# International Journal of Reality Therapy

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The International Journal of Reality Therapy is directed to concepts of internal control psychology, with particular emphasis on research, theory, development, or special descriptions of the successful application of choice theory and reality therapy principles in field settings.

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Editor’s Comments
Larry Litwack

As we start the 25th year of publication of the Journal, we are fortunate to have the usual mix of articles. There are several of particular note. The first is the article by Sansone comparing Morita Therapy and Reality Therapy. As I read his article, I was reminded of the number of articles over the years that have compared and contrasted RT/CT and other theoretical approaches. As a help to readers, I would suggest that you review the following:

A Comparing and Contrasting of Reality Therapy and Rational-Emotive Therapy Vol 1(2)
Adlerian Antecedents to Reality Therapy and Control Theory Vol 3(2)
Reality Therapy and Brief Strategic Interactional Therapy Vol 9(2)
Control Theory and the Paradigmatic Perspective of Thomas Kuhn Vol 9(1)
Neuro-Linguistic Programming Compared to Reality Therapy Vol 9(1)
The Early Years of Control Theory:
Forerunners Marcus Aurelius & Norbert Weiner Vol 13(2)
A Comparative Analysis of RT and Solution-Focused Therapy Vol15(2)
Glasser’s Quality Schoolwork and Dewey’s Qualitative Thought Vol 15(2)
Choice Theory and Ta’i Chi Chuan: Are There Any Similarities? Vol 18(1)
Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy as an Internal Control Psychology Vol 19(1)
PCT, HPCT and Internal Control Psychology Vol 19(1)
Choice Theory and PCT: What are the differences and do they matter? Vol 21(2)

Social Cognitive Theory and Choice Theory: A Compatibility Analysis Vol 22(1)

The Relationship Between Glasser's Quality School Concept and Brain-Based Theory Vol 22(2)

Mindfulness Based Reality Therapy (MBRT) Vol 23(1)

Integrating the Karpman Drama Triangle with Choice Theory and Reality Therapy Vol 23(1)

Reality Therapy and Individual or Adlerian Psychology - A Comparison Vol 24(2)

A Comparison of Wellness Coaching and Reality Therapy Vol 24(2)

Reality Therapy and the Human Energy Field: Working with Needs that Influence Mind and Body Vol 24(2)

The second is the article by Byron Loyd, based on his doctoral dissertation. This is one of the latest articles that help fill the critical need for sound research studies on RT.

The third is the response by William Glasser to my comments in the last issue. I have received other comments, but I am printing none of them. The Journal will not be the home for a dialogue re the current and future status of the William Glasser Institute. The Journal was conceived as a home for all who believe in the principles of internal control psychology. It will continue in that fashion as long as it continues to publish. I will, of course, continue to welcome research-based articles and articles that critically analyze, compare, and/or contrast RT/CT with other theoretical approaches, particularly those that seem to share the commitment to internal control psychology.
The Effects of Reality Therapy/Choice Theory Principles on High School Students’ Perception of Needs Satisfaction And Behavioral Change

Byron D. Loyd

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the extent to which exposure to Choice Theory increased high school students’ perceived satisfaction in 4 psychological needs: belonging, power, freedom, and fun. A quasi-experimental, nonrandomized pretest/posttest design was used. For 5 sessions, the treatment group received exposure to Choice Theory principles. After the first posttest, the control group also received exposure to Choice Theory principles. A second posttest was administered to each group. A 2 x 3 with repeated measures ANOVA was conducted on all data concerning the perceived satisfaction of each of the 4 psychological needs after the end of the second exposure. The results suggested that high school students’ exposure to Choice Theory principles had a positive sustaining effect on their perception of satisfaction in 3 of the 4 psychological needs. This study could prove beneficial to educators; teaching students to satisfy their needs in appropriate and effective methods may help decrease disruptive and destructive behavioral choices, and may increase behavioral choices that effectively satisfy their needs.

Of the many problems facing schools today, addressing the needs of at-risk youth has become one of the most difficult problems, one that will likely grow well into the 21st century (Richardson & Wubbolding, 2001). These problems are predicted to continue to mount with “frequency and severity” (Morose, 1996, p. 126). Society expects teachers and counselors to develop productive relationships with youth who have difficulty accepting responsibility, managing their emotions, making responsible choices, and believing adults can and want to help them. It can be a difficult task to develop and nurture meaningful relationships with youth who have a history of abuse, neglect, and rejection by caretakers.

Many current researchers agree with the concept of human needs and the disruptive behaviors associated with not having those needs met. For example, Ryan and Deci (2000), creators of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT), have performed extensive and widespread research over the past several decades (p. 69). Through their research, they have concluded that there are “innate psychological needs that are the basis for self-motivation and personality integration,” and that the meeting of these needs “appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural propensities for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being” (p. 69). Ryan and Deci (2000) stated their definition of a psychological need by declaring, “A psychological need is an energizing state that, if satisfied, is conducive to health and well-being but, if not satisfied, contributes to pathology and ill-being.” They go on to specify that psychological needs are “essential nutrients that individuals cannot thrive without satisfying all of them, any more than people can thrive with water but not food” (p. 76).

At-risk student behaviors and their relationship to unmet psychological needs are viewed through the lens of Choice Theory (1998a), authored by William Glasser. What contributes to the motivation of students who continue to make choices in at-risk behaviors? Glasser maintains that adolescents make ineffective and self-damaging choices in an attempt to fulfill basic human needs such as freedom, belonging, or power (1998a).

According to Choice Theory (1998a), there exists an interconnection between needs satisfaction and behavior. Glasser wrote, “Our behavior is always our best attempt to control the world and ourselves as part of that world so that we can best satisfy our needs.” He further suggests, “Every client is choosing some sort of painful, self-destructive behavior in a misguided or misunderstood attempt to regain control over a poorly controlled, need-frustrating life” (Glasser, 1998a, p. 5). Mickel (1994) states the basic needs (as defined by Glasser) are the “determinants of behavior. Unmet needs lead to violence, and violence is an irresponsible way to meet our basic needs” (p. 7-8). Many students choose at-risk and disruptive behaviors in order to gain a sense of control, and disruptive behavior is a common response to unfulfilled needs (Glasser, 1998b).

In the Choice Theory literature, innate basic needs are also referred to as “genetic instructions,” and “internal instructions,” that are “biologically encoded” (Buck, 2002, p. 7) and “genetically programmed” into the human at conception (Glasser, 1998a, p. 28). One of the fundamental tenants of Choice Theory is that all behavior is internally motivated and therefore, not a response to external stimuli, that “all of our behavior is our constant attempt to satisfy one or more of five basic needs that are written into our genetic structure” (Glasser, 1998b, pp. 18-24). Skeen (2002), writing about these needs, declared they “push from within for outward expression” (p. 14). Wubbolding refers to these innate human needs as “internal forces or internal motivations” (2000, p. 10). Based on the Choice Theory premise that the human needs are genetically encoded, it should be kept in mind that the five needs are considered universal and common to every human being, while specific behaviors that each person will choose to satisfy these needs will be unique to each individual human being. The universal observation is that humans will
feel pleasure when a need is met and frustration when a need goes unsatisfied; there is a constant urge to act to satisfy the unmet needs (Glasser, 1998).

