*"

   "*He has overcompensated for his felt deficiencies by developing an acute sense of independence.*"

   "*He is trying but his self image is based on events, things he has done, and as time passes and this event fades from his mind his self image will return to its normal low.*"

2. No explanation for conflicting indicators:

   "*He tends to be conservative and reserved...He shows an uninhibited and carefree attitude.*"

   "*Your tendency is to maintain a low profile. You may be modest or shy and prefer to remain behind the scenes and avoid socializing.*" Six lines later, "*Usually you are a good mixer who can easily make contact in social situations and maintain elationships on a common sense basis.*"

3. Use of jargon, abstract language and awkward writing styles making it difficult for reader to understand:

   "*Furthermore, the dominantly lower zone writer will feel that dominant upper zone and middle zone writers cause 'Tension of Promise' (the anticipation of excitement) and the 'Return of Nothing' (the lack of delivering upon the promise), although the former will consider 'Returns', i.e., the fulfilment of promise, as having been met with abstract and ethereal properties, and the latter will view 'Returns' as having been met when his actions served himself.*"

   "*Regardless of the way he falls, keep in mind he can be gullible, he will second guess his final decision and wind up judging himself harshly.*" "*His first goal might be to learn to think and plan ahead to better keep his environment off of his tail. This could help in keeping his life problems routine.*"

4. Meaningless statements and incomplete sentences:

   "*He operates mainly from habit.*"

   "*Instead just criticism of a negative nature.*"

5. Mixture of unrelated subjects:

   "*You are generally modest and not overly materialistic.*"

   "*His tastes are simple and his imagination and fantasies are conservative.*"

   "*He is probably not critical because he needs time to assess a situation.*" and analyst continues later, "*He is quite flexible and shows his own indiviuduality to express original ideas but still remains socially discreet.*"

6. Contradictions within the same sentence:

   "*Although the control of his emotions is erratic at times, he is very controlled in the expression of them.*"

   "*While utilizing strong goal direction you may be inconsistent in your purposes.*"

Table 2. PROBLEMS IN THE WRITTEN SYNTHESIS (ACTUAL STATEMENTS OBSERVED)