

**Policy Brief: Self-management Across the Curriculum: A Holistic Model
for Student, Faculty, and Staff Development**

By

Donna Berger

07/21/00

The demand for educational reform goes hand in hand with the pressure to improve teaching practices, raise standards for students, and increase productivity on every level. College faculties are expected to challenge students, while administrators are under the gun to sustain or increase enrollment levels. At the same time, students shop for quality at the lowest price. This climate has raised the bar of expectation for everyone who is part of the educational process – clerical and maintenance staff, administration, and educators alike. While a commitment to quality education is the expressed mission of nearly every postsecondary institution, obstacles to achieving it usually are attributed to other people or outside circumstances. Perhaps the problem is the administration, the students, the staff, or the faculty. “Nothing so needs reforming as other people’s habits.” Mark Twain’s words echo an all too common sentiment when discussing improvement in organizational performance.

Historically, the explanation of human motivation and productivity has shifted from a focus on forces within the environment as the primary “mover” of people to those forces within the individual. The fields of management and psychology have come to recognize that changes in people’s motivation occur when people “move” themselves. Still, all too often change is seen as emanating from outside of ourselves — an assumption that can be prophetic.

The most important goal of undergraduate education is to produce a workforce of students who see the forces of positive change within themselves. For this goal to become a reality, it is the responsibility of undergraduate institutions to teach its students how to become self-directed, self-managed, and self-motivated learners and workers. The purpose of this policy brief is to:

1. provide a summary of the historical movements and research in psychology and management that have influenced organizational management;
2. challenge the assumption that motivation and long-term productivity can be managed through practices that focus on only segments of the campus environment and singular aspects of human functioning;
3. present a rationale for institutionalizing a campus-wide self-management pro-

gram for students, faculty, administration, and staff; and

4. propose an integrated, institutional approach to professional development that employs a holistic model of self-management as its foundation.

Historical Context

O’Keefe and Castaldo (1981) describe how advances in psychology have influenced, or at least paralleled, organizational theory and practice. Since the behaviorism of Watson (1914) and Taylor’s (1947) scientific management, the perspective on who is in charge of human functioning has moved from an emphasis on the external environment to the individuals who comprise it. A retracing of this history will provide the theoretical underpinnings of this proposal.

From Behaviorism to Humanism

While Watson’s behaviorism was revolutionizing psychology in the early 1900s with its call for a completely objective science of psychology, Taylor’s scientific management approach was taking hold in industry. Like Watson and other behaviorist psychologists, Taylor’s time and motion studies emphasized observable behavior. The job of both the psychologist and manager was to manipulate the environment in order to produce desired results.

It was not long before Gestalt psychologists began to challenge behaviorism for its reductionism and mechanistic view of human beings. Scientific management was also criticized (Follet, 1924, 1941) as the human relations movement began to emerge. The Hawthorne studies (Roethlisberger & Dickenson, 1939) conducted by Mayo and Roethlisberger had shown that workers were not robots simply reacting in response to working conditions, but that their perceptions and feelings also influenced productivity. Maslow (1943) also broadened the scope of motivational theory to include human needs and aspirations – a concept that McGregor (1957) and Herzberg (1966) would ultimately apply to administrative practice. Thus, during the 1930s and 1940s a more humanistic orientation that took into account personal needs and satisfaction began to infuse itself in both psychology and management practices.

Operant Conditioning and Contingency Management

Human relations theory called for, according to Gellerman (1963), a “new breed of

manager – one who was self-controlled enough to relinquish control and one whose “motivations were geared less to the satisfactions of controlling other people than to the rewards of facilitating group productivity” (p.30). What often surfaced instead were shallow sensitivity training programs that eventually turned into the “bad case of superficiality” from which human relations theory began to suffer.

During the 1950s skepticism over humanistic approaches in psychology also crept in, bringing about a return to empiricism with the behaviorism of B.F. Skinner (1953). At the heart of Skinnerian behaviorism is the single contention that behavior is a function of its consequences. To Skinner, looking at the internal aspects of human functioning only tends to “obscure the variables which are immediately available for scientific analysis” (p. 31). Skinnerian principles of operant conditioning found their way into management practices by way of organizational behavior modification and contingency management (Luthans & Kreitner, 1975) where the contingent relationships among the antecedent stimulus, the response (behavior), and the subsequent consequence (reward or punishment) are used to manage employee behavior.