Rationale for the Study

Research has shown that a lack of needs satisfaction contributes to disruptive and self-destructive behaviors, low academic motivation and performance, and unsatisfying social relationships in the lives of some high school students. Students may choose ineffective behaviors due to a lack of understanding of the connection between their innate needs and their behavior; they also lack the knowledge of how to effectively satisfy their needs. This study was designed to explore and evaluate what effects Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles may have on high school students' perceived satisfaction of the four psychological needs as defined by Glasser (1998), (Belonging, Power, Freedom, and Fun), and how these principles effect behavioral change. The Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles were presented within the framework of the Choice Connections Manual (Loyd, 2003). This study was also intended to provide high school counselors with a manual, of which its principles have been empirically tested, for use in guiding students into making more effective choices. Teaching students Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles could aid students in moving toward assuming responsibility for satisfying their personal needs, thereby encouraging more positive behavior changes. In the current literature, needs satisfaction is linked to positive coping skills, an internal locus of control, academic motivation and success, and greater personal responsibility. Also, the current literature indicates that ineffectively meeting these needs leads to frustration, higher levels of anger intensity, disruptive classroom behaviors, lack of academic motivation and performance, personal relationship dissatisfaction, and an external locus of control. The Choice Connections Manual (Loyd, 2003) may be an effective tool to lead students into choosing more effective life behaviors, thereby, effecting social change.

Four research questions were addressed in this study. For the purpose of this article, one research question will be given addressing all four Choice Theory psychological needs.

To what extent will exposure (instruction, discussion, application) to Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles, as presented within the framework of the Choice Connections Manual (Loyd, 2003), increase perceived need satisfaction for Belonging, Power, Freedom, and Fun, and effect behavioral change in high school students?

METHOD

Participants

In an attempt to answer the research questions, the following quantitative study was conducted with two classes (n = 68) of high school students. One class was designated as the treatment group (n = 34), and the other class, the control group (n = 34). To determine the two participating classes, five classes, taught by the same teacher, were numbered 1-5, respectively. From these five numbers, two were drawn blindly from a container. The two classes became the research groups. From these two, each class was re-numbered, 1, 2 respectively, and from the remaining two numbers, one number was drawn blindly from a container. The first number drawn became the treatment group. The non-drawn class became the control group. Due to the nature of the school setting, this was a “sample of convenience” (Triola, 2002, p. 29).

Due to the structure and constraints of the high school environment, randomly assigned participants were not possible. Pre-formed classroom student assignments could not be disrupted and must remain intact. The classes that represent the treatment and control groups were randomly chosen from a pool of five classes. Since any one teacher at the chosen high school has five teaching periods and one planning period, and the constant of having the same teacher needed to be maintained, only a pool of five classes could have been used. This study was a quasi-experimental study, a design that Babbe (2001), referred to as “the non-equivalent control group design” (p. 341). He gave the example of a school classroom being appropriate for this type of design.

Materials

The chosen instrument used to measure the perceived level of needs satisfaction was Pete’s Pathogram, a very practical and effective assessment tool used by Choice Theory/Reality Therapy counselors, originally developed by Arlin Peterson and Gerald Parr (1982, 1992). One rationale behind this decision was that Pete’s Pathogram is the only instrument that measures the specific aspects of the four psychological needs of Choice Theory needed for this project. Another rationale was that a substantial amount of empirical research has been conducted using Pete’s Pathogram, as opposed to a limited amount of empirical research conducted with other available instruments. This instrument assesses the self-perceived (a) interest, strength, or intensity of each of Glasser’s four psychological needs, (b) the time and effort invested in satisfying each need, and (c) the success attained in satisfying each need. This instrument was originally designed to be a clinical instrument to provide a graphic illustration for clients to measure the perceived intensity of their basic needs as explained by Glasser, the time and effort the students were investing in attempting to satisfy their needs, and the success attained in satisfying each need (Peterson, Chang, & Collins, 1998, p. 27). The rating is subjective, but consistent with the Choice Theory concept of self-evaluation (Sullo, 1997, p. 115).

Pete’s Pathogram revised (1992) is designed to maintain the clinical utility of the original pathogram (1982), while adding a consistent numerical scale (1-9), with a mean score of 5, and a standard deviation of 1. The Pathogram is designed to measure quantitatively, various dimensions of the psychological needs of belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Peterson & Truscott, 1988). The Pathogram is utilized to compare the profiles in regard to perceived needs, time/effort invested, and success.
achieved in satisfying each psychological need. Also, the interrelationships of each need to each of the other needs have been reported. It has been shown to be an effective tool for discovering the internal world of students, as well as an effective tool for counseling (Peterson & Parr, 1982; Peterson & Truscott, 1988).

**Procedures**

Each group was given a pretest, consisting of Pete’s Pathogram. This instrument assessed self-reported satisfaction of each of the four psychological needs (Belonging, Power, Freedom, and Fun) as defined by Choice Theory. The test data were collected and recorded. Then, the treatment group was exposed to Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles, as presented within the framework of the *Choice Connections Manual* (Loyd, 2003) through five consecutive, 50-minute sessions, which consisted of instruction, discussion, personal application, and planning for practically applying these principles to life situations. When the five sessions were completed, a posttest consisting of Pete’s Pathogram was administered to the treatment and control groups. Data were collected and recorded.

To increase the statistical power of this study, the following additions were performed. After the posttest, the Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles were administered through five consecutive, 50-minute sessions, to the control group. At the completion of the additional five sessions, a posttest was administered to both groups. Finally, repeated measures of analysis of variance were used. These additional steps will serve two functions: (1) A stronger test was created for Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles in a situation where the participants in the original control group acted as their own control, and (2) A test to determine if any gains from the original treatment group had lasted beyond the original treatment.

The quantitative data obtained from three administrations of Pete’s Pathogram were analyzed by SPSS (Norusis, 1993), a statistical analysis program for social sciences. Two different operations of statistical analysis were conducted with the research data collected for each of the four research questions and hypotheses. First, an Analysis of Covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted for the purpose of controlling for any pre-study differences that might have existed between the control and treatment group with respect to the level of need satisfaction prior to this study. This type of analysis was necessary because it was not possible to randomly assign students to control or treatment groups independently; intact, pre-formed groups had to be used. Second, a Repeated Measures Analysis of Variance was conducted for the purpose of testing the equality of means over time. A repeated measure ANOVA is used when all members of a sample are measured under a number of different conditions or over a number of different time periods.

**RESULTS**

**Quantitative Picture**

The following table presents a panoramic quantitative picture of this research study. The mean satisfaction scores for each of the three administrations of Pete’s Pathogram are recorded. The treatment group was exposed to Choice Theory principles (TX) after the pretest and the control group was exposed to Choice Theory principles (TX) after the posttest. One can observe the changes in the satisfaction of needs scores after each group was exposed to Choice Theory principles.

**Mean Scores for Need Satisfaction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Needs</th>
<th>Pretest</th>
<th>TX</th>
<th>Posttest</th>
<th>TX</th>
<th>Follow up test</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>N=34</td>
<td>6.50</td>
<td>6.85</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>6.20</td>
<td>6.52</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>6.23</td>
<td>6.61</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.47</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>7.11</td>
<td>6.91</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.91</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>N=34</td>
<td>6.70</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.44</td>
<td>7.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Power</td>
<td>6.11</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>6.08</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.52</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>7.20</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>7.67</td>
<td>7.85</td>
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</table>

The control group’s pretest mean score of the satisfaction of Belonging was 6.50, with a standard deviation of 1.69. The treatment group’s mean score was 6.71, with a standard deviation of 1.58. This analysis demonstrates that these two groups were statistically equal when this study began.

After treatment with Choice Theory principles, the treatment group’s posttest mean score for satisfaction of Belonging rose to 7.44, with a standard deviation of 1.35. The control group’s posttest score remained near the pretest score at 6.85, with a standard deviation of 1.74. At first glance, it appears that the treatment by Choice Theory principles increased the satisfaction scores of the treatment group. However, the data analysis revealed no significant statistical improvement in the groups’ posttest mean satisfaction scores concerning Belonging. The other psychological needs (Power, Freedom, and Fun) did show a significant statistical improvement in the mean satisfaction scores.

