

# **TAXONOMY OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES**

**and**

# **SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM**



**PORTLAND  
HABILITATION  
CENTER, INC.**

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For further information about the *Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives* or *Social Readiness Program*, or to explore a consultation, contact Ron at [info@rontalarico.com](mailto:info@rontalarico.com)



**REMEMBER**  
- he said to me -  
**WE ALL ARE ONE**  
*the waters of the womb are one*  
remember this  
and all the rest will come back to you

January 1982 / Talarico

***TO PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES***

Master Teachers  
of those of us  
whose own disabilities  
lie  
patiently  
waiting  
to be discovered

***THIS BOOK  
IS DEDICATED***



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## FOREWORD

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom and his colleagues published the **Taxonomy of Educational Objectives**.<sup>1</sup> The authors described the intent of the taxonomy as providing "for classification of the goals in our educational system." For over twenty-five years, the **Taxonomy of Educational Objectives** has been a very important reference book for teachers, researchers, administrators, and students in the fields of curriculum and evaluation. Bloom and his colleagues stated that the major purpose for the construction of the taxonomy was to provide a bridge for communication among professionals involved in the educational process. The classification of educational objectives included the cognitive and affective domains.

Similarly, yet many years later, the University of California, Los Angeles Neuropsychiatric Institute Research Group at Lanterman State Hospital (formerly Pacific State Hospital) in Pomona, California, became interested in the categorization of *behavioral* goals and objectives for individuals with exceptional needs. The research group studied assessment and training of adaptive behavior, independent living and vocational competencies of more than 20,000 individuals in state hospitals and community-based programs in twelve states.

In the process of data collection for the Individualized Data Base project, the staff of the research group found that:

(1) Diagnosis of adaptive behavior and independent living skills occurred frequently and consistently for a wide range of disabilities at all functioning levels in different community settings. However, *training* of behavioral skills was haphazard. Repeatedly, professionals expressed the necessity for categorization of goals and objectives for the teaching of behavior and skills necessary in our society to become functionally independent.

(2) When training occurred, teachers often concentrated on a particular skill and ignored the important behavioral principle, that antecedent maladaptive behavior may prevent learning and transfer of a new behavior.

While looking for a bridge to close the diagnostic-training gap, the staff of the research group became aware of the exciting work done at the Portland Habilitation Center, Inc., in Portland, Oregon. Indeed, it became clear that the **Social Readiness Program** and **Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives** authored by Ron Talarico and Francella Hewitt Slusher could provide teachers, professional specialists, students in credentialing programs, administrators, and curriculum designers with the tool for which they had been looking.

With 1,100 precisely sequenced, specific behavioral goals and objectives that can be fitted into any teaching situation, the **Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives** is the most comprehensive taxonomy available to educators teaching skills to individuals with exceptional needs.

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<sup>1</sup> A Committee of College and University Examiners. Bloom, B.S. (ed.). *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. London: Longman Group Ltd., 1956.



The **Social Readiness Program** provides for systematic monitoring, training, and maintaining of acceptable social behavior. For example, in the area of inter-personal behavior, eye contact needs to be established (*Social Readiness Program*) before an individual can be taught to turn a sweater right side out, show the I.D. card which would be used to cash a check, or identify how many cents are made by two quarters and six pennies (*Taxonomy*). The **Social Readiness Program** prepares the individual for training in any skill area.

The usual practice in the past has been to organize curriculum around categories of exceptionality which has resulted in programs for the mentally retarded, learning disabled, etc. The **Taxonomy** is a categorization of goals and therefore it is not concerned with deviations in development that result in a label (even though the term mentally handicapped appears in the title\*). Instead, it focuses on specific skills and behavior that need to be taught to individuals at various levels of functioning, regardless of the label used to classify the individual. It provides the sequences and steps which can be universally adapted to individual teaching styles and programmatic needs. This is especially important in our era of individualization in habilitation and education plans.

The **Taxonomy** is unique in its authenticity. The authors relied on their experience in teaching, and *performed* the behavior for each other whenever questions arose regarding the sequence of steps necessary to train a specific skill. This is in contrast with designing a program purely theoretically.

