

Reflection is a process of thinking about and evaluating one's choices. It is the most successful approach to having people change and improve. It is exemplified in what every super salesperson knows: *The art of influence is to induce people to influence themselves*. We can control students by aiming at obedience, making demands, or imposing consequences, but we cannot change anyone but ourselves. We cannot force change in how students think, want to behave, or will behave once our presence is no longer felt. Coercion is not long-lasting and pride cannot be mandated. What we *can* do is establish expectations and empower students to attain them. This is done in a noncoercive manner by asking *reflective questions* that prompt students to think about their choices. Reflection often sets in motion a positive change in behavior. The way to jumpstart reflection is to prompt students to ask themselves questions such as, "If I wanted to be successful in this class right now, what would I be doing?" In most cases, the answer will be apparent and students will begin behaving accordingly.

WHAT IS MARSHALL'S HIERARCHY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AND HOW IS IT USED?

Marshall created the *Hierarchy of Social Development* that many teachers use in promoting responsible behavior in their classrooms. When students are taught the four levels of social development, they naturally begin moving upward on the hierarchy toward more responsible behavior. If students should slip and behave irresponsibly, teachers seldom have to do more than ask students to identify their chosen levels. This reflection prompts students to self-correct. Here is Marshall's hierarchy:

Marshall's Hierarchy of Social Development

- **Level A—Anarchy** (*an unacceptable level of behavior*). This is the lowest level of social development. When students are functioning at this level, they are narcissistic, think only of themselves, and have little concern for others.
- **Level B—Bossing/bullying/bothering** (*also an unacceptable level of behavior*). When functioning at this level, students are bossing, bullying, or bothering others without regard for the harm they are doing. They only obey the teacher when authority is used. In effect, they are saying to the teacher, "We are unable to control ourselves. We need you to boss us." Marshall says sharing this concept with students has a profound effect on how they behave.
- **Level C—Cooperation/conformity** (*an acceptable level of motivation*). When functioning at this level, students conform, comply, and cooperate. The key to understanding, though, is that, at this level, behavior comes from external

influences: Behavior occurs either to please others, in order to receive a reward, or to avoid negative consequences. Discussing and thinking about the nature and effects of external motivation helps students understand how and why many people are motivated.

- **Level D—Democracy and taking the initiative to do the right thing (the highest and most desirable level of motivation).** When functioning at Level D, students take the initiative to do what is right and proper—they behave responsibly without having to be told to do so. Marshall advises that teachers explain to students that democracy and responsibility are inseparable. At this motivational level, people do the right thing because they understand it is best for themselves and for the people around them.

Marshall says that although Level C behavior is acceptable in school, teachers should have students aim for Level D, where they are motivated to make good decisions about their personal behavior regardless of circumstances, personal urges, or influence from others.

To illustrate how the Hierarchy of Social Development is used to help students reflect on their behavior, suppose two boys are talking audibly while another student is making a class report. The teacher quietly asks the disruptive boys, “At what level is that behavior?” They think for a moment and answer, “Level B.” Their misbehavior typically ceases at that point and they return to behavior at a higher level.

How Does the Hierarchy Help Students Develop Self-Control?

Marshall says that once students understand the hierarchy, their attention turns away from compliance and toward self-control and social responsibility. This process is greatly helpful not only to teachers but to administrators as well (Marshall, 2005b). According to Marshall, the hierarchy:

- enables teachers (and administrators) to separate the act from the actor, the deed from the doer. Without that separation, students become defensive when asked to change their behavior.
- helps students realize they are constantly making choices, both consciously and unconsciously.
- helps students understand and deal with negative or inappropriate peer pressure.
- fosters internal motivation to behave responsibly and put forth effort in learning.
- promotes good character development without calling attention to personal values, ethics, or morals.
- serves as a vehicle for communication that uses the same conceptual vocabulary for youths and adults.