

To Charm, to Strengthen, and to Teach: A Consideration of Implications for Teacher Education in The De Charms' Model of Origins and Pawns

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What can change a reluctant participant to an active participant in an inservice program? The difference can be a combination of factors that add up to participants feeling like "Origins," not "Pawns."

What is an Origin? According to De Charms, an Origin is "a person who is the director of his life. He feels that what he is doing is the result of his own free choice; he is doing it because he wants to do it, and the consequences of his activity will be valuable to him." Origins are genuinely self-confident because they determine how to reach goals through their own efforts.

A Pawn, on the other hand, is "a person who feels that someone else, or something else, is in control of his fate. He feels that what he is doing has been imposed upon him by others, that he is doing it because he is forced to and the consequences of his activity will not be a source of pride to him."

De Charms does not claim that it is possible to live in the real world entirely as an Origin, but he does suggest that

some people act and feel like Origins more of the time than others.

Figure 1 demonstrates the interrelatedness of the components of De Charms' model and their integral dependence. For instance, it is clear that Origins are made, not born; and administrators and supervisors can help by providing an atmosphere both physically and psychologically compatible with an individual's needs and objectives.

Such an atmosphere minimizes anxiety and loosens tension so that individuals can begin to develop internal control. The primary responsibility of the administrators/supervisors is more that of director than puppeteer. They must structure learning situations so teachers/learners achieve success in the tasks at hand and transfer the positive effects of success to later tasks and objectives.

Origin-ness is a firm foundation for permanent acceptance of individual responsibility. Origins, by means of inner controls, develop a sense of personal responsibility and compete confidently with self-standards. They accept the

consequences of their own actions realistically without external coercion. They, to use De Charms' terms, are encouraged to continue in being Origins because they learn to value the advantages of directing their own lives.

For De Charms, conditions of free choice involving elements of personal causation (behavior motivated for its own sake rather than for some external reward) will result in more relevant motivation and behavior than constrained, externally reinforced conditions.

There are, according to De Charms, two major ways to increase the likelihood of origin behavior:

1. People have to be helped to think like Origins and to feel confidence in themselves.
2. People have to be helped to act like Origins, in other words, to act in ways that are successful.

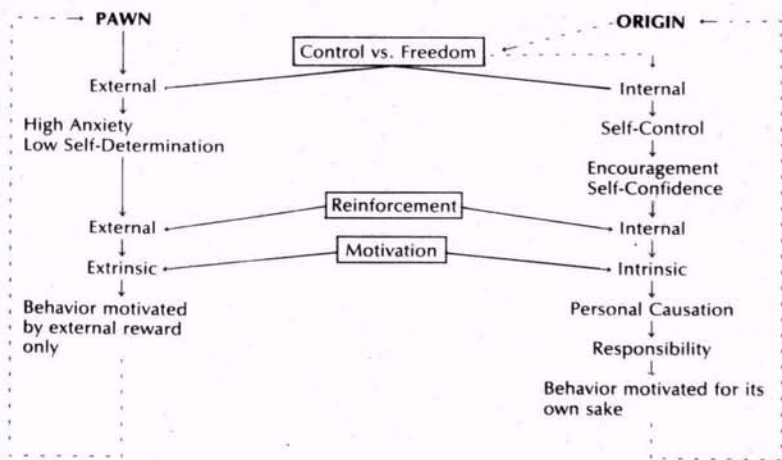
How does this affect inservice programs? A school district personnel office that actively involves teacher-representatives in the process of planning inservice activities emphasizes the Origin-ness of its personnel. The activities will be relevant to the audience and offered in climates that reduce anxiety to a minimum and that are physically and psychologically compatible. Moreover, since decision making involves choices, participants will be considered as Origins and rewarded not by extrinsic factors, but by an opportunity to learn something useful and applicable to their daily lives. **EL**

Reference

De Charms, R. *Personal Causation*. New York: Academic Press, 1968.

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Figure 1. Graphic Representation of De Charms' Model of Origins and Pawns.



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