**Summary**

The four research questions examined the effectiveness of Choice Theory principles on the needs satisfaction levels of Belonging, Power, Freedom, and Fun, as defined by Choice Theory. The findings indicate that with respect to the needs for Power, Freedom, and Fun, Choice Theory principles were effective in increasing the posttest satisfaction scores of the treatment group after their exposure to the principles. The findings also indicate that the follow up test scores of the control group also increased, while the increased scores of the treatment group were sustained at the follow up test.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Given the research data results presented, the following conclusions were reached:
1. Based on the results of the Pre- and Posttest, exposure to and practice of Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles by high school students do have a positive effect on those students’ perception of satisfaction of three of the four psychological needs of Choice Theory: Power, Freedom, and Fun.

2. Based on the repeated measures conducted in the study, exposure to Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles do have a sustaining effect on students’ perception of needs satisfaction of three of the four psychological needs of Choice Theory: Power, Freedom, and Fun.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After evaluating the effectiveness of this study, the following recommendations are presented:

1. When evaluating the satisfaction level of the four psychological needs, some ambiguity could arise due to the many areas in which needs satisfaction could be assessed. For example, a student could score very high in satisfaction in Belonging with reference to family and score very low with reference to the classroom. A more accurate reading of needs satisfaction could be assessed if the focus of needs satisfaction is narrowed to a specific area of life (a specific classroom, family life, extracurricular activities, etc.) when completing Pete’s Pathogram.

2. Pete’s Pathogram could be reconstructed to include the Survival need. The original Pete’s Pathogram only included Glasser’s four psychological needs. From the literature, it is evident that the psychological aspects of the Survival need (safety and security) are valid elements to be assessed.

3. A polarized, dichotomous selection of each of the four psychological needs could be created as a forced-choice, self-evaluation and assessment tool, to help students more accurately identify and distinguish the characteristics of each of Glasser’s needs.

4. Incorporating personality-profiling instruments, such as the MBTI, with the exploration of the strength and satisfaction of Glasser’s needs, may help students to discover any correlations that may exists within the “engine” in their personal Car of Life.

5. This program could be implemented school-wide and continually evaluated as to its progress and effectiveness. Longitudinal studies need to be conducted in an attempt to determine the longevity of the effects of Choice Theory/Reality Therapy principles on elementary, middle, and high school students’ perceived needs satisfaction of Glasser’s four psychological needs.

FUTURE RESEARCH POSSIBILITIES

The current study was intended to explore the impact Choice Theory principles have on high school students’ needs satisfaction. Not only is there a need to add to the research knowledge base by replicating the current study, but the need also exist to explore the influence of Choice Theory principles on elementary and middle school students. Early exposure to Choice Theory principles may result in early prevention of disruptive and destructive student behaviors.

There is also a need to conduct empirical research in the use of Pete’s Pathogram in other specific and focused situations. For example, teachers could conduct studies for a specific classroom atmosphere, where satisfactions of the four psychological needs would be assessed. Results of the Pathogram could help teachers assess present instructional strategies as to their effectiveness in meeting the students’ needs. Another example is to have students complete the Pathogram concerning their home life only. The results could have implications concerning the relationships at home and their impact on student behaviors at school.

These research possibilities could help teachers and counselors determine school life and classroom effectiveness, home life influences on students, and how extracurricular activity is need satisfying to students. The data could aid educators in planning need satisfying curriculum and teaching strategies to maximize student performance and minimize disruptive behaviors. Studies such as these would also add to the research knowledge base concerning the use of Pete’s Pathogram and the effectiveness of Choice Theory principles on students’ behavioral choices. Administrators could conduct studies concerning the needs satisfaction of faculty and staff. Results of such studies could aid administrators in staff development and staff management. Such data would also add to the present knowledge base of the use of Pete’s Pathogram and the effectiveness of Choice Theory principles in quality management.

IMPLICATIONS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Considering the continued increase of at-risk and disruptive behaviors, the importance and necessity of this research study conducted with student populations is evident. Since the literature supports the idea of the existence of human needs, supports the idea that needs frustration contributes to student at-risk behaviors, and supports the idea that needs satisfaction contributes to student well being and positive academic performance (Deci & Ryan, 2000), it seems reasonable to conclude that, based on the data results of this study, teaching Choice Theory principles to students can have a positive social impact within education.

The results of this study support the above stated postulation and could also prove significant to school administrators, teachers, parents, and students. Teaching students to meet their needs in appropriate and effective methods may help those students to choose less disruptive and less destructive methods of meeting their needs, enabling them to effectively satisfy their needs. If differences are made in students’ lives to the extent that they make less disruptive and less destructive behavioral choices, then this study has contributed to the goal of positive social change, within and without the educational system.
Students in crisis are not a new phenomenon, nor are the concepts of intervention within the educational setting. Margolin, Youga, and Ballou (2002) suggested that although research on student aggression and at-risk behaviors has increased understanding of the problem, “prevention and intervention efforts have achieved only moderate success. Perhaps what is needed is some fresh insight into the problem” (p. 215). This is one reason why this study is exciting and relevant; it contains research results that could offer fresh insight and a fresh approach to helping students make responsible choices. Beck and Dolce-Maule (1998) suggested that the principles of Choice Theory, with their emphasis on effectively satisfying the human needs of students, are the best opportunity for reaching at-risk students (p. 24).

Glasser maintains that adolescents make ineffective and self-damaging choices in an attempt to fulfill basic human needs such as freedom, belonging, power, or fun (1984, 1998a). Glasser’s postulations could be crucial and pivotal concepts in dealing with at-risk students. Vass (2002) proposed that those individuals who are able to have their needs met are more likely to be “mentally and physically healthier, more stable and better integrated. Those whose needs are not fulfilled may suffer considerable distress or develop, as a means of coping, antisocial behaviors which are a burden to others or to society at large” (p. 40).

The data results of this study, added to the existing research knowledge base, could have implications for school curriculum and teaching methods. Curriculum and methodology could incorporate the meeting of the four psychological needs within their framework, creating classrooms that are need satisfying for students. Successful interventions for at-risk students experiencing academic or psychological problems could include methods to help students satisfy unmet needs. Students could be trained in the principles of Choice Theory, teaching them more effective behavioral strategies for satisfying their needs, subsequently demonstrating less at-risk behaviors and demonstrating more appropriate behaviors. The idea is to empower students to exercise responsible freedom. In general, students’ abilities to satisfy basic needs “appear to be critical for healthy psychological growth” (Vass, 2002, p. 35). The results of this present study, which support and add to the literature, are encouraging, considering the impact this could have on the behavior, academic success, and safety of students. The results of this study may also have an impact on teachers as they create classrooms with a more need-satisfying atmosphere. With students equipped with Choice Theory principles to satisfy their needs more effectively, teachers and administrators may see less disruption, greater quality of work, and happier students.

With a firm foundation of Choice Theory, schools would be equipped to develop students with values that are consistent with internal choice and motivation, quality work, personal responsibility, and needs satisfaction. This, in turn, will produce leaders and citizens in this country who possess these same values that would cultivate and promote educational progress, social reform, and moral enlightenment to future generations.

REFERENCES


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ABSTRACT

This pilot investigation sought to provide pre-service teacher education majors with relevant knowledge to apply and assess the concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior to achieve desired quality living as they pursue a teaching career. Impressive gains were noted in participants’ knowledge, along with motivation to apply the information to their professional as well as personal lives. Results are a contribution for institutions of higher education teacher preparation programs to integrate courses on classroom teaching content with proactive quality living strategies.

