The learning processes in the social domain of learning skills (Table 1) include a hierarchy of skills related to communication, teamwork, management, and leadership. This domain is distinct from the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains in that all of its process areas and specific skills involve interpersonal performance in the large range of social contexts in which learning occurs. Traditionally, educators (e.g., Bloom) have subsumed the social domain mostly under the affective domain but with some crossovers to the cognitive domain (e.g., critical thinking about a communication performance). However, with the emergence of newer learning theories that take fuller account of the social and cultural contexts of learning, educators have become aware of the unique types of learning in the social domain and of interdependence among the four domains of learning for all complex performance goals. Some of the benefits of learning about social domain skills include greater awareness that communicating and teaming skills support management and leadership skills, that context greatly influences selection and uses of knowledge, and that integration of social domain processes into any learning process will enhance transfer potential.

Role of the Social Domain

Bloom (2.2.1 Bloom’s Taxonomy—Expanding its Meaning) did not author a social domain of learning skills to complement his cognitive, affective, and psychomotor taxonomies. However, sociocultural and constructivist philosophies of education strongly incorporate social domain learning skills. Cobb and Yachel (1996) provide an overview of these theories.

The socio-cultural approach is associated with theorists such as the Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1934/2006) and the American philosopher/educator John Dewey (2005) who assume that learning is a developmental process that starts with “external” stimulation and emerges as “internalized” abilities. In Process Education, this approach is used in the “scoping” of learning activities to assure that the learning expectations are within the present capabilities of the learners and that they are compatible with the time constraints and other available resources. It is essential to provide appropriately designed, guided experiences to encourage a learner to internalize knowledge (2.4.8 Methodology for Course Design).

The emergent/constructivist theories are often associated with Jean Piaget’s (1970) developmental theory. These theories assume that the physically maturing brain and environmental stimulation contribute equally to an individual’s ability to construct knowledge. These theories are similar to those of the socio-culturalists in the belief that learning is maximized if opportunities stimulate emergence of new “schemas” (knowledge patterns or units). Process Education assumes that learners not only continually construct knowledge but that the quality of that construction can be facilitated as suggested by the five levels of skill competency presented in Table 2.

Description of the Social Domain

The learning processes included in the social domain feature performances that directly focus on the development of social skills (e.g., being courteous) as well as the uses of the social skills themselves to manage situations or problems (e.g., improvising). There are general rules of thumb for identifying key distinctions among the four domains (2.3.3 Classification of Learning Skills). The cognitive domain involves reasoning-related skills that need not be connected to a concrete context, the affective domain involves valuing skills related to ways of being, the psychomotor domain involves physical skills involving tool use or movement coordination in specific contexts, and the social domain involves communication-related skills in goal-oriented contexts.

The five process areas of the social domain as defined by Pacific Crest include communicating, relating to others, relating culturally, managing, and leading. As with the other domains, the social domain processes consist of a hierarchy of complexity from the more basic or foundational (i.e., communicating) to the more complex (e.g., managing and leading).

Within each of the five social domain processes are four to six clusters of skills whose titles indicate how specific skills are related to each other. The combination of clusters for a process identifies the skill types for that process; the skills identified within a cluster have no further subdivisions because they are assumed to occur holistically in natural settings. There is no significance to the order in which the specific skills are listed under each skill cluster.
## Social Domain Learning Skills

### Communicating

**Receiving a Message**
- Attending – mindful focusing by a listener
- Reading body language – gathering information from nonverbal cues
- Responding – giving appropriate and timely responses
- Checking perceptions – feeding back implied meaning

**Preparing a Message**
- Defining purpose – specifying outcomes for a message
- Knowing the audience – predicting the background and interests of receivers
- Organizing a message – sequencing elements for the best impact
- Selecting word usage – using language that matches the audience’s background
- Formatting a message – selecting a mode or style that fits the purpose
- Illustrating – enhancing a message with images, tables or drawings

**Delivering a Message**
- Selecting a venue – deciding when and where to present a message
- Generating presence – delivering a message with authority
- Sharing knowledge – effectively presenting relevant facts and interpretations
- Persuading – using information selectively to convince
- Story telling – relating what happened
- Managing transitions – using planned techniques to lead an audience

### Relating with Others

**Inviting Interaction**
- Taking an interest in others – enjoying personal differences
- Initiating interaction – approaching and engaging others
- Hosting – using social events to build social cohesion
- Expressing positive nonverbal signals – accurately projecting feelings
- Assisting others – being kind without expecting a reward
- Being non-judgmental – responding with an assessment mindset

**Relating for Meaning**
- Belonging – gaining acceptance in a group
- Befriending – initiating a supportive relationship
- Empathizing – taking another’s emotional perspective
- Collaborating – working together for mutual benefit
- Parenting – guiding the social-emotional development of children
- Mentoring – encouraging one’s growth through an advisory relationship

**Performing in a Team**
- Goal setting – formulating shared outcomes
- Achieving consensus – agreeing on decisions based on shared values
- Planning – deciding how to use resources to achieve goals
- Cooperating – respecting role boundaries and responsibilities
- Compromising – modifying positions to achieve common ground

**Performing in an Organization**
- Accepting responsibility – demonstrating initiative and persistence
- Being assertive – advocating strongly on the basis of reason and evidence
- Making proposals – presenting plans for consideration
- Documenting – creating a record of activities, work products, and processes
- Influencing decisions – using assessment data to support decision paths

