

THE MARAZON SYSTEM

If we take an honest look at the education of our children over the past 60 years, we must admit that teachers have been laser focused on imparting curriculum content (math, science, social studies, language arts, etc.) to children with no regard for their unique persons, their developmental readiness to learn, their interests, or their natural God-given skills, talents, and spiritual gifts. This curriculum-only focused approach has worked to the detriment of all our children because it completely ignores each child's personhood, what makes them a unique and valued creation of God, and it prevents them from developing to their fullest potential with dignity and positive self-esteem."

In 1988, I was appointed chairperson of the early childhood education department at a Catholic college. I grew more and more uneasy about teaching my students to write behavioral objectives. It was 1989 when I first began to think about an alternative approach to the "behavioral philosophy of education." I began to teach my students how to write a "developmental objective," one that would consider the uniqueness of each child and focus on their interests and readiness to learn. A colleague in the psychology department told me I was ten years ahead of my time. Actually, she was wrong. The developmental objective is not even a close competitor to the behavioral objectives.

A few weeks ago, a priest acquaintance told me I should contact the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education so that is why I am writing to you. I would be so grateful to you if you had the time to chat with me about his philosophy.

The Marazon System is the broad name given to a systematic approach of putting child development on menus and defining it in a handbook format so that parents, teachers, and other professionals can access important child development information when and as needed. There are five Marazon System publications: Parent/Teachers, Family Childcare, Home Visitors, Christian Parents/Teachers, and Catholic Parents/Teachers. The Parent/Teacher, Christian Parent/Teacher, and Catholic Parent/Teacher editions are ideal teaching resources for home-school families.

The Marazon System publications are concrete planning and assessment tools that present a methodical approach to intentionally using curriculum content (math, science, language, social studies, etc.) in ways that support and challenge children based upon their interests, innate skills and talents, and developmental readiness across six domains. A domain is a sub-category of human development. There are six domains in the *Marazon System*. They are **affective** (relating to self), **social** (relating to others), **creative** (originating from self), **cognitive** (thinking), **language** (communicating), and **physical** (doing).

This developmental philosophy of education offers teachers an alternative to traditional teaching methods. It is focused on individualized planning that supports students where they are and challenges them to where they have yet to go. The *System* uses the everyday curriculum of the school, home, and community to do this.

Domain of Development	# of Target Objectives
Affective	21
Social	19
Creative	8
Cognitive	18
Language	14
Physical	16

Each of the six domains are further divided into a total of 96 developmental traits or characteristics on individual domain menus. As noted in the chart to the left, the 96 characteristics are organized across the six domain menus. *The Marazon System* refers to these characteristics as "Target Objectives" of development. The terms "developmental characteristics" and "target objectives" are used interchangeably throughout the Marazon publications.

The Marazon method incorporates four steps: Writing the Plan, Setting up the Environment, Assessing Progress, and forming partnerships with families. As shown in the graphic below, the *system* is detailed with components. Notice how each of the steps and their components are situated around the child or children, more specifically, their interests and development. The steps and components enable teachers and adults to nurture, support, and challenge children's interests and needs.

