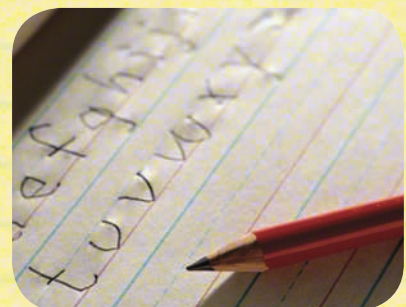




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APPLYING SELF-REGULATING APPROACHES 6–3**Claiming Ownership of a Problem**

Marvin Marshall believes that students must accept ownership of their behaviors. Review the information in this chapter on problem ownership. Then, as you read the following scenario, decide who owns the behavior problem.

Ms. Modrak, a seventh-grade teacher, questioned the issue of ownership. A consultant recently visited her school and stated that “the misbehaving student owns the problem. He or she must accept ownership and decide on a responsible action.” Although Ms. Modrak liked the consultant’s assertion, she thought about Andy, the terror of the seventh grade. He did

nearly everything she did not like. He bullied and made oral threats to other students, acted up in class, constantly thought of reasons to walk around or leave the room (“I just wanted to see if the flowers were blooming yet, Ms. M.”), yelled out answers, and nonchalantly goofed off when he should have been working. She asked herself: “Who owns this problem? Is it mine? Is it Andy’s? How can it be Andy’s if he does not recognize his behavior as a problem and will not agree to any responsible course of action? When Andy disturbs others and me, don’t I own the problem?”

longer have any ownership in the decisions, and they may “take on a victimhood mentality and have negative feelings toward” (p. 51) those who impose the consequences. Focusing on obedience engenders defiance and resistance, while using rules makes the teacher a police officer (Marshall, 2007). Applying Self-Regulating Approaches 6–3 looks at the idea of problem ownership.

According to Marshall (2007), you can control but not change another person. The change must come from within the person. Thus, the “ultimate goal of discipline is self-discipline” (p. 67) in which students voluntarily comply with expected behavior standards. The alternative is obedience and accompanying punishment for non-compliance.

Rewards are external motivators and are successful only if the student is interested in receiving the reward. By focusing on something external, the student learns to change the motivation from internal to external, something that, according to Marshall (2007), will not lead to responsible behavior or promote positive values. Winning the prize teaches students that they will receive something for good behavior. However, this does not carry over into the real world because “society does not give rewards for expected standards of behavior” (p. 45).

Marshall (2007) also believes in the power of acknowledgements rather than praise. For example, a teacher should say “Your work shows that you are putting a lot of effort into your project” rather than “I am so pleased with the way you are working.” Marshall (2007) notes that one way to distinguish between the two statements is that praise often begins with “*I am so proud of you for ...*” (p. 40, emphasis Marshall’s). Also, praise is often patronizing and something you would not say to another adult. Consider the statements in Applying Self-Regulating Ideas 6–4 to determine whether they are potentially destructive or potentially helpful.

APPLYING SELF-REGULATING IDEAS 6–4**Identifying Potentially Destructive and Potentially Helpful Statements**

For each of the following statements, indicate whether the statement is potentially destructive or potentially helpful. If a state is destructive, change it.

“Samal, you’re doing good work, considering that English is your second language.”

“Simms, good boy, I knew you could make that soccer goal. Your team members are proud of you.”

“Alvenia, I appreciate your fine work on the mathematics test. You improved your average a lot.”

“Fine play performance last night, Susan. I know you practiced hard.”

“Denise, your handwriting is improving. I am pleased and I know your mom will be, too.”

While supporting competition in extracurricular activities, Marshall also believes classroom competition is counterproductive because “rankings and ratings often depress kids who have no chance of making it” (Black, 2005, p. 34). Unfortunately, competition often allows only one student to be successful. In addition, competition focuses on external motivation and winning rather than fostering an internal interest in learning. It can lead to anxiety (Marshall, 2007) and a “pessimistic belief of the inability to change or to improve” (p. 42).

Practical Applications of Marshall’s Model

Developed as part of Marshall’s experiences in a classroom, Discipline without Stress® is based on three core principles of **positivity**, **choice**, and **reflection**. However, the core part of the model is the **Raise Responsibility System**, which outlines a hierarchy of social development that establishes expectations and is taught to students. This hierarchy becomes the base for students to use to self-regulate their behavior.

THREE POSITIVE PRACTICES Rather than reacting to students’ misbehaviors, teachers must be proactive to promote responsible behavior (Marshall, 2004). Thus, Marshall begins with what he calls the three positive practices that promote responsible behavior and that contribute to classroom management.

Positivity. Teachers should be positive in everything they do and say. Marshall (2005b) points to simple things such as greeting people with a smile and making positive comments as good starting points. He suggests that teachers should try to restate everything they say in a positive way. Thus, instead of saying, “Don’t run,” a teacher should say, “Walk to line up at the door for lunch.”

