

# The New (3rd, 2007) Edition of PASSING

**Susan Thomas & Wolf Wolfensberger**

IN FEBRUARY 2007, the new, revised, 3rd edition of PASSING was published (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 2007). Below, we give a brief history of PASSING, and an overview of the differences between this new revision of PASSING, and the previous (1983) edition.

## **The History and Background of PASSING**

IN 1969, in connection with what was then the brand-new effort to shift from institutional to community services for retarded people in the US state of Nebraska, an evaluation instrument called PASS (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1969) was developed. PASS stood for **Program Analysis of Service Systems**. This first edition of PASS was printed on a mimeograph machine, and was not widely available. It was intended to be applied to services that were vying for newly-available (for the first time) state money to support community services for the mentally retarded. In order to prevent the pirating of this new money by institutions, universities, and non-normalized services, PASS was structured to evaluate how well a service measured up to the requirements of the new state plan and what was then the brand-new service approach of “normalization” (Nirje, 1969; Wolfensberger, 1972), as well as to some additional criteria for good service administration and management practices. This first version of PASS was used only within Nebraska, and to make funding decisions for one funding cycle.

However, as interest in normalization

spread, and as normalization began to be more widely taught, PASS was revised twice (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1973, 1975), and published by a “real” publisher (what was then called the Canadian National Institute on Mental Retardation in Toronto). Tens of thousands of copies of PASS were sold, and several thousand people attended training workshops (usually lasting five days) in PASS, given in the US, Canada, England, Australia, and some French-speaking countries.

In 1978, the Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership, and Change Agency, headed by Wolf Wolfensberger, was approached by the Developmental Disabilities Services Board of the County of Dane, in the US state of Wisconsin, to produce an adaptation of PASS that was meant to be easier to apply to services, in part by not assessing management practices as PASS had done, and by providing much more (and easily understandable) text for each evaluation criterion. It was called PASSING, which stood for **Program Analysis of Service Systems’ Implementation of Normalization Goals**. The first (1980) version of this adaptation was available and used only within that county, but a second version was again published by a “real” publisher (the same Canadian National Institute on Mental Retardation) in 1983; and, as with PASS, many people have attended training in it since 1983. However, just at the time that PASSING was published and training in it was begun, the senior author of both PASS and PASSING (Wolfensberger) reconceptualized normalization as Social Role

Valorization -- and this was unfortunate for PASSING because PASSING was already in print with the word "normalization" in its name, and with normalization language instead of Social Role Valorization language throughout the text, even though it reflected a great deal of Social Role Valorization conceptually. This meant that people who learned PASSING had to be taught to, in essence, ignore the normalization terminology in PASSING, and mentally substitute Social Role Valorization language for it.

In 1989, a French translation of PASSING was published (Wolfensberger & Thomas, 1989), with the title *PASSING (Programme d'Analyses des Systèmes de Services Application des Buts de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux): Manuel des critères et des mesures de la Valorisation des Rôles Sociaux*.

In the late 1990s, the National Institute on Mental Retardation (by then renamed the Roeher Institute) ceased publishing all the items authored by Wolfensberger which it used to publish, and that included PASSING. This made training in it difficult, since copies of the book were increasingly hard to come by. This is the situation that prevailed through 2006.

## Revision of PASSING

EVER SINCE PASS was published, and then PASSING, the authors had collected notes for revising the instruments. Some of these notes were submitted by users, teachers, and trainers of the instruments. However, the authors were unable to attend to any major work of revising PASSING until prompted by the crisis of the unavailability of PASSING. How could people be trained in PASSING without the book?

Beginning in 2005, revision work was finally intensified, and then rapidly accelerated in

2006 by a subsidy from the Prescott-Russell Services to Children & Adults of Plantagenet, Ontario, Canada. This enabled the third edition to be published in early 2007. This subsidy also made it possible to sell the book at a much lower price than books of its size (424 pages of 8 1/2 x 11 inches) ordinarily sell for these days.

The new edition contains many changes -- and what are hoped to be improvements -- over the 1983 version. Some of the changes are briefly noted below, but elaborated in the 3rd edition of PASSING itself.

1. The terms normalization and normalizing have been replaced throughout the text by Social Role Valorization (SRV), and a role-valorizing idiom. Also, there was much revision in the text to reflect the theoretical developments in Social Role Valorization that had taken place since 1983.

2. PASSING is no longer an acronym, as in the previous edition, but a name, and the book has a new subtitle: *A Tool For Analyzing Service Quality According to Social Role Valorization Criteria. Ratings Manual*. This allows continuity with the previous edition, but without having to come up with a contrived new name to fit the pre-existing acronym.

3. Generally, the language has been changed so as to no longer imply that the service being assessed is necessarily run by a formal service agency, or that the servers are paid service workers. Accordingly, the term "service client" has been changed to "service recipient;" and the terms "service worker" and "service staff" have been changed to "server" in those instances where the text is meant to include either people who work for pay and can therefore be considered employed or hired staff, or people who serve voluntarily or for free and can therefore not be considered employees.