Introduction

The teaching internship is a pivotal phase of a teacher preparation program. Classroom visits along with course work on theories, characteristics, and methods culminate in this capstone experience. For the first time, pre-service education majors experience full-time teaching. As they finally get to “be a teacher,” pre-service majors learn just how exciting and exhausting their chosen profession can be. Early in their internship, these practicing teachers realize their personal life has also changed. The job of teaching with its obligations and responsibilities can be all encompassing in their life. This can lead interns to feeling that their teaching job is all consuming and their personal life is nonexistent. Excitement and enthusiasm about teaching are combined with feeling stressed and overwhelmed. Teaching interns experience frustration and a rude awakening to the reality of having less time for life basics of fun, family, leisure, self, exercise, and sleep, to name just a few areas of life. Pre-service education majors receive little information on this, and rarely are they provided opportunities to learn strategies for quality living during their teacher preparation that can extend into future proactive decision-making. It is important for pre-service majors to exit teacher preparation programs with knowledge and skills that lead them to develop optimum life quality, personally as well as professionally.

Rationale for the Study

The project was designed to give pre-service teacher education majors’ relevant, applicable knowledge and tools for desired professional and personal life quality during their teaching internship with basic concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000; Wubbolding & Brickell, 1999). Choice Theory provided participants with a philosophy that they can take charge of the direction of their life. Participants learned to assess their five basic needs (survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, fun). Quality world was presented to participants’ as their utopia life vision that can serve as a perception filter for daily life experiences. Total behavior (thinking, acting, feeling, physiology) was a perspective that suggested proactive physical and emotional activities to get needs met.

This pilot investigation sought to establish a process for pre-service education majors to: (a) assess their life quality, (b) apply the components of Choice Theory to maintain their desired life quality, (c) establish an empirical structure to measure life quality that will contribute to the research foundation of Choice Theory, and (d) establish a database that will encourage institutions of higher education to develop teacher preparation programs that integrate classroom teaching content with proactive quality living strategies.

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

This pilot investigation was conducted at East Carolina University, a regional university situated in eastern North Carolina with an enrollment of approximately 20,000 students. At the time of the investigation, the university produced the largest number of teachers in the state. Of the students enrolled at the university during the time of the study, 60% were women, 20% minority, and 14% from out-of-state.

The participants for this study were pre-service special education majors enrolled in the weekly senior seminar class taught in the College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Instruction, Area of Special Education, concurrent to the required full-time teaching internship. This seminar and internship experience was the capstone requirement for initial teaching certification in special education. The investigation was implemented across three consecutive semesters (January to April 2003, August to November 2003, January to April 2004). A total of 26 special education pre-service teacher education majors participated in this pilot investigation. All participants were female and enrolled in the final semester of their special education teacher preparation. Investigation participation was voluntary and confidential. Participants self-selected an individual code that was used to complete investigation instruments. The investigator did not have access...
to the connection of participant name to individual code.

Participation in the investigation was not a component of the grade earned in the senior seminar class.

Materials

The project investigator sought to develop instruments that were manageable, efficient, and motivating for participant completion. Pre-investigation instruments, administered within the first two weeks of the semester consisted of a survey and a needs strength profile (self-rating). The same items served as post-investigation instruments, administered during the last two weeks of the semester. The needs strength profile was administered during two additional teaching sessions throughout the semester for a total of four completed profiles. Participants rated their: (a) perceived need, (b) time invested, and (c) perceived success on each of the five basic needs (survival, love and belonging, power/self-worth, freedom, and fun). This instrument used a scale of 1-5 (low-to-high) rating scale (See Figure 1).

The survey, *Pre-Special Education Majors' Assessment of Life Quality During Senior Internship*, developed by the project investigator, consisted of 15 base items that sought pre-service majors understanding of the concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, total behavior, and life quality responsibility. A five-point Likert scale (1-5) was used to code participant responses (non existent, poor, fair, good, excellent). Items related to response areas of: (a) knowledge perception, (b) skill application, and (c) motivation for life quality.

Design and Procedures

After receiving approval through the university’s Institutional Review Board, the project investigator obtained the permission of the course instructor to lead four, 1-hour teaching sessions on the basic concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior (Glasser, 1998; Wubbolding, 2000; Wubbolding & Brickell, 1999) during the 15-week senior seminar course.
The first teaching session was held within the first two weeks of the semester. Participants received information regarding the investigation with explanation of confidentiality, voluntary participation, and assurance of no negative repercussions for participation or connection of course grade to investigation activity. Pre-investigation instruments were administered. The remaining time in this first teaching session introduced the concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, and quality world.

The second teaching session held the following week reviewed the opening session information, and participants completed their second needs-strength profile. The investigator introduced the concept of total behavior and problem-solving through the interaction of thinking, acting, physiology, and feeling. Participants’ input was sought on life updates related both to personal life and teaching.

The third teaching session occurred during the mid-semester, coordinated when interns had full-time teaching responsibilities in their classroom site. During this third teaching session, participants complete their third need-strength profile. The investigator facilitated participants’ comparison of 1st, 2nd, 3rd need-strength checks with review of life status in meeting their five basic needs. All previous information on Choice Theory was reviewed with a focus on life quality and self-responsibility by looking at total behavior. Anecdotal life information relating to personal and professional life was shared with discussion on areas to maintain, change, and enhance through proactive problem-solving.

The fourth and final teaching session was implemented during the last two weeks of the semester with the conclusion of the teaching internship. All investigation concepts related to Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior were reviewed. The participants shared their future plans as well as the impact of the investigation teaching sessions. All pre-investigation instruments were administered for a post-investigation perspective, concluding the fourth needs-strength profile.

RESULTS

Data in two broad areas of information are presented as a result of this pilot investigation. The first area relates to participants’ perceptions of level of knowledge, application, and motivation regarding the concepts presented on quality living (Choice theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior). The second area relates to participants’ self-ratings on the needs strength profile completed during each of four teaching sessions across the semester on the five basic life needs.

Data Analysis

In order to efficiently review the quantitative data, the five-point Likert response codes were collapsed into three categories (a) excellent/good, (b) fair, and (c) poor/nonexistent. Participants’ responses collected across three consecutive semesters are presented as an average in percent. The quantitative results summarize participant self-report perception data in two general areas: (a) quality living, and (b) perceptions of five basic needs.

Quality Living

Knowledge of Quality Living Concepts. Participants’ knowledge of the four areas considered basic to quality living concepts (Choice theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior) was nearly nonexistent at the beginning of the teaching sessions with 0-8% of the respondents reporting perceptions of excellent/good knowledge across all three semesters (Table 1). Gains of 64-78% in perceptions of excellent/good knowledge in these four were reported as a result of the teaching sessions. Ninety-three percent of the participants reported excellent/good knowledge perception of responsibility for their life quality at the conclusion of the investigation, a 49% increase from the first teaching session.

Table 1
Participant Knowledge of Content Items, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge of:</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Respondent Perception</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Ex/G Fair P/None</td>
<td>Ex/G Fair P/None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Choice Theory</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8% 90% 0</td>
<td>80% 20% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Basic Human Needs</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>22% 70% 0</td>
<td>83% 17% 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Quality World</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8% 92% 0</td>
<td>67% 27% 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Behavior</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>5% 92% 0</td>
<td>67% 27% 6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility for your life quality</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>27% 29% 0</td>
<td>93% 7% 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Skill Application of Quality Living Concepts. Participants’ skill application of the four knowledge areas considered basic to quality living (Choice theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior) was nearly nonexistent at the beginning of the teaching sessions with 78-90% of the respondents selecting a poor/none rating (Table 2). Gains of 58-75% in excellent/good perception of skill application in these four areas were reported at the study conclusion. Additionally, 93% of the respondents reported excellent/good application skills in responsibility for their life quality at the conclusion of the teaching sessions, compared to 30% excellent/good at the beginning of the semester.

