The William Glasser Institute
President & Founder
William Glasser, M.D.
Administrator
Linda Harshman
22024 Lassen Street, #118
Chatsworth, California 91311
1-818-700-8000
FAX 818-700-0555
1-800-899-0688

The William Glasser Institute-Australia
President
June MacQueen
P.O. Box 134
Burpengary
Queensland 4505
Australia

The William Glasser Institute-Ireland
Director
Brian Lennon
6 Red Island
Skerries
Republic of Ireland
011-849-9106
FAX 011-353-1-849-2461

The Reality Therapy Association in Japan
Contact Person
Masaki Kakitani
2205-23
Oiso-Machi
Kanagawa 255
Japan
0463-33-8819
FAX 0463-61-2434

The William Glasser Institute-New Zealand
President
Sharlene Petersen
WGI-NZ
PO Box 130 059
Christchurch, New Zealand
Ph 64-3-3264056
FAX 64-3-3264057

KART: Korea Association for Reality Therapy
Chairperson
Rose-Inza Kim
707-10, Hannam 2-dong
yongsan-gu 140-212
Seoul, Korea
011-82-2-790-9361 / 9362
FAX 011-82-2-790-9363
e-mail: KCC 8608@chollin.net

Canadian Association for Reality Therapy
President
Jean Suffield
530 Des Chenes
Beloeil, Quebec
J3G 2H8
Canada
514-446-5671
FAX 514-446-5908

Association for Reality Therapy-Singapore
President
Irene Lio
c/o Boys’ Town
622 Upper Bukit Timah Rd.
Singapore 678117
769-1618
FAX 762-7846

The Institute for Reality Therapy UK
Contact Person
Director of Training - John Brickell
Administrator - Adrian Gorman
PO Box 227
Billingshurst
West Sussex, RH14 0YU
United Kingdom
Tel: 01403 700023
e-mail: info@realitytherapy.org.uk

The Israeli Reality Therapy Association
Contact Person
Michal Harel-Hochfeld
29 Oleh Ha-Gardom St.
Tel Aviv 69860
Israel
reality_therapy@hotmail.co.il

Croatian Association for Reality Therapy
President
Dubravka Stijacic
Kuslanova 59a
10.000 Zagreb
Croatia

Reality Therapy Association-Slovenia
President
Bojana Gobbo
Morova 29
6310 Izola
Slovenia
386 666 2706
FAX 386 6674 7045
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ABSTRACT

The research component of a storytent project documents the positive impact of the program on the frequency of reading in children’s lives, on their own reading levels, and on their self-perceptions about reading and themselves as readers. What made this program successful was a method of delivery combining Choice Theory, humanistic learning principles, and developmentally appropriate practice. Statements by children showing them to be surprised and delighted at their own emerging and growing skills appear in staff notes, and parent reports corroborate this appearance of positive self-perceptions in their children because of having had reading success in a need-satisfying environment.

Introduction

“I like to read. It is good to do. It helps you get into a higher grade. You can find stuff out. I like it.”

~Storytent participant

In December of 2002, riding the wave of success of the Harry Potter Reading Club, Community Literacy Workers Kate Wright, Wendell Dryden and Cheryl Brown discussed what a children’s summer reading program might look like. In the summer of 2003, a storytent program ran in Crescent Valley.

Crescent Valley is located in Saint John. It is a residential neighborhood made up of multi-unit buildings, grouped about common green spaces and bordered by mixed commercial and residential properties. It is New Brunswick’s largest Anglophone Public Housing complex, hosting nearly four hundred families of various socio-economic and cultural descriptions. As a low-cost housing neighborhood, it has attracted many families on social assistance and/or a low fixed income. Many residents describe themselves, or their families and neighbors, as suffering from poor health, interrupted schooling, the proximity of violence, a dependence on government provided services, and low or no meaningful employment. Most residents fit into Health Canada’s broad categorization as a population at-risk (Health Canada SantÉ Canada, n.d.), and it is the authors’ perception that many are, indeed, at severe risk of losing their dignity, health and families to the twin burdens of personal poverty and dependence. This program was a partnership between the Crescent Valley Community Tenants Association and the Saint John Free Public Library facilitated by the authors in the role of community literacy workers.

What is a storytent?

A storytent consists of one or more canopies, blankets and ground sheets, a variety of popular children’s books including picture, story and chapter books, and two to three adults. The role of the adult is to talk and sing with, listen to, and read to and with children as requested by the children themselves. Another role is to build and maintain relationships and environment. In this instance, the storytent program provided a venue for the Summer Reading Club (SRC) as part of a library outreach to the community. The SRC is an established provincial library program that encourages reading by allowing children to choose a reading goal for the summer, track their progress with logbooks and stickers, and celebrate their accomplishments.

Method of delivery

Staff members delivered these programs in accordance with the established principles of a humanistic philosophy of delivery (Heimstra & Brockett, 1994; Knowles, 1988), and principles of early childhood education set out by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (1990). Choice Theory principles, expressed through Lead Management (Glasser, 1994) and Quality Education (Glasser, 2000; Glasser, 1998b) provided a framework for every aspect of the program. Staff chosen for the project had extensive experience in basic literacy and community development, as well as Choice Theory training. In this instance, the researcher and the two community literacy workers had already worked in this community for a minimum of one year. The fourth member of the team, the library liaison, had a corresponding degree of experience with the library system.

Humanism

Humanism is a philosophy that first appeared in the context of European Christianity and writers like Desiderius Erasmus (c. 1466-1536) and Reginald Pole (c. 1500-1558). It emerged in response to a passive, top-down and corporate view of human, personal and spiritual development. This early humanism saw value in all authentic human activities and products, in contrast to the claimed superiority of men of authority, the ‘experts’ of the day, who polished their resumes with appeals to the divine. As well, it insisted that the individual had a moral freedom and standing before God that went beyond their membership in a church or community (Gilmore, 1952; McConica, 1991). More recent exponents of humanist theories include psychologists Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, and educational theorists...
John Holt, Malcolm Knowles and Paulo Freire. These modern humanists continue to write against a rigidly corporate and top-down view of education and human development (Atherton, 2003; Heimstra & Brockett, 1994).

According to a humanist view, all humans are born with an urge to self-actualization; a desire to learn and to become something. Each human being is in a constant process of becoming, and the human potential for growth and development is inherently unlimited. What drives successful learning, according to humanists, is internal self-direction or motivation. Each human being will be happiest and most successful when reaching for personal goals that he or she has identified as being both important and attainable (Heimstra & Brockett, 1994). Hence, Rogers' definition of self-direction, that “one chooses - and then learns from the consequences” (Rogers, 1961, p. 171). Yet, a critical humanist knows that what or whom an individual turns out to be depends on more than that one person’s inclinations. Social, physical, mental and temporal restrictions place bounds on each person’s potential. All human development, including learning, occurs in, and is influenced by, multiple social, cultural and physical contexts. According to this holistic view, people learn and grow best in the context of a community where their needs are met, and where they feel secure and valued. This is rooted in the assumption that humans have a hierarchy of needs and wants, but also in the belief that learning is a social phenomenon, as humans are social creatures (Maslow, 1970).

Developmentally Appropriate Practice

Many of the ideas espoused by critical humanists reappear in the context of early childhood education under the banner of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP). As a philosophy, DAP became widely known when the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) published a position paper in 1987 (Bredekamp, 1987). This paper highlighted the value of individualizing curriculum and assessment methods based on factors like the age, culture, interests, or physical and emotional development of each child. Such an approach is necessarily holistic, and, in company with critical humanists, Bredekamp and her colleagues wrote, “We believe that from the time of birth, all children are ready to learn [though] what we do or don’t do as individuals, educators, and collectively as society can impede a child’s success in learning” (Bredekamp et al, 1992, p. 1). DAP also focuses on what Auerbach (2001) refers to as ‘embedded literacy’; that is, learning that takes place in the context of activity the learner finds meaningful and might well engage in for non-educational reasons. However, DAP goes beyond conventional play-based learning. Much of the theoretical underpinning for this approach comes from the work of the psychologist Vygotsky and his notion of “...learning as a form of social transaction with more competent peers and adults” (Iturrondo & Vega, n.d.). For all its individualism, like a humanistic theory of learning, developmentally appropriate practice views learning as a social event, and a social event in which adults and older children can play a crucial role. According to Vygotsky, “...human learning presupposes a specific social nature as a process by which children grow into the intellectual life of those around them” (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 88). The challenge for anyone wishing to facilitate such learning is to provide for an environment, content and relationship able to sustain this social transaction.

Choice Theory

Of this triune, it is the last that Choice Theory stresses. Writes Glasser, “...if we are not sick, poverty stricken, or suffering the ravages of old age, the major human problems we struggle with ... are caused by unsatisfying relationships” (Glasser, 1998a, p.ix). In the context of human learning, Glasser insists that the “main reason so many students are doing badly” in schools is a “destructive, false belief” that kids ought to learn what we want them to learn, and if they refuse, they should be punished. This practice, which he labels ‘schooling’ (Glasser, 1998a, p.237), is an example of a larger philosophy of life he calls ‘external control psychology’ or the “ancient I-know-what’s-right-for-you tradition.” This is the same passive, top-down model of human development that the early humanists deplored. For Glasser, an external control approach is destructive because it damages human relationships and makes impossible the kind of ‘learning as social transaction” Vygotsky described. “Teaching is a hard job when students make an effort to learn,” he writes. “When they make no effort, it is an impossible one.” (Glasser, 1988, p. 1). How, then, do teachers encourage children to learn? First and foremost, they need to build relationships with their students. According to Choice Theory, learning is a by-product of need-satisfying relationships formed in an environment where freely chosen, authentic, useful activities are present and possible. Here the phrase ‘need-satisfying’ has an exact meaning: Glasser believes in five basic human needs (survival, freedom, fun, power, love and belonging) which he says are genetic in origin, and he states that all human actions are attempts, of varying degrees of effectiveness, to satisfy these needs (Glasser, 1998a). Though this is not the same as Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, Choice Theory and modern humanism meet on the terrain of humans as holistic, social creatures driven to satisfy embedded longings, who, to paraphrase Rogers (1961), choose and then learn from the consequences. This is not to discount the importance of content or curriculum. Echoing Auerbach’s (2002) notion of the primacy of embedded learning, Glasser insists that students will not gladly perform useless tasks, and certainly will not learn a great deal, unless they believe that the work they do is useful and valuable for themselves (Glasser, 2000, p.71). This belief is most easily fostered where learners co-construct the curriculum with their teacher, facilitator, manager or coach.

For the staff and researcher, building relationships in the context of the storytelling focused on avoiding what Glasser described as disconnecting behaviors: criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, bribing (rewarding to control) (Glasser, 2002). They replaced disconnecting behaviors with connecting behaviors: listening, supporting, encouraging, respecting, trusting, accepting, and always nego-
whom participated in the research component of this project.

The adult's roles were oriented to provide scaffolding; allowing children to reach further than they might alone, but stopping short of pushing children toward predetermined goals. Consequently, what the storytent and Summer Reading Club programs meant to and for each child was determined by him or herself. There was also an effort made to provide a consistent service - rain or shine - so that it was the child or family who determined the degree of access a child would have to the program.

**Times and Frequency of Delivery**

The storytents were offered 10 times per week, Tuesday through Saturday, mornings and afternoons, over five different locations. The locations and dates were staggered throughout the community to provide the best possible access for all resident families. Storytents were set up in common green spaces located in courts or near street corners. Morning tents ran from 10:00 am through 12:00 pm, and afternoon tents ran from 1:30 pm through 3:30 pm. The program ran for 9 weeks (90 tents), with only two ‘indoor’ tents and two other instances of weather severe enough to warrant a truncated session.

**Level of Participation**

Between July 1 and August 30, 2003, one hundred and seventy-seven children registered for the Summer Reading Club at the Storytent., ninety-seven girls and eighty boys. Seventy-four children reached their reading goal (42%). Recorded books read ranged from 2 – 246. Children’s ages ranged from preschool (age 2) to grade nine. Attendance at Storytents ranged from 3 to 34 children, with an average of 15 children per session. Approximately 100 children attended regularly (at least twice weekly), and approximately 50 children attended three or more times per week.

**Research Component**

The role of the research was to address the question of the impact of the program on the frequency of reading in children’s lives, on their own reading levels, and on their perceptions about reading and themselves as readers. Questions to obtain these qualitative data were developed through conversations with the researcher, storytent and library staff.

**Researcher Bias**

The authors came into this project and this research with extensive knowledge of the Crescent Valley Community and the families who live there. In addition, they had already built relationships with some of the families and children, some of whom participated in the research component of this project. Prior to the project, they were Family Literacy Practitioners in this community for two years. They coordinated an intergenerational family literacy program, guided by Choice Theory principles, where parents came for support and to address their learning needs, and where their children took part in an on-site educational program. Also, they worked as homework coaches for one of those two years. This prior relationship was important to the success of the storytent program in that the families requested the program and gave it their support. However, it could influence the research results in that those families would have known what was important to the authors, and acted or spoke accordingly.

The authors are also committed to the principles of Choice Theory and its description of human learning.

**Research Methods**

To answer the questions posed, the authors used multiple methodologies, both qualitative and quantitative, including: quantitative data from the Summer Reading Club; Library statistics; daily tent attendance figures; a daily weather log; and informal assessments of a group of children early in the summer (June 28-July18) and again late in the summer (Aug 19-30) using a series of guided reading books also currently used in New Brunswick primary schools. Qualitative information came from staff’s written daily observations; parent, community partner and children's interviews at various points in the project and field notes. Unplanned sources of information came from written and picture artifacts from children and their parents; and photographs. This research was evaluative research.

During each child’s assessment, the researcher kept a running record and noted miscues and reading strategies. A running record is “a documentation of a child’s actual reading of text, providing both qualitative and quantitative information... They have a variety of uses [including] finding the appropriate level of text for children to read [and] documenting progress in reading” (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 78). Running records are used by the local public school district, in conjunction with other methods, for the same and many other purposes. See Appendix A for a list of guided reading books used.

The researcher compiled the daily written notes of staff and interviews with parents, children and community partners, and the authors read and re-read for recurrent themes as well as statements pertaining to the impact on children’s reading levels, perceptions about reading and reading frequency. Results were verified by using triangulation, a combining of “multiple methods, empirical materials, perspectives and observers that adds rigor, breadth and depth to an investigation” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

**Analysis**

The program has had a positive impact on reading frequency in so far as children’s frequency of reading or being read to was reported by all parents as having increased throughout the summer. As well, based on library statistics, more children from this community participated in the Summer Reading Club than the previous year.
All of the children who were assessed maintained or showed a gain in reading level. Parent and staff reports, and remarks made by the children themselves, corroborate this quantitative data. For those children who chose to make frequent or intensive use of the storytent, the program was instrumental in helping them acquire or improve their reading skills.

Statements by children showing them to be surprised and delighted at their own emerging and growing skills as a reader appear time and again in staff notes. Parent reports corroborate the appearance of positive self-perceptions in their children as a result of having had reading success in a need satisfying environment.

In summary, this summer reading program has had a significant positive impact on the frequency of reading and perceptions about reading in the lives of many children in this community. For a smaller number, the program supported a measurable increase in reading levels.

Frequency of reading in children’s lives

The parents of the children involved in the research were interviewed at the beginning and end of the project. Most parents reported a change in the frequency of their child’s reading. This also represents a shift in the parents’ perceptions of their children as readers. One father noticed that his child ‘barely ever read’ at the beginning of the summer, and that he read ‘every chance he got’ at the end of the summer. Likewise, other parents reported:

“She wasn’t really into reading before the storytent came — now she wants me to read to her all the time... I didn’t read [my children] books every night, so now I try to read them one each night.”

“He reads every day now. [Before,] I was lucky to get him to sit down once or twice a week.”

“With [my older child] it really made her interested in reading. When she goes to bed she brings a book now instead of a toy.”

Staff noted early on that the SRC provided children with a goal or task within which reading (and writing) was embedded (Auerbach, 2002). Many children read, or were read to, long and persistently in order to fill up the pages of their log books. It is the authors’ perception that writing in their log books and putting on stickers met the children’s power needs.

“[He] has profited a lot from reading logs! He is very proud of his list of books and shows everyone when he has another one written down. I have never read more than one book to him before he lost interest and did something else.”

Staff notes

For most children, this seemed to last for a period of 3 to 4 weeks, during which they might attend 7 or 8 of the 10 tents. However, some children continued to fill out logbook pages even after the program, and summer, had ended.

Another factor that may have contributed to increased frequency in reading was the liberal book borrowing policies of the storytent. Staff allowed children to borrow two books at a time on their honor. They documented a steady stream of children returning and borrowing books, some back whenever the children could bring them, some disappearing into the black holes of their closets. Book giveaways were also part of the project, and storytent staff gave away 114 new books to children who participated in the program.

Reading Levels

Subjects

Parents of thirty-seven children gave permission for their children to participate in the research project, and agreed to be participants themselves. The children, 15 male and 22 female, ranged from two to 12 years of age.

Where children chose not to read with the researcher, this was noted as part of their assessment. However, it did not weigh for or against the children, and sometimes the children were observed reading with storytent staff, other children or independently.

There were six children who were pre-school age, or below the lowest book used, and were assessed using an adaptation of Marie Clay’s (1998) Concepts about Print Assessment (including book handling, directional behavior, and printed language concepts). If children who did not read had some book awareness, they were assessed at Book Awareness (BA). If there was no book awareness, or if the child did not sit and listen to a story in the tent or play with the books, they were assessed at No Interest (NI).

Of the thirty children who received permission to participate in the research project, thirty received initial assessments in the first three weeks of the project. The other seven children either chose not to read with the researcher or were not present at the storytent when she was there. Eighteen children were assessed for a second time during the last ten program days. Of the remaining 19, four children had moved out of the neighborhood, three chose not to read with her, and eleven were not present in the storytent.

Information that is related to gain is recorded in the chart below. Guided reading levels were interpreted as approximate grade levels using Fountas and Pinnell’s (1996) guidelines.
Reading Level Results Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Number</th>
<th>Initial Assessment</th>
<th>Final Assessment</th>
<th>+/- gain or loss in level</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child 1</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>E (Grade one)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 2</td>
<td>I (Grade two)</td>
<td>M (Grade three)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 3</td>
<td>BA (preschool)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 4</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>F (Grade one)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 5</td>
<td>L (Grade 2)</td>
<td>M (Grade 2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 6</td>
<td>BA (preschool)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 7</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 8</td>
<td>D (Grade 1)</td>
<td>I (Grade 2)</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 9</td>
<td>D (Grade 1)</td>
<td>N (Grade 3)</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 10</td>
<td>BA (preschool)</td>
<td>A (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 11</td>
<td>L (Grade 2)</td>
<td>R+ (above Gr. 4)</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 12</td>
<td>A (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 13</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 14</td>
<td>A (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 15</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>I (Grade 2)</td>
<td>+2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 16</td>
<td>L (Grade 2)</td>
<td>O (Grade 3)</td>
<td>+1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 17</td>
<td>A (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>B (Kindergarten)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child 18</td>
<td>M (Grade 3)</td>
<td>N (Grade 3)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This is further summarized in Figure 1.

![Increase in Reading Levels](image)

**Figure 1. Increase in reading levels**

We also found a relationship between increase in reading levels and attendance, as shown in Figure 2.

![Reading Level Increase by Attendance](image)

**Figure 2. Reading Level Increase by Attendance**

Parents, staff and children’s comments reflect the qualitative measure of gain:

"His teachers were impressed with his reading, and he had two spelling tests and only got one word wrong!"

**Parent**

"I feel like she has improved with her reading. She’s doing better than ever. She’s picking up words when she borrows books from you guys. She’ll try to read them and then show me. Sometimes she’ll make up the story."

**Parent**

"[H]e’ll pick up books now, before he’d [want] me to read to him."

**Parent**

"[He] read The Big Goof, got to page 26 and said ‘look at all the pages I read! I’m doing good!’"

**Storytent Staff**

"I think we succeeded in helping kids maintain and improve their reading levels. They did reading over the summer that they wouldn’t have done without us..."

**Storytent Staff**

"This is cool. I’m reading this book— I’m learning to read!"

**Child**

Children’s perceptions about themselves as readers

"One day she brought a book home she’d learned to read. She said ‘I read this book, Mommy!’ She was so excited. I’ve never seen her so excited in her whole life."