Today, there is a great concern in our society with teaching skills that prepare individuals to function independently. Yet no comprehensive categorization of goals and objectives in behavioral domains has been available to professionals. Ron Talarico and Francella Hewitt Slusher have done a great service. Because of their efforts, professionals can teach with more competence, and laypersons can work with more understanding. However, I believe that ultimately it will be the student and client who will reap the benefits from application of the **Social Readiness Program** and **Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives**.

Inge Pelzer, Ph.D.  
District Learning Disabilities Specialist  
Chaffey Community College  
Alta Loma, California

Visiting Lecturer, School of Education  
University of California, Riverside

1982  
(original foreword)

\*Authors' note: The title of the original work, for which this foreword was written, was *Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives for Habilitation of Mentally Handicapped Persons*. The phrase "for Habilitation of Mentally Handicapped Persons" has been dropped from the title of the present work because of the work's applicability to individuals regardless of their specific abilities, and because our society's language has become more sensitive in its description of people with disabilities.



## PREFACE

### ***Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives***

The Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives is a classification of measurable performance goals intended for use in helping people with disabilities progress in the pursuit of their maximum individual potentials for independence. It is a resource manual for planning, writing, and implementing individualized skill training programs.

One of the most truly efficient ways to impact positively on a person's growth in skill acquisition is through **SPECIFICITY** in training — clearly defining exactly what it is the person needs to do. Belief in the indispensability of these "functional specifics" and commitment to their development are perhaps the most striking features of the TAXONOMY.

The nine habilitation programs developed in this work are intended to affect the quality of an individual's life far beyond the mere fact of skill acquisition. Learning new skills means more than success in physical or mental mechanics. Learning new skills can have a truly positive and powerful impact on many aspects of a person's overall development. It can increase options. Increased options expand freedom of choice. The freedom to choose inevitably increases responsibility. Self-concept grows stronger. Learning to do what others can do creates common ground, provokes acceptance, and ultimately invites increased participation.

### ***Social Readiness Program***

The Social Readiness Program is a daily-used instrument designed as a systematic method to monitor, train, and establish maintenance of acceptable social behaviors in people with disabilities.

The sixty-four behaviors incorporated into the Social Readiness Program are observable, common-sense behaviors the mainstream of society expects from all its members — no less from people with disabilities — as minimum requirements for the broadest social acceptance. They are "readiness" behaviors; that is to say, assumed prior conditions to almost any work performance task and basic social interaction.

This program is designed to have a positive impact on effecting desirable changes in behavior by improving the specificity and objectivity of behavioral observations, by providing a convenient and organized means for recording, processing, and analyzing daily observational data, and by promoting consistency in behavioral management practices.

The behaviors in the Social Readiness Program bear a direct and daily relationship to the whole of a person's life. They have direct application to an almost limitless variety of daily happenings — in contrast with most other types of learning whose application is much more limited and infrequent. As such, the program should rank among top priorities in the development of each individual's comprehensive habilitation plan.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Development of this *TAXONOMY* and *SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM* has been dependent upon the support of many individuals and organizations. Their belief in this project, and the assistance they offered as validation of that belief, are truly appreciated and here acknowledged.

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To the editor and the authors of the *Inventory of Habilitation Programs for Mentally Handicapped Adults*, the curriculum that was developed by the Center in 1975, served as the starting point for this project, and without which there would be no *Taxonomy* or *Social Readiness Program*.

Editor	<b>Suzanne Avison Thiel</b>
Authors	<b>Bill Froman</b>
	<b>Pauline Odegard Johnson</b>
	<b>Elizabeth M. Schaafsma</b>
	<b>Ron Talarico</b>
	Greer Lynn Byrne
	Deborah A. Lemly

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Ralph C. Cheney	John Kimmel, M.D.
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Dave Cloudman, M.Ed.	John Murphy
Connie D. Easter	Carol Rutz, M.Ed., C.R.C.
Betty Elliott	Robert W. Slusher
Bill and Karen Froman	J. Alison Talarico, R.D.H.
Laura Gooding	L.J. Talarico, D.M.D.
Charlie Graham	Rose Talarico

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Debra Wallace, M.Ed., C.R.C.  
Paula E. Williams

**To the clients at the Portland Habilitation Center** — master teachers indeed.

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**To All  
THANK YOU**

Ron Talarico  
1982  
(original acknowledgements)