Motivation for Quality Living. At the beginning of the first teaching sessions, 49-73% of the participants’ reported excellent/good motivation for quality living (Table 3). This included (a) motivation for quality in your life, (b) motivation to have the life quality you envision, (c) motivation to take responsibility for your life quality, and (d) motivation to take initiative to solve challenges in your life. At project conclusion, 90-100% of the participants reported excellent/good motivation for life quality in these areas. Life application of these concepts was also reported to have increased at project conclusion. Ninety
percent of the reported excellent/good motivation to apply the concepts of Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior in their life at the end of the investigation, compared to 40% at the pre-project reporting.

Table 2
Participant Skill Application of Content Items, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Skill Application of:</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Choice Theory.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five Basic Human Needs.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Concept of Quality World.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Behavior.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility for your life quality.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>59%</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating scale of 1-5 (low to high)

Table 3
Participant Motivation for Life Quality, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivation to for:</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality in your life.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ex/G Fair</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>P/None</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have life quality you envision</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power/self-worth</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take responsibility for your life quality</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>freedom needs</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Take initiative to solve challenges in your life quality</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Apply Choice Theory, Five Basic Needs, Quality World, and Total Behavior in your life</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating scale of 1-5 (low to high)

Perceptions of Five Basic Needs

Results on needs strengths perceptions summarized data collected four times throughout the semester by participants self-rating their five basic needs (survival, love and belonging, power/self-worth, fun, and freedom) in three areas of: (a) perceived need, (b) time investment, and (c) perceived success. An average was calculated from participant response on a scale of 1-5 (low to high) for each response item.

Interns’ Perceived Needs. No major differences in participants’ perceptions of their five basic needs were noted across the four data collection points. On a scale of 1-5 (low-high), participants averaged 3.9 on their perceived needs for survival, love and belonging, power/self-worth, fun, and freedom across three consecutive semesters (Table 4). Participants demonstrated consistency in their perceived level of need for each of the five areas throughout the internship semester (15 weeks later). All five basic life needs were generally viewed as equally important needs in day-to-day life for pre-service teacher interns who participated in this investigation.

Interns’ Time Invested in Meeting Needs. Differences in participants’ perceptions of their time investment across the five basic needs were noted in the four data collection points. At investigation conclusion, the area of survival needs received the highest time investment (Table 5) with an average 3.7 on a scale of 1-5 (low-high). Generally, participants were consistent in their reported time investment in meeting survival needs with ratings of 3.4 to 3.9 across the semester. Love and belonging needs with power/self-worth needs were second in time investment with an average rating of 3.4 and a range of 3.0 to 3.4 averages across the semester. The area of freedom needs received the largest range for participants’ time investment (2.6 to 3.4 average), with 3.1 as the semester average. The need area of fun received the lowest participant time investment with an average of 2.9 and a range of 2.3 to 3.0 across the semester.

Table 4
Perceived Need of Senior Intern Participants, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating scale of 1-5 (low to high)

Three consecutive semesters, January 2003-May 2004

Perceived Success on Needs. The data present varying success by participants in meeting their five basic needs across semester (Table 6). All five need areas received their highest perceived success rating in the last teaching session when the fourth rating was collected.

Survival needs received the highest averages of perceived participant success with 3.8 (on a scale of 1-5). Perceived success on meeting love and belonging needs was a close second
with an average rating of 3.6 across the semester. Throughout
the semester, these two areas maintained the highest range of
perceived success rating with averages of 3.5 to 4.1 for survival
needs and averages of 3.0 to 3.8 for love and belonging needs.

In the area of power/self-worth need, participants reported
a consistent perceived success average of 3.1 for three data col-
lection points and then increased this to an average of 3.9 at
semester conclusion. Power/self-worth needs received the same
perceived success average as freedom needs with a rating of 3.4
and both were similar in their range of perceived success across
the semester with averages of 3.1 to 3.9 for power/self-worth
needs and averages of 2.9 to 3.8 for freedom needs. The aver-
age perceived success rating for freedom needs varied across
the semester (3.1, 3.4, 2.9), and then increased to an average 3.8
for the fourth data collection point.

The need area of fun received the lowest average perceived
success rating with a reported average of 3.0, and was consist-
tently rated the lowest in perceived success across the semester
with ratings of 2.5, 2.4, and 2.7 for the first three data col-
lection points. The perceived success of meeting fun needs did
increase to a 3.7 average at the fourth rating.

Table 6
Perceived Success for Senior Intern Participants, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Success on Five Basic Needs</th>
<th>1st</th>
<th>2nd</th>
<th>3rd</th>
<th>4th</th>
<th>Avg.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating scale of 1-5 (low to high)
Three consecutive semesters, January 2003-May 2004

Comparison of Interns’ Perception Averages. A comparison
of averages of participants’ perceptions of perceived need, time
invested, and perceived success is presented in Table 7. Each of
the five basic needs can be reviewed to see if perceived need
matched time investment and what level of perceived success
was achieved.

Survival needs received the highest average time invest-
ment (3.7) and the highest average perceived success (3.8). The
average time investment rating for survival needs was equal to
the participants’ perceived need in this area.

Love and belonging needs and power/self-worth needs
received a lower average time investment (3.4) from partici-
pants than average perceived need rating (3.9). These two areas
received slightly lower average perceived success ratings than
the area of survival needs. Love and belonging received a
semester perceived success rating of 3.6 and power/self-worth
received 3.4, respectively.

Fun needs received an average time investment rating of 2.9
and an average perceived success rating of 3.0 for the semester.
Although the time investment is equitable to the perceived suc-
cess, both are lower than participants’ perceived need for fun
which received an average of 3.9 for the semester.

Freedom needs received an average time investment rating
of 3.1 and an average perceived success rating of 3.4 for the
semester. The time investment into freedom needs and the per-
ceived success of this need area are lower than the participants’
perceived need for freedom which received 3.9 for a semester
average.

Overall, the needs that received the lower time investment
also received the lowest ratings of perceived success.
Statistically significant differences have not been calculated
with this pilot investigation, but warrant further review in
future research endeavors.

Table 7
Comparison of Intern Perceptions, N = 26

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perceived Need</th>
<th>Time Invested</th>
<th>Perceived Success</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Survival</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belonging</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fun</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freedom</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Rating scale of 1-5 (low to high)
Three consecutive semesters, January 2003-May 2004

DISCUSSION

In summary, this pilot investigation can be viewed as hav-
ing a positive impact on the knowledge and acquisition of
quality living concepts by the pre-service education majors
who participated. Participants reported excellent/good self-rat-
ings in both their knowledge and application in the five quality
living areas of: (a) Choice Theory, (b) five basic needs, (c) con-
cepts of quality world, (d) total behavior, and (e) responsibility
for your life quality. The participants assessed life quality in:
(a) evaluating their perceived needs, (b) rating their time invest-
ment to meet life needs, and (c) assessing perceived success at
meeting basic life needs.