**Parent**

Comments from parents, children and staff demonstrate the shift in self-perceptions of the children. In some cases, children were walking into the storytent saying “I can’t read” and walking out on the same day saying, “I can read!” See Appendix B. One parent described her child’s perceptions of himself as a reader as ‘tentative’ at the beginning of the summer. At the end of the summer the parent stated, “He feels better now that he can pronounce words and reads to himself. Now [he] feels better”

**Storytent Staff commented:**

"[She was) running around asking “Can I read this (Blue Hat Green Hat or Twinkle Twinkle Little Star) to you?” to Kate, to me, to everyone."

"I saw some gains in children’s perception of themselves as readers, confidence level, and reading level."

"I know of a number of children who came to conceive of themselves as readers."

"[He was] sitting and listening to 8-10 books read by me and then [an older child]. He picked up Blue Hat Green Hat, pointed to ‘oops’ [and] said it— ‘oops’. [He] looked at me and smiled. Asked me to read that one next…saying ‘oops’ on cue.”
Children Commented:

“t’m good at reading”

“[Child] didn’t want to register because ‘I can’t read’ But at end of tent said ‘I can’t wait till you come back that was fun. I read 11 books!’”

“[He] wanted to read [Buz]. Some of it he had memorized, some repeated. Proudly he said in the middle ‘Hey, I’m reading a book!’”

“Assessed [Child 33] and [Child 34] who said ‘We can’t read.’ [Child 34] took the paint book [I Like to Paint] and read it a few more times and then said ‘Yay! I’m reading!’”

Researcher

“I like to read, but I hate it when I can’t read the book”

Child

“[Little girl] delighted to discover she could read (“I didn’t know”) the words “Tra La La” From the wooden soldier book”

Storytent Staff

“Thank goodness for those level 1 books. Once again, 4thor 5th time, someone went from “I don’t know how to read” to “I can read” in about 30 minutes.”

Storytent Staff

Discussion

How was the program instrumental in helping children acquire or improve their reading skills? Before this project began, the authors worked hard to build relationships with the community. In addition to their work in the Family Literacy Program, they brought their storytent to several community events, volunteered for others, became associate members of the local tenant’s association, and spent time listening to the community. Storytent staff continued this work of relationship building with the children, their parents, and any neighbors who happened by. Staff noted, happily, the positive comments and donations of books or snacks that came unexpectedly from passersby.

Although many children showed an increase in reading level, the Storytent program was not about instructed reading. Talking, laughing, playing, and sharing were all part of the content of the program. Sometimes, children dictated stories to staff who wrote them down. Other times they wrote notes to each other, copied out text from books, or just doodled. One day, a staff member brought a guitar for the children to play. Another staff member taught them to make hemp bracelets and necklaces. Staff often skipped, played cards or clapping games, or shared bubbles or sidewalk chalk with the children. Each of these activities had a defensible ‘early literacy’ dimension (sequencing, symbolic representation, vocabulary enhancement, etc.), but for staff they were also about quality relationships. The children were allowed to help staff put up the tents. Sometimes, it was a child who wrote up the attendance for the researcher, or who passed around snacks. For the children, also, the Storytent was never just about reading instruction. Some children used the program to meet common social needs. Some children used it as a source for reading materials. Some quite deliberately came to acquire or improve their reading skills. Most came for a variety of reasons, and reasons changed as the summer went on.

Staff worked hard to employ connecting language and habits, and to avoid disconnecting behaviors. The liberal book borrowing policy was part of this. When children borrowed books, they were not nagged to bring them back. If particular children seemed to be ‘collecting’ books, if they had a dozen or more out and showed no inclination to return them, staff would negotiate a new borrowing limit, usually settling on borrowing to one book at a time. No children were punished by being cut off from borrowing books. When, as happened occasionally, a borrowed book turned up in a yard sale, staff simply purchased the book back without comment. In all of this, the commanding assumption was that making books part of children’s quality worlds was fundamental to supporting their literacy development, and that having readers in the tent was more important than having books.

Staff spent some time considering the SRC’s use of stickers and other incentives for reading. Did this constitute bribery? Was this ‘rewarding to control’? Eventually, staff came to the perception that the act of filling a logbook with titles read and stickers had to do with meeting one’s power and love and belonging needs. The logbooks were witnesses to personal accomplishment and fitting in or belonging. Children were encouraged to decide for themselves if they had ‘read’ a book, and if they were ready for another sticker, and so there was no failure, no falling behind the crowd, in this aspect of the program. The authors now believe that this self-monitoring played an important part in the positive shift in many children’s perceptions of themselves as readers.

Early on in the program, staff documented various conversations and observations that fall under the category of violence, such as “He said he was scared to walk home alone because he might get beat up”, or “The police officers in the book bothered him. He said the police were at his house last night.” Several times, domestic violence spilled over into the proximity of the Storytent. During the end of summer interviews, parents said:

‘[The program] kept a lot of fights down between the kids. [This is] the first summer [my son] didn’t have the crap beat out of him all the time, he’s really enjoyed his summer’

“When I walked by [the storytent] I noticed there was no arguing or fighting. The kids were just sitting there, listening and reading – they were right into it.”

The authors believe these observations point out a research theme worth pursuing in a future summer’s storytent project; namely, the interplay, if any, between a quality learning environment and a larger social context.

Despite appearance, in the tent things were not always idyllic. While they were in the tent, children were shown how their behavior influenced whether or not others could read or hear books. This attempt at assisting children to self-evaluate
required constant negotiation. So, too, did the expectation that no one would talk disparagingly of other children or families. As in the adult world, bossiness, jealousy, hoarding and boasting often created sharp disconnections. Physical boisterousness also posed a challenge, especially on rainy days. Often, children in conflict looked to staff for justice or vindication. In these circumstances, staff began the negotiation by asking about roles ("She took my book!" "What are you asking me to do?") rather than becoming a boss. Too often, there was no "connecting place" and too little time for individual children and staff to talk through these challenges (Glasser, 2000 p.160).

On those occasions when negotiations broke down, children were asked to leave the tent and 'try again tomorrow'. Staff then discussed incidents after each tent, and made plans for preventing or dealing more effectively with the challenge at the next tent. In some cases, the staff began perceiving certain behavior patterns less as ineffective choices than as simply a long, effective need-meeting goodbye. In any case, the strength of the relationships built in the tent brought the children back the next day. The general perception of the Storytent in the community was that it was a warm, safe place to be.

Children's reading was not criticized. Staff would wait to be asked before they supplied a word or corrected an error in decoding. Staff did not require children to sit still or silently while they read, though they might stop reading if it became obvious that no one was interested in the text (there was always someone else to read to). The methods used to assist children in learning to read included reading aloud to children (as well as listening to children read), shared reading, guided reading, independent reading, interactive writing and independent writing - six of nine elements of a balanced literacy program (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996).

The authors agree with Depree & Iverson (1994) that "reading to children...models both the 'how' and 'why' of reading" (p. 31). "Children, [as well as adults], need to see the purpose in reading. If you believe you learn to read by reading, you must learn to want to read" (P.31). Therefore, reading to the children was an established method for "vocabulary acquisition, increased listening vocabulary; exposure to language structures and aspects of good grammar, and the ability to use book language" (Depree & Iverson, 1994, p. 31). While reading to, staff commonly left the choice of book up to individual child. However, staff also became aware of, and made frequent use of, those books they themselves found easy or enjoyable to read. Preserving the joy of reading was important in a context where staff might be asked to read the same four or five titles thirty or more times in one week. Using dramatic or comic voices, integrating the names of, or locations familiar to, the children, and transforming a prose text into a song or play were all ways staff found to read the same books many times over without manifesting boredom or impatience.

Shared reading has been described as "a step between reading to children and independent reading by children [and therefore] the step where children learn to read by reading" (Depree & Iverson, 1994, p. 34). This was another method storytent staff felt was appropriate to "a non-competitive learning environment" where "risk taking, mistakes, and approximations are seen as a normal part of learning - not signs of failure" (Depree & Iverson, 1994, p. 34.). In a typical shared reading scenario, a child might sit close to the adult and book. The adult reads the book aloud, at least twice, with children joining in as they feel comfortable. With a book like Robert Munch's Mortimer, the child would probably begin by 'reading' the short chant repeated every other page. With a pattern book like Bill Martin Jr.'s Brown Bear Brown Bear, the child might start by 'reading' the line "what do you see" which appears with each new illustration. Or, with Sandra Boynton's Blue Hat Green Hat, they might read "oops" each time it appears. With time and repetition, the children gather more of the text, until they reach a point where they believe they can read the book on their own. Here, accuracy counts for little, and staff would redirect a reader only if a misread frustrated the child's attempt to make sense of a story.

With older children, shared reading might follow a more structured scenario: "You read a page and I'll read a page, okay? Who do you want to start, me or you?" This can allow a child to read a longer or more difficult book that, were he or she to attempt on his or her own, would end in frustration. It allows the child to observe, up close, how an accomplished reader approaches a text. It also creates a context of closeness and cooperation in which children can ask for help with a word or phrase without feeling as if they had somehow failed. In either scenario, shared reading "allows less able readers to function as readers, develops positive feelings towards stories and book experiences in a relaxed, secure situation (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 34), and "helps children to be independent with material that would otherwise be too hard" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 35). Where shared reading helps children construct a positive perception of themselves and their ability, the children will be and feel able to learn to decode more exactly in the near future.

Staff also used an adaptation of guided reading, which involves promoting specific reading strategies. They held in reserve leveled books that were in children's instructional ranges, and tried, gently, to match up children and texts, knowing that a book "within the "90 – 94 % range presents challenges that the child will be increasingly able to control with... guidance in an instructional reading situation" (Fountas & Pinnell, 1996, p. 35). They gave the children time to actively 'figure out' text. They talked about the book with children, pointing out patterns in the text, or regularities and irregularities in phonic principles, or discussing things like the title, author, or method of illustration.

Guided reading, reading to, and shared reading often blended into one another. Multiple copies of Mortimer or Stephanie's Ponytail, another Munch favorite, allowed children to join in or follow along when a staff was reading either story to a group. One time, a child snuggled into some shared reading suddenly stopped 'reading' the pictures and demanded, "What are all these letters doing on the page?" The overarching principle of all this interaction was the desire to build relationships and allow the children's interest and curiosity to lead.
Having the right books was another important factor in success. Staff made sure there were appropriate books in the tent for reading and borrowing. There were many emergent texts, "...one and two line caption books that contain stories about subjects familiar to most children: strong pictorial support provided by illustration that match text exactly; predictable language patterns" (Depree & Iverson, 1994, p. 24). Staff also had increasingly challenging books, as well as 'high interest low level' (books with easy-read text but subject matter appealing to older children or youth). We made effort to find or purchase books that the children said they were interested in, and books that were popular read alouds or popular books for borrowing. The range extended from board books appropriate for infants and toddlers, through picture and easy read books, chapter books of increasing difficulty, and very popular, high-level books, such as the Harry Potter Series.

Children were free to read or borrow any titles they wished, and staff accepted their choices. Books were not presented in terms of age appropriateness, and staff avoided making negative comments about children's selections. There were a number of children who took home, and kept, Harry Potter novels who showed no sign of being able to navigate the text. Some had parents or older siblings read to them, but others, apparently, found the simple act of possessing the books to be satisfying. Nonetheless, staff did note individual children's reading levels, and an effort was made to alert children to books that they might find easier to read. This was assisted by the use of high-interest low-level books; books originally written for adults or older teens, but at a very low literacy level.

Conclusion

[He] was running around, talking while reading — then wanted Buzz twice. Then he wanted to read it. Some of it he had memorized some repeated. Proudly said in middle “Hey, I'm reading a book!”

Staff Notes

The storytent program was mentally and physically demanding on staff and researcher alike. Storytent happened rain or shine - there were only three cancellations - and sometimes more than a dozen children competed for reading room inside two 10 by 10 foot tents. At times, people disconnected, opportunities were missed, and children and staff both experienced gaps. Yet, the relationships held. Children came to the tent in miserable weather, snuggled up with books, and asked us to read with them.

Reading level featured prominently in the research portion as well as in the everyday interaction with the children. There were definite limits to how accurately a child's reading level could be assessed. Apart from the role played by the researcher's relationship, or lack thereof, with the children, the environment was less than perfect. The 'assessment' was conducted outside, in weather that might be cold and damp, or hot and humid. Readers and researcher had to cope with the presence of other, noisy children, and the dust and clamor of nearby construction, as new water and sewer lines were being installed in the neighborhood. There was no way to factor in variables like the children's eating or sleeping, what was going on in their home life or if they had been harassed on the way to the tent. In some respects, the process the researcher used was adapted to the storytent and the books and behavior on-hand, departing from a strict version of what Clay describes for a running reading record assessment or a concepts about print assessment. Because the environment was the same on pre as well as post assessment, the authors do not feel these limit variations outweigh the bulk of quantitative and qualitative evidence for reading level, reading frequency and reader self-perceptual improvement.

It is hard to say the preschool children involved 'learned to read' in any formal sense while in the tent. Yet, a good many came to believe that they were readers. This was a by-product of strong positive relationships, connecting behaviors, and having the right book on hand. For emergent and fluent readers, the quantitative and qualitative data support the acquisition and improvement of reading skills. Definitely, children read more over the summer - over 4000 books - and qualitative data in the form of staff and parents' quotes support changes in self-perceptions about reading and themselves as readers. Most significantly, by the end of the summer, reading was in many childrens' quality world, and the Storytent had become part of the quality vision of the community.

In the fall and winter that followed, reading and book access continued for the children. In September of 2003, adapted versions of the storytent, '20 minute Storytents', were held on Saturdays in each of the five summer locations. Twenty-minutes proved long enough for children to read a story or two, borrow some books, and to stay connected. Eventually, cold weather made it impossible to continue with the tents program. After talking with some of the parents, researcher and staff started a door-to-door borrowing program. For this program, we filled our storytent wagon with books for all ages, and traveled through the neighborhood. Sometimes, children hailed us from their doorsteps. Other times, parents asked us to knock on their door each Saturday. We quickly saw that this program offered us a new opportunity to start building those all-important relationships with parents. New families began accessing the service, and reading and borrowing continued in the neighborhood through the long, snowy months. At the time of writing, Summer Storytents have returned to the five locations in the community, and children and adults come to the tent once more to read and borrow books. However, we have reserved one day for door-to-door borrowing, and continue to build on and expand our relationships with families in the neighborhood. We are tracking reading level and participatory statistics to compare with last year. We are also gathering data on any interplay between our presentation of a quality learning environment and instances of literacy, perception shifts and social violence in the larger, neighborhood context.

The data in this paper were first presented in a report prepared for the Saint John Free Public Library.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

List of guided reading books used as assessment tool

Level


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APPENDIX B

Self perception Case Story

One story that demonstrates the power shared reading on the children's self perceptions is the following conversation between a child and a storytent staff member as an example of a pre-school child developing a positive self perception about reading.

[He] came into the tent and said “I can’t read” I had my box. So we read Trucks by Donald Crews. [He] Read it once, “I read it by myself. By myself.” After reading trucks, I asked, “Do you want to read Machines at work?” [He said] “You read with me ok?” [We] read Machines at work five times. [He] noted the machines in the book were “like machines up there” (on Sandy Point Rd Construction site).

[The] third time [he] does it on his own. “I did it! Yes, I did it all by myself!”

Then he said, “I touched a spider. It didn’t bite me. I put it on the grass” I opened Machines at work and started... “Hey...” [He] said, “Wait. I want to do it” Then he turned to the child sitting next to him: “[Little girl], you want me to read this to you?”

Little Girl: “Yep”

“Do you want me to read you this book? (Machines at work)

Little Girl: “That’s a chapter book.”

[He said], “No it’s a machine book.”

Little girl to staff, “Is he reading that right?”

“Yes”

“I did it! Did you hear me – I did it!” [he said].

The little girl had turned her attention elsewhere. [He] chases after her – [Little girl]! You can’t hear me”

Staff #2 “He’s trying to read a book – Do you want to read it to me?” and listens to him read it.

The corresponding author, Cheryl Brown, may be reached at 3 Tanglewood Crt, Saint John, New Brunswick, Canada, E5K 2T9, sjfamilit@nbnet.nb.ca
ABSTRACT

Traditional Taekwondo programs for children can have significant psychological benefits. A brief explanation of the elements of Taekwondo training is provided, and a differentiation is made between traditional and modern Taekwondo training programs. Positive psychological benefits of Taekwondo are explored, and research studies addressing the psychological effects of martial arts training are considered. This paper examines traditional programs from a Choice Theory (CT) perspective, particularly with reference to CT's concept of basic needs.

Taekwondo, the Korean martial art, has grown substantially outside of Korea in recent decades. This international growth and acceptance is reflected in its status as a recent addition to the Olympic Games. At the grassroots level, Taekwondo schools offer programs for children and adults, teaching the physical skills and philosophical tenets of the sport. This article discusses some of the psychological benefits associated with children's Taekwondo programs, and considers how Choice Theory and particularly the concepts of the Basic Needs can explain these positive results.

Taekwondo

The word Taekwondo translates literally as "the way of kicking and punching." Taekwondo's history in Korea extends back over 2,000 years. Artists' renderings of Taekwondo practitioners have been found on the walls of royal tombs from the Koguryo dynasty (Chun, 1975, 9). The martial arts were largely unknown in Western countries until after the Second World War. Many servicemen returning from the Pacific theatre of operations brought back an interest in the martial arts after being stationed in Japan and Korea. Interest increased after the war, and in the late 1950's, a small number of Korean masters emigrated to the west to meet the demand for formal Taekwondo training (Lee, 1989). Taekwondo's growth has accelerated even further since being elevated to the status of an Olympic sport by the International Olympic Committee.

Taekwondo contains elements of the abrupt, linear movements found in Karate and the more flowing, circular movements of Kung Fu. Students start by learning basic blocking, punching and kicking techniques, and then begin to combine these elements into patterns of movements and non-contact sparring. Taekwondo practitioners move through a series of belt levels as their skills, techniques and knowledge grow. A color-belt system moves the beginner (white belt) through to the level of advanced practitioner (black belt). Further development is recognized through the awarding of black-belt levels, from first dan to tenth dan.

Traditional vs. Modern Taekwondo

It should be noted that while Taekwondo can be a competitive martial art, Taekwondo programs can also incorporate uniquely Eastern philosophical elements. A distinction is made between traditional and modern Taekwondo programs. Modern programs place an emphasis on full-contact sparring and self-defense. Traditional Taekwondo programs typically stress self-control, conflict avoidance, and non-contact sparring, and place a stronger emphasis on poomse (patterns of blocking, kicking and punching rehearsed without an opponent). As well, traditional Taekwondo programs incorporate more philosophical teachings and meditation (Nosanchuk, 1981, Trulson, 1986). Lee emphasized the importance of practicing both the philosophical and technical aspects of Taekwondo to rise to the level of true martial artist: "Only those who consider its philosophical character can hope to elevate themselves to the mastery which makes Taekwondo an art rather than a mere assortment of physical techniques" (Lee, 1989, p. 58). Nosanchuk (1981) identified four criteria for traditional martial arts programs. Traditional martial arts require an emphasis upon poomse; non-contact rather than full-contact sparring; an atmosphere requiring respect for the instructor, uniform and the class; and attention to meditation and philosophy (Nosanchuk, 1981; Nosanchuk & MacNeil, 1989).

For a pop-culture illustration of the differences between traditional and modern, or Western, martial arts programs, think back to the film The Karate Kid. The young "hero" of the film was schooled in the traditional method of Karate, while the antagonist was a young man schooled in a modern program. Chun suggested that Eastern approaches to self-defense, such as Taekwondo, differ from Western approaches in that they extend beyond a focus on developing a proficiency of technique, to "integrate the art as a way of being-in-the-world." (Chun, 1976, 8).

Relationship between Taekwondo and Mental Health

A number of published studies seem to indicate that participation in either Taekwondo or another type of martial art can be beneficial to one's mental health. This was the conclusion of a review of the literature (Fuller, 1988). Studies are supportive
of the benefits of martial arts training to psychological well-being. Nardi (1984) has even suggested that a martial arts instructor behaves in a manner similar to a psychotherapist.

**Aggression**

At first glance it may seem paradoxical that participation in Taekwondo or one of the related martial arts would lead to a decrease in aggression. It seems to defy logic that learning “the way of kicking and punching” would reduce aggression in participants. However, a number of studies have come to that conclusion. The study of Taekwondo and Karate students by Nosanchuk (1981) found a reverse correlation between length of training experience and reported aggressiveness. Daniels and Thornton (1992) found a significant correlation between training time and reduction in hostility levels. Nosanchuk and MacNeil (1989) found similar results for students schooled in a traditional martial arts program, but found that students attending a modern program became more aggressive as their belt level increased. Trulson (1986) evaluated the effectiveness of Taekwondo training in treating juvenile delinquents, and suggested that traditional training reduced aggression, but modern training resulted in a greater tendency towards delinquency. Skelton, Glynn and Berta (1991) found that parents of children aged six to eleven years reported a decrease in aggression as the children increased in belt rank. Lamarre and Nosanchuk (1999) replicated Nosanchuk (1981), controlling for sex and age, and found a reduction in aggression with martial arts training.