Cognitive-Behavioral Framework

Still psychologists in the fields of learning and perception challenged their own field by pointing out that behaviorism was too limited to account for the complexity of human behavior (Dollard & Miller, 1950; Rotter, 1954). The incorporation of internal cognitive processes such as thoughts, images, consciousness, and fantasy within behaviorist research set the stage for a cognitive-behavioral framework, which is seen in the work of Ellis (1962), Mischel (1968), and Lazarus (1971). Within a short time, cognitive themes were a major aspect of behavioral research, with its new focus on self-perception, belief systems, expectancies, problem solving, attribution theory, etc.

While psychology was entering a period of transformation, so too were approaches in management as the expectancy theories of Vroom (1964), Lawler and Porter (1967), and others were placing an emphasis on internal cognitive processes to describe employee motivation and productivity. Bandura (1977) would later place the concept of self-control within a reciprocal-

interaction framework, and thereby combine cognitive and behavioral concepts to explain changes in learning and performance.

With the cognitive approach firmly in place, psychology and management practices underwent radical changes. In psychology, it spawned a psycho-educational emphasis where the psychologist is facilitator and coach rather than director of clients' behavior. Similarly in management, a humanistic trend emerged where managers were encouraged to be less authoritarian and more employee-centered and participative (Hoy & Miskel, 1996). Research on organizational management was also redefining the very basis of authority and power to include the subordinate's perceptions, values, sentiments, and interpretations (French & Raven, 1968).

A Holistic Emphasis

Just as behaviorism was found to be too narrow in its focus, some psychologists were also finding the cognitive-behavioral framework to be deficient. To the average person it is by no means profound to say that people are biological beings who think, feel, sense, imagine, act, and relate to others. Yet, it took psychology and management a long time to come to this realization. Psychologist Lazarus (1976) was the first to introduce an empirically-based approach to assessment and treatment that took all these dimensions of the person into consideration with his "multimodal psychotherapy." Lazarus focused on seven modalities represented by the acronym BASIC-ID, which stands for behavior, affect, sensory, imagery, cognitive, interpersonal and drugs. (The "D" actually stands for biological, but the "B" would have ruined the acronym.) Lazarus argued that it was necessary to attend to the whole person (BASIC-ID) to effect lasting change.

With Lazarus there was a shift from a therapeutic to a psycho-educational model as psychologists began to teach their clients how to employ self-change techniques to manage all their needs. At the same time, segments of the corporate world began to adopt more holistic approaches in management training programs (O'Keefe and Castaldo, 1981). To influence their subordinates behavior and motivation, managers needed to help employees redirect their thoughts, feelings, activities, and interactions with others toward company goals. In effect,

employees, like clients, had to manage themselves holistically.

Self-management Theory and Practice

The field of self-management emerged in response to the need in psychology and management to find a holistic, but practical model for personal and professional development. It places control over clients and employees where it always should have been – with the individual. As important, self-management refocuses the impetus for change, productivity, and lasting improvements on the ability of the individual manage his or herself.

Ellis (1975), Dyer (1976), Seligman (1990), and others brought self-management principles to the general public by promoting cognitive change methods as the impetus for changing affect and behavior. Bandura (1977), Rotter (1954), Vroom (1966) and others had helped to explain cognitive processes that relate to self-motivated behavior and self-management. Their research demonstrated that people who expect to achieve an outcome and believe that the outcome results from their efforts are likely to have stronger self-management skills than people who anticipate failure and see no connection between their efforts and the events in their lives.

O’Keefe & Berger’s (1993, 1999) ABC approach to self-management subsumes the seven modalities of Lazaus’ BASIC-ID within three general areas of human functioning: affect, behavior, and cognition. It assumes that improvements in human functioning and motivation (whether the incentive for change originates within the environment or internally) are mediated, and therefore determined, affectively, cognitively, and behaviorally by the individual. Areas that are so often treated as if they were separate and distinct are integrated within a model that focuses on affect, behavior, cognition as the common denominators through which change can occur.