At semester conclusion, respectable gains were noted on
participants’ content knowledge, and perception of skill and
motivation to apply quality living concepts as defined by this
investigation. Participants were also highly motivated at the end
of the investigations’ teaching sessions to: (a) have quality in
your life, (b) have the life quality you envision, (c) take responsibility for your life quality, (d) take initiative to solve challenges in your life quality, and (e) apply Choice Theory, five basic needs, quality world, and total behavior in your life.

Participants viewed all five basic needs as equal in need on self-rating profiles. The need areas of: (a) survival and (b) love and belonging were perceived by teaching interns as most successful in achieving need satisfaction success. The need areas of: (a) power/self-worth and (b) freedom also received need satisfaction from participants’ ratings. The need area of fun received the lowest level of need satisfaction success and lowest time investment, despite being perceived by participants as equal in need to the other four areas.

Time investment held some correlation to participants perceived need satisfaction. The participants reported the lowest time investment in their five basic needs at the third needs profile rating which coincided with mid-semester and the time that interns took over their classrooms from their clinical teachers and assumed full-time responsibility. At this third needs self-report rating, participants perceived need satisfaction success was lower than the first two ratings on three of five needs (survival, love and belonging, and freedom), and remained the same in the area of power/self-worth. Further investigation into the professional and life challenges at this stage of the internship is worth consideration in order to more clearly understand how to assist participants to have life balance and adequate need satisfaction.

Participants’ overall average reported time investments in this investigation for (a) survival, (b) love and belonging, and (c) power/self-worth were consistent with their overall perceived success in each of these three areas. In addition, the participants’ perceived satisfaction success in these three areas was consistent with their perceived need. The lack of perceived need satisfaction success by pre-service special education majors to meet their fun needs may have some connection to their reported lower time investment in this area. Future review is warranted given the necessity of fun as a basic need for quality living.

Noteworthy are the data indicating that all five basic need areas received the highest perceived need satisfaction success rating in the last teaching session, the fourth self-report rating near the conclusion of the internship experience. There is nothing specific to contribute to this perceived satisfaction, but possibilities include: (a) participants’ motivation to have the last investigation teaching session, (b) participants’ motivation to be completing their teaching internship, (c) participants’ feelings of success regarding their teaching internship, (d) participants’ skill perception in using Choice Theory and quality living at the end of the semester and (e) participants’ motivation to begin their teaching career as they discussed job interviews. These possibilities are speculative at this time in linking to participants’ perceived success ratings on their five basic needs. All areas are worth review to incorporate strategies for participants to continue this level of perceived success into their future teaching experience.

The results provide a starting point for ongoing review of the investigation methodology, teaching sessions, instruments, data analysis and content validity. The project process and results are a positive contribution to evaluate teacher preparation programs for content that help pre-service education majors have quality living and meet their life needs. Future investigation replication should seek to more clearly link knowledge acquisition and application of the presented quality living concepts to the internship responsibilities and to subsequent life challenges of the participating pre-service education majors.

CONCLUSION

This project sought to disseminate proactive strategies that can provide pre-service education majors with choices for quality in their personal and professional life as they pursue a teaching career. Further query is recommended on time investment, problem-solving, and need satisfaction strategies in all five basic needs for pre-service education majors, particularly in the areas of fun and freedom, to achieve optimal perceived success levels in all areas of basic life needs. The ability of pre-service education majors to begin their teaching career with optimal skills for quality living is relevant for teacher preparation programs. When the teacher education graduates are adequately equipped for quality living, they can in turn more adequately prepare their students to choose quality living.

REFERENCES


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Perceptual Differences Between Adults and Adolescents on Meeting Their Need for Love

Jeri M. Petersen, Charles L. Thompson

The first author lives in Jacksonville, North Carolina. The second author is on the faculty of the University of Tennessee in Knoxville.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current research was to compare perceptions of adolescents and adults on the myths and realities surrounding the differences between falling in love and real love. Implications for meeting one's need for love and the ability to distinguish between romantic and real love are considered. Participants responded to a true/false survey developed from M. Scott Peck's (1978 & 1997) work on defining love. The adult group scored significantly higher than the adolescent group on the survey (P<0.001).

Glasser (1998) describes five basic human needs that people seek to fulfill. These include survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. Of these five needs, meeting the need for love is, perhaps, the most difficult need to meet. Peck (1978 & 1997) writes that an attempt to understand love is like beginning to toy with mystery. He believes that love is too large and too deep to be truly understood within the framework of words. In fact, Peck mentions that his patients who come to psychotherapy are invariably found to be more or less confused about the nature of love. This confusion results from the misconceptions and myths about love that seem to abound across all cultures. Confusion between “falling in love” and “real love” seems to be the root of many problems brought to counseling. In fact, Glasser (2000) points out that every problem has a relationship component which often involves difficulty in meeting a need for love.

Falling in love or romantic love has been cited by Peck (1978 & 1997) as an effective marriage trap; however, it carries with it the illusion that it will last forever. Like the prince and princess fairy tales, people believe they will live happily ever after in the bliss of romantic love. Other myths have been spawned from such fairy tales including the one about there being only one person in the world for me and that we will be united through predetermined fate. Failure to understand the differences between “falling in love” and “real love” and how the transition from the initiating to the latter occurs have resulted in many broken and unhappy marriages. Glasser and Glasser (2000) report that fewer than one-half of the married people in the United States feel happy, healthy, and satisfied.

Confusion about romantic and real love in adolescent relationships may lead to the additional problems of unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases as teenagers seek to meet their needs to love and belong. The developmental stage of adolescence has become common subject matter for researchers attempting to shed some light on the complexities of adolescent behaviors and relationships. When individuals enter this formative period of life, a time of romantic exploration begins as adolescents try to understand those of the opposite sex as well as gain a better understanding of themselves and life in general. Erikson (1968), most noted for his study of developmental stages across the lifespan, had several ideas about the importance of adolescent relationships. He believed that exploration and experimentation were not only normal for this time period, but also much needed so that the adolescent could try out new ideas, different roles and new personalities. Through this process, adolescents come to understand themselves better and can define themselves as mature individuals. Erikson (1968) believed that this understanding was required before intimate relationships could be formed.

In a developmental-contextual model, adolescent relationships develop through a series of four phases, during which relationships become more intimate while the importance of the peer group becomes less important (Brown, 1999). Adolescent relationships begin with the initiation phase in which the adolescent becomes more aware of members of the opposite gender as possible romantic partners, proceeds through the status and affection phases, and then into the final bonding phase in which there is the expectation of long-term commitment and marriage. Although no ages were assigned for these phases, it is expected that the bonding phase does not occur until after adolescence is over. Seiffge-Krenke (2003) studied adolescents moving through the initiation, status, and affection phases at the ages of 13, 15, and 17 respectively. Moving through the phases at these ages and shifting the focus from the self to peers to the romantic relationship itself was the best predictor of achieving bonded love at the age of 21. Seiffge-Krenke indicates that experiencing and exploring romantic relationships in adolescence contribute significantly to long term relationships later in life.

Although romantic exploration has been shown to be an important time in an adolescent's life, it often leads to sexual exploration as well. A survey of 683 men and women found that most of them not only experienced their first dates and first relationships during adolescence (96.2 and 83.9 percent respectively), but also had their first sexual encounter (75.8 percent) during their high school years (Reagan, Durvasula, Howell, UreOo, & Rea, 2004). A survey conducted by the Center for Disease Control in 1999 showed that approximately 50% of high school students reported that they have already had sex. In
a third study, the percentage of students having engaged in sexual intercourse increased by grade level from 39% of ninth graders up to 65% of twelfth graders. Eight percent of students had sex before the age of thirteen and 16% of the high school students reported that they had already had four or more sexual partners (Kann, Kinchen, Williams, Ross, Lowry, Grunbaum, & Kolbe, 2000).