**Self-esteem**

Duthie, Hope and Barker (1978) compared advanced martial arts students with less advanced students, and concluded that the advanced group appeared to be more extroverted, was more achievement-oriented, and had a stronger self-image. Improvement in self-concept as a result of training was also noted by a number of other authors. Richman and Rehberg (1986) found that novice practitioners had lower self-esteem than students with higher belt levels. Kurian, Verdi, Caterino and Kulhavy (1994) reported that Taekwondo belt rank was associated with higher self-reliance scores. Finkenberg (1990) investigated the impact of participation in Taekwondo on self-esteem, and found that an eight-week course in Taekwondo resulted in significantly higher self-concept scores. Similarly, Trulson (1986) reported that juvenile delinquents who undertook traditional Taekwondo training scored substantially higher on the self-esteem category of the Jackson Personality Inventory.

**Other Measures of Psychological Health**

Training in the martial arts has been associated with improvements in other traits associated with mental health. Kurian, Caterino and Kulhavy (1993) observed lower scores on anxiety and higher scores on independence. Konzak and Boudreau (1984) compared personality factors of Karate practitioners and non-practitioners, and found that both male and female practitioners scored higher on measures of intelligence, emotional stability, self-sufficiency, relaxation, imagination, venturousness and forthrightness. Kurian et al. (1994) studied boys attending Taekwondo schools and found that a higher belt rank was associated with optimism and self-reliance. Trulson (1986) noted that students in a traditional Taekwondo program improved in anxiety, responsibility, self-esteem, social adroitness, tolerance and value orthodoxy. Madden (1995) found that martial arts students reported an increased sense of control and decreased feelings of vulnerability one year after enrolling in classes.

**Taekwondo and Basic Needs**

How can we explain the effectiveness of traditional martial arts programs such as Taekwondo in improving these measures of mental health? Choice Theory, and particularly the concept of basic needs, provides us with some insight. Choice Theory explains that all human behavior is purpose-driven. At any particular time, we choose to do what we perceive will fulfill our needs. We are not, however, always aware of this process of choosing. Choice Theory identifies five genetically programmed basic needs: survival, power, belonging, freedom and fun. Further, Glasser expands the definition of “behavior” beyond the concept of physical action. Glasser perceives one's actions, thinking, feelings and physiology all as interrelated elements of “total behavior.” Reality Therapy operationalizes this concept in the counseling process. The reality therapist helps the client to focus on his “front wheels” (actions and thinking) where the client has more control, and encourages the client to explore his needs and wants, and then evaluate his choices in light of these. Together, these components of total behavior represent an individual’s attempts to satisfy these basic needs. Within this framework, our mental health can be defined as our level of success in meeting these needs.

How do these basic needs lead the individual to behave in a particular way? Glasser has proposed the concept of the Quality World to illustrate how these universal human needs are transposed into incentives to action (Glasser, 1998). In essence, each of us has a unique Quality World consisting of specific images and ideas of people, things or conditions which satisfy the basic needs. Our motivation to behave lies in an ongoing process of comparing our Quality World to the real world, as we perceive it. Our behaviors represent our attempts to bring our Perceived World closer to our Quality World. The Quality World, therefore, is a unique, individualized construct; no two people have identical Quality Worlds. The basic needs, however, are universal.

**Belonging**

Those familiar with the works of William Glasser may have noted the emphasis placed on the need for belonging in some of his more recent works. While he has not strayed from his belief in the importance of all five needs, much of Glasser’s more recent writings focus on the importance of belonging. According to Glasser, “we must have good relationships with other people. This means that satisfying the need for love and belonging is the key to satisfying the other four needs” (Glasser, 2000, p. 22-23). Montagnes (2003) succinctly illustrates the sin-
gular importance of this need: “Most people ultimately want people, not things, beyond their basic survival needs of food and shelter” (p. 18). Words that illustrate this need include “love”, “friendship”, “connection”, “affiliation” and “relationship.” Boudreau, Folman and Konzak (1992) have suggested that participation in a traditional martial arts program led to the participants developing improved relations with others.

How can participation in a traditional Taekwondo program provide students with opportunities to meet this very important need? The reality is that such opportunities exist as a result of a number of elements of these programs. The fact that classes are constituted of a group of students with at least one common area of interest (the Taekwondo itself) allows the individual to develop a sense of belonging to a larger entity. This sense of belonging is strengthened by some of the associated aspects of these programs. The wearing of uniforms can provide a sense of solidarity with the larger groups, while the color belts and dan markers provide a sense of small group affiliation. Students are frequently paired with partners to practice drills, patterns and sparring movements. This element of working with a peer towards a common goal can serve to help build an effective relationship. Further, individuals and small groups will receive attention from the senior instructor, or a junior instructor, the latter often being of a similar age to the student.

Students of the more traditional Taekwondo programs can develop strong and lasting relationships with their classmates. The underlying philosophy of these programs and the more explicit code of conduct are important elements in the development of character, which is one of the goals of Taekwondo. Over time, the students begin to internalize a philosophy which has at its core the tenets of respect, loyalty, perseverance and self-control. Thus the relationships that can develop are based on a commonality of personal philosophy, not merely shared interests and activities.

The net result of these factors is that a true sense of community can be established within a Taekwondo class, and children may find that participating in a traditional Taekwondo program can be an effective opportunity to partially fulfill their need for belonging. Trulson’s analysis of Taekwondo programs for juvenile delinquents demonstrates that participants receiving traditional Taekwondo training scored significantly better on the Social Adroitness subscale of the Jackson Personality Inventory Scale than both the control group and the group receiving modern Taekwondo training (Trulson, 1986). This suggests that children may be developing skills that can allow them to better meet this need for belonging in other environments and situations.

Taekwondo classes place an emphasis on respect for authority figures and peers, and require quiet communication between students. This presents opportunities for students to develop prosocial skills such as listening, turn-taking, and quiet conversation. Show-off behavior is frowned upon, and much of the pattern and non-contact sparring practice is cooperative rather than competitive in nature. The social skills development aspect of martial arts was noted by Levine, who quoted a tradi-
of accomplishment. The pride on their faces is evidence of their sense of self-worth. These elements of Taekwondo can be very effective in helping to meet their power need.

It is noteworthy that some of the key elements of Taekwondo instruction and belt advancement are common to the concept of the Quality School as well. Both place an emphasis on having the student demonstrate competence in an area before advancing further. Glasser has suggested that the time allotted for students to reach the level of competence be tailored to the nature of the task (Glasser, 1990, p. 113). In Taekwondo, students can move fairly rapidly through the lower belts levels, but more time is allotted for the higher levels, reflecting the increasing complexity of techniques and patterns to be mastered. Further, if some students require more time to master a level, then more time is allowed, without any real notion of having "failed". Like a Quality School, classwork is emphasized. Homework as such is typically not a requirement, but students are encouraged to practice at home between classes.

As Taekwondo students achieve higher-level belts, particularly approaching and at the black belt level, an instructional component is added to the training. Advanced students may be required to provide instruction to lower belt students. For many, this represents a very need-fulfilling behavior. In school settings, peer-helper roles have proven to improve the self-esteem of the peer helper as well as academic achievement and attitude (Yasutake, Dohrn and Bryan, 1996; Elmore and Zenus, 1994). Many children lack opportunities to satisfy this need for power, and resort instead to bullying and aggression, as is well documented in our daily newspapers. Participation in traditional Taekwondo programs provides assorted opportunities to meet this important need. Evidence for this can be found in the decreased levels of aggressiveness identified above. Violence and aggression are typically the results of an individual's attempt to satisfy the need for power. Taekwondo represents a more positive outlet for achieving the same thing.

Fun

Another of Glasser's five basic needs is the need for "fun." Glasser calls fun "the genetic reward for learning" (1998, p. 41). Words that reflect this need include "laughter", "variety", "novelty" and "humor." Most traditional Taekwondo programs incorporate a wide variety of learning elements, with children doing warm-ups, stretching, patterns, and sparring as well as kicking and punching techniques within a class that typically ranges from 45 to 90 minutes. This variety adds to the element of fun within the class. The personality of the instructor plays a large role in the amount of fun the children experience in a taekwondo class. There is as much variety in terms of their personal approaches as we find among teachers in our schools. Perhaps what is more important is how well attuned the instructor is to the amount of fun being experienced by his students. A change in the routine of the class, or the introduction of a novel exercise or technique can go a long way towards satisfying the need for fun.

The relationship between fun and learning is significant. Few learning experiences do not contain an element of fun: the two naturally flow together. Taekwondo presents children with ample opportunities for learning new skills and techniques, and novelty is a word that seems to apply to most Taekwondo training programs. Fun flows as a natural element of the shared learning experiences of the class.

Csikszentmihalyi (1990) has proposed the word "flow" to represent the state of being that one experiences when one is optimally engaged in an activity. He suggested that the optimal conditions for flow are present when a challenge is presented that tests the individual's skills at a high level but does not overwhelm them, and when feedback is immediate. These are natural conditions of a children's Taekwondo program, as the training and testing is matched to the skill levels of each individual. Csikszentmihalyi recognized the harmony between body and mind that can be achieved in the martial arts, and indeed suggested that "it seems appropriate to think of the martial arts as a specific form of flow" (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, p. 106). The belt level system of Taekwondo training, along with the learning of novel and more complex patterns and techniques, increase the likelihood that the children are optimally engaged, learning and experiencing fun.

Freedom

Next, we come to the need for freedom. Other words associated with this need include "choosing", "independence", and "creativity." Montagnes describes freedom as "the ability to be oneself, different and unique" (p. 28). Seen from this perspective, Taekwondo can allow the participant to meet the need for freedom. Participation in something as different as Taekwondo becomes an extension of the individuality and creativity of the student. Taekwondo can allow for the participant to "stand out in the crowd." Participation can represent an expression of the uniqueness of the individual.

The philosophical and meditative components of traditional Taekwondo offer valued opportunities to experience freedom, if on a somewhat more abstract level. Boudreau et al. (1992) suggest that immersing oneself in a traditional martial art can represent the ultimate freedom: an opportunity to reinvent the "self" or experience the self and the external world in a different way. More advanced practitioners of traditional Taekwondo may develop their concentration and self-discipline to the point where the students "achieve freedom from problems with the ego and experience a spiritual peace" (Lee, 1989, p. 63). These perspectives reflect the integration of Zen philosophy with Taekwondo.

Survival

The last of Choice Theory's five basic needs that we will explore in relation to Taekwondo is survival. The survival need is linked with such words as "safety", "comfort" and "security". Glasser suggests that the need for survival includes elements relating to shelter, clothing, food/drink, physical safety and economic security. A children's Taekwondo program
provides training in self-defense, as well as exercises designed to improve participants’ strength, endurance, flexibility and reflexes. An important concept in children’s Taekwondo is that the children develop stronger, healthier bodies with a minimum of risk of personal injury. Together, the physical improvements combined with specific self-defense training help the individual satisfy this basic need for survival. A sense of physical security naturally begins to develop as the students master more skills, and higher levels of complexity, at each belt level. This sense of physical safety is enhanced through the sparring element of Taekwondo. Non-contact sparring is a required element of traditional Taekwondo training, and students practice sparring techniques with a partner, in both choreographed step-sparring and free-sparring modes. As their ability to defend themselves in such sparring situations develops, the students’ confidence to protect themselves in real-world situations grows as well. This self-confidence relates directly to a higher level of satisfaction pertaining to Glasser’s survival need.

Additionally, it can be argued that the above-cited psychological benefits of participation in traditional Taekwondo increase the prospects of economic survival in adult life. Clearly the psychological benefits that accrue are qualities that are generally sought for in the working world. Higher levels of self-esteem, independence, optimism and achievement-orientation, coupled with lower levels of aggression and anxiety are related to what Goleman has identified as “emotional intelligences” and enhance an individual’s prospects for both academic success and career advancement.

Conclusion

It appears that traditional Taekwondo training can offer need-fulfilling opportunities for children. Observing and participating in Taekwondo classes has allowed me to recognize that many children have placed these people and places in their Quality Worlds. The reasons have been illustrated above. Chun (1975, p.8) offered a description of traditional Taekwondo: “Through strict discipline, tae kwon do trains both the mind and the body, placing great emphasis on the development of moral character. In other words, control of the mind, self-discipline, kindness and humility must accompany the physical grace.” This quote offers an alternative definition of mental health, one that fits comfortably when considered from a Choice Theory perspective.

The fact that children’s traditional Taekwondo programs can be need-fulfilling, and often find a place in a child’s Quality World can explain the psychological benefits of these programs. The seemingly paradoxical decrease in aggression appears not at all paradoxical when we recognize how Taekwondo helps participants meet their basic needs as set out in Choice Theory.

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The author may be reached at davidrlaw@rogers.com
I taught them but did they learn...?

Bette Blance

The author is an adjunct lecturer at Griffith University on the Gold Coast in Queensland Australia, and a Advanced Practicum Supervisor with the William Glasser Institute – Australia.

ABSTRACT

Teacher education students often say that their courses are too theoretical and are not related to the classroom. The Collegial Classroom is a university course for undergraduates and postgraduate students that combines the theory of Choice Theory, and the practice of reality therapy and lead management with the implementation of current classroom pedagogical approaches such as cooperative learning as a way of enhancing higher order thinking and connectedness to the world. This article shows how students involved in the course make changes in their thinking and their classroom practice over a six month period.

Since 1996 more than 500 final year teacher education students (TE students) have attended a five day intensive mode elective course entitled Collegial Classroom which gives credit towards a Bachelor of Education (Primary) at Griffith University, Gold Coast in Queensland Australia. This course draws heavily on Glasser’s Choice Theory, reality therapy and lead management. It emphasises the importance of focusing on a classroom that is need satisfying, where learning is relevant and meaningful and adds quality to the life of the learner. In the Collegial Classroom the teacher takes the role of lead manager, creating an interesting, challenging classroom where children learn to take responsibility for the quality of their academic work and their behaviour and where discipline as a major problem is minimized.

The course enables the students to explore and evaluate current trends in effective learning and teaching and behaviour management. They discover ways to lead children towards self management. TE students are asked to reflect on their own classroom practice while in schools and critically evaluate how they respond the needs of the learner. The course enables the students to plan to manage the classroom using preventative approaches rather than reactive approaches.

Course content

The content of the course is experienced through cooperative learning strategies throughout the five days with classroom strategies being modeled in each session over the full week. A number of key understandings are revisited throughout the course to support the notion of teachers moving from using external control to internal control. Choice Theory provides a significant framework for understanding the learner. They learn that all behaviours including their own, are purposeful. By developing understandings such as ‘the only behaviour you can control is your own’ or ‘you’ve got to reach them to teach them’ they plan to put into practice these significant ideas as they learn about Choice Theory. The course promotes thinking about what teachers can do to ensure that students are more likely to perceive that school is a need satisfying place.

In setting up a need satisfying classroom, TE students are encouraged to build up a range of strategies to increase higher levels of thinking and to teach social skills. In exploring cooperative learning, TE students learn to clearly distinguish group work from working in groups. They understand that all classes will travel through a number of stages as they work towards becoming a fully functioning group. The facilitation of these stages will determine how cohesive the class becomes.

To enable the TE students to plan to deal with behaviour that disrupts learning, they examine the notion that a teacher’s behaviour can bring them closer to their students or push them further away. They learn that teaching is about developing quality relationships amongst their children as well as the all important teacher student relationship. In developing quality relationships with children, there are a number of specific approaches that can be used. TE students prepare to enhance relationships within the classroom, particularly with those students who provide the most challenge. The most vital part of the process of creating a productive classroom is the development of these relationships. They learn that if there is a climate of trust and respect within the classroom, students will engage in learning.

Demonstrating understanding

Over the five days there is some evidence that the TE students have developed an understanding of Choice Theory as it relates to becoming a lead manager.

During the course they design of a personal vision statement that is the essence of what they want their classroom to be like. This is refined during the five day course and continues to be developed over time. One part of the assessment for this course requires the TE students to keep a reflective journal while they are completing their classroom practicum experience.

2 The word behaviour management is used in this context because it is the term understood in the local area. During the course I explain that the only behaviour we can manage is our own and thereafter I avoid the use of the words behaviour management and talk about teaching students to become self managing.
To create a meaningful, deeply reflective tool, the TE students use a double entry learning journal. At the top of each page the personal vision statement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My ideal classroom</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial reflection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One TE student wrote the following vision statement which is an articulation of her classroom in her quality world. This statement was constant throughout the six learning episodes described in the learning journal.

I want a classroom where students want to be, where learning is fun, personal bests are encouraged and students are self managing. I want a classroom where as the teacher I lead manage through developing cooperative learning and thinking skills, quality relationships with students and teaching to the multiple intelligences to overall provide a need satisfying classroom where individuals are valued.

In deeper reflection the TE student compares what he or she wants with what they are getting. This is a move away from the typical reflection 'this is what I did and this is what I would do next time'. The following statements are part of the journals that show deeper reflection.

This statement suggests an understanding of the differences between external control psychology and internal control psychology and the implications for the classroom. It also demonstrates application of the theory to the classroom.

My understanding of what motivates students has increased. By successfully moving the locus of control from external to internal, students are willing to and keen to learn.

During the course, the TE students develop a language to describe approaches used by supervising teachers in the classrooms they visit. The following student wrote of her dilemma of being in a classroom where her supervising teacher chose external control methods to gain compliance from the students. Her use of goal setting was her best attempt to help students become self managers.

My supervising teacher relied heavily on a punishment/reward regime in his approach to behaviour management. Any off-task or behaviour was dealt with by either threatening a punishment (which was very rarely followed through, or enticing them with incentives such as sweets or free time. This made it difficult to use any other approach as this is what they were used to and they would frequently ask "What do I get for that?" (This approach) does have its merits in that the teacher maintains his or her sanity and the students are compliant and it keeps stress to a minimum. This results in short term benefits for the teacher but what about the long term benefits for the student. Does this help them to become autonomous, socially responsible, and lead them to the ultimate goal of being a self manager? In order to com-

but this approach I had the children set a goal for the next three weeks and to sign a contract that stated that they would always try to achieve their personal best.

As part of the five day course students are introduced to ideas such as On the Spot Mediation\(^1\) and the Solving Circle\(^2\) as a ways to help student mediate when disputes arise. These student comments suggest that they had some success in using these approaches.

When given the skills to resolve disputes, students become good mediators and assume responsibility for decisions. This has allowed students to focus less on teacher resolution of problems and promoted a genuine feeling of cooperation and sharing amongst students.

Glasser's Choice Theory and an understanding of the styles of approaches to behaviour management have been the foundation of my analysis of my teaching practice. The teaching of social skills has reduced the fear of disagreement not only between students but also between myself as teacher and the students.

The introduction of the idea of quality work is for many of the TE students a relatively new idea. During the course, students undertake an activity that enables them to experience a process for doing quality work in a group. This activity uses a photograph as the stimulus to mount an interpretive display. TE student decide on the criteria for this being a quality piece of work, so that they could self evaluate at the end of the activity.

Although self assessment has been proposed in curriculum documents for a number of years in Queensland schools, there is evidence that few teachers use the idea of quality work in their classrooms. This TE student has made a shift in her teacher behaviours by using the concept of self evaluation.

I am no longer the 'chief assessor' of student achievement. By empowering students and creating a supportive classroom environment all students can identify quality work and evaluate their written work against a student-determined set of criteria.

Significant numbers of TE students have expressed the value of the course and have made noteworthy shifts in their thinking about the way they interact in the classroom and how they promote quality work. As the journals are written a good six months after the course, the assumption is that some of these values and beliefs and teaching behaviours are embedded in the repertoire of at least some of these students. A follow up interview with students who are now practising teachers would be useful in determining if these are still guiding the behaviours that are indeed still being used in the classroom.


The author can be contacted on bette@betteblance.com

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1. Blance, 1996
2. Glasser, 1998
PROBLEMS WITH YOUTH
(crime, violence, school failure, drug use, mental health, promiscuity)

Antun-Tony Rehak

The author, a counselor, lives and works in Croatia

ABSTRACT

A cause and effect diagram helps to understand what produces the effects, and how to bring about desired results. Youth problems are results of processes which are unknown. However, we can work to help children who have a problem, while at the same time working with children utilizing principles of prevention and early identification.