4. There were also some changes in the names of several ratings and rating clusters, so

that the identifying number of the rating or rating cluster is now more important than its name in relating the new PASSING to the contents of the 1983 edition of the *Guidelines for Evaluators During a PASS, PASSING, or Similar Assessment of Human Service Quality* (Wolfensberger, 1983).

5. A very significant amount of editing and changing of both text and examples was done, though this is more obvious in certain sections and ratings than in others. Some improvements were major, some minor.

6. There were some significant content changes in certain ratings, some of these reflected in their names. One of these had to do with tying the issue of social integration in PASSING more cleanly to Social Role Valorization criteria, and separating it from ideological (i.e., non-empirical) rationales.

7. The relationship among certain ratings was greatly clarified.

8. Texts which apply to all the ratings in several rating clusters were consolidated, and moved to a spot where it is easier to tell that they do, in fact, apply to all ratings in a cluster.

9. All the statements of criteria for the five levels of each rating (called "Criteria and Examples for Level Assignments") have been revised. While the essence of the levels is not changed much thereby, the level statements have all been reworded so as to make the principle of each level, and the distinctions among levels, clearer for raters.

Even more than before, the rating criteria imply that it will be easier for some services to get higher scores than others. Uncomplicated services with a single narrow function, and/or that serve recipients who are not devalued, are more likely to score higher, in part because they face fewer pitfalls, especially in the image domain.

10. Examples have been one of the sources

of complaint from previous PASSING users. Some users did want, and some did not want, examples that they thought were culture-specific or time-specific; or some did want examples of specific kinds of services in which they were very interested, and which they felt had been slighted. There has been extensive editing of examples, but this will not appease all critics, in part because there are very good reasons (further explained in PASSING itself) for keeping certain examples and not including others that were suggested.

11. This edition contains some changes in the set-up of the book, in response to feedback from users. These format changes are a trade-off: they eliminate certain features of a practical nature, but considerably reduce the bulk of the book, which is an advantage when it is carried around during an evaluation, and also keeps the cost down.

12. The section that described normalization in detail on pp. 23-29 of the 2nd (1983) edition of PASSING was eliminated. This is because SRV has been refined and elaborated in several separate publications since 1983, especially in Wolfensberger (1998, 2000) and Race (1999); and users of PASSING are referred to these.

13. Because the names of some of the ratings and rating clusters have been changed, all the scoring and reporting forms (including the *Checklist* and *Scoresheet/Overall Service Performance Form*) have been revised.

### Implications for Future Use of PASSING

THE ARRIVAL of this new version of PASSING has several implications, including the following.

1. Even more than with the previous edition of PASSING, this edition can serve as an SRV

reference text that can be useful even for people who never conduct a PASSING assessment of a service. Even more than before, PASSING is not only a major text on SRV and its application, but also a major text on what makes a service good or bad. We therefore strongly recommend that every service agency purchase a copy for their staff development library. Of course, many people would want to have their own personal copy as well.

2. People who are well familiar with the 2nd (1983) edition of PASSING **must study** this new one, especially before applying it to a service, because the changes in it are not merely superficial or cosmetic ones, but also entail changes in content. It is often easier for people who are new to something to learn it fresh than for people to have to “unlearn” something with which they are already familiar, and relearn it with changes.

3. However, people who are well-skilled in the application of PASSING (site visit, observation, interviewing workers and recipients, individual ratings followed by team conciliation) will be able to apply the new version of PASSING in the same way, once they have studied it.

4. People who sponsor, host, and conduct PASSING workshops should now make every effort to have each participant own a PASSING book when they leave the workshop, so that they can have and use it as an SRV reference book, and make sense of the written reports that they should be receiving of the services that they helped assess.

### How to Obtain PASSING

PASSING can be purchased from the Syracuse University Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership & Change Agency,

800 South Wilbur Ave., Suite 3B1, Syracuse, New York 13204 USA, phone 315/473-2978; fax 315/473-2963. The price is \$55 US funds per copy, plus 15% postage and handling charge within North America, and 20% outside North America. Quantity discounts are available (15% for 25 to 49 copies, 20% for 50 or more copies).

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Please see the training calendar on page 64 for information on a one-day orientation to the new edition of PASSING.*

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## A NOTE ON THE ORIGINS OF THE WORD 'ROLE'

### From the Editor

The word 'role,' meaning a part one plays or assumes, including figuratively in society or life, derives from a French translation of the English word 'rowle.' The word 'rowle' referred to a roll of papers on which were written a stage actor's lines and entrance/exit cues.

Written references to the word 'role,' as in a behavior appropriate to a particular social position or interaction, began to appear in the 20th century (e.g., G. H. Mead, 1913; R. Linton, 1936; R. K. Merton, 1949; Parsons & Shils, 1951; E. Goffman, 1961; etc.).

[Thanks to Joe Osburn for bringing this to my attention; he read it in *Will in the World* by Stephen Greenblatt (Norton & Co., 2004). Additional information from the *Oxford English Dictionary*.]