## INTRODUCTION

The Portland Habilitation Center is a private, non-profit organization serving people with disabilities in the State of Oregon. The Center was founded and incorporated in 1951 to provide educational opportunities to children with mental retardation who were as yet denied acceptance into the public schools. By 1973, with implementation of enlightened public policies and consequent incorporation of these children into the public education system, the Portland Habilitation Center began providing habilitation services to *adults*. The focus of habilitation currently provided by the Center is on assisting individuals with disabilities to acquire the skills necessary for gainful employment in the community. On a much broader scale, the Center's mission is to assist each individual to progress through always higher and more complex levels of personal achievement and independence. The Center offers a variety of habilitation services through its work evaluation and work adjustment training programs, sheltered workshop, vocational training programs, work-activity center, and custodial and landscape maintenance employment programs.

In 1973, it became apparent to the Portland Habilitation Center (PHC) that there was a compelling need for a *complete habilitation program* for adults with disabilities in the areas of basic adult education, job readiness skills, adult social behavior development, and functional daily living skills. Many curricula were being developed for *children* with disabilities but there appeared to be no comprehensive and systematic habilitation program designed specifically for the country's *adult* population.

By 1974, in an effort to meet this need, PHC had developed a curriculum of its own which was soon implemented within the facility and remained in use for more than a year. During this period, experience revealed the curriculum as a relatively primitive tool — one not yet sufficiently refined to bear the weight of the expectations placed upon it. It was, however, to serve as a valuable reference point from which to construct and finely tune what was soon to come.

Beginning in the latter part of 1975 and continuing well into the following year, the Portland Habilitation Center committed itself to the task of refining and expanding the curriculum. A truly staggering amount of time, effort, and determination were brought to bear on the project. As a result, in October of 1976, PHC published the *Inventory of Habilitation Programs for Mentally Handicapped Adults* — a sophisticated and comprehensive training instrument that surely ranks as one of the finest, most practical, and accountability-based training documents of its kind and time.

In January of 1979, the Portland Habilitation Center was awarded a grant through the University of California at Los Angeles in association with the UCLA Neuropsychiatric Institute Research Group at Lanterman State Hospital, Pomona, California. The grant proposed that PHC perform an item analysis of the *Inventory's* 800 skills and categorize the skills according to 11 broad conceptual domains developed by the UCLA NPI Research Group (Pelzer and Mayeda, *Analysis of Item Contents of Performance Measurement Instruments for the Developmentally Disabled*, 1978). The eleven domains were: *Basic Adaptive Skills, Community Skills, Home Environment Skills, Communication Skills, Math Skills, Pre-Academic Mental Skills, Personal Affective Skills, Sensory-Motor/Health Skills and Needs, Recreation Skills, Social Skills, and Vocational/Leisure Time Skills*. These eleven domains had already been used to categorize the item content of 94 of the country's **assessment instruments** for individuals with mental retardation and developmental disabilities. It was proposed that the *Inventory*, as a **training instrument** for this population, undergo similar categorization. In this way, the 94 assessment instruments and one (for the moment at least) training instrument would relate to the same conceptual domains, thus facilitating a smooth and logical transition from *gross assessment* at one end of the habilitation process to *direct skill training* at the other end. In this way, too, a clear and simple answer

might be offered for consideration to those agencies asking the questions: Now that *gross assessment* is completed, where do we go from here for a *training* instrument that interlocks? How can the two processes come together to form a *unified system*? The grant proposed, in addition, that PHC reconceptualize and revise the Inventory in accordance with new ideas that were sure to evolve from the categorization process and with revision plans PHC had previously developed.

During the next four years the Inventory underwent reconceptualization and total revision. Virtually the entire curriculum was rewritten. Reorganization of content was based on the conceptual domains developed by the UCLA NPI Research Group. The revision process incorporated PHC's own five-year experience using the Inventory, comments from those who had come for inservice training on use of the Inventory, discussions with members of the NPI Research Group, and responses to 750 evaluation questionnaires sent throughout the country to a sample of those who had purchased the Inventory. Great effort was made to give the evolving curriculum the broadest possible base of national applicability. Ease and flexibility of use, strict data-based accountability, high degree of organization and consistency, originality, comprehensiveness and specificity, clear and concise use of language, and provisions for detailed individualization — these were some of the principles that dominated the revision process. In addition, the revised work was to incorporate a philosophical shift from emphasis on habilitation primarily of adults with mental handicaps to habilitation of individuals of a much wider age range (including children) and with a more inclusive range of disabilities.