### Relating Culturally

**Accepting Constraints**
- Obeying laws – complying with rules meant for the common good
- Inhibiting impulses – delaying one’s reaction until one is aware of the situation
- Noticing social cues – recognizing situational signs that direct behavior
- Recognizing conventions – behaving politely within a context

**Living in Society**
- Sharing traditions – participating in mutually meaningful rituals
- Supporting institutions – upholding important organizations
- Valuing communities – recognizing the worth and needs of a group
- Reacting to history – responding with knowledge of past events
- Being a citizen – participating in the political process

**Demonstrating Cultural Competence**
- Clarifying stereotypes – checking assumptions about people in different cultures
- Appreciating cultural differences – enjoying learning cultural knowledge
- Generalizing appropriately – validly acknowledging cultural differences
- Using culture-specific expertise – possessing detailed knowledge about a culture

### Key for Table 1

- **Process**
- **Skill Cluster**
- **Specific skill**
Managing

Managing People
- Building consensus – developing goals and plans that are well-accepted
- Motivating – arranging rewards that fit individual aspirations
- Modeling performance – demonstrating high quality in action
- Assessing performance – providing feedback for improving performance
- Evaluating performance – judging whether a performance standard has been met

Building and Maintaining Teams
- Defining team roles – deciding on roles that support a goal
- Setting rules – defining ethical and professional expectations
- Delegating authority – authorizing others to manage selected tasks
- Confronting poor performance – requiring specific change
- Recruiting – selecting qualified personnel for specific functions
- Mediating – resolving interpersonal conflicts

Managing Communication
- Connecting with stakeholders – involving key individuals at appropriate times
- Networking – developing relationships with internal and external advocates
- Marketing – initiating messages to persuade clients of the value of something
- Sustaining change – promoting creative proposals for ongoing improvement

Managing Resources
- Negotiating – making agreements with other stakeholders to advance a position
- Politicking – advocating positions with external stakeholders
- Securing resources – assuring appropriate funding, scheduling, and staffing
- Creating productive environments – arranging for essential resources in a setting

Leading

Envisioning
- Projecting the future – visualizing future status based on trends/logic
- Seeing implications – describing the operational impacts of future trends
- Balancing perspectives – maintaining the vision while working within constraints
- Responding to change – being flexible in strategic thinking

Building a Following
- Inspiring – being positive in the face of negative challenges
- Sharing a vision – using empathy and imagery to help others see a vision
- Generating commitment – asking for specific signs of willingness to tackle challenges required for a vision
- Maintaining integrity – responding to personal issues with clear criteria/principles

Maintaining Commitment
- Meeting individual needs – responding to evidence of needs with relevant resources
- Taking meaningful stands – publicly articulating principles
- Thinking opportunistically – using positive strategies to predict and reduce risks
- Being charismatic – displaying confidence in action

Empowering
- Giving credit – publicly and equitably acknowledging performance
- Encouraging ownership – engaging others in important tasks for a vision
- Grooming subordinates – developing future leaders to take over key roles
- Being a servant leader – placing interests of others before personal interests

Social Domain Skill Competency Levels

Table 2 presents five levels of competency that can potentially be achieved in any skill in the social domain. From the lowest to the highest, these five levels of skill use are “non-conscious use,” “conscious use,” “consistent performance,” “self-reflective use,” and “transformative use.” These level descriptors provide a way to identify how much competence an individual has with any social domain skill. Brief examples are presented in Table 2 to illustrate what the varying levels of competency look like at each of the five levels in the skills of “attending” and “sharing a vision.”
Table 2  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Competency</th>
<th>Description of Individual Response</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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</table>
| Level 5 Transformative Use | Is highly skilled in the timely use of the skill to improve others’ engagement or commitment. | a. Discerning subtle changes in audiences and stakeholders  
b. Updating a vision to improve or “capture” the future potential of the organization |  
| Level 4 Self-Reflective Use | Uses the skill within a planned strategy for organizational change, e.g., when running meetings. | a. Noticing the effectiveness of meetings on the basis of one’s own criteria for effective meetings  
b. Designing organizational teams to implement a vision through action projects |  
| Level 3 Consistent Performance | Uses the skill to make a difference in real-time, e.g., cooperatively or collaboratively. | a. Task-oriented listening, questioning, and paraphrasing  
b. Volunteering to be a member of a college committee on vision; presenting personal and peer perspectives effectively |  
| Level 2 Conscious Use | Uses the skill passively but with an awareness of the need to grow; is limited in confidence, social smoothness, and timing. | a. Actively selecting information from team comments  
b. Questioning a college president’s vision in discussions with peers |  
| Level 1 Non-Conscious Use | Is responsive if prompted by others; is attentive but does not consciously identify social domain processes and skills. | a. Passively present; able to respond if asked a question  
b. Noting the main features of a new college president’s vision |  

Concluding Thoughts

This module presents the processes, skill clusters, and skills of the social domain of learning (Table 1) and differentiates these from the processes and skills in the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. A five-level rubric is presented in Table 2, analogous to Bloom’s taxonomy for cognitive learning objectives, for assessing the level of competence with any skill in the social domain. The socio-cultural and constructivist philosophies of learning and development are briefly discussed in order to demonstrate how skills in the social domain fit into educational theory and practice. As a systematic approach to education, Process Education emphasizes the significance of social domain learning skills which in the past have often been considered peripheral to learning. By identifying the relevant skills from the social domain that are likely to make a difference in a learning context, educators will be able to integrate these skills with those from the other domains to create truly integrated learning experiences.

References