The problems of youth are obvious. It is important to do something, because these are not what people want. There are two directions which can be chosen: one is to minimize the incidence and effects of negative behaviors and the other is to try to prevent the initial occurrence of negative behaviors.

We all want better figures about juvenile crime, violence, school failure, using drugs, mental health or/and promiscuity. There are three ways to get better figures:

1. Distort the figures
2. Distort the system
3. Improve the system

There are many ways to destroy the figures. It is called 'creative accounting': we summarize it this way: we need a new examination...we need to know precisely how many The specification approach will tell (maybe) where we are. It will not tell how we got there and will not tell us how to get out of the mess in which we found ourselves. Even one child with negative behaviors is a problem, and we must do something. We need to help children with problems, hoping that we will can reduce the negative behaviors. We do nothing to prevent the problem from being developed by other children who are just born or who have yet to be born.

CAUSE EFFECT DIAGRAM

(Ishikawa K., 1985.)

PARENTS

Parents’ relationship

Long-term parents’ wishes

Care, worry

Control, coercion

coercion

Imbalance between parents’ wishes and child identity

They do not like me as I need

I do not need them

they separate from adults

The child is here to learn, discipline

Failure to treat student as person

Separation from adults

NEW BORN

FAILURE

Genetics makes variations

THE SCHOOL VALUE OF SUCCESS

Teach, test, evaluate

Curriculum, outside control

Teacher education

PEERS

parents

VIOLENCE

CRIME

SCHOOL

PROMISCUITY

DRUG USAGE
Merely recognizing that we need to do something leads us to distortion to the system. A system is a network of interdependent components that work together to try to accomplish the aim of the system. The secret is cooperation among components toward the aim. The system cannot afford to work on some components which we isolate, or we do not know possible other components. Predominantly, we tend to focus on a component which is the nearest in time or/and space. When we want to stop drug usage, we treat the drug dealer or drug production and never examine the most important component: why so many people drink, but only some of them are alcoholic. The most important component we do not know or understand: the knowledge about processes inside the brain which lead someone to be a criminal or alcoholic or school failure.

Improving the system starts with the theory of the system, theory of knowledge, theory of what is the problem, processes, cause and effect approach, common and specific cause, theory of variation, etc. Every problem must be treated, but the same energy that is spent to cure the manifested problem, needs to be spent to prevent the future problem.

The cause-effect diagram shows components which are involved in creating the youth problem. It starts with a lovely newborn baby. This component requires good knowledge about what are human genes, and what the baby was born with. Then, follow the other components as shown in the diagram. Every problem is really an effect resulting from a particular cause or combination of causes. We know the effect. We need to know the cause. The causes are forces of destruction that come from present stimulus-response psychology. It creates processes which are around and inside the child. The outcome we can see.

Each component of the system is important in leading the child to lose. The most important component is the relation among components – the arrows. To have better results at the end of the system, there needs to be a transformation of the present system. The individual components of the system, instead of being competitive, will for optimal effect reinforce each other.

The first step of transformation is transformation of our knowledge. Individuals, transformed, will perceive new meaning to their lives, to events, to numbers, to interactions between and among people.

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The author may be contacted at Ede Jardasa 24, 51000 Rijeka, Croatia
Using a Discipline System to Promote Learning

Marvin Marshall, Kerry Weisner, Mary Lou Cebula

The first author is a staff developer and author. The second author teaches at Alex Atken Elementary School in Duncan, British Columbia. The third author is a principal at Central School in Warren, New Jersey.

ABSTRACT:

On returning to the classroom after 24 years, Mr. Marshall struggled to maintain discipline. In Part 1 of this article, he describes how his frustration led him to develop a system that would promote responsible behavior by internally motivating students. In Part 2, Ms. Weisner describes the positive changes in her students’ behavior and learning after she implemented Mr. Marshall’s program in her classroom. In Part 3, Ms. Cebula describes the changes that occurred after adopting the Responsibility system in her role as a school principal.

PART 1: CREATING THE SYSTEM

AFTER 24 years as a counselor, supervisor, and administrator, I decided that I wanted to spend my final years in education doing what I enjoyed most — classroom teaching. I took a position teaching middle school social studies, computers, and math. Since I had previously taught at this level (as well as at the elementary and high school levels), I felt familiar with the situation. What I did not realize was that the situation had changed. What struck me immediately was the amount of inappropriate student behavior. Graffiti, rudeness, disrespect, and lack of interest in learning were prevalent. Although I was aware that society had changed, I had forgotten just how clearly students reflect the society in which they grow.

After a few weeks in the classroom, I realized that I might as well have been wearing a blue suit with copper buttons to school every day — I had become a cop. I had returned to the classroom to be a teacher, a mentor, a facilitator, a role model, a coach, a builder of young people — not a policeman.

My discomfort with this role inspired me to begin to design a system that would promote responsible behavior. The system would draw on my own teaching, counseling, and administrative experiences, as well as on the insights of others who had explored the area of human potential.

STEPHEN COVEY

The first of Stephen Covey’s “seven habits of highly effective people” is to be proactive. I decided that, rather than follow the customary approach of constantly reacting to inappropriate classroom behaviors, I would be proactive. Since I was a teacher, it made perfect sense for me to start by teaching something.

It is an understatement to suggest that young people are influenced by their peers. Young people have a strong desire to be liked, and the easiest way to be liked by others is to be like them. The most obvious example is the adoption of particular clothing styles. Peer influence and the desire to conform are so strong that some students will not take books home because studying and achievement in school rank low in their subculture.

I realized that identifying and articulating instances of conforming to peer influence could serve as a first step in resisting inappropriate influences and behaviors. I decided to employ this concept of “external motivation.” I reflected on George Orwell’s classic, 1984, and how he both explained and illustrated the critical importance of language to influence, direct, and control thought. Orwell used the example of “freedom” to make his point: the word “freedom” is necessary to articulate the concept it represents. I decided to use key terms to promote responsible behavior.

ABRAHAM MASLOW

Once I had made this decision to promote responsible behavior, it seemed that the most effective approach would be to develop a hierarchy. Jean Piaget had developed a hierarchy of cognitive development. Lawrence Kohlberg had developed a hierarchy of moral development. Abraham Maslow had developed a hierarchy of needs but also spoke to a hierarchy of values that are at the very core of human nature.

Human life will never be understood unless its highest aspirations are taken into account. Growth, self-actualization, the striving toward health, the quest for identity and autonomy, the yearning for excellence (and other ways of phrasing the striving “upward”) must now be accepted beyond question as a widespread and perhaps universal human tendency.

My hierarchy was to be one of social development — a way to explain human social behavior in simple terms that anyone could understand. I began by considering a classic work on the subject, Lord of the Flies. This 1954 novel, which won William Golding a Nobel Prize in literature, is about a couple of dozen British schoolboys who are stranded on a tropical island and left to their own devices. Without any social order, anarchy and chaos erupt. At this point, two of the bigger boys become bullies. They start bossing the younger boys and making the rules. From this story, I derived my hierarchy’s two lowest levels — anarchy and bossing/bullying.
Society cannot exist without some norms, some external controls. A society becomes civil when its people cooperate and live according to these external influences. The concept of cooperation suggested the third level of the social development hierarchy.

As noted above, there is another type of external influence, to which young people in particular are susceptible. Young people should be aware of their basic desire to belong. With this understanding will come further awareness that resisting peer influence may at times be extremely challenging. A “herd” or “join the gang” mentality can even draw young people toward some action that they know is not good for them or for society.

I felt that the strong urge to conform — even to inappropriate external influences — also needed to be recognized in the hierarchy. Thus the third level was altered to cooperation/conformity.

As people grow, mature, cultivate manners, and develop values of right and wrong, the prompts for civility, originally external, become internalized. Doing the right thing simply because it is the right thing to do — without being asked or told — is the concept that characterizes the fourth and highest level. I refer to this level as democracy because taking the initiative to be responsible is an essential characteristic of self-rule.

I will describe the levels in more detail later, but it is important to recognize a few points at this stage. The usual terms associated with motivation are extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation applies when the aim of the performance is to gain approval, to receive a reward, or to avoid punishment. Intrinsic motivation applies when people perform for inner satisfaction. I intentionally chose the terms external and internal rather than extrinsic and intrinsic because my purpose is to promote responsibility in young people, and responsibility is not a characteristic that we ordinarily associate with “intrinsic” motivation. Intrinsic motivators such as interest, curiosity, or a challenge are more likely to lead to the feeling of satisfaction. The motivation to be responsible is more cognitive than emotional and is rooted in ethics and values.

Although humans operate from both external and internal motivation, the motivation itself often cannot be discerned from a person’s actions. For example, if a youngster makes her own bed because her parent asks her to (external motivation) or does so because she wants to (internal motivation), the action is the same; the bed has been made. In a classroom, both levels are acceptable. Similarly, no attempt is made to distinguish between the two lowest levels. Neither anarchy nor bossing/bullying is an acceptable level of classroom behavior.

DOUGLAS McGEOR

While earning a master’s degree in business administration, I had the opportunity to read widely in the areas of business and economics. One book in particular had a profound influence on me. In 1960, Douglas McGregor, then the Sloan Professor of Management at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, published The Human Side of Enterprise. This book was a major force in promoting the application of behavioral science to the improvement of productivity in organizations.

McGregor examined the factors underlying the different ways that people attempt to influence human activity. He studied various approaches to managing people, not only in industrial organizations but also in schools, public services, and private agencies. He concluded that the thinking and activity of people in authority are based on two very different sets of assumptions about people. He referred to these assumptions as Theory X and Theory Y.

Theory X. McGregor labeled the set of assumptions upon which the top-down, authoritarian style is based as Theory X. He concluded that this style is inadequate for full human development. Theory X consists of the following beliefs:

1. The average person has an inherent dislike for work and will avoid it if possible.
2. Because of this inherent aversion, most people must be coerced, controlled, directed, or threatened with punishment to get them to put forth adequate effort toward the achievement of goals and objectives.
3. The average person prefers to be directed, wishes to avoid responsibility, has relatively little ambition, and wants security above all.

Under a Theory X management style, responsibilities are delineated, goals are imposed, and decisions are made without involving individuals or requesting their consent. Rewards are contingent upon conforming to the system, and punishments are the consequence of deviation from the established rules.

Theory Y. Theory Y assumptions are more consistent with current research and knowledge. The management style associated with Theory Y leads to higher motivation and greater realization of goals for both the individual and the organization. Theory Y managers rely on collaboration rather than coercion.

The assumptions of Theory Y are:

1. The expenditure of physical and mental effort is as natural in work as it is in play. Depending upon controllable conditions, work can be a source of satisfaction and will be performed voluntarily, or it can be a source of punishment and will be avoided.
2. People will exercise self-direction and self-control in pursuit of objectives to which they are committed.
3. Commitment to objectives depends on the rewards associated with achieving them. The most significant of such rewards is the internal reward of self-satisfaction.
4. The average person learns, under proper conditions, not only to accept responsibility but also to seek it.
Avoidance of responsibility is a general consequence of experiences. It is not an inherent human characteristic.

5. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity, and creativity in the solution of problems is distributed widely, not narrowly, in the population.

6. Under the conditions that we encounter in modern life, the intellectual potential of the average person is only partially used.

Theory Y encourages growth and development. Above all, Theory Y points up the fact that the limits of human collaboration are limits not of human nature but of the authority figures' ingenuity and skill in discovering how to realize the potential of the people with whom they work.

The Theory Y style is not a soft approach to managing. It can be very demanding. It sets up realistic objectives and expects people to achieve them. It is more challenging to the participants.

The traditional model for attempting to manage or change people has been authoritarian and aligned with Theory X. But the conviction that this model is the best way to achieve our objectives is a delusion. It brings to mind an old story about a scientific expedition to capture a Tonkin snub-nosed monkey. Only an estimated 100 to 200 members of this particular species exist, and they reside only in the jungles of Vietnam. The scientists wanted to capture one of the monkeys alive and unharmed. Using their knowledge of monkeys, they devised a trap consisting of a small bottle with a long narrow neck. A handful of nuts was placed in it, and the bottle was staked out and secured by a thin wire attached to a tree. Sure enough, one of the desired monkeys scented the nuts in the bottle, thrust an arm into the long neck, and grabbed a fistful. But when the monkey tried to withdraw the prize, his fist, now made larger by its contents, would not pass through the narrow neck of the bottle. He was trapped, anchored in the bottle, unable to escape with his booty, and yet unwilling to let go. The monkey was easily captured.

We may smile at the monkey's foolishness, but in some respects we operate in the same manner. We cling to the very things that hold us back, remaining captive through sheer unwillingness to let go. Peter Drucker, perhaps the dean of management theory and practice in this country, has said that people fail because of what they will not give up. They cling to the very things that will work, students would do exactly as they were told, and repetition would be unnecessary. To see the ineffectiveness of telling, just complete this sentence: "If I have told you once, I have told you . . . ."

Punishment, another coercive approach, is based on the idea that a student has to be harmed to learn or be hurt in order to be instructed. The truth is that people do best when they feel good about themselves, not when they feel bad. Punishment is counterproductive to a teacher/student relationship because imposed punishment (whether called natural or logical) immediately prompts negative feelings against the person meting out the punishment. Punishment satisfies the punisher more than it influences the punished.

As a high school assistant principal in charge of supervising a student body of 3,200, I never had a teacher come into my office demanding that a student be made more responsible; instead, the teacher wanted the student punished. The motivating force for the adult was the desire for a "pound of flesh." If imposed punishments were successful in changing people's behavior, young people would want to act more responsibly, and the same students would not be repeatedly assigned to detention.

If a youngster is believed to be an adult, then the youngster should be treated as an adult. However, if we agree that youngsters are not yet adults, then logic and experience dictate that we treat them in such a way that they will become more responsible. There are over two million people incarcerated in this country. Schools should be promoting responsible behavior, not just obedience, so that when young people become older they will not join this increasing number.

Rewarding appropriate behavior is also manipulative. A reward can serve as an incentive if the person is interested in the reward. Grades are a case in point. A student who is interested in obtaining a good grade will work for it. However, if a good grade is not in a person's "quality world" (to use William Glasser's terminology), then a grade is not much of an incentive. Rewards can also serve as wonderful acknowledgments. However, giving rewards for meeting expected standards of behavior conveys a false message. The implication is that society will continue to reward expected standards of proper behavior as the young person grows. The practice of rewarding young people for acting appropriately conveys the message that responsible behavior for its own sake is not good enough — that one needs to receive something in order to be motivated to act appropriately and responsibly.
Like the monkey, a person who clings to a coercive approach loses freedom. A person becomes liberated when he or she is willing to let go of Theory X strategies, which are generally accompanied by stress, resistance, and poor relationships. In direct contrast, the use of collaboration and empowerment — the outgrowths of Theory Y — reduces stress, improves relationships, and is much more powerful in effecting change in others.

WILLIAM GLASSER

The psychiatrist William Glasser devised a pioneering clinical approach called Reality Therapy. Glasser’s work with patients led him to conclude that the failure to take responsibility for one’s actions is a major cause of psychological illness. He rails against external motivators to change behavior. In his landmark book, *Schools Without Failure*, he illustrates how coercive approaches are counterproductive for lasting success.

Attempts to apply external pressure upon students to motivate them generally fail. In contrast, Reality Therapy does not concern itself directly with motivation. We don’t attempt to direct motivation because we know that it can be produced only with a “gun” or some other forceful method. But guns, force, threats, shame, and punishments are historically poor motivators and work (if we continue the gun example) only as long as they are pointed and as long as the person is afraid. If he loses fear, or if the gun is put down, the motivation ceases.

In a more recent work, Glasser (1998) notes that the following verbs all signal coercion: force, compel, manipulate, boss, threaten, control, criticize, blame, complain, nag, badger, put down, preach, rank, rate, withdraw, reject, ridicule, bribe, reward, punish.

With his Choice Theory, Glasser further explains that all problems are present problems. For example, an abused person may, because of an unhappy past, have difficulties dealing with the present, but he or she is still not totally incapable of doing so. The past — be it abuse, neglect, or rejection — is not the problem. This means that inquiry into an earlier experience may be of interest but has little bearing on the resolution of a problem.

Finally, Glasser asserts that all problems are at their core relationship-oriented. An obvious example is that if a client has a poor relationship with a counselor, counseling sessions will have little success. The client’s negative emotion impinges upon anything positive emanating from the session. Similarly, how a student feels has a direct bearing on learning. Cognition does not occur in isolation. If the student does not feel emotionally, psychologically, and physically safe, learning will be diminished.

In summation, my system to promote responsible behavior incorporates several of Glasser’s ideas:

- Taking responsibility for one’s own behavior,
- Using a noncoercive approach.

- Investing little if any time in determining the motivation for a behavior,
- Establishing a safe environment.

W. EDWARDS DEMING

W. Edwards Deming was the American who showed first the Japanese and then the world how to improve quality while simultaneously reducing manufacturing costs. The underlying principle of the Deming approach is continuous self-inspection. In traditional approaches, quality control was a specialized task placed at the end of the manufacturing process. If the product failed to pass inspection, the cost of producing the product was wasted. Deming showed how to build quality into the manufacturing process by empowering workers through the encouragement of collaboration. The result was zero defects — improved quality at less cost.

Deming believed that in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration, everyone wins. This view is in contrast to the usual competitive approach, which implies that if one person wins, the other person loses — the winner gets the loser’s piece of the pie. Deming showed that people working together can make the pie bigger. Rather than building barriers, which is often a result of competition, he believed in breaking down barriers so that people could derive joy from their efforts. Among his prime principles were continuous improvement, driving out fear, and building trust rather than control. Deming understood that you cannot legislate or dictate desire and that it is internal motivation such as desire that is the key to improved achievement.

THE IMPORTANCE OF A SYSTEM

My teaching and administrative experiences had taught me that having a system is even more beneficial than having a talent. I had seen many “natural teachers” at their wits’ end with certain students. Relying on a system rather than relying on talent means that there is always something available to help in challenging situations. That dependable aid is precisely what I wanted to offer practitioners. But I also knew that if a system were to be implemented and replicated, it would have to be simple. With this in mind, I set out to tie together all the ideas discussed above. The result was the Raise Responsibility System.

Now Kerry Weisner, an elementary teacher, shares how she has used this system to promote both responsible behavior and learning in her classroom.

PART 2: THE SYSTEM IN PRACTICE

NEARLY 25 years ago, as a beginning teacher struggling somewhat with classroom discipline, I eagerly scanned teacher magazines in search of tips. One technique came well recommended: I should divide my class into teams; offer points for good behavior, kind deeds, and diligent work habits; and then
each week present the winning team with something special — perhaps a chocolate bar, a comic book, or a fancy pen. The magazine promised that this system would build self-esteem and motivate students to behave, do their best work, learn well, and be kindhearted. Armed with enticing treats for incentives, I had great expectations for improved behavior from those few students who occasionally challenged me and for an increased level of motivation from the rest of the class. This was so easy. Why hadn’t I thought of it myself?

Easy? Well, not for me! I didn’t seem to have the necessary skills to get this straightforward little plan to work. It turned out that I wasn’t a very accurate judge of who should be awarded points. I could never pay enough attention to determine which team was truly the quietest at dismissal time, and I found it almost impossible to accurately assess which group had the tidiest handwriting. Since I was not alert enough to notice every act of kindness in the room, the children themselves began to interrupt lessons to point them out to me.

As it happened, my students, grade 5 that year, were quick to pick up on my obvious lack of skill, and the more vocal ones were not about to let any errors go by unnoticed. Often squabbles broke out, and eventually even the “good kids” started to complain if I awarded points in a way with which they didn’t agree. Somehow, this wasn’t what I had envisioned! Instead of becoming more cooperative, self-disciplined, and focused on lessons, these children were becoming greedy and resentful, interested in only one thing — getting points, more points than their neighbors.

Where were those thoughtful, well-behaved, motivated students who wanted to learn simply for the joy of learning? What happened to that respectful and purposeful classroom atmosphere that I was trying to create? Why were the children more interested on Monday mornings in the nature of the Friday prize than in the wonderful lessons that I had spent long hours preparing? I was sadly disappointed in myself as a teacher.

A QUEST

Fed up with conflict and never one to really enjoy competitive activities anyway, I knew I couldn’t follow through with the magazine’s suggestion. After three weeks, I accepted what seemed obvious; I wasn’t cut out to be the truly effective teacher the magazine described. When it came to classroom discipline, I simply didn’t have the talent. Somehow I would have to find another way.