The revision project resulted in two training instruments — the **TAXONOMY OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES** and the **SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM**

The TAXONOMY and the SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM together contain a total of ten training programs. According to the following comparison, these ten programs correspond to the eleven conceptual domains developed by the UCLA NPI Research Group.

#### **PHC Programs**

Basic Adaptive Skills Program  
Home Environment Skills Program  
Health And Sensory-Motor Skills Program  
Pre-Academic Mental Skills Program  
Communication Skills Program  
Community Skills Program  
Recreation And Leisure Time Skills Program

Math Skills Program

Vocational Skills Program

**SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM**

#### **UCLA Domains**

Basic Adaptive Skills  
Home Environment Skills  
Sensory-Motor, Health Skills & Needs  
Pre-Academic Mental Skills  
Communication Skills  
Community Skills  
Recreation Skills  
Leisure Time Skills (of Vocational/Leisure Time Skills)  
Math Skills  
Vocational Skills (of Vocational/Leisure Time Skills)  
Personal Affective Skills  
Social Skills



# 1993 - Ten Years Later

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This third printing of the TAXONOMY and SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM, which comes ten years after completion of the original work, has brought with it both opportunity and the need for some clarification and comment.

The present work is being reprinted due primarily to a sudden re-surfacing of interest by the general public in obtaining copies of it, coupled with a depleted inventory at Portland Habilitation Center. One could say that the work is back by popular demand.

THIS WORK IS NOT A REVISION but rather a combination into one work of two previously separate works. What were previously two volumes are now one volume. Namely, the *Taxonomy of Behavioral Objectives for Habilitation of Mentally Handicapped Persons*, and the *Social Readiness Program* are now one volume: **TAXONOMY OF BEHAVIORAL OBJECTIVES and SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM**. The original separation of the two works was never intended by design, nor was it desirable; rather, it was the result of financial constraints at the time. This third printing has brought with it the opportunity to unite what was meant to be one.

The reference to mentally handicapped persons has been dropped from both titles of the present work because of the work's applicability to individuals regardless of their specific abilities, and because our society's language has become more sensitive in its description of people with disabilities.

Only a few parts here and there of the introductory material have been changed from the original version, and only to the extent that this was necessary in order to facilitate a smoother combination of the two works into one. In addition, an effort has been made in these parts to use language which is more sensitive in its references to people with disabilities.

Much has changed in the world of habilitation and in our society since the Taxonomy and Social Readiness Program were being developed in the years around 1979.

In those times, it was common and considered appropriate to refer to people with disabilities as "handicapped persons" or "the handicapped"; now the focus is consciously on the person first, disability second, as it should be. The dated language the reader will encounter in the work regarding references to people with disabilities is not entirely harmless, but is forgivable, it is hoped, considering the standard of the times.

In those times, we made suggestions and recommendations regarding involving the individual in his or her own individualized program planning; now it is the law in Oregon. This is just one type of anachronism the reader will encounter throughout the work.

In those times, the dollar bought a lot more than it does now. Thus, in some of the money concept skills, what we said was possible to buy for a given range of money is no longer possible to purchase for that amount.

In those times, the following were not in wide enough usage to lead us to offer them as skills for training: compact disc players; cordless phones and phones with last number redial and memory capacity; 911 emergency dialing; televisions with remote controls; and videocassette recorders. Now these items are common, as are a seemingly limitless number and variety of additional technological developments.

The term "client" is used exclusively throughout the work to refer to any person who receives habilitation services (e.g. client, student, group home resident, patient, program participant). It was a term of convenience.

The main body of this combined work remains virtually identical to the 1983 version. No new skills have been added to the TAXONOMY and no new behaviors have been added to the SOCIAL READINESS PROGRAM. Even so, both components remain models for writing any new skills that are desired for inclusion, or adding any new behaviors. Writing a new skill, for example, should be fairly simple, given that there are 1100 model-skills developed in the TAXONOMY to use as references.

It is the sincere belief of the authors that the work presented here is still today substantially current in nature and is as true and as compellingly important now as it was at the time of original publication. *Good principles endure.* On this we depended and toward this end we committed four of the best years of our lives.

## 2020 - Thirty-Seven Years Later

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*Good principles endure.* Still.