As mentioned above, adolescents' high risk behavior is cause for concern due to the possible consequences of pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and associated mental disorders. Only 58% of adolescents that reported having sex also reported using condoms during their last sexual intercourse. An additional 16% reported the use of birth control pills (Kann et al., 2000). Although the teenage birth rate has decreased thirty percent since its peak in 1990 (Martin, Brady, Sutton, Ventura, Menacker, & Munson, 2003), teen pregnancy is still a problem. According to the CDC, approximately 831,000 girls age 15 to 19 years of age and 21,000 girls under the age of 15 got pregnant in 2000 (Ventura, Ahma, Mosher, & Henshaw, 2004). Even though the numbers have decreased in recent years, the United States still has the highest teen pregnancy rate among comparable countries (The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy, n.d.). In addition, 274,000 teenagers have abortions each year in the United States (Center for Bio-Ethical Reform n.d.)

Researchers have found that ideas of romance and an adolescent's view on love may play an important role in the decision to engage in sexual activity. While romanticizing and fantasizing about love and marriage is a natural thing for adolescents to do, a study of 121 pregnant teenage girls found that the amount of romanticizing was greater in the pregnant teens than their non-pregnant counterparts (Medora & Goldstein, 1993). Those who romanticize more tend to have more unrealistic expectations about love, sex and marriage (Lester, Doscher, Estrict, & Lee, 1984). The majority of teenage girls who engage in sexual activities report romance and true, lasting love as the motivation for their activities, not the pleasure of the sexual act itself (Thompson, 1984). In addition, Knox, Schacht, & Zusman (1999) surveyed 184 undergraduate students to determine their ideas about love, with the idea that realistic expectations of love come with age. They reported that those under the age of 20 were more likely than those 20 and over to believe in love at first sight and that "all problems can be solved if there is enough love" (p.150). This research supports the idea that the older individuals are and the more life experience they have, the more realistic they are about love.

Adolescents are making major decisions to engage in sexual behavior, based on their feelings and beliefs about what love is, that have the potential to impact the rest of their lives. This raises the question of whether an adolescent truly knows what love is. The National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy (2002) reports that the third most popular response of teens when asked to name their biggest unanswered questions about sex, love, and relationships was a tie between "Does my partner really love me?" and "How do you know when you’re in love?"

Perhaps it would be wise to postpone potentially life changing decisions such as engaging in sexual behavior until later in life when the individual is better equipped to make such decisions. It is generally reported in the media the common sense knowledge that individuals who graduate from high school, marry after age 21, and have no babies before marriage have an 85% better chance of having a good and satisfying life than those do not follow these three guidelines. Adolescent mothers are less likely to finish high school and research shows that the majority of teenage mothers end up being single mothers (Alan Guttmacher Institute, 1999).

Therefore, the current research was directed toward the question of whether or not adolescents know what love is at this stage of their life by comparing their ideas of love to those of older individuals. Before it could be determined whether or not our participants' beliefs about love and relationships were correct, real love and the characteristics of real love needed definition. While massive amounts of literature have been published defining love and theories of love, the clarity of Peck's (1978 & 1997) ideas on the differences between falling in love and real love made them the choice for this study.

Peck (1978 & 1997) defines love as "the will to extend one's self for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth." He states that true, genuine love is an extension of one's ego boundaries in order to include a portion of the other person whom you love into your life and identity; or as Glasser (1998) would put it, inclusion of this person into one's quality world. Often true love and the extension of ego boundaries is confused with the sudden collapse of one's ego boundaries that occurs in the initial stage of falling in love. Peck explains that during this period of falling in love, the honeymoon period as it is commonly called, one's ego boundaries come crashing down leading to feelings of happiness, pure bliss, and even euphoria. While this stage feels wonderful and is accompanied by seemingly unlimited amounts of happiness, it is neither true nor genuine love and does not last. The falling in love period inevitably ends and the couple will begin to fall out of love. It is at this point that a couple must choose to either break up or to begin the real work of love which is accompanied by the extension of their individual ego boundaries.

In addition to the extension of ego boundaries, Peck described many other characteristics for defining real love: (a) You cannot love another person unless you first love yourself. (b) Love is a choice that you make. (c) Love is not easy, it requires work. (d) There is no such thing as a soul mate. (e) Love is both a selfish and non-selfish act. (f) If you love someone, you are able to live without them, you simply choose not to; needing someone is not the same as loving them. (g) Due to the extension of the ego boundaries, the more you love an individual the more blurred the distinction between yourself and the outside world becomes, and (h) You cannot make someone else happy just by loving them, in turn, you cannot depend upon them for your happiness. These ideas formed the basis of our survey comparing adolescent and adult perceptions of romantic and real love.
METHOD

A survey was administered to a convenience sample of 119 adolescent students in an urban, eastern high school and 137 adult graduate and undergraduate students at a large southeastern university. The mean age of the adolescents was 15.82 and the mean age of the adults was 26.45. There were 90 females and 47 males in the adolescent group and 60 females and 59 males in the adult group. The adult population was comprised of both traditional and non-traditional college students; 26 participants were over the age of 30. The survey was constructed specifically for this study and consisted of twenty-three true/false statements based on Peck’s (1978) theories concerning the differences between real love and falling in love (see Appendix). Survey items also were taken from Howard & Howard’s (1985) study guide for The Road Less Traveled (Peck, 1978).

RESULTS

Data were analyzed using Levene’s test for equality of variances and independent sample t-tests. The .05 confidence level was used for testing the level of significance. On average, the adult sample answered more of the twenty-three items correctly than the adolescents. The mean score for adults was 16.02 (SD = 2.42). The mean score for adolescents was 12.65 (SD = 2.50). An independent samples t-test showed this difference to be significant, t=10.95, p<.001.

Independent samples t-tests were run on each individual question to determine which items contributed the most variance to the differences between the two samples. Significant differences were found in sixteen of the twenty-three questions (see Table I). The adolescent sample did significantly better than the adult sample on one question which was question 4.

Real Love and Falling in Love Survey

Age: ___________________ Gender: _____________________

The following are common statements about love and relationships. Please indicate whether you believe each one is true or false.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRUE</th>
<th>FALSE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. You cannot love someone unless you love yourself.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. True love is not hard, it comes spontaneously.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Love is a choice that you make.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The more you love, the more blurred the distinction between you and the outside world becomes.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. You can only truly love another person for whom you are genuinely attracted.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Real love is often painful.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. You only truly love someone if you are quite capable of living without them.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Being in love will complete you.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Real love is always a reward in and of itself.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. True love is never having to say you’re sorry.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. There is only one person in this world “for me,” a soul mate.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Loving is the inability to function adequately without knowing that you are being cared for by another.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Withholding is often just as important as giving.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Love is both selfish and unselfish.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Love makes everything beautiful.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Genuine love is sensible and thought-out, not emotional.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. The right person will meet all of my needs.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. When you love someone, you want to “make him/her happy.”</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Needing someone means really loving them.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. The experience of falling in love is an act of regression.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. No partner is perfect in the beginning, but he/she will change eventually if he/she truly loves me.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. If he/she really loves me, he/she will understand what is important to me without me having to say it.</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. My significant other is required in order for me to be a whole and complete person.</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DISCUSSION

The adolescent population answered fewer questions correctly than did the adult population. This finding is supportive of the idea that adolescents know less about the realities of love, as defined for this study, than adult college students. More specifically, the adult population did significantly better than the adolescent population on fifteen of the twenty-three questions. Correct responses to the following items indicated that the adult group had a better understanding of real love than did the adolescent group:

1. True love is the hard work that is needed to build a solid, real love relationship after the “Honeymoon” period is over. One of the best predictors of establishing real love relationships is whether or not a couple enjoys playing together. The mutual enjoyment of recreational activities ensures spending quality time with each other. In other words, there is more to the real love relationship than physical attraction.