Discouraged with my inability to successfully follow popular educational advice as outlined by that upbeat teaching article, I turned instead to personal experience for direction. I started to reflect on the teachers who had taught me over the course of my schooling. Certain ones clearly stood out in my memory as powerful and inspiring. What characteristics did they share?

They had cultivated personal bonds with students by

• Treating us with respect and kindness;

• Using an honest, direct teaching approach;

• Showing interest in us as individuals;

• Sharing stories from their own lives;

• Maintaining an approachable manner so that we felt safe; and

• Displaying a willingness to give extra help and encouragement.

They had held high expectations:

• Requiring us to work hard;

• Insisting that we try;

• Challenging us to think; and

• Expecting us to behave appropriately.

They had employed best teaching practices:

• Capturing interest through an engaging classroom environment;

• Providing a reason to want to attend class;

• Making learning fun;

• Using a variety of carefully planned teaching strategies; and

• giving varied and meaningful assignments.

For the next 20 years, I tried to emulate these memorable educators. Although I gradually developed an increasingly clearer sense of direction, I still struggled on a day-to-day basis with students who misbehaved, were insensitive, or avoided responsibility. I felt as if I had a pretty good idea of where I wanted to go, but only the vaguest notion of how to get there. Eventually I began to investigate motivation research and was greatly affected by what I found.

With great conviction, I set out to find an approach to classroom teaching and discipline based on internal motivation. Forget the gimmicks, the quick-fix approaches, the prizes, the stickers, the pizzas for reading, and those merit points for good behavior. The studies clearly showed that none of these things would bring about long-term, lasting results. I was determined to find a program that would encourage the children in my charge to work consciously toward becoming compassionate, self-disciplined, responsible individuals; nothing less would do. Yet the challenge remained: How on earth could anyone do that with 6-year-olds?

Although this idealistic vision certainly captured my imagination, I knew that in a practical teaching sense I didn’t have much to go on. What I needed were concrete teaching strategies that would allow me to assist students who daydreamed class time away, ridiculed classmates, or deliberately hurt others in the schoolyard. Once again, feeling discouraged, I felt destined to spend the rest of my career searching for something that didn’t exist.
And then one day, all of that changed with just a quick click of my computer mouse. Prompted by mail-ring conversations regarding discipline plans based on behavior modification and other imposed approaches, I entered the phrase “rewards and punishments” into a search engine. Up came a site titled “Dr. Marvin Marshall — Discipline Without Stress, Punishments, or Rewards”.

Eureka! Here was the information for which I had been endlessly searching. The website described a simple system based on internal motivation that focused on promoting responsibility rather than on promoting obedience. It was exactly what I needed to inspire children to lead responsible lives.

THREE PRINCIPLES TO PRACTICE

Excited, I decided to start by implementing three recommended practices:

1. I was positive in everything I said. Students do better when they feel good about themselves.
2. I taught students that they always have the freedom to choose their responses — regardless of the situation. Realizing that they had choices, the students became more self-controlled and responsible. They felt empowered.
3. I learned to ask questions that would effectively guide students to reflect and self-evaluate.

Practicing these three principles of adopting positivity, empowering through choice, and encouraging reflection greatly reduced my stress as a teacher and allowed me to view misbehavior as I would any academic difficulty — as an opportunity to teach and learn instead of as a problem. My goal became to influence students, rather than trying to coerce them into making constructive changes in their behavior.

THE THREE PHASES OF THE RAISE RESPONSIBILITY SYSTEM

In Part 1 of this article, Marvin Marshall detailed the theories behind his Raise Responsibility System. As applied in the classroom, the system has three phases: 1) teaching, 2) asking, and 3) eliciting.

Phase 1: teaching the hierarchy. The foundation of the Raise Responsibility System is the hierarchy of social development. Classroom behaviors can be assigned to different levels of the hierarchy. I chose behaviors appropriate to my grade and displayed them on a chart:
- Level D: Democracy
  - Listens
  - Cooperates.
  - Does what is expected.
  - The motivation is internal.
- Level C: Cooperation/Conformity
  - Bosses others.
  - Bother others.
  - Bullies others.
  - Breaks classroom standards.
  - Needs to be bossed to behave.
- Level B: Bossing/Bullying
  - Noisy.
  - Out of control.
  - Unsafe.
- Level A: Anarchy
  - Using the familiar situation of a piece of trash lying on the classroom floor, I introduced the concepts underlying the hierarchy. I described the type of behavior with regard to the trash that would be indicative of each successive level of social development.

At the lowest level of behavior, Level A, a student might pick up the trash but then throw it at someone. Moving up the ladder, a student operating on Level B also would not feel compelled to pick up the trash but instead might kick it around the room. At an acceptable Level C, a student would pick up the trash at the request of the teacher. At Level D, a student would take the initiative to pick up the trash and deposit it in the trash can without being asked — whether or not anyone was watching — simply because this was the right thing to do.

The important points for students to understand are:

1. Levels A and B behaviors are always unacceptable. The use of authority by the teacher is required at both of these levels.
2. Level C behavior is acceptable, but the motivation is external — to gain approval or avoid punishment.
3. Levels C and D differ in motivation, not necessarily in their behaviors.
4. Level D is the goal, where the motivation is internal — taking the initiative to do the right, appropriate, or responsible thing.

I was astonished at how quickly my young students grasped these concepts and were able to generate novel examples of...
their own. With understanding in place, I was ready to implement the second phase of the program: reflective questioning.

**Phase 2: asking students to reflect on their behavior:** The point of this phase is to guide a misbehaving student to self-evaluate. The first question I always asked was, “On what level was that behavior?” It was clear that the effectiveness of this phase was the result of asking the child to identify the level of behavior, rather than using the traditional approach of telling the child that the behavior was unacceptable. Also, by referring to a level — rather than to the student’s specific behavior — the deed was separated from the doer. Students did not feel a need to defend themselves.

Having learned the hierarchy, the students found it easy to accurately assess their levels of behavior, and when they identified an action as being on an unacceptable level, they felt a strong sense of responsibility for correcting it or at least not repeating it.

I was taken completely by surprise as I immediately began to see positive changes and significant improvements in the students’ behavior. They began to analyze their actions and take responsibility for their choices. The little girl who nearly drove me crazy by constantly making noises suddenly started to display excellent self-control. The impulsive youngster who often bullied others on the playground started having peaceful noon-hour experiences. The disorganized little boy who could never keep track of his belongings made a commitment to return a special book that he wanted to borrow. Proudly and responsibly, he followed through with his plan! Having experienced the powerful feelings of satisfaction that emerge from being capable and caring toward others.

Although I believed strongly in the power of internal motivation, I had always assumed that any success based on such a teaching model would be measured in years, rather than in days and weeks. I had mistakenly equated lasting results with a lengthy and delayed process.

**Phase 3: eliciting changes in behavior:** On rare occasions, a student continued to misbehave even after having identified a behavior as being on an unacceptable level. Then I used the process of “guided choices.” I gave the student an activity to prompt self-reflection, with the goal of eliciting (rather than imposing) a plan of action. In this way the student could develop a procedure that would redirect impulses and assist in preventing a similar inappropriate behavior in the future. This approach demonstrates that one can use authority when necessary, but without being punitive.

**A GIFT FOR LIFE**

Moment by moment, choice by choice, we each create a life, the quality of which depends largely upon the choices we make. With awareness, we can consciously choose to make decisions that will lead to positive results. The Raise Responsibility System gives young people, even young children, the awareness they need in order to look at their choices and plan future behavior.

Although initially it appeared that the children who often misbehaved were the ones who were benefiting from the Raise Responsibility System, it wasn’t long before I realized that every student had been given an incredible gift. The very nature of the hierarchy inspires young people to set their sights at the highest level. They found that they could better themselves by consciously choosing to aim for Level D, the level at which they could be autonomous — making appropriate choices without relying on the teacher to direct them.

I noticed that by adding to the list of descriptors for Level D, I could easily influence the children to operate more consistently at this level. For instance, when I added the phrase shows initiative, those who had always shown initiative got reinforcement and a boost to their self-esteem because they recognized this quality in their own actions, and those who tended to operate at lower levels had yet another trait to which they could aspire.

**EXTENDING THE HIERARCHY TO LEARNING**

Gradually, as I experienced continued success with the Raise Responsibility System, I realized that the way in which I understood the system was evolving. I no longer viewed it in a limited way — as only a tool for handling classroom discipline. I began to see that there was enormous potential and value in using the hierarchy to inspire young people in all areas of their lives.

One day I decided to have a discussion with my students about how they could use their understanding of the four levels of development to help themselves become better readers. We talked about the 30-minute “Whole School Read” session in which we participate each morning. I asked the youngsters to describe hypothetical behaviors of students operating at each of the four levels during this daily reading time.

They were able to clearly describe conduct at each level:

At level A, students wouldn’t be practicing reading at all. They would be deliberately misbehaving and causing a disturbance. At level B, students wouldn’t be doing much reading either. They would be annoying or distracting others, perhaps by poking them or making jokes. They would probably flip through the pages of a book but wouldn’t put in the effort to actually read. We reviewed that when students are behaving at Levels A and B, a teacher must step in and use authority, because neither Level A nor Level B conduct is ever acceptable.

Then we discussed the higher and acceptable levels of development, C and D. Students operating at Level C would be reading — but more or less only when an adult (the teacher or a parent) was directly watching or working with them. When an adult was not supervising in their area, they probably wouldn’t disturb anyone but wouldn’t put in much effort, either. Their motivation for reading would be external — they would willingly cooperate and do what was necessary in order to avoid the disapproval of the adults in the room.
At this point in the discussion, I felt it was important for students to fully understand another aspect of Level C. I stressed the idea that people operating at this level sometimes comply with expectations simply in an effort to impress someone else with their conduct. In other words, their reason for reading is again external. They feel the need to be noticed while reading so as to “look good” in the teacher’s eyes. I wanted the students to understand that a lot of energy can be wasted worrying about what others think — energy that in this particular situation could more profitably be devoted to actual reading.

When we moved on to Level D, the class imagined students who would be using reading time each morning to truly practice reading. It wouldn’t be necessary to have an adult directly with them at all times; they would stay on task simply because they knew what was expected of them. They would read and re-read sections of their books because they knew that by doing so they would become better readers. Their motivation would be internal. They wouldn’t be wasting any time watching the teacher in the hope of being specially noticed as “someone who was reading.”

Having run through examples of all the levels of development in this particular situation, I asked, “Which of these students from our discussion will learn to read?” The class understood that it seemed unlikely that students operating at levels A and B could ever learn to read very well. Their choices and actions were leading them in the opposite direction.

We then went on to the benefits of operating at the two higher levels of the hierarchy. We discussed that students operating at Level C probably would learn to read but would be unlikely to get much pleasure from reading or to become proficient readers because they were reading only when directly supervised. They complied with the classroom expectation of reading, but their hearts weren’t in it. With only a so-so effort at practicing, they would get only so-so results.

Then we discussed Level D — which is always the goal in the Raise Responsibility System. This is the level at which people take the initiative to do what is right or appropriate. People at this level motivate themselves to put forth effort and achieve. The results are long-lasting and powerful. These people strive to become good readers and therefore can get a lot of enjoyment from reading. Because they experience enjoyment, they keep reading and therefore become even better readers. People at this level feel good about themselves because they experience improvement and are aware that it comes as a result of choices that they have consciously made.

After these discussions, I wanted to prompt some reflection, and so I simply asked the students to analyze their own developmental level in the reading session that had just passed. After giving them a moment to think “in their heads,” I asked them to honestly evaluate their own choices. I wanted them to think about whether or not their choices were leading them in a positive direction. Nothing more was said aloud, either by me or by the students, and they were left to reflect for a minute before we moved on to another lesson.

THE RESULTS

That night, without any suggestion or prompting on my part, the poorest reader in the class went home and read his reader over and over again. Prior to this, the kindly parents of this child had been sincerely concerned about his lack of reading progress and fairly supportive of the school, but they hadn’t understood the value or importance of conducting nightly reading sessions with their struggling youngster, as the school had requested.

That evening they watched as their little boy independently read and reread his reader. Both the parents and the child could see a dramatic improvement in his reading skills. They experienced the powerful impact that internal desire, coupled with just one night of true effort, could have on someone’s ability to read. The boy came back to school the next day bursting with pride and determination to practice more and more so that he could move on to a new, more difficult reader. It only took one more night of practice, and he was able to do just that.

The Raise Responsibility System prompted this youngster to learn a powerful lesson that is bound to influence his behavior in the future. He could clearly see the connection between his own choices and the results from them. I could never have bribed him into such a learning experience by offering a sticker or a prize for having read a certain number of pages.

As a result of promoting responsibility, I discovered that obedience followed as a natural by-product. As a result of teaching a hierarchy, which inspired students to aim for the highest level, I observed children choosing to be more responsible and becoming willing to put forth the effort needed to learn. As a result of encouraging selfreflection in a noncoercive manner, I witnessed students doing what they knew to be appropriate and aiming to fulfill the highest expectations.

I am elated to have finally found an effective approach to discipline that creates a classroom in which young people feel safe, care for one another, and enjoy learning. Teaching becomes a joy when students demonstrate more responsible behavior and become motivated to put more effort into their own learning.

PART 3 A PRINCIPAL’S TURNAROUND EXPERIENCE

At the NAESP convention in April 2003, I started a new life journey that dramatically changed who I am as a principal as well as who I am as a person. I was completing my fifth year as an elementary public school principal. One of my colleagues recommended I attend the convention in Anaheim, California. He had attended the conferences in the past and found them highly worthwhile.

Excitedly, I registered and began to think of my main goals during the conference. In reflecting on my abilities as an educational leader, I felt that I could improve my interaction skills with students encountering behavioral issues. In one third-grade class for example, the teacher and I had been meeting on
a weekly basis to help a child who seemed to be continually making poor choices and becoming exceedingly angrier each day. We met with the parents who worked together with us on several behavior plans. Nothing seemed to change the child's behavior. I kept thinking there must be something else in the land of educational ideas that could provide my staff and me with additional strategies or suggestions to help children with behavioral difficulties.

Armed with a mission, I attended every convention workshop in the program concerning "at-risk," "disruptive," or "difficult" children. It was at one of these sessions that I first heard about the Raise Responsibility System and the power of positivity, the empowerment of choice, and the importance of reflection. I knew in my heart that I had hit upon something that might work for my school and me.

Immediately following the conclusion of the presentation, I turned to a gentleman sitting next to me. He seemed to know about the approach, and so I asked him if he used it in his school. When he said, "Yes," I asked his opinion and he responded by stating, "The teachers who use the approach are sad at the end of the school year because they don't want their children to leave. The ones who do not can't wait for the school year to end." That was all the vindication I needed. I hurried to the convention bookstore and purchased the presenter's book, Discipline without Stress, Punishments or Rewards: How Teachers and Parents Promote Responsibility & Learning.

Before the plane landed back in New Jersey, I had finished the book complete with highlighting, tabs, and notations in the margins. I have read the book at least twice and some chapters three or four times. I carried the book everywhere I went: school, home, to lunch with friends, and at family gatherings. What is remarkable about it is not that there are profound statements or earth-shattering revelations. Instead, it is a primer for a way of life—a new way of thinking, a new way of helping children act responsibly.

Back at school, I began to make attempts to implement the philosophy in some small way each day. The first chapter of the book discusses the three principles of (1) positivity, (2) giving students choices, and (3) using reflective questions to help students assess their own behavior and accept responsibility for their actions. I decided to start by waking up each morning and telling myself to think and act in positive ways.

Each morning, I greeted staff and students with a smile, wished them a happy day, and tried to think of ways to state comments to students in a positive manner. I practiced saying things like, "We walk from the bus to the classroom," instead of "No running!" In the lunchroom, I called clean-up time, "Quiet clean-up," instead of "No talking!" In the past, we clapped out a rhythm for getting students' attention in the lunchroom or during an assembly. As the presenter suggested, I started raising my hand and timing how many seconds it took the students to become quiet. If it took more than a few seconds, I would say, "That took 10 seconds. I bet we can do it even faster." Then we would try again and of course they shortened the time it took to get everyone's attention. Being positive, rather than negative, and challenging the students seemed to work every time.

As the idea of positivity began to become a habit with me, I started to notice how good it felt. People responded to me in the same way I interacted with them. I also noticed when other staff made statements in negative terms. It began to bother me. I hadn't noticed before how often educators speak to students and others in negative terms.

I wanted to share the knowledge I had gained from the book, but I did not want my staff to feel this was a top-down directive. I decided that after I had practiced a bit, I would begin to have conversations with my staff about their styles of interacting with children.

In the meantime, I began to experiment with giving choices to students. This was an easier change for me because I had used this strategy to some degree in the past. I have always felt that children should be an active participant in solving problems and resolving conflicts. When speaking to students about their behavior at recess, in the lunchroom, or on the bus, I would try to elicit from them what choices they had and how they could make a better choice. If a consequence were needed, we would talk together about some of the choices. I would usually start with, "What do you think we should do about the situation?" When I was satisfied, with the student's choice, I would say, "I can live with that." The process worked every time and I would wonder at its simplicity.

Finally, I began the hardest part of the three principles to practice: reflective questions. This is especially challenging for educators because we feel we are not doing our job unless we are constantly teaching or telling children what they should do, when, how and why. Actually, we are doing children a great injustice when we do this. Who is doing all the thinking and reflecting? Certainly not the children! When reflective questions are asked, the student is prompted to respond. These reflective questions do not come naturally. They take practice. At first, I fumbled a little. I felt like my brain was on overload deciding what questions I needed to ask. Many times I would go back to the book and reread examples of reflective questions so I could get a better feel for them.

At team planning meetings, I asked teachers if they were satisfied with the behavior of their students. We talked about the different procedures in their classroom and how they handled behavior concerns. They agreed that sometimes behavior modification plans did not work. Sometimes they ran out of ideas and were frustrated and stressed out. I started telling them about ideas from the book. Teachers expressed an interest in reading the book and trying the Raise Responsibility System, which is based on teaching four levels of social development, asking reflective questions, and eliciting a procedure to assist impulse management.

I purchased copies of the book through my administrator's account for each staff member who expressed an interest. At our last faculty meeting in June, I distributed the books and invited the staff to read them over the summer. In September,
the entire faculty was ready to go. We watched the presenter's instructional video prior to the first day of school. That served as a good reminder for teachers who read the book as well as providing important information for those who had not. Teachers made bulletin boards of the hierarchy showing the four levels of behavior: Anarchy (A), at the bottom level of social development; Bullying/Bossing (B), the other unacceptable level; Cooperation/Conformity (C), external motivation; and Democracy (D), internal motivation—taking initiative to be responsible—at the highest level. We printed and laminated posters for each classroom from the examples at MarvinMarshall.com.

By the end of September, we were all speaking the same language. I could walk up to any student in the building and ask him/her: “What level of behavior is that?” and the student could identify it correctly. The goal of course was for students to be at Level C or D. Some students got it right away and made efforts to make good choices. One second grade student was concerned because a classmate was ill on Halloween. He was worried that his friend would not be well enough to go Trick or Treating. He asked his parents if he could take half of his “goodies” to his friend and so the parents drove him to his friend’s house. What a great example of Level D behavior! I would not have even known about it except that the sick child’s mother called me the next day to praise the child.

At team planning meetings each week, we shared experiences, asked questions, and helped each other implement the program. We also held several after-school gatherings. We called it a “Book Club.” Teachers volunteered to come and talk about the book and their experiences with the Raise Responsibility System. I especially enjoyed sitting back and listening to others share their stories.

It has been more than a year since I heard the presenter speak at the NAESP convention. My life has not been the same since that momentous day. I continue to work each day at being positive. Reflective questions now come more naturally to me. Most of my interactions with students are calm events that challenge students to think about what they did and come up with plans for how they can be at Level C or D more frequently. One first grade student was worried that her classmate would not be able to bring in a treat for his birthday, so she asked her mother if they could make cookies for him. They did and the child was so excited when she brought them in on his birthday to share with the class. This is another example of level D behavior—caring for others as well as oneself.

At a team planning meeting one day, the teachers were discussing the behavior of a first grade student. In the classroom, she was having difficulty staying in her seat, attending to the lesson, and refraining from calling out. She had also been getting out of her seat on the bus. I asked the teachers if they would mind if I contacted the parent and explained that I wanted to use what I had learned with the student and afterwards share my conversation with the mother. When the girl arrived at my office, I began asking her a series of reflective questions. I asked her to describe some of her behaviors in the classroom and on the bus. I asked her what level of behavior she had been acting on. I asked her what she needed to do to be at Level C or D. Then I asked her to close her eyes and imagine herself sitting on the bus and putting on the seatbelt. I also asked her to visualize herself in class and thinking before she got out of her seat or called out. She told me that she could see herself doing what I asked her to visualize. At the conclusion of our conversation, she assured me that she would try to be at Level C or D.