Choice. Teachers should offer choices to a student so that the student has the ownership of the result. For example:

- When seventh grader Shen-Ye behaves, Mrs. Littleman says: “What do you think we should do about the situation?” (Marshall, 2005b, p. 29).
- When third grader Jamot acts out while completing a form, Mr. Lang says: “Would you rather complete the form (1) in your seat, (2) in the back of the room, or (3) in the office?” (Marshall, 2005a, p. 52)

Reflection. Although teachers can control students, that does not mean that the teacher has changed the student because change must come from inside. While a teacher can hope to influence a student’s behavior, coercion, bribes, and punishment are not effective ways to do so. Thus, rather than telling students what to do, teachers should ask reflective questions of both themselves and the students. Reflective questions include:

- “If you could not fail, what would you do?” (Marshall, 2005a, p. 52).
- “What would an extraordinary person do in this situation?” (p. 52).

Weisner (2009) expanded Marshall’s focus on reflection to the entire school by replacing part of the daily announcements in an elementary school with a question of the day that asks students to think for themselves and to reflect. One question was:

- “This evening we have parent–teacher interviews. Your parents may ask how well you pay attention to lessons, whether or not you are organized, and how well you manage yourself on the playground. How does your teacher know what to say about you?” (p. 78)

With this change, students began to pay attention to the announcements. The questions are always worded positively, but they draw the students’ attention to problems and issues.

TABLE 6–2 Marshall’s Social Hierarchy

Level	Description
D—Democracy <i>Acceptable—Internal</i>	Displaying responsibility Demonstrating self-discipline Evidencing internal motivation
C—Cooperation or Conformity <i>Acceptable—External</i>	Complying with expected standards of behavior Conforming to peer pressure Evidencing external motivation
B—Bullying or Bossing (“Bully” is never used because it refers to a person, while bullying refers to a social interaction.) <i>Not acceptable</i>	Breaking rules Bossing others Behaving irresponsibly
A—Anarchy <i>Not acceptable</i>	No rules or order Chaos

RAISE RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM The three positive practices provide the foundation for the Raise Responsibility System (Marshall, 2005a, 2007). This is a three-part discipline and learning system: **Teaching the Concepts**, in which teachers teach a hierarchy of four developmental levels of social interaction; **Checking for Understanding**, in which the teacher uses unobtrusive techniques and asks questions to help a misbehaving student; and **Guided Choices**, in which a teacher employs strategies to assist with continued disruptions.

Marshall’s (2005a, 2007) **social hierarchy** consists of the four levels shown in Table 6–2. Anarchy is the lowest while Democracy is the highest level. While levels A and B are not acceptable, either level C or D is acceptable. However, only at level D does the student demonstrate internal motivation. Because educators teach the hierarchy to students, the students learn the general concepts of behavior before misbehaviors occur.

Marshall (2007) encourages teachers to create examples of the levels of behavior. Weisner (2004) uses a piece of trash on the classroom floor as an example of the levels for her elementary class. At level A, the student picks up the trash and throws it at another student. Functioning at level B, a student kicks the trash around the room. At level C, the student follows the teacher’s request to pick up the trash. Finally, at level D, without being asked, the student picks up the trash and puts it in the wastebasket. Another teacher explains the levels as follows: **Anarchy** is unsafe and out of control, while **bullying** bothers others and “breaks classroom standards” (Marshall, 2007, p. 81). **Conformity** listens and cooperates, while **democracy** “shows kindness to others” (p. 81) and develops self-discipline.

Teachers can even use the hierarchy to teach individual subjects. Weisner (2004) encouraged her students to become better readers by helping them identify reading behaviors at each level. For example, at level C, students would be reading only when working with or directed by an adult. Marshall (2007) suggests that a math teacher should correlate levels A and B with spending “little if any” (p. 89) time to learn, level C with “fulfills the assignment primarily to get a good grade” (p. 89), and level D with “willingly practices to improve math skills” (p. 89).

The behaviors noted for each level of the hierarchy should be appropriate for the age level of the students (Weisner, 2004). For example, behaviors that symbolize anarchy to a 6-year-old might be “noisy, out of control, unsafe” (p. 505). Teachers can also support students’ behavior by adding to the list of descriptors for the levels of the hierarchy. Adding “shows initiative” to level D gives

APPLYING SELF-REGULATING APPROACHES 6–5

Helping with Keith's Problem

Before reading the following scenario, review Coloroso's ideas on conflict and confrontation and Marshall's ideas on social interactions.

Ms. Buha probably let a situation go too long. Keith, a bully, had been verbally and in some cases physically abusive to others in his class. Ms. Buha kept thinking that class rejection or isolation eventually would tone down Keith's aggressiveness; however, that did not happen. Instead, the principal complained, some parents called, and several other stu-

dents ended up bruised or crying. When Ms. Buha finally spoke to Keith about his bullying, Keith "blew up."