Self-management in Education

Learning how to manage one’s self is so fundamental to personal, professional, and academic growth as well as productivity in the workforce that it should be a part of every curriculum. Teaching students how to be in charge of themselves, how to think critically, how to set meaningful goals, interact well with others, and be happy, self-motivated, productive individuals is what education should be about. Nearly everything else will depend on these abilities. And,

while few educators see it as part of their responsibility to teach these skills, most probably would agree that students need to learn them. Somehow students are expected to figure it all out on their own, even though many never do. It is no wonder corporate America needs to bring in professionals to teach its employees (many of whom are college graduates) how to work together, communicate, manage stress and time, set goals, and be productive. In effect, American education has left it to the corporate world and the popular media to fill this educational void. However well intentioned Oprah Winfrey and Tony Robbins may be, it is an indictment of higher education when “educated” people must seek personal and professional development strategies from celebrities.

It is partly for these reasons that self-management is now taught as part of freshman seminar programs in college (Cuseo, 1991; Gardner & Jewler, 1997; Ellis, 1998; O’Keefe & Berger, 1993, 1999). These courses have been found to be effective because they strengthen self-efficacy beliefs and perceptions of internal locus of control, increase student persistence and achievement, and decrease attrition rates (Watson & Tharp, 1989; Berger & O’Keefe, 1993). However, if self-management is to be effective on a broad scale, it needs to be infused throughout an institution so that students can experience an educational climate where self-management is practiced by educators, staff, and administrators alike. The benefits for students would certainly be more far-reaching and profound. Students would be able to experience first hand a commitment to “quality” inside and outside of the classroom.

A Self-management Framework for Professional Development

The ABC approach to self-management rejects simply teaching behavioral techniques alone in favor of a holistic approach that sees affect and efficacy beliefs as integral to professional, personal, and academic development (Watson & Tharp, 1989; O’Keefe & Berger, 1993, 1999). Administrators, educators, and students are constantly dealing with feelings, behaviors, and thoughts, their own and those of others. The ABC approach provides a holistic model for understanding the role that affect, behavior, and cognition (ABC) play in one’s functioning and interactions with others. It also provides an eclectic framework for applying the best of what

psychological research has to offer for personal goal achievement and conflict resolution. In this way, self-management is not prescriptive; it does not favor a particular methodology. Instead, it provides a simplified roadmap for applying research-based methods for self-direction.

What follows is a self-management framework to guide student and professional development activities aimed at fostering a climate of self-directed learning and improvement. This generic approach to self-management can be learned by nearly anyone and applied to any area of professional, academic, or personal development.

The ABC Self-management Model

Self-management can be defined as the process of directing one's affect, behavior, and cognition toward the accomplishment of a task or goal. It can be thought of as the common denominator of any area of development – personal, professional, or academic – in that it provides a schema for development in any area.

Individual and organizational goals are more apt to be accomplished if one can identify feelings, behaviors, and thoughts that would contribute to or inhibit their achievement. However, before this can be accomplished, one must first be able to distinguish among feelings, behaviors, and thoughts, recognize their interrelationships, be familiar with self-change strategies that can be used to change affect, behavior, and cognition, and be able to apply them as needed. The ABC approach to self-management is outlined below. A more detailed description can be found in *Self-management for College Students: The ABC Approach* (O'Keefe & Berger, 1993, 1999).

Step One: The ABC Model

The ABC Model provides a framework for distinguishing among affect, behavior, and cognition (i.e. ABC). The assumption here is that one first needs to be able to identify what one wants to change before attempting to change it.

- *Affect* is our emotional (anger, happiness, etc.) and our sensory experiences (physical feelings). Generally, people are imprecise about their feelings (confusing affect with cognition) and often claim that feelings are the reason for doing or not doing something. Determining what kinds of feelings we would be of benefit in a given situation and what kind of feelings interfere with moving toward a particular goal is not just a matter of semantics, but of methodology for change.