After she left, I called her mother and shared all the questions I had used with her daughter. I encouraged the mother to try some reflective questions with her daughter at home. The mother said she would try. A week later, I met with the child and she reported that she was doing a much better job of behaving responsibly. I later confirmed this with the teachers. When I called her mother to share the good news, her mother told me that recently when her daughter came home, she said that she had almost behaved at Level A, but right before acting out she thought for a moment and realized that what she was thinking of doing would not have been on an acceptable level. Instead, she caught herself “just in time” and remained at Level C. Her mother and I celebrated her daughter’s improvement. The child has continued to improve in her choices and has made progress in self-monitoring her behavior.

Before leaving for the recent 2004 convention in San Francisco, I met with the teacher who would “be in charge” during my absence. When she asked me what she needed to do, I surprised myself by indicating that there were only two children she needed to watch at recess time. One child I actually had no concern with but the mother was worried about him, and I had promised to keep a watchful distance at recess time.

When I returned from the NAESP Convention, my desk was empty of phone calls that needed returning, discipline problems that needed resolving, or issues that needed my intervention. What an incredible feeling it was to return to my school after a rejuvenating conference and be able to resume my daily duties as if I had never left!

At a recent staff meeting, I made the comparison of a Sonicare Toothbrush with what we now call “The Marshall Plan.” All my life, I had used a manual toothbrush: Reach, Oral B, or whatever the dentist gave me after a checkup. I never thought there could be something better to clean my teeth until the Sonicare Toothbrush entered my life. Was it easy to use? Not at first.

My husband and I read the instruction book. Then we practiced. The toothbrush felt tingly during our first few times using it, as the book indicated. Did we give up? No, we felt it was worth the effort to continue trying. There were many things to remember when using the Sonicare Toothbrush. You must keep your mouth shut or the toothpaste will dribble down your chin. If you take the toothbrush out of your mouth without turning it off first, the toothpaste splatters all over the mirror, sink and your clothes! The toothbrush has an internal clock. It runs for two minutes. With a manual toothbrush, you can just stop or start whenever you want.
Despite all these adjustments and changes to my tooth brushing habits, the end result is so effective and my teeth are so much cleaner that I will never go back to my old toothbrush again. This is exactly how I feel about my new life. I will never go back to being who I was before. Was it easy? No. Was it worth the effort? Yes! The new me is a happier, more positive person and administrator. Living the three principles and implementing the Raise Responsibility System have made all the difference in my personal life, my professional life, and most importantly, the lives of the staff and students.

REFERENCES

WEB RESOURCES
This website contains an overview and descriptions of the Raise Responsibility System. It includes articles on promoting responsibility, promoting learning, and highlights from a free monthly newsletter, “Promoting Responsibility & Learning.” The site also includes a section for parents.

This site contains selected sections from the book, Discipline without Stress: Punishments or Rewards: How Teachers and Parents Promote Responsibility & Learning. Online sections include: “Classroom Meetings,” “Collaboration for Quality Learning,” and “Reducing Perfectionism.”

This site describes how external approaches of rewarding, telling, and punishing are counterproductive to promote long-term responsible behavior.

The first author is a staff developer and author and can be reached at www.MarvinMarshall.com. The second author is an elementary school teacher at Alex Aitken Elementary School in Duncan, B.C. and can be reached at kwbw@shaw.ca. The third author is a school principal at Central School in Warren, New Jersey and may be reached at mcebula@warrentboe.org.

INTERNATIONAL RESOURCE GUIDE
An International Resource Guide has been established. This guide contains an annotated bibliography of all published articles and dissertations. The resource guide is available upon request at a production/mailing cost:

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The mailing address for the Guide is:

Reality Therapy Resource Guide
650 Laurel Ave. #402
Highland Park, IL 60035
Telephone: 847-681-0290
E-mail: lilitwack@aol.com

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Defining the Possible

Francesca

The author is her last year at The John Dewey Academy in Great Barrington, Massachusetts

ABSTRACT

A nineteen-year-old survivor of child abuse discusses her journey to self-discovery in hopes of helping improve methods of treatment, and helping others like her to do the same.

I attend The John Dewey Academy, a residential, therapeutic college preparatory high school, with thirty other students who were at extreme risk to self-destruct. The school implements the ideas of Glasser's (1965, 1969, 1972, 1990, 1998, & 2000). Students enter with a myriad of problems. Some abused alcohol and drugs, had eating disorders, self-mutilated, and/or had been sexually promiscuous. A few had been institutionalized and/or incarcerated. Several had attempted suicide. Many had failed to perform academically, which virtually would have eliminated any possibility of entering a real college of merit. Most, had they not attended The John Dewey Academy, would have lived wasted lives. All arrived dishonest, self-pitying, self-absorbed, and consumed by self-hate. So did I.

I write this article now to explain my odyssey to recover myself, in hopes that my insights into my treatment may improve methods of treatment for adolescents at risk, especially since one rarely hears about the success of a treatment from the person who has gone through the experience. Writing this article has been cathartic: it has caused me to reassess my turbulent past, and appreciate what I have done for myself now. Like my peers, I entered the Academy disheartened and apathetic. Like most, my parents had a great deal to do with my downfall.

Though my parents are dysfunctional, they camouflage their massive problems by pretending to be altruistic, God-fearing people. Both have chosen not to deal with their own traumatic pasts; in turn, both have succeeded in perpetuating their own problems. Neither understands how to have healthy relationships. When she was a child, my mother was abused physically and emotionally by alcoholic parents. At age five, my father was sent to an all-male boarding school, where he alluded to being sexually abused. Ten, my father molested me by massaging my genitals and breasts. This happened repeatedly.

I do not understand why my parents have stayed together. My father confided to me that my grandmother (his mother and the person responsible for introducing my parents to each other) would apologize to him for doing so because my mother was crazy. My mother would incite arguments with my father about inconsequential issues and would make both of their lives miserable. Their relationship continued like this for nine years, until my sister was born, then my mother transferred her frustrations onto me. My mother verbally and emotionally abused me, frequently reinforcing the fact that I was weird, a failure, and bad. As I grew older, she continually told me that she hated me. At one point, she told me she wished I were dead. My father made comments about being relieved that my mother would attack me rather than him, then apologize for how abusive she was; though he never intervened.

My mother hates me for various reasons. She hates me because I did what she failed to do: I asserted myself, whereas when she was abused; she remained silent. Also, my father preferred me over her. Finally, since my mother has made her life goal to look good, she resents me because I tarnished the family name with self-destructive behavior. She also feels I have betrayed my family by voicing their betrayals. She blames me for actions beyond my control, which prevent her from maintaining the fantasy that our family is well adjusted; thus she views me to be a cancerous influence. I am the designated scapegoat; everything that has gone wrong is my fault. In turn, I believe my mother wants me to fail because, with my failure, I confirm her truth that I am the problem. She resents me because she now knows how toxic she has been as a parent.

My relationship with my father was exclusive and lecherous. He converted me into his wife, while claiming to be my best friend. He used me as his confidante; he discussed the problems he had at work and elaborated on his sexual exploits as a teenager. I idolized him. I depended on him. When I was ten, my father molested me by massaging my genitals and breasts. This happened repeatedly. I did not protest or protect myself because I was afraid, confused, and conflicted. What happened felt wrong, but the perpetrator, my father, was the person whom I trusted most. I found it impossible to reconcile these polar realities. I wanted to forgive him, but I could not. I tried to convince myself that my father did not know what he was doing and that it was my fault. I analyzed the situation ad nauseam. If I said something, I feared he would be angry or feel embarrassed. I wanted to protect him as well as avoid acknowledging the truth of what had happened.

I was consumed by guilt; I tried to gain a sense of self-worth through pleasing others. I tried to be the perfect child. Until eighth grade, I excelled academically, played on two varsity teams, and took the lead in my school play. I was musically and artistically talented. Then, I let my life deteriorate. My secrets festered, and I stopped working. Although I was superficially socially adept, I was unable to create real relationships with people. All I knew was to pretend to be "normal", but I could not maintain this illusion because I was hemorrhaging. I felt alien-
Eighth grade was also the time when most of my acquaintances became promiscuous. Disgusted by this behavior, I became more withdrawn from people. My mother's hatred prompted me to hate myself, as my father's actions only confirmed the idea that I was indeed a bad person. Driscoll (1989) has described me: I was consumed with “self-criticism, self-contempt, self-deprecation, self-doubt, self-punishment... seeing the worst in [myself propagated]; by...low self-esteem; and by accompanying feelings of failure, inadequacy, worthlessness, embarrassment, guilt.” (p. 104)

I associated care with betrayal, love with pain. I prided myself on being reckless and self-effacing. At ten, I started to self-mutilate to numb my pain. It was the simplest way I could devise to free myself from my suffering. At fifteen, I consumed twenty shots of vodka in twenty minutes. I awoke the following morning in a hospital where I was told my BAC had been 3.82, almost double what a lethal dosage is. I stopped drinking, but became anorexic and bulimic. When my weight plummeted to eighty pounds, my parents finally institutionalized me at Boston Children’s Hospital. After seven weeks of being an inpatient, I was released and sent to an ineffectual day treatment program. There, I learned about Ipecac, which I thought was the miracle cure for my purging. For the next three years, I was seen by seven psychiatrists who diagnosed me as depressed. They prescribed Paxil, Prozac, Neurontin, Aderal, Sonata, Cefexa, Welbutrin, and several other antidepressant and antipsychotic medications. I was told I had a chemical imbalance, even though no psychotropic medications produced relief. None worked because my presenting problem was not a chemical disorder. Glasser (1972) is right when he writes,

The drug used to alleviate the pain of a failure identity thus becomes itself an obstacle to gaining the human involvement necessary for a successful identity. A mental patient locked in a state hospital with no program for guidance toward responsible involvements will not be helped to give up his symptoms by drugs. The drug may calm his crazy symptoms and make them less painful, it may make the ward he lives on quieter, and it may make the work of the staff easier. None of these reasons by itself justifies the use of the drug. However, when a thus quieter and calmer atmosphere helps the hospital develop a program for patient involvement and worthwhile work, moderate use of drugs does serve a purpose when the hospital has such tranquillizers to help patients calm down and become involved in the program is wise. In a hospital with such a program, the administration of tranquilizing drugs to patients often encourages the staff, who identify quiet and passivity with less craziness, to try harder to reach the patients. (p. 84)

As both the prescribed medications and my various means of self-medicating became less and less effective, I considered suicide to numb my self-inflicted suffering. Because I had thirty-four absences. Knowing I was troubled and in trouble, I demanded to attend a therapeutic school. I concealed that life was ruined. I was terrified by emotions which I did not understand, but felt overwhelmed by them. Craving companionship, I would rush into a relationship, but abruptly retreat because I feared intimacy. To defend myself from being hurt, rejected, and betrayed I played games. I had become so dishonest that I no longer could decipher truth/reality from deceit. When others paid me a compliment, I felt the need to prove them wrong. I rarely felt temporary respite or good about myself, I would punish myself because I believed I did not deserve praise or relief. When my weight became so low because I refused to eat, I was in constant pain. When that pain subsided, I felt as though I was doing something wrong. I believed it was impossible for people to care about me and, worse, for me to care about anyone. It was ingrained into my psyche that I was inherently bad. The most damage psychiatrists did was when the only resolution they offered as an explanation for my behavior was that I was damaged goods. It was easy for me to maintain what Glasser (1972) termed a “failure identity [person] who lacks a concept for himself as a loved and worthwhile individual, [and] will no work for any long-term goals” (p. 289).

By the time I arrived The John Dewey Academy March 1st, 2002, I had nearly succeeded in making myself unreachable. If it had not been for harshly delivered confrontations which forced me to penetrate my denial, I do not know if I could have overcome my self-imposed prison. I was lucky that I entered a program that eschews mediocrity and failure. I was not permitted to play the victim because had I been offered the chance, I would have chosen it. I was expected to take accountability for the actions that I could control. I was confronted continually about my irresponsible, deceitful, manipulative, and self-destructive acts. I was challenged when I claimed to be unable either to control my behavior or to change, thus I was compelled to shed the lie that I was damaged goods. The head of my school, Dr. Bratter, describes confrontation in the following way (2000):

[T]he concept of responsible concern is the quintessential value. Simply stated, the message is since I care about you, I promise to prevent you from harming yourself or others but also help you to help yourself, thus promoting the moral growth of the confronter and the individual who is the object of the confrontation. Members of the community intuitively know when confrontation is disingenuous, designed to hurt, to humiliate, and/or to manipulate. Students gain courage of their convictions and the confidence to assert themselves when perceiving any abuse of power, deceit, and/or sadistic acts. [This quasi-Reality Therapy quasi-confrontation psychotherapeutic orientation has two phases, i.e. the painful process of unlearning old patterns of behavior and the nurturing (re)learning phase. During the later phase, the adolescent begins to establish a positive personal identity and to discover a direction to achieve intermediate and long-term goals. [There are] listed seven sequential guiding principles.

(1) attacking the malignant and dysfunctional aspects of behavior.
(2) penetrating the facade of justification behavior.
(3) forcing the adolescent to accept responsibility for his/her behavior.
(4) helping the person evaluate behavior.
(5) assisting the adolescent to be aware and to anticipate the future consequences [and payoffs] of present acts.
(6) Challenging the person to mobilize personal assets.
(7) Defining a direction to continue to grow (pp. 168-169)

No one at Dewey blamed or accused me of being seductive with my father, though the staff and peers refused to be sympathetic. Like a Greek chorus, everyone demanded I become honest and responsible. Initially, I hated hearing that I had a choice. I hated reliving the betrayal by my parents. This agony was, at first, too intense to endure. On December 31, 2002, after almost one year, I impulsively left. With no desire to return home, I stayed on the streets in two women shelters in Boston. I lived with drug addicts, the mentally impaired, and the clinically insane. After nearly being raped, I trusted no one and made movements to return to Dewey. As it was clear I was more invested in self-destruction than self-improvement, I was told to attend a wilderness program.

I attended Catherine Freeer in Oregon. For three weeks, I and a group of seven others were guided by four staff members through the snowy mountains in northern Oregon. I always excelled with physical activities, so the program did not challenge me. However, it was therapeutically effective to have to sit alone and think. For the first time, I realized how lonely I was. All that I had been trying to avoid began to surface and I was pushed to look into my soul.

When I returned to John Dewey, I wrote a confrontational letter to my father concerning everything that had happened in the past. His response confirmed his guilt, but he only justified his actions and caused me to believe that even more transpired that I did not remember. I wrote him again, demanding answers to what he had written and confronting him again. This was the starting point at which I first began to think and feel, to sit and ponder, to realize how truly weak I was. All that I had been trying to avoid began to surface and I was pushed to look into my soul.

Being at John Dewey with so many confrontations and feedback, I started recognizing my destructive patterns. I could distinguish how I sabotaged myself whenever I felt good, and I felt incomplete without having something to feel guilty about. I saw that these were ways to guard myself from people. If no one trusted me, no one could get close to me, thus I felt safer. I would lie incessantly, sometimes to promote myself and other times simply for the sake of seeing if I could ever get over on other people. I would attempt to convince myself that my lies were true, and at various points I lost sense of what was real and what was fallacy. Recognizing this fact scared me, especially since the longer I was there, the more I felt like I fell into a world of my own making and I was terrified that I was indeed cut off from reality. I butchered my self-esteem with an incredible amount of criticism. I understood that through lying and the games I played, I was trying to placate the immense loneliness and pain I felt, and I understood that the only way to possibly be close to people, this ideal that I had never experienced, I would have to become honest, and drop all of my defenses.

My options were very black and white. I had to open up to people, otherwise I would have to leave John Dewey. John Dewey did not allow me to continue to play all the games I had been playing for my whole life, and if I insisted on continuing them, I knew I would be asked to leave. I also understood I had to be honest for another reason. I discovered that when I kept all of my thoughts and feelings inside, I would become indifferent about my life, and sabotage myself by physically hurting myself, lying, or by purposely breaking rules to get in trouble. Again, John Dewey did not tolerate my self-destructive behavior, and I understood that I either needed to do what terrified me, i.e. be honest, or leave.

The simplest, most important revelation I had was when I was expelled the third time from John Dewey and had to leave for a period of a week. I did not even have the option of going home because during this time, the state of Massachusetts was pressing charges against my father, and I legally could not go home. I stayed with very generous friends in my hometown. It was surreal. It was a very learning experience for me. Though the family I was staying with was incredibly inclusive and kind, it was impossible for me to ignore the knowledge that I felt completely alone in the world. I knew that many people there cared deeply for me and wanted to see me succeed, but it was I who was preventing myself from doing so. I finally saw that it did no matter whatsoever what people did or felt for me, I was the only person capable of changing and bettering myself; a message that Dr. Bratter had been trying to hammer into my head from the first day I set foot in his school.

I was given another chance at Dewey Academy, and peers and staff kept me on course; even though I wanted to avoid/hide from my reality, they confronted me with the truth which empowered me. It was incredibly important that no one let me play the victim any more, and this caused me to grow up.

I began to deal with my relationships with my parents. After confronting them various times and in various ways, I discovered the fortune cookie wisdom still stands that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks, as my mother continues to oscillate between being vicious and trying to repent and my father has said nothing. I have come to terms with the fact that my mother will be the way she is, and it is wiser for me not to become engaged with her, as she is unpredictable and unhealthy. I have said all I need to say to her, how she has hurt me, how I feel about the past, and have apologized for my behavior. She has chosen not to hear a lot of it, and so be it. Likewise, my father has not answered any of my questions, nor do I expect to have anything to do with him in the future. I accepted the fact that I essentially do not have parents.

Undergoing this harsh realization, I found that I was also supported and pressed to make a decision about who I would become and what I wanted. I went after what I wanted, which was, and is, to be happy and to be a success, and, in essence,
slew my demons. I survived the most painful experience of my life, of becoming honest, becoming close with people, and caring about people. The highs I felt from the accomplishments I made became the most intense positive feeling I ever had. Glasser (1976) termed this phenomenon a “positive addiction.”

[A] positive addiction is something that people choose to do, physical or mental. They believe it is something that has value for them, and it is something that they can do on their own. It is something that they think they can become proficient in doing. It has to have an inherent value in itself so that it will stick to it long enough to reach the PA state. Once they have reached the PA it is easily recognized by the fact that if they attempt to stop the activity, they suffer withdrawal, some sort of pain, discomfort, anxiety, or guilt that is satisfactorily relieved only by resuming the activity. (p. 48)

Prior to John Dewey, through events outside of my control and through my own actions, I had cut myself off from others; from feeling, from living, and from success. Entering my senior year, I am proud of what I have done for myself and feel indebted to The John Dewey Academy for giving me the opportunity to resurrect myself. These past three years have been the most important of my life, and I will be leaving John Dewey with hard earned and well deserved self-respect. I am hopeful that I will attend Barnard College next fall, and continue to pursue my broad academic interests, ranging from astrophysics, to philosophy, to English. Being in an unrelenting and uncompromising environment ultimately drove me to better myself, and in turn, I have become a driving force at the school, and am helping others better themselves. I now understand two treatment cliches - only I can do it, but I cannot do it alone which means I need people in my life to be able to be happy and be who I want to be. In addition, I cannot keep it unless I give it away; when I confront a friend, I internalize values of which I speak and confront myself. I now understand the meaning of honor, integrity, decency, goodness, choice, excellence, and responsible concern.

I have filled the void left by what was supposed to be my family with others who genuinely love me, as well as with a love for myself. I sadly understand that the past cannot be simply be buried and forgotten, but that it haunts and lingers. I know I want to go far in life, and the past is the past, and really, I determine how much of it I carry with me. There are too many wonderful things to squander it on self-pity or fear.

**BIBLIOGRAPHY**


The author may be contacted at student@jda.org
ABSTRACT

Initially Maintenance For The CT/RT Student was intended for the homeroom teacher of students who were enrolled in the original social skills program at Kirkwood School of the Toppenish School District in Washington State. Students were referred to the program by administrators or classroom teachers, because they seemed to be going through the discipline process too quickly. This proactive program followed a pullout model, in which the students were “pulled-out” during a content area period. It was felt that learning to get along with peers and adults, thereby being less disruptive in the classroom, was a priority need for these particular students.

