The Problem of Trying to Incorporate a Model Coherency Analysis into a PASSING Assessment

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<u>Les difficultés attenantes aux tentatives d'inclure une analyse de cohérence de modèle dans une évaluation PASSING.</u>

Wolfensberger et Thomas, les auteurs de PASSING, rappellent brièvement la petite histoire du développement du PASSING et de la décision d'exclure la mesure de la "cohérence du modèle" qui figure pourtant au premir plan de l'outil d'évaluation PASS: la cohérence du modèle est un concept complexe et trop exigeant pour des étudiants à leurs premières armes dans l'utilisation d'un outil tel que PASS ou PASSING. Bien que les auteurs ont depuis lors developpé du nouveau matériel et offrent de la formation au sujet d'une nouvelle mesure de la cohérence du modèle, ils déconseillent généralement les tentatives de certains évaluateurs qui superposent une mesure de "cohérence du modèle" au dessus des 42 mesures de PASSING. Ils concluent en énumérant les conditions souhaitables qui permettraient l'utilisation de la "cohérence du modèle" dans une évaluation PASSING: entre autres une équipe où tous les membres avaient déjà reçu une formation PASSING; où plusieurs des membres connaissaient aussi PASS; et où le chef d'équipe avaient suivi une formation avancée de la nouvelle mesure de la "cohérence du modèle."

*Editor's note:This article assumes at least a general knowledge of the issue of Model Coherency. Model Coherency is interested in the good fit of the various elements of a human service program. In a nutshell, Wolfensberger (1996) described Model Coherency as answering the following question: **"Are the right people working with the right people (who are grouped in the right way) using the right materials, methods, and language, in the right settings in order to do the right things?"** Of course, many of the terms of the above question require definition and explication which would in turn require an article for a future ISRVJ issue or a workshop, which of course is periodically given by Wolf Wolfensberger's Training Institute.*

Reference

Wolfensberger, W. (1996). <u>Four Day Introductory Workshop to Social Role Valorization</u>. Winston-Salem NC (March 1996).

In 1973, Wolfensberger and Glenn published PASS, a service evaluation instrument based largely on the principle of normalization. PASS stands for Program Analysis of Service Systems. Its second edition (Wolfensberger & Glenn, 1975) consists of 50 ratings, 37 of which measure how well a service is implementing normalization, and the remaining 13 of which deal with aspects of service administration. PASS was intended both to assess service quality, and—just as importantly—to teach what constitutes service quality in terms of the principle of normalization, which was a new concept on the service scene at the time of PASS's publication.

However, one problem with PASS was that it was not easy to master, and some of its quality criteria proved very difficult for people to fully grasp, especially the concept of model coherency of service. Several people made efforts to simplify PASS. One such simplification was the PASSING service evaluation instrument by Wolfensberger and Thomas, published in 1983. The name—chosen half in jest—stands for Program Analysis of Service Systems' Implementation of Normalization Goals. As its name suggests, it was designed at first in order to measure whether and how well any human service is consistent with normalization implications. However, while PASSING was being written, and after it had been named, and just before it was supposed to go to the printer, the senior author reconceptualized normalization as Social Role Valorization (SRV). The last draft of PASSING was revised to incorporate this reconceptualization of normalization, but because the reconceptualization occurred before the new name SRV had been coined, and the last revision had to be made in a

hurry, PASSING still used some normalization language even though its content reflects SRV theory, and the language emphasizes the attainment of valued social roles.

PASSING consists of 42 separate "ratings," each of which embodies one specific SRV implication. For each rating, there are five levels, with Level 1 representing extremely poor service performance, and Level 5 representing the best conceivable performance. A service is graded, or rated, at one of these five levels on each rating by a team of evaluators who have all had training in SRV, and in using the evaluation instrument.