- *Behaviors* are overt, observable responses, actions, and gestures. They are visible, measurable, and therefore more easily identified than affect or cognition. The basic question is: What behaviors need to be in place, altered, or diminished to reach a particular goal? Obviously, some behaviors are much more difficult to develop or change than others. Once identified, however, it becomes clearer what needs to be done and what is within a person's reach.
- *Cognition* encompasses our beliefs, values, expectations, images, decision-making, problem-solving, reasoning processes, and perceptions of self, others, and the world. These perceptions and beliefs include efficacy beliefs, perceptions of locus of control, and expectations.

Step Two: ABC Interactions

Feelings, behaviors, and cognitions obviously do not occur in isolation, they can influence one another in a domino-like effect. What is important here is to identify which ABC modality is the "trigger" of the spiral and to become familiar with personal ABC interactions so that we can learn to isolate and direct them.

Step Three: Self-Motivation

Once the ABCs and their interactions are understood, these general concepts can be applied to understanding and managing one's motivation. Here, the basic elements of motivation are demystified and presented in a practical formula for self-motivation. Motivation is understood in terms of the cognitions and feelings that promote motivated behavior. This knowledge can then be used to increase positive motivation, reduce negative motivation, or resolve motivational problems.

Step Four: Affective, Behavioral, and Cognitive Change Techniques

There is an old adage: "If you give a fish to a starving man, you feed him for a day, if you teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime." Self-management is based on the premise that people can learn how to fish and feed themselves for a lifetime. Therefore, methods effective in modifying affect, behavior, and cognition are introduced within the context of the ABC model.

Step Five: Application Areas

Once people are able to identify thinking patterns and beliefs, feelings, and behaviors that

influence their personal motivation and other aspects of their functioning, they are then in the position to use self-change techniques as they see fit. Application areas are only limited by human imagination. The approach is adaptable to individual interests and has been used to increase positive motivation, enhance communication, time management, and leadership skills, resolve motivational and other problems. Time management, study habits, communication, and self-esteem are a few areas that students find of benefit.

Implementing a Campus-wide Self-management Program

What would a campus environment that adopts self-management as part of its mission look like? First and foremost, self-management principles would permeate professional development, management, and educational practice and would be emphasized in the institutional mission, values, goals, leadership, and expectations.

- The *mission* of the institution would be to foster the development of self-directed students who know how to motivate and manage themselves toward their goals while displaying respect for others and the environment.
- The greatest *value* of the institution would be its people – students, faculty, staff, and administrators.
- *Goals* for every department would be modeled on this ideal and objectives would contribute in some way to helping students develop their emotional and physical health as well as their ability to think critically and act responsibly.
- *Leadership* would emanate from all areas in that administration and faculty would expect from themselves the same self-management skills that they expect from their students and one another.
- The shared *expectations* of all members of the campus community would be to assist each other in meeting the institutional mission by modeling the goals set forth for students.

A skeptic might say: “How on earth can anyone expect everyone to participate in such a plan?” The “can’t do it” voices will always resound the loudest – until they see the results for themselves. This is not to say that implementing such a program would be easy. To the contrary, like most anything that requires change, there will be “nay-sayers.” And, while it would be against the philosophy of a self-management approach to mandate participation, once a core of

administrators and faculty take on the challenge of teaching and applying these principles, and once the differences in students' expectations of themselves become evident, others will want to lend support and participate. One thing is clear. A college campus is an ideal environment to implement such a program. If it cannot happen in an educational environment, where personal and professional development are highly valued commodities, it is doubtful that it can happen anywhere.

This proposal for self-management across the curriculum is not just another new idea. It is a research-based response to the needs of the workforce to find practical ways to address fundamental human issues that are ignored within the majority of schools today. Historically, approaches to bring the individual into harmony with his or her environment have shifted from externally-focused strategies aimed at changing behavior to holistic approaches that recognize that complexity and diversity of human beings. Self-management programs that incorporate a holistic approach to human functioning have been found to be effective with students and have been recognized for their contributions to character development (The John Templeton Foundation, 1999). However, there is no reason to limit education in this area to students. Understanding the factors that govern one's own behavior, feelings, and thoughts and being able to better manage these aspects of one's self is not just the business of psychology, but of good management and educational practice as well. If postsecondary education were to meet this challenge and systematically take on the responsibility for educating the whole person, self-direction and self-motivation could become the norm rather than the exception of the twenty first century workforce.