It was intended that the students would return to the classroom full-time, after their behavior choices became more appropriate. After the student was returned, the teacher would be forwarded this document to allow him/her language and concepts consistent with the teachings received in the social skills program.

To allow generalization of these Choice Theory learning’s into the classroom, it is important for the classroom teacher to use common labels/terms and to have consistent expectations of the student. Those individuals who choose to be in control of their behavior, consequences and resulting feelings are more satisfied and more likely to treat others in an appropriate manner.

Knowledge level of CT/RT students

Your students now have a good understanding of behavior as explained by Choice Theory. They now have the tools necessary to adjust their behavior through consciously choosing behaviors that will get them what they want in an effective and appropriate manner. The following information will allow further application of Choice Theory and maintain quality behavior choices.

During the time spent in the Choices Activity Program, your students have learned the following:

1. All people have 5 basic needs of Survival, Fun, Power, Freedom, and Love & Belonging. The needs have been defined as follows:

   Survival—Those things, activities, states of being, & persons needed to maintain life, i.e., food, water, clothing, shelter, medical care, etc.

   Fun—Things, activities, states of being, & persons that allow laughter and enjoyment of life.

   Power—Things, activities, states of being, & persons affecting appearance, health, knowledge, learning, activities done well, roles attained, and character development.

   Freedom—Things, activities, states of being, & persons allowing choices or the ability to make decisions.

   Love & Belonging—Things, activities, states of being, & persons allowing us to express care and concern for others or to receive care and concern; belonging to groups.

2. Our Quality Worlds are comprised of Things, Actions, States of Being and People that meet our needs. (Have’s, Do’s, and Be’s developed by Barnes Boffey.)

3. Individuals choose their behaviors and resulting consequences and, indirectly their resulting feelings.

4. All behaviors are chosen with the goal of meeting one or more of our needs.

5. Behaviors which are effective meet one need very well or meet more than one need.

6. Behaviors showing respect for the individual or self, others, and property are considered appropriate.

7. Individuals tend to frustrate, i.e., sad, anger, disappoint, etc. when their needs are not consistently well-met.

8. The individual can make any situation better by choosing new appropriate and effective ways to have Fun, Power, Freedom, and Love & Belonging.

9. Every activity we do involves our Total Behavior, which is comprised of the four components of Acting/Doing, Thinking, Feeling, and Physiology. It is possible to adjust the quality of a Total Behavior component by consciously adjusting the remaining behavior components.

Strategies to use in the classroom with Choice Theory students

The process of applying Choice Theory is called Reality Therapy (RT). Reality Therapy is a questioning/verbalization strategy based upon four main questions—1) WHAT DO YOU WANT?; 2) WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING?; 3) IS IT WORKING?; and 4) WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?
CT/RT is an action-oriented type of Internal Psychology. Motivation to behave comes from within the individual. In short, we act to gratify our personal needs of Fun, Power, Freedom, and Love & Belonging. We are not made to behave by an outside stimulus. If a behavior doesn’t allow Survival, Fun, Power, Freedom, and/or Love & Belonging, an individual wouldn’t choose to do it. While implementing the following suggestions, always emphasize the premise that the individual has the ability to be in control by way of applying Choice Theory in his/her life.

The following will address the previous Choice Theory/Reality Therapy learning’s.

2. All behaviors are chosen with the goal of meeting one or more of our needs. And these need-fulfilling want’s can appropriate or inappropriate. If a students want’s to meet his/her needs are inappropriate, their behaviors will go contrary to established rules and/or laws. Needs are being met, but in an inappropriate manner with unwanted consequences. For example, it is possible to meet the need for Power by doing well in math, playing 4-square well, or disrupting the class. The need is met in all, but only the first two will allow need gratification and wanted consequences. You might choose to:

- After observing a student, ask, “Which need are you meeting by (playing 4-square)?” If the behavior is appropriate, encourage continuation. If the act is inappropriate, you might say, “If you continue doing that you probably will meet your need for Power, but what will happen?” AN UNWANTED CONSEQUENCE “Is that something you want to happen?” NO “What other things can you do that will meet your need for Power and have wanted consequences?” APPROPRIATE BEHAVIORS ARE VERBALIZED. “Those will probably work.”
- Ask, “How do you most often meet your need for Fun?”... Power?”... Freedom?”... Love & Belonging?” If you find a student’s needs are not being met regularly or are being met in an inappropriate manner, assume the responsibility to:

- Connect the student to peers or groups to meet the deficient need of Love & Belonging.
- Within the classroom or school environment, offer the student many opportunities to make choices or decisions to meet the need for Freedom.
- Encourage activities in which the student shows some strengths to meet the need for Power. Allow them roles of responsibility in the classroom. Everyone must literally, believe that there are things they do well. Activities and roles can be scholastic or extracurricular.
- Find out what activities the student enjoys and plan them in the day for the whole class or the individual. For example, the Toppenish Parks and Recreation Department offers many fine programs. Encourage its use by your students.

- Give examples of want’s from your personal Quality World. “You know how I met my need for (Fun) last weekend? I (activity pursued).” In addition, you might indicate how you are planning to enlarge your behavior repertoire, i.e., “Do you know what I think I might do in the future to have (Fun)? I think I might try (hang gliding) next summer.”
- Validate a student’s choice at meeting his/her need in an appropriate manner. “The way you are working so well has probably done a good job of meeting your need for Power today.” or “That certainly is a very good way to meet your need for (Power).”

4. Individuals choose their behaviors and resulting consequences and feelings. Consider the statement, If you can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen. Furthermore, know that a student of Choice Theory might add... or change the kitchen. Your students are aware that appropriate behaviors have wanted consequences and that inappropriate behaviors have unwanted consequences. They are usually inseparable.

- If a student is the recipient of a discipline report for the unsanitary act of throwing food, you might ask, “Did you want this discipline report?” NEGATIVE RESPONSE “Sure you did, throwing food and a discipline report go together. If you choose to throw food, you also choose to be written-up.” Ask, “What else can you do in the cafeteria to have better consequences?”
- You might offer a situation relative to an adult. For example, you are running late in the morning to work, you’ve 22 miles to go and 12 minutes in which to do it; you “let the pony go.” A state trooper observes you and stops you. After indicating to you the inappropriateness of your behavior, he/she informs you of a forthcoming ticket. It is unrealistic to say, “Trooper, I fully understand that the ticket is overdue, but you can keep the ticket.” After such an example, ask, “Did this person want the ticket?” YES, BECAUSE HE/SHE CHOSE TO DRIVE TOO FAST. Elicit from the students responses to a What else can he/she do? or What can he/she do differently the next time? question.

7. Every activity we do involves our Total Behavior, which is comprised of the four components of Acting/Doing, Thinking, Feeling, and Physiology. It is possible to adjust the quality of a Total Behavior component by consciously adjusting the remaining behavior components. It is with this premise in mind that you should deal with your students’ behavior choices.

- When interacting with the student, use derivatives of the word “choose.” For example, a student’s Actions and Physiology are hinting at a Feeling of Anger, say, “I see you are choosing to anger. Would you like to talk about it?”
- Verbalizations should show the interrelationship of the Total Behavior components. For example, you might say, “I see you are choosing to (complete your assignments at
home instead of at homework club in the mornings). When you come to school with your homework compet-
ed, how do you feel?” or “... think of yourself as a student?”

- Closely related to the latter, after the student is consistently choosing an appropriate Act, bring to mind the positive effect it is having on the state of Thinking, Feeling, and Physiology components. “You have been choosing to (listen carefully in class). When you do this, how are you choosing to think of yourself as a student?” or “When you do this, how are you choosing to feel?” After a period of time, you might bring to mind the positive effect to the Physiology in the form of less anxious behavior. Impress upon the students the consequences of such student management skills—ability to answer questions, better understanding of assignments, improved grades, etc.

- To show how the condition of one component might affect the quality of the remaining three components, you might choose to share a similar personal experience as to the following. I’ve used the example of my leaving home in the morning with my wife and I not “seeing eye to eye.” They define the condition of my Feeling component as angry. I ask, “If one is choosing to anger, how might he/she act?” Undoubtedly, they’ll render responses like frowning, yelling, pushing, hitting, profanity, taking things from others, etc. At the end of the story, I ask, “Would my behavior choices be fair to my students? coworkers? administrators?” Undoubtedly, they’ll say, “No.” At this point, elicit from students possible consequences of this chosen unfair behavior. Expect such responses:

Consequences from students—“They wouldn’t like you anymore.” Their feelings would be hurt.” “They wouldn’t want to be around you.” The parents would get mad because you yelled.” “They’d get you ‘out’ in four square all the time.”

Consequences from coworkers—“They wouldn’t talk to you anymore.” “They might tell the principal.” “They might leave the teachers’ lounge when you walk in.” “They might get your copier code number and run copies ad infinitum.” “They might kidnap Alphie.”

Consequences from administrators—“They might fire you.” “They might accuse you of using the copier for personal business and running far too many copies.” “They might kidnap Alphie.”

- Obviously, on the other hand, I’ll share with them an experience of leaving home on a good note. “When I leave home choosing to feel happy, how might I act when I get to school?” They will probably render responses like laugh, smile, play with the students, etc. Discuss the “fairness” of these behaviors and identify possible consequences from students, coworker, and administrators. Undoubtedly, these will range from the students letting me stay in the server’s square to Ms. Jimenez designating a parking space in our lot as Mr. Donato’s. Follow-up with a What do you want? or Which consequences would you rather have? question.

- Recall the prior incident of leaving home not “seeing eye to eye” with my wife. I left the house choosing to feel angry. When that anger was manifested in my actions, thoughts, and physiology, I was choosing to anger or angering. When an individual chooses to allow his/her negative feeling state to manifest itself in the other Total Behavior components, the outcome may be unwanted consequences or unfair treatment of others. It is with this in mind that you should:

- encourage your students to evaluate the states of their Physiology, Feeling, and Thinking components to determine if they may adversely affect their Acting component. When one of the states is negative, they are to be encouraged to “Go through their Thinking Wheel.” This simply means that they are encouraged to think of consequences of their possible behavior; i.e., “If I do this, what will happen? Do I want this to happen? If not, what else can I do?” If the conditions of the Thinking, Feeling, and Physiology components are positive, they are encouraged to “have at it.” The majority of the time when we are feeling “good,” our behaviors toward others are positive.

- encourage students to predict the state of Total Behavior components in others. this will allow empathy with others. I have utilized a very informal type of bibliotherapy, by sharing short stories with students. One story is the Golden Ax, a Japanese folk tale. In this story, there are two characters—one old, honest and kind, and another who is young, dishonest, and cruel. Some Actions are identified in the story, the list is expanded by way of the question, “What are some other actions a kind person might choose?” “... a dishonest person?”

- arrange other activities to allow them to understand the impact on the Feeling component. One possible activity would use the attached Good Feelings List. The activity might begin by asking, “Suppose you came in contact with someone who was choosing to sad. What kinds of Actions might they choose?” “... thoughts they might choose?” “...

9. Our Quality Worlds are comprised of Things, Actions, and states of Being which meet our needs. (Have’s, Do’s, and Be’s developed by Barnes Boffey.)

During my Advanced Week of Choice Theory instruction, I was encouraged to go right for the client’s Quality world. When you are able to do this, you are then better able to assist the student/client in choosing the right direction, because it becomes quite evident what the client wants and where he/she wants to go. I would at this time ask you to think of the Quality World as encompassing things, actions, and states of being that would allow us to have it as good as it gets.
When processing a student’s behavior choice, I suggest you use the following HAVE-DO-BE transition questions. These questions and process came my way during my Advanced Week of study with Barnes Boffey. Underlying the processing interaction is the fact that we change to allow better consequences and/or more effective gratification of our needs in appropriate ways. Two ideas should be evident in your language as you speak to the student/client. One, consequences can get better; and two, the individual has control, as he/she is able to choose his/her behavior and consequences.

HAVE-DO-BE Transition Questions (Barnes Boffey)

HAVE You want to make it better. What would you have to have in order for it to be better?

DO You want to make it better. What do you have to be able to do in order for it to be better?

BE You want to make it better. What do you have to be able to be in order for it to be better?

As Choice Theory is an action-oriented form of psychology, change or transition from one phase to another is dependent upon the Acting or Doing component of Total Behavior. After the student client identifies items in his/her Quality World, it is then the counselor’s task to question and allow the individual to discover new behaviors to allow attainment of What is wanted. Barnes has developed his Transition Questions to flow in a cycle, allowing the the student/client to always return to the Doing or Acting component. For example:

HAVE—DO “I see you chose some difficult behavior during Math. Tell me about it.” I didn’t finish my assignment. I started too late. “What can you do differently to make it better for yourself during math?” Start sooner, keep working. But it was hard. “What could you do, if the work is hard?” Ask for help. “If you had help, what would you then be able to do?” Finish my work, know how to do it, and feel better about math class.

DO—BE “If you were finishing your work and knew how to do the math, what would you then be able to be?” Be smart, be a good student, and be happier in math.

BE—DO “If you were being smart and a good student in math, what else would you also be doing?” Getting good grades, helping other students who didn’t understand, taking a good report card home, smiling more, and going to math early instead of being tardy all the time.

DO—HAVE “If you wanted to get good grades, help others, take good report cards home, smile more and go to math class on time, what would you have to have to be able to do them?” Probably someone to help me when I have trouble or some one to talk to when I have questions. “Would you like for me to help you look into our tutoring program and perhaps speak with your math instructor? All right.

The above example used the Transition Questions in sequence using the initial response as springboard to the next question in sequence. You may choose to do likewise or use the questions independently, but always lead to a Doing response. At any rate, I suggest you follow with an evaluation question such as:

If you chose differently, how would it be better for you?
If you could do that, how would it be better for you?
If you could be that, how would it be better for you?
If you were doing that, how would it be better for you?

We choose to make it better when the new behaviors meet our needs in a more effective and appropriate manner. The counselor’s assistance allows the student/client to understand how it can be made better by assuming the personal control over his/her behaviors, consequences and resulting feeling state.

REALITY THERAPY

Choice Theory is Dr. Glasser’s explanation of how and why we behave; the application of Choice Theory is Reality Therapy. At this point, I would encourage you to consider the statement, “All behavior is need-fulfilling and is an individual’s best effort at that particular time.” Meaning, all behavior, appropriate or inappropriate, effective or ineffective, is an individual’s “best shot” at that particular time to meet his/her needs. It is in this situation Reality Therapy is beneficial. Via RT, a teacher/counselor is able to help the student/client understand that he/she has the ability to get what they want in an appropriate and effective manner.

Reality Therapy is made of four related questions:

WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING TO GET WHAT YOU WANT?
IS IT WORKING?
WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?

The initial question, WHAT DO YOU WANT?, represents the student/client’s Quality World. The answer to this question will be things to have, activities to do, and ways to be. For example—new basketball, more friends, go fishing, play basketball on a team, to be happier, and a better student. Most of us when asked this question will identify appropriate and effective Quality World items; the problem arises when our current behaviors are not consistent or relative to what we want.

The second question, WHAT ARE YOU CURRENTLY DOING TO GET WHAT YOU WANT? This question allows the student/client to bring to mind their Total Behavior. Recall that Total Behavior is comprised of our Thoughts, Actions, Feelings, and Physiology. To continue the above example—“You say that you want to have more friends. What are you doing to have new friends?” WELL, GOING OUT TO RECESS BY MYSELF, KIND OF STAYING BY MYSELF, WAITING FOR SOMEONE TO COME AROUND ME.
The third question, IS IT WORKING?, allows the student/client an opportunity to consider whether or not his/her Total Behavior is conducive to his/her want's. And, more importantly, if the answer is negative, the motivation to continue to the fourth and final question. The example continues—"You say that you want more friends and you are choosing to be by yourself and you are waiting for someone to come around you. Are being by yourself and waiting for someone to come around working for you?" WELL NOT YET. "Do you think it will work for you?" PROBABLY NOT.

The final question, WHAT ELSE CAN YOU DO?, is the key to Reality Therapy. At this point the student/client has come to realize that what he/she is currently doing will not get them what he/she wants. Furthermore, he/she also understands that the Quality World item is need-fulfilling and important to him/her. In response to this question, the student/client will identify new Total Behaviors that are conducive to what he/she wants. Our above example concludes—"You really want to have more friends and you think being by yourself and waiting for someone to come around is probably not going to work for you. And it sounds like you know how important friends are for our need for Love & Belonging, because you say you still want more friends. What else can you do to have more friends?" I DON'T KNOW. "OK, let's think only about a part of your day. How about during recess?" WELL, PLAY A GAME WITH OTHERS, LIKE 4-SQUARE OR TETHER BALL. MAYBE WALK TO A GAME WITH SOMEONE IN MY ROOM. "Those ideas make sense, because in order to have more friends you do have to be around people, right?" RIGHT "How about at home while you're away from school?" MAYBE TRY TO CALL SOMEONE FROM MY CLASS JUST TO TALK. At this point, you would paraphrase what the student/client said and write out the new behaviors the he/she identified. Lastly, identify a When? for the student/client to choose these new behaviors.

CONCLUSION

Hopefully, this information will be helpful in dealing with your students in the classroom, as it contains what I believe are some central truths of CT/RT. First, it is the individual who is in control of the condition and direction of his/her life. If an aspect of one's life allows frequent concern, mental energy can be focused to devise a plan on how to get what one wants. Second, within Choice Theory, we are given a cognitive structure with which to interpret our environment and to allow us to develop strategies to get what we need. Reality Therapy allows a plan to translate intention into effective action. Inaction to solve a problem cannot be attributed to, "I don't know what to do." but rather, "I know what to do, but am choosing to live with the consequences of not changing."

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*IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE VAST MAJORITY, IF NOT ALL, OF THE ABOVE STATES OF BEING OR FEELINGS HAVE MATCHING BEHAVIORS. IN SHORT, WE ARE ABLE TO BE THESE WAYS BY "DOING."
Positive Addiction: Self-evaluation and Teaching Tools

Zachary Rapport

The author is on the faculty of the University of Phoenix in San Francisco, California

ABSTRACT

The author of this article has provided a questionnaire and an information sheet. Individuals may use the questionnaire and information sheet to learn about positive addictions and to self-evaluate whether they have one. Also, educators may use them to teach William Glasser’s positive addiction concept to students.

Introduction

I teach undergraduate psychology classes. In the process of teaching William Glasser’s Choice Theory, I have developed two tools with which to teach students about positive addictions. The first tool is a questionnaire. The second tool is an information sheet.

The questionnaire asks for information based on the criteria for a positive addiction. The information sheet provides a definition, the criteria, and additional information for and about positive addictions.

How I use the tools

Here’s how I use the tools:

1. I hand out the questionnaires.
2. I ask one student to read the objective and the instructions out loud.
3. I tell the students to complete the questionnaire—to write their answers.
4. Once the students complete the questionnaire, I hand out the information sheet.
5. I ask one student to read the objective and the instructions out loud.
6. I tell the students to complete the check list as indicated in the instructions.
7. Once they finish the check list, I ask the students to share their answers with a partner.
8. I open the discussion for the large group, answer questions, and discuss my own positive addiction.

The results I get

When I use the questionnaire, one issue commonly arises: some students eliminate all their answers before they complete the last question. Consequently, they have no activities remaining with which to use the information sheet and they ask whether they did something incorrectly. I handle this issue by saying, “You might not have a positive addiction.” In which case, the tool has served its purpose. The objective is satisfied. They can still read the information sheet.

Another way to handle the issue is to ask them to think of activities they could do to satisfy all the criteria for a positive addiction. That way they can still go through all the information and apply it to themselves. Of course, later, if they choose, they could actually try-out the activity.

The questionnaire and information sheet keep my students interested in the topic. Students have said, “I am learning!” and “This is interesting!”

I imagine one could use these tools in a variety of ways with good results. If you choose to use these tools, please let me know the way you use them and the results you get.

Questionnaire

Objectives: The purpose of this questionnaire is to understand William Glasser’s idea of positive addiction and to determine whether you have any positive addictions.

Instructions: Read and answer each question.

1. Do I engage in any activities that involve no competition? If so, write as complete a list of those activities as possible.
2. Do I choose to engage in the above activities? Write down the activities you choose to do, as opposed to those activities you feel forced to do.
3. Of the activities written in answer 2, do I devote at least one hour per day to any of them? Write down the activities to which you devote a total of about one hour per day.
4. Of the activities written in answer 3, can I perform any of them with minimal mental effort? Write down the activities you can do with a minimal of mental effort.
5. Of the activities written in answer 4, can I do any of them alone? Write down the ones you can do alone.