There are any number of issues in a service that go beyond the scope of PASSING but that a PASSING team may nonetheless learn about during the course of its assessment. A prime example would be administrative issues, such as those that would be assessed by the administrative ratings of PASS, which do not fall within the category of strictly programmatic issues with which PASSING exclusively deals. Such issues often arise during team data collection and the team discussions (called "conciliation") that lead to the assignment of quality levels. However, because administrative issues are not within the scope of a PASSING assessment, a PASSING team would not spend time during its evidence collection deliberately looking for things such as fiscal competence or malfeasance, administrative prowess or shortfalls, regional service system comprehensiveness issues, and so on, even though it commonly happens that a team will discover such information tangentially to its collection of evidence on programmatic issues. When a team discovers service strengths and weaknesses that are outside the scope of PASSING, it usually ignores them in both its conciliation and its report.

However, a difficulty is presented when PASSING teams discover, and/or try to tackle, so-called model coherency issues, because model coherency is within the programmatic domain. But when PASSING was written, the authors made a deliberate decision not to include model coherency as one of the ratings, because PASSING was intended to be a service assessment tool that would be easier and simpler to learn and to use than its predecessor PASS, and would therefore be accessible to more people than PASS had been. If a model coherency rating had been included (as it had been in the 1973 version of PASS under the name "Specialization," and in the 1975 version under

the name "Model Coherency"), then PASSING would have been almost as difficult as PASS, since—out of all the 50 ratings of the 1975 version of PASS—the one on model coherency and the one on comprehensiveness have proven the most difficult ratings for most participants to learn to apply properly. Further, in standard introductory SRV and PASSING training, the issue of service models is touched on only briefly, and the issue of model coherency is not addressed at all.

The authors of PASSING deliberately made the decision not to include a single, distinctive model coherency rating in it, even though PASSING was intended to cover only programmatic issues rather than administrative ones, and model coherency is a programmatic construct. However, the major components of model coherency (e.g., program relevance, server identity, groupings of recipients, setting congruity with valued analogues, to name a few) were included as separate distinct ratings in PASSING. But neither singly nor in combination do any of these PASSING ratings yield a singular index of a service's model coherency that integrates all these elements, as does the single rating of R113 Model Coherency in the 1975 edition of PASS.

Some people might think the PASSING authors made an error of omission, or at least of judgment, in not including a model coherency rating. However, as noted above, it was neither an accidental oversight, nor do the authors think they made an error in judgment, because time and experience have shown that even people with training in model coherency need to participate in several such training events and practice exercises before they really become competent in the use of the construct.

All of this presents a challenge for written PASSING reports when the report writer is conversant with the construct of model coherency, and perhaps even understands it fairly well. Usually, this would only be the case if the report writer were someone who had extensive previous PASS experience, and/or had been through introductory model coherency workshops, such as have occasionally been conducted since 1983. (Those on how to design coherent service models have lasted between 18.5 and 35 hours.) Not even many PASSING team leaders have had sufficient such training—or even any such training. Advanced PASSING workshops that include a practice evaluation that applies PASSING with those elements of PASS that have not been superseded by PASSING may include a model coherency evaluation. However, most likely,

the latter would not be based on the rating of model coherency that is found in PASS, but on a new—as yet unpublished—experimental rating named "Model Coherency Impact," produced by the Training Institute for Human Service Planning, Leadership and Change Agentry. (Since its original design in 1991, this rating has undergone several field tests and two revisions.) To most participants of such an Advanced PASSING workshop, this is apt to be their first or most detailed instruction about the model coherency construct—little as it is compared to workshops of 2 to 4 days duration on it.

It is very easy for teams and team leaders (and therefore written reports) of introductory PASSING evaluation practice to go astray when they try to do a model coherency analysis without having the necessary sophistication and competency in it. And even if the report writer him/herself has a strong grounding in model coherency, and therefore feels capable/qualified to address it in the written report, such a written discussion would not represent the team's findings and the team's discussion, since the team would not have been able to adequately deal with the model coherency of a service during its conciliation—at least, not an introductory or unselected team. There is simply no time during a PASSING conciliation (at least not in introductory PASSING workshops and similar practicum exercises) for a team leader to adequately teach model coherency, and for a team to learn and discuss it, and the team is certainly in no position to rate a service's model coherency since there is no model coherency rating in PASSING. It is problematic for written reports to include sections on issues that the team was not competent to discuss, did not have time to discuss, and did not in fact discuss, since reports are intended to represent something that is reasonably close to the team's findings.