REFERENCES

- Bandura, A. (1977). *Social learning theory*. NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Berger, D.S., & O'Keefe, E.J. (1993). Self-management for college students. In John W. Miller (Ed.) *Students at risk: Pitfalls and promising plans* (p. 159-169). Dubuque, Iowa: Wm. C.Brown Communications, Inc.
- Cuseo, J.B. (1991). *The freshman orientation seminar. A research-based rationale for its value, delivery, and content*. National Resource Center for The Freshman Year Experience, University of South Carolina.
- Dollard, J., & Miller, N.W. (1950). *Personality and psychotherapy: An analysis in terms of learning, thinking, and culture*. New York: McGraw Hill Book Company.
- Dyer, W. (1976). *Your erroneous zones*. NY: Avon Books.
- Ellis, A. (1969). *The essence of rational psychotherapy: A comprehensive approach to treatment*. NY: Institute for Rational Living.
- Ellis, D. (1998). *Becoming a master student*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.
- Follett, M.P. (1924). *Creative experience*. London: Longmans and Green.
- Follett, M.P. (1941). In H.C. Metcalf and L Urwick (Eds.) *Dynamic administration: The collected papers of Mary Parker Follet*. New York: Harper.
- French, J.R.P., & Raven, B.H. (1968). *Bases of social power*. In D. Cartwright and Zander (Eds.), *Group dynamics: Research and theory* (pp. 259-270). New York: Harper & Row.
- Gardner, J. N., & Jewler, A.J. (1997) *Your college experience: Strategies for success*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Gellerman, S.W. (1963). *Motivation and productivity*. American Management Association. US: Vail-Ballou Press, Inc.
- Herzberg, F. (1966). *Work and the nature of man*. New York: World Publishing Company.
- Hoy, W.K., & Miskel, C.G. (1996). *Educational administration: Theory, research, and practice*. New York: McGraw Hill.
- Lawler, E.E., & Porter, L. (1967). Antecedent attitudes of effective managerial performance, *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 2, 122-42.
- Lazarus, A. (1971). *Behavior therapy and beyond*. NY: McGraw-Hill.
- Lazarus, A. (Ed.). (1976). *Multimodal behavior therapy*. New York: Springer Publishing Co.

- Luthans, F., & Kreitner, R. (1975). *Organizational behavior modification*. Glenview, IL: Scott Foresman.
- Maslow, A.H. (1943). A theory of human motivation, *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-96.
- McGregor, D.M. (1957). The human side of enterprise. In *Adventures in thought and action*, Proceedings of the Fifth Anniversary Convocation of the School of Industrial Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 23-30.
- Mischel, W. (1968). *Personality and assessment*. New York: Wiley.
- O'Keefe, E. J., & Berger, D.S. (1993). *Self-management for college students: The ABC approach*. NY: Partridge Hill Publishers
- O'Keefe, E. J., & Berger, D.S. (1999). *Self-management for college students: The ABC approach*. (2nd ed.) NY: Partridge Hill Publishers.
- O'Keefe, E. J., & Castaldo, C.C. (1981). Multimodal management: A systematic and holistic approach for the 80's. In L.M. Miringoff (Ed.), *The proceedings of the Marist College symposium on local government productivity*. Poughkeepsie, New York: McCann Foundation and Marist College.
- Roethlisberger, F.J., & Dickenson, W.J. (1939). *Management and the worker*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Rotter, J. (1954). *Social learning and clinical psychology*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Seligman, M.E. (1990). *Learned optimism*. NY: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Skinner, B.F. (1953). *Science and human behavior*. NY: Macmillan.
- Taylor, F.W. (1947). *Scientific management*. NY: Harper.
- The John Templeton Foundation (1999). *Colleges that encourage character development: A resource for parents, students, and educators*. Philadelphia: Templeton Foundation Press.
- Vroom, A.H. (1964). *Work and motivation*. New York: Wiley.
- Watson, D., & Tharp, R. (1989). *Self-directed behavior. Self-modification for personal adjustment*, (5th ed.). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Watson, J.B. (1914). *Behavior: An introduction to comparative psychology*. New York: H. Holt and Company.