"You're picking on me, just like the other kids do. I'm no bully!" Then he slammed his book on his desk.

What should Ms. Buha do? Try using Coloroso's seven rules for an assertive confrontation and applying Marshall's ideas on the social hierarchy.

students "another trait to which they could aspire" (p. 506). In addition, Marshall (2007) suggests using children's literature to teach the concepts of the hierarchy to Pre-K and elementary students. A life cycle comparison (cycle of the butterfly), stages of human development (baby, child, adolescent, adult), or specific lessons incorporated into academic subjects are successful with older students. "Using the hierarchy BEFORE a lesson and reflecting AFTER a lesson increases effort and raises academic achievement" (Marshall, 2007, p. 112). Applying Self-Regulating Approaches 6–5 asks you to use these ideas in a classroom situation.

The second part of the Raise Responsibility System has teachers Checking for Understanding by asking students to reflect on their behavior. However, before doing this, teachers can use a number of "unobtrusive techniques" (Marshall, 2007, p. 90) or visual, verbal, and kinetic cues such as body language, posture, voice, and pacing of speech to influence the behavior. Some of these are shown in Figure 6–3.

FIGURE 6–3
Marshall's Unobtrusive
Techniques

Visual
Smiling in a friendly way
Changing your facial expressions
Making fleeting eye contact rather than staring at a student
Nodding to the student
Using a group attention signal such as flicking the lights
Verbal
Pausing in your talking
Changing the inflection or volume of your voice
Thanking students for their attention
Asking an evaluating question about performance—"What level is your behavior currently meeting?"
Kinetic
Moving to a different part of the room
Using proximity
Redirecting a student's actions such as tapping a pencil from a hard surface to soft surface
Source: Developed in part from Marshall, M. (2007). <i>Discipline without stress®</i> , <i>punishments, or rewards: How teachers and parents promote responsibility & learning</i> . Los Angeles: Piper Press.

If a student misbehaves and the unobtrusive techniques do not work, the first question that the teacher asks is “On what level was that behavior?” The teacher should always refer to the level rather than the person. For example, when Ms. Mills saw Maria misbehaving:

Ms. MILLS: On what level is that behavior?

MARIA: I don’t know.

Ms. MILLS: What level is it when someone does not follow the rule to work quietly on their math problems?

MARIA: Level B

Ms. MILLS: Thank you. (Marshall, 2007)

If misbehaviors continue, the teacher moves to the Guided Choices, the third part of the Raise Responsibility System, to “stop the disruption and give the student a responsibility-producing activity and/or to develop a procedure to redirect future impulses” (Marshall, 2005a, p. 53). Used only when a student is “constantly disruptive” (Marshall, 2007, p. 101), Guided Choices requires the teacher to use authority without becoming authoritarian by offering choices to the student in the form of questions. In addition to stopping the disruption, it isolates the student, provides a time for reflection, and allows the teacher to return to instruction.

Marshall (2007, 2005a) explains that the first step in the Guided Choices stage is to try to help students help themselves to avoid becoming victims of their impulses.

Suppose that Michael sticks his foot out into the aisle in an attempt to trip Jimmy. The teacher’s conversation to Michael sounds like the following:

- “Michael, every time you stick your foot out to trip Jimmy, you are a victim of your impulses. Do you want to go through life being a victim? If not, let’s think of some procedure you can rely on so that when you get that impulse you will be able to redirect it. Without having some procedure, you will continue to be a victim of your impulses.” (Marshall, 2005a, p. 54)

There are a number of different activities that can be used as part of Guided Choices. The ideas behind this stage are similar to the Think Time™ strategy (Chapter 4) because the activity should help the student to reflect on the misbehavior and “encourage self-evaluation” (Marshall, 2007, p. 102). In the primary grades, students can draw, create a story, talk to another student or adult, or use an audio recorder to explain their actions. This is similar to a time-out, but it involves a reflective activity. In upper elementary and secondary schools, teachers can have students complete a self-evaluation essay in which the student responds to the following questions:

- “What *did* I do? (Acknowledgement)
- What *can* I do to prevent it from happening again? (Choice)
- What *will* I do (Commitment)?” (Marshall, 2007, p. 102)

Students are given the choice (see an earlier example on choice in this chapter) of where to complete the essay. A teacher may elect to keep the completed essay or destroy it; the changed behavior, not the essay, is the important thing.

Marshall (2005a, 2007) notes that the essay usually solves the problem. However, if a disruption continues after the activity or essay, Marshall has the student complete a Self-Diagnostic Referral form, which is more detailed than the essay and which varies depending on the age of the student. This form may be shared with administrators, parents, or both. At this point, Marshall employs a “three strikes and you are out” (Marshall, 2007, p. 105) philosophy. When three of the Self-Diagnostic