Further, the written report is not the proper context to try to make up for the fact that there is not enough time in PASSING workshops to examine model coherency, nor for the fact that model coherency is not a rating in PASSING, if doing so were the intent of the writer.

We have seen many otherwise good reports flounder when they tried to address issues that were simply too advanced for the writer's and/or team's competence, particularly when the report is of an assessment conducted in an introductory-level workshop.

Presumably, it would be possible to conduct a productive model coherency analysis of a service where the following conditions are met.

1. The context is an advanced one, not an introductory PASSING workshop.

2. All team members had participated successfully in at least one introductory PASSING workshop in which two separate practicum sites were assessed, and preferably had participated in more than one.

3. The team leader is well versed in model coherency theory and analysis.

4. Either (a) team members have been selected from among people who have already had training in model coherency, as perhaps by having attended one of the Training Institute's workshops on the topic, mentioned above, or (b) the advanced workshop itself allows enough time to teach model coherency and its assessment.

In addition, team members would greatly benefit from having had previous training and experience with PASS. In fact, for at least certain types of advanced PASSING workshops, such as began to be taught in January 1992, we recommend that the following PASS ratings be taught:

• R121 Comprehensiveness
• R122 Utilization of generic resources
• R123 Consumer & public participation
• R124 Education of the public
• R125 Innovativeness
• R131 Ties to academia
• R132 Research climate
• R141 Deinstitutionalization
• R142 Age group priorities
• R211 Staff development
• R212 Manpower development
• R2211 Administrative control & structure
• R2212 Planning process
• R2213 Program evaluation & renewal mecha-nisms
• R2221 Financial documentation -extent
• R2222 Budget economy

In addition, we recommend that because it supplies that important integrative element which is lacking in PASSING itself, the above-mentioned new experimental rating called Model Coherency Impact

should be taught either in workshops devoted entirely to it, or in certain kinds of advanced PASSING workshops.

So when writing reports of introductory PASSING workshop assessments, what is to be the proper strategy in regard to the above issue? While we have not resolved all aspects of this question in our minds, one answer is not to attempt to include a model coherency analysis in the report, though the report-writer may wish to recommend that the service that was assessed seek an evaluation or consultation that does address the model coherency issue. Instead, the report should address the issues that are, and can be, identified by means of the concepts embedded in the PASSING ratings and rating clusters, and it should address especially the overarching, key or major programmatic issue(s), strengths, and weaknesses. This does not mean that one only reports the findings in terms of specific ratings, but that one draws on the so-called foundation discussion that is routine during properly-conducted team conciliations. PASSING ratings that do, in fact, assess separate elements of model coherency can help shed much light on service strengths and weaknesses that a proper model coherency analysis would also have brought out, and would have done in a more integrating fashion. The higher-weighted PASSING ratings are particularly apt to play a prominent role in this, especially

- R231 Program Address of Clients' Service Needs (50 points out of 1000),
- R232 Intensity of Activities & Efficiency of Time Use (39 points),
- R2211 Competency-Related Intra-Service Client Grouping—Size (46 points),
- R2212 Competency-Related Intra-Service Client Grouping—Composition (43 points),
- R1231 Image Projection of Intra-Service Client Grouping—Social Value (29 points), and
- R1231 Image Projection of Intra-Service Client Grouping—Age Image (18 points).

Of course, an introductory PASSING workshop team leader conversant with model coherency should certainly feel free to let the team know that there is such a thing as model coherency, that it is

a construct that integrates several PASSING ratings, and that team members would benefit from learning about it—elsewhere. Also, in a way that is not explicated as constituting a model coherency analysis, the foundation discussion usually does end up pointing out how the combination of quality-related issues impacts on the recipients of the service being assessed.

References

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