6. Of the activities written in answer 5, do I believe any of them benefit me physically, mentally, or spiritually? Write down the activities you believe benefit you.

7. Of the activities written in answer 6, do I believe by persisting in the activity I will improve at it? (Only you measure that improvement). Write down the activities at which you believe you can improve.

8. Of the activities written in answer 7, can I engage in any of them without criticizing myself? Write down the activities you can do without criticizing yourself.

Positive Addiction information sheet

Objective: The purpose of this sheet is to define positive addiction, to double-check your answers, and to provide additional information.

Instructions: Select an activity from answer 8 of your questionnaire. Go through the checklist below to see whether you can check off each item in relation to the activity.

A positive addiction is a life-enhancing activity from which you experience a high and gain mental strength.

- The activity involves no competition.
- You choose to engage in the activity.
- You devote approximately one hour per day to this activity.
- You can do this activity well with minimal mental effort.
- You can do the activity alone.
- You believe the activity benefits you physically, mentally, or spiritually.
- You believe by persisting in the activity you will improve at it (Only you measure that improvement).
- You engage in the activity without criticizing yourself: You can observe yourself in the activity without concern as to whether you perform well.

As you perform an activity that fulfills the above, you may go into a trance-like state of mind. If you regularly go into this trance-like state of mind, you may develop a positive addiction to the activity or you may already have an addiction to it. If not, get addicted!

To test whether you have a positive addiction, stop engaging in the activity for a period of time. If you experience withdrawal, pain, discomfort, anxiety or guilt only relieved by resuming the activity, you have a positive addiction.

REFERENCES


The author may be contacted at ProfessorRapport@yahoo.com
The Needs within the Meaning

Keith Manchester

The author works as a Mental Health Specialist at the Allendale Association in Lake Villa, Illinois.

ABSTRACT

This article looks at the parallels between Choice Theory and Victor Frankl's book, Man's Search for Meaning. It highlights similarities in the needs that each author proposes. There is also a concentration in looking at the parallels in the power of individuals to choose essentially everything that they do.

Throughout this wonderful world, Choice Theory pops its enlightening head. As I travel through my experiences, I observe how much of life relates to Choice Theory. By identifying the parallels between Choice Theory and other sources of knowledge, we may further instill Choice Theory into a person's quality world. I put forth that Man's Search for Meaning by Victor E. Frankl contains many similarities with Choice Theory. Prominent similarities include Frankl's perception of needs, the idea of having a choice, and an awareness of internal control as a key to his survival. As Frankl faces death and hopelessness, he wraps his world around satisfying his needs in order to find meaning in his life. He is able to find freedom, love, power, and fun in the worst of human conditions; all in order to sustain his one physiological need, which was to survive.

In the preface, we see Frankl address his freedom need and his power to choose as key components of his survival. Everything had been taken from the prisoners, yet Frankl realized the elements he needed to satisfy in order to live on. He states, “What alone remains is the last of human freedoms—the ability to choose one’s attitudes in a given set of circumstances” (Frankl, p. 12). He looks at this truth as the crux of his plan in his effort to survive. Frankl is still able to find the other needs being met even though they seem nonexistent. He demonstrates the need for fun in his reflections on art and the ability to see humor if only for a second. He contemplated that, “Humor was another one of the soul’s weapons in the fight for self-preservation” (p.63). In Glasser’s book, he discusses how fun is linked to our ancestors and their survival. He commented that, “Learning gave [our ancestors] a survival advantage, and the need for fun became built into our genes” (Glasser p.41).

One of the most perplexing of the needs is the need for power. One may also wonder how one can have any power as a prisoner. Nevertheless, Frankl ascertains that another key element to survival was the prisoner’s ability to believe in himself, and that he had some worth in this world. To believe that you “have some worth” I believe is in some sense a source of power. He expresses this in the book contemplating, “If a man in the concentration camp did not struggle against this in a last effort to save his self respect, he lost the feeling of being an individual, a being with a mind, with inner freedom and personal value” (Frankl, p. 70).

Then there is the need for love and belonging. Very early in the book, Frankl describes to the reader the enormous necessity of and power of love. He realizes, “The truth—that love is the ultimate and highest goal to which man can aspire” (Frankl, p.57). Moreover, he infers that, “The salvation of man is through love and in love” (p.57). We see that Frankl puts a large emphasis on the need for love and how essential it is in life. Glasser also addresses the need for love by commenting that, “our love and belonging genes demand that we keep love going for our whole lives” (Glasser, p. 33).

I find it fascinating that Frankl identified all the different needs that coincide with those in Glasser’s Choice Theory. It was not just one or two of the psychological needs that were sufficient for survival; all were factors in his struggle for survival. This adds to the credibility of Choice Theory’s necessity of all the needs and their pertinence in even the gravest of conditions.

In addition to similarities in the needs between Frankl and Glasser, I think it would be significant to discuss the large parallels between the power of choice and Frankl’s perception that a man must search for meaning within himself. Frankl consistently points to the importance of a man’s ability to choose his own thoughts and perceive the world through his own eyes. This is easy to relate to Choice Theory’s necessity for the individual to discover for him or herself what to do about a situation. For instance, Glasser writes, “Choice Theory explains that, for all practical purposes, we choose everything that we do, including the misery we feel” (Glasser, p. 3). Frankl similarly states, “Even though conditions such as lack of sleep, insufficient food and various mental stresses may suggest that the inmates were bound to react in certain ways, in the final analysis it becomes clear that the sort of person the prisoner became was the result of an inner decision, and not the result of
camp influences alone” (Frankl, p. 87). Frankl saw that a man’s ability to recognize that he could choose his thoughts and actions could lead him to have meaning and thus survive. He points out, “The experiences of camp life show that a man does have choice of action” (p. 86).

Throughout Choice Theory as well as in Frankl’s book, the focus is on the inner ability of a man to deal with his thoughts and actions in order to have a more pleasurable life for himself or herself. Dr. Glasser proposes that, “Choice theory explains that we are, as all living creatures are, internally motivated” (Glasser, p. 17). Frankl reaffirms the notion that internal control and inner focus are what is key in survival. He states, “Psychological observations of the prisoners have shown that only the men who allowed their inner hold on their moral and spiritual selves to subside eventually fell victim to the camp’s degenerating influences” (Frankl, p. 90).

As I conclude, I think it’s important to pause and try to imagine the despair that the prisoners had. I find it interesting to see Choice Theory concepts in such a bleak and horrifying circumstance. Had Frankl known about Choice Theory, he may have had a reference to identify the concepts he discovered. Nonetheless, Frankl realized that although the environment in which he was in was inescapable, a man could still survive if he could satisfy his needs and find choice and meaning within himself. I have put forth similarities between the concept of Choice Theory and of Frankl’s novel. In the second portion of Frankl’s book, he presents his own theory called logotherapy. I think there are similarities between his theory and Choice Theory. Dr. Glasser and Victor Frankl put forth ideas that I think can be assimilated and integrated to show various similarities. Furthermore, I believe that by observing these similarities, it will further our knowledge about the vastness of Choice Theory. Ultimately, I feel it is beneficial to incorporate and discover different examples of Choice Theory in the world. It will allow for it to grow and hopefully help many people.

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The author may be reached at keithmanchester98@hotmail.com
ABSTRACT

The idea that one is responsible for one's own behavior is a given in Choice Theory. When a person accepts the contractual position of helper, responsibility increases. This article identifies some of the strategies that can be used to diagnose and help students learn.

On a recent follow-up visit to a school district that I have worked with for ten years, I was told that a few teachers were saying, "The student is just choosing to fail." In one sense, that is a correct statement. A major premise of Choice Theory is that all of our behavior is chosen and the only person we can control is ourselves. Students are choosing to fail if and only if they have the requisite knowledge and skill to do what is being asked. This is demonstrated primarily in students just refusing to work.

The difficulty arises from the simplicity of the statement. While the behavior may make sense to the student, it is not usually the best long-term choice for the student. Students do not have the experiences that most adults have. The ability to predict long-term consequences and/or to see the importance of learning something that may not have long-term value is difficult for adults, let alone 6, 12 or 18 year-old.

The teacher is not exempt from answering the question, "Am I allowing this student to fail?" Professional teachers work with, and are responsible for, continuing to work with students as long as they are enrolled in the class.

Here are ten important questions that the teacher/adults can/should be asking:

1. Does the student know how to do the work?
2. Does the student have the necessary prerequisites to do the work?
3. Has the usefulness of the work been explained?
4. Does the work need to be adapted for this student?
5. Is the instructional method appropriate for this student?
6. Is the assessment of the work helpful/meaningful to the student?
7. Does the assessment need to be adapted for this student?
8. What does the student find motivating?
9. Does the student know how to study?
10. Does the student have any kind of support? Parent, Friend, Tutor?
Part II: External Evaluation Can Be Helpful

ABSTRACT

This article challenges the teaching concept that “external evaluation” is always harmful. The author contends that there are three factors/questions that can help create successful external evaluations.

Since the early 1990’s, after Dr. Glasser published The Quality School: Managing Students Without Coercion, self-evaluation has been one of most emphasized and important topics in Institute training. Since individuals will not change a behavior until they decide (evaluate) what they are doing isn’t working, the self-evaluation process is critical to change.

There is a problem using only self-evaluation however. If all people do is self-evaluate, how do they know what they don’t know? My premise is that external evaluation and information is crucial to our learning and growth. The external evaluation doesn’t “make” us do, think or feel anything. We take the external information and use the “self-evaluation” process to determine if we will use the information we are getting.

The term “learner” is used from this point forward to represent anyone receiving feedback or evaluation information because successful external evaluations result in learning.

There are three factors that determine the effectiveness of external evaluation?

1. Does it benefit the learner?
   a. How will the evaluation be used?
   b. Does the learner have a chance to improve on the rating/score, etc.?

2. Is it wanted / asked for?
   a. Does the learner “respect” the source of the evaluation?
   Does the rating / grade / score mean anything to the learner?

3. Does the evaluation give the learner the information needed to make the necessary improvements?

Phil Mickelson and Tiger Woods, as do all golf professionals, have golf coaches to look for and help them correct flaws in their swing. As with all successful external evaluations, the information from the coach is given in the spirit of “helping” the learner grow and improve. At times, a golfer is unable to determine the specific reason a swing is not producing the desired result. The coach, viewing the swing from a different perspective and angle, can provide the information to correct the swing.

Students that decide that they need to improve their writing skills do not always have the knowledge and skill to improve on their own. The teacher’s critique and feedback is instrumental in the student’s growth in the writing process.

In the business world, like in education, a rating, grade or external evaluation in and of itself is not useful. However, when specific feedback is given and accepted, results occur. For example, feedback was given to several supervisors on how to improve their written communication in Lotus Notes (E-mails). The supervisors agreed that there was room for improvement and accepted their manager’s feedback. The messages are now more professional, easier to understand and more thoughtful in their tone.

The intent of this article is to challenge the statement and teaching that all external evaluation is harmful. It is also to ensure that when external evaluation is used, that it meet the criteria for helpfulness to the learner. The author does not minimize the importance of self-evaluation.

The following questions can help readers test the author’s statements.

1. Describe a time that you received a grade, rating or evaluation that was especially important to you. Why was it so significant to you?
2. How or when have grades, ratings or evaluations motivated you?
3. How or when have grades, ratings or evaluations not motivated you?

The author may be reached at bob@bobhoglund.com
Teaching Certification Week

Robert Wubbolding, John Brickell

The first author is Director of Training for the William Glasser Institute.
The second author is Director of the Centre for Reality Therapy in Hampshire, England

ABSTRACT

Participants of certification weeks are asked to make a brief presentation to a small group of peers. In this presentation, they demonstrate their knowledge of choice theory and reality therapy by means of a creative application or extension of the principles. The Institute encourages them to publish their presentation so that others can benefit from it. This article contains a summary of several presentations at recent certification weeks. The hope is that other persons “Reality Therapy Certified” will develop their presentations and submit them for publication.

The mission of the William Glasser Institute is to “teach all people Choice Theory and to use it as the basis for training in Reality Therapy, Quality School Education, and Lead-Management” (Programs, Policies & Procedures Manual of The William Glasser Institute, 2003). The certification process provides the primary means for addressing this lofty, idealistic and unrealistic goal. Two training workshops each composed of 27 contact hours as well as two practica of 30 hours each precede the certification week. Together, these components comprise the structure of the certification process and result in a certificate of completion allowing the participant to use the letters RTC – “reality therapy certified.” In spite of occasional efforts to tinker with this designation, the William Glasser Institute board has consistently insisted that the longstanding designation RTC is an adequate title for those completing the certification process.

Training for certification culminates in the four and a half day certification week held at the site of the international convention (San Antonio, 2002; Kansas City, 2003; Chicago, 2004; Dublin, Ireland, 2005) and other sites throughout the world. Instructors in countries throughout the world conduct intensive training weeks as well as certification weeks.

Institute Expectations at Certification Week

The Programs, Policies, and Procedures Manual (2003) states that participants will demonstrate knowledge, conferencing skills, and self-evaluation skill. They are asked to be familiar with the basic books on choice theory and reality therapy. “One of the requirements for completing Certification Week is a short 15-minute presentation to the small group of certification candidates. The purpose is for the participant to demonstrate the ability to teach, through involvement, an aspect of Choice Theory, Reality Therapy, and Lead-

Publication of Presentations

Institute faculty members continue to express delight and exuberance at the quality of certification week presentations and encourage participants to publicize their work. Though few have chosen to publish their works, participants have standing invitations to develop their presentations into journal articles and submit them to the International Journal of Reality Therapy for publication. This article summarizes a few presentations with a view to demonstrate the widespread applicability of CT/RT as well as encourage individual participants to publish their creative and innovative work. Below are summaries of several presentations from certification weeks which the authors have taught in 2003 and 2004 in the United States and in England.

Examples of Presentations

Crisis intervention. Adrian integrated reality therapy into the four stages of crisis intervention with emotionally disturbed children. He described do’s and don’ts for the anxiety stage when the child is agitated or withdrawn; for the defensive stage when the child is challenging or threatening; for the acting out stage when the child attempts to harm him/herself or others; and for the recovery stage when physical activity is reduced and agitation is quieted. Common to all stages is the use of various components of the WDEP system especially the calm discussion of current behavior as well as the avoidance of the negative habits or toxic behaviors on the part of the adult.

Health care and the elderly. Maureen described how nurses provide excellent care for the elderly. Yet many health care professionals could improve elderly care by more attention to the three expressions of their unmet needs: loneliness, helplessness and boredom. The use of reality therapy can provide a key antidote by enhancing human relationships. The presenter helped us increase our compassion for the aged population by imagining ourselves at 80 years of age and asking where we would like to live, with whom, what kind of clothes we want, our favorite
type of friends, etc. We then brainstormed ways to meet fun, belonging, choices, and power. Exercise, helping in preschools, dancing, menu choices, outings, resident council, education about health, computers, and especially attending to our spiritual needs were ways to meet our genetic instructions. She clearly showed the applicability of CT/RT to a population growing in numbers. Also, participants and future counselors became cognizant of possible career opportunities working with “seasoned citizens.”

Balance wheel. With the balance wheel, used at the Pacific Institute, Diane provided an exercise for participants to examine important life areas such as family, spousal relationships, friendships, finances, physical health, mental health, community service, spirituality, career development and others. With zero at the center of the wheel, participants marked with an x on emanating spokes their current self-perceived location on a scale of 1 to 10 with the center being 0. They then joined the x’s with a line graphically presenting a visual description of the amount of life style balance. Increased insight resulted from such questions as, “Does your circle appear balanced?” “What would your life be like if you had better balance in your wheel?” Define some specific goals and steps you could take to achieve your goals.” Clearly, the specific life style components relating to the quality world, current behavior, self-evaluation and planning are easily infused into this exercise (Wubbolding, 2000).

Five basic needs: Intrinsic motivation and your pet. At some point in history it was destined to happen at certification week! Dave brought Purdy (his formal name is Pedernalis, but we came to know him well enough to call him by his nickname). His presence for a full day helped us discuss such pertinent questions as, “Do you believe Purdy’s basic needs are being met: comfort, inclusion, success, expression, discovery, connectedness, recognition, learning, respect, choices, laughing, being heard, creativity?” “How do you know?” For “extra credit” could answer such questions as, “Does Purdy fit into anyone else’s quality world other than mine (Dav’s)?” “Does his presence create a conflict for anyone?” Fortunately, we were not coerced to answer these extra credit questions aloud. After all, inserting a parrot into one’s quality world is easy for some people and difficult for others.

Career planning. Darryl introduced his activity stating that career planning is never ending, often changing, always subject to evaluation and closely connected with total behavior. His activity can be used by teachers and career counselors working with small or large groups. Using a worksheet, we were asked to list a desired career in the middle of the page. We then wrote in surrounding boxes possible ineffective job behaviors and effective job behaviors. For example, effective total behaviors for a bank manager are maintaining good relations with customers (actions); telling ourselves, “I get along with the customers and I truly like them,” (cognition); warm friendly, altruistic feelings (emotions). Ineffective behaviors include being curt with the public or delivering mediocre service to them (actions); telling myself, “These customers are a pain and I really don’t like them” (cognition); feeling chronically frustrated and angering (emotional).

Using a separate worksheet, he asked us to match our career with basic needs and how these tasks might interfere with meeting them. For instance, power might be fulfilled for opportunities to set, change, and adapt the bank policies. On the other hand, paper work could require unsatisfying attention to detail, etc. This presentation emphasized a very useful tool for helping students and clients move toward more realistic career choices.

Student handbook. Other presentations of equal value included Kate’s application to a student handbook containing valuable information about setting boundaries, 10 steps to control anger, resolving conflict and other notable ideas.

Educational goals. Blanca and Lourdes described using a “music circle” and goal setting for college students. When they stop the audio tape, the students team up in groups of 2 to 4 and discuss educational goals and educational strategies.

Attachment theory. Jeff and Clarann related choice theory to attachment theory, describing the fit between these two systems. They explored changes in couples’ needs, perceptions, and total behavior over the course of a relationship. The presentation highlighted research findings about couples, including recent applications of attachment theory to adult relationships, and demonstrated how these findings can inform the use of reality therapy with couples.

Art therapy. Sandy presented a case study combining reality therapy with art therapy. Interpreting a traumatized client’s two dozen drawings in the context of survival, power (self-worth), belonging, fun, and freedom, she traced the journey moving from dark despair to a serene sunset. At the end of a two-year therapeutic relationship, the client stated, “Now I am free to rekindle the flame of true happiness.”

Addiction. Adam presented a model for using the WDEP system applied to addiction as a family illness. The hypothetical client K., spouse of an alcoholic, had issues with anger, dependency, boundaries, and other symptoms. Six sessions consisted in:

1. Discussion of partner’s relapsing.
2. Focus on denial.
3. Expression of anger about partner.
4. Release from denial, detaching from problem, and self-worth (power).
5. Emphasis on relapse and self-evaluation of client’s own behavior.

This presentation illustrated how the principles of reality therapy effectively apply to brief, solution focused counseling.

Embarrassed adolescent. Steve described an adolescent client troubled with hygienic problems including bedwetting.
Using the principles of reality therapy summarized as WDEP, especially self-evaluation, the client was able to take responsibility for his own actions and eventually became confident enough to sleep over at friends’ homes with no problems.

Lawyering. Mike explained the differences between litigation, arbitration, and mediation in the context of choice theory. The procedures of reality therapy are especially useful in mediation. Participants are in control of their choices and, when they receive unpleasant information, they are reminded that they have at least some control over how they will choose to feel and act. Mike stated that his efforts to mediate have been more successful as a result of using the principles of reality therapy.

Medicine wheel. Jennifer described the medicine wheel of the North Dakota Lakota tribe in the context of human needs. Wacantognaka or generosity is similar to love and belonging. Woohitika or bravery and courage equate to freedom. Wowacintanka or integrity is similar to power and Woksape, wisdom, is associated with fun. The circumference of the wheel encompassing all four components is seen as survival. This and other presentations provide clear evidence of the universal and crosscultural application of choice theory and reality therapy.

Among the many other presentations, Sheeleigh showed the use of questioning techniques to help people gain a sense of inner control. Caroline described differences in quality worlds by applying choice theory to the art of cooking.

Conclusion.

These few selected presentations could be altered and applied to various settings and age groups. Each provided for the involvement of the audience and so it is impossible to adequately describe the presentations in a short space. Each demonstrated the knowledge of the presenter and each resulted in one more person “Reality Therapy Certified.”

REFERENCES


The senior author may be contacted at the Center for Reality Therapy, 7672 Montgomery Road #383, Cincinnati OH 45236
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