2. “Love is a choice” is a concept that is compatible with Glasser’s (1998) choice theory stating that we do have free choice and we can choose to engage in relationships that are available to us. However, relationship troubles erupt when we try to control our partner’s behavior.

3. Real Love is predicated on the idea that it can exist only if both partners are capable of living without the other. Clinging dependency is a major threat to the life of any relationship.

4. Being in love does not complete you as a person. The task of personal growth and fulfillment of one’s needs rest with each of us. While we may have a board of directors within our quality world, we are, nevertheless, the CEO on our board of directors. We are responsible for meeting our needs for survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun. We are responsible for developing our potential strengths and abilities.

5. “Love means never having to say you are sorry;” while a title of a once popular book and movie, is a mistaken belief that typically originates from the falling in love stage of a relationship. Real love is founded on consideration of your partner’s needs and feelings which can be accomplished through accurate communication and active listening to one another.

6. The fairy tale theme that there is a one and only soul mate for each person in the world is just that, a fairy tale. The fact is that we all are capable of loving a wide variety of people with whom real love relationships could be developed.

7. While falling in love and the departure of reality that often accompanies falling in love makes everything seem beautiful, it falls to each of us to maintain a rational perspective on reality and to address the not so beautiful parts of our lives. Falling in love does not release us from the responsibility of solving our problems nor does it make our problems disappear.

8. Frustration in meeting one’s need for love and belonging is often mistaken for loving someone. Needing someone does not mean that you love him or her. Real love has a better chance to survive in a relationship between two, independent people. Neediness tends to undermine relationships.

9. Adequate functioning does not depend on being in love or being loved. While being in love is nice and desirable, it is not a requirement for survival and adequate functioning in fulfilling one’s other needs. Faulty thinking on the issue happens when what is desirable is viewed as a necessity.

10. Love has both selfish and unselfish components. Often we need to give love in order to receive love. In a sense, we are giving what we want to give; hence, the selfish and unselfish nature of real love. Being selfish is not necessarily all bad. There is a good and bad side to selfish. Taking care of yourself is operating within the good context of being selfish. Failure to take care of one’s own needs leaves you deficient and less able to contribute fully to a real love relationship. However, if to meet our needs infringes on others’ rights to meet their needs, we are operating within the bad context of being selfish or, as Glasser (1965) would say, we are behaving irresponsibly.

11. The “right” person will not fill one’s personal needs nor should he or she be expected to do so. Such faulty beliefs or expectations are sure to make the attainment of real love relationships very difficult to achieve.

12. Loving someone does not mean making your partner happy. Happiness is a by-product, not a goal. It is a by-product of things accomplished, personal need-fulfillment, and shared experiences. Achieving personal happiness is our job. In fact, a serious pitfall to real love relationships is the faulty belief that it is my partner’s job to make me happy.

13. Perhaps one of the more serious faulty beliefs about real love relationships is that a potential partner with undesirable behaviors in the beginning of a relationship will change eventually if he or she loves me.

14. “If my partner truly loves me, he or she will understand what is important to me without my having to say it,” is another troublesome faulty belief. As mentioned above, failure to communicate effectively cannot be corrected by “true love.” Your partner, in all likelihood, will not be an accomplished mind reader.

15. Finally, your significant other is not required for you to be a whole and complete person. Again, that is your job. Deficiencies in meeting personal needs with the expectation of your partner filling the deficiencies will put a serious strain on the attainment of a real love relationship.

The adolescents did score higher on item number four which was a true statement: “The more you love, the more blurred the distinction between you and the outside world becomes.” Both groups scored low on question four which could have more to do with the ambiguity of the item than the
difficulty of the question. The item was intended to assess the responder's awareness of how falling in love can affect perception of one's reality.

Data from the current study reinforces the idea that most people discover that love develops over time and that managing conflict in relationships takes work. These discoveries often come with age and relationship experience (Knox et al., 1999, p. 151).

Teenagers are making the decision to engage in risky behavior that may impact the rest of their lives based on ideas and beliefs about love that are not true. They believe that they love each other when, in fact, they have a very limited idea of what real love is. As adolescents age and mature, they will come to realize that the beliefs that they held previously were incorrect as they gain experience and learn what love is truly all about. Unfortunately for some teenage parents, this realization comes too late as they are already living with the life-long consequences of their acting on misinformation about the nature of real love.

School counselors and mental health counselors who lead adolescent group sessions and classroom meetings would be well-advised to spend some time working with their students and clients on the differences between falling in love (romantic love) and the real love that endures after the bliss of irrationality accompanying romantic love is exposed in the morning light of reality. However, it may be more important to help adolescents with their critical thinking skills in separating the popular myths of love from reality. It would seem that a first step would be to identify the differences between those things in a relationship that are "musts" and those things that are "nice ifs." Too often, adolescents have difficulty in distinguishing the differences between their needs and wants. A relationship with a best girl or boy friend is viewed as a survival need rather than a personal preference. Breakups of relationships may be viewed as the lost, last chance for happiness. Helping adolescents move such losses from tragedy to disappointment is a productive way to initiate the critical thinking process. Finally, love as contributing to another's personal growth and fulfillment would be a solid foundation for working on the relationship difficulties that Glasser (2000) believes often accompanies every problem brought to counseling. Just the proactive choice of giving love to another, rather than waiting to be loved, should result in progress toward meeting one's need to love and be loved.

Table 1

The Number and Percentage of Adolescents and Adults Responding Correctly to Each Survey Question

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question #</th>
<th>Adolescents</th>
<th></th>
<th>Adults</th>
<th></th>
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<td>#</td>
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<td>#</td>
<td>%</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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REFERENCES


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The Use of “Educational Moments” in Teaching College Students

Thomas S. Parish

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined a group of college students, enrolled in a “general psychology” course at a small, Midwestern, private university. These students were presented with certain key concepts that they had never been introduced to before. Subsequently, they were asked to rate the level of importance of these concepts held for them, and were also asked to rate how well the concepts had been taught to them. The findings from the present study seem to lend support to the notion that “educational moments,” or “teaching moments,” definitely can have a great impact in interesting students in various concepts/notions, as well as appreciating how well the concepts were taught to them.

What’s the best way to teach college students? Some argue that small groups work best, while others have found that pleasant environment surroundings, and/or access to multimedia technology have a great impact how well students learn. This investigator, however, has generally found that learning really isn’t controlled so much by group size, environmental settings, and/or by various forms of multimedia technology.

The length of the classes, and how often classes meet, really are not all that important either. What is most important, however, is that students need to be provided with “educational moments,” and/or “teaching moments,” which occur when teachers share new ideas with their students that may eventually change their students’ lives. This idea may sound pretty far-fetched at first, but let’s hear what others have to say about it. For instance, William Glasser (1980) stated that people don’t learn what they don’t want to learn, but that teaching becomes more effective as soon as people who hurt, have an interest, and/or a need, discover that they can learn a better way. Hence, teachers need to be familiarizing people with insights regarding the nature of their problems, and how these problems can be effectively overcome. But do teachers always manage to achieve these ends? The answer is a resounding “NO!” That this is likely so is attested to by the quote by Winston Churchill who stated that “I love to learn, but sometimes I hate being taught.” What both of these men of great insight have tried to teach us is simply this: Keep what you teach “short and sweet,” and insightful to all you teach. In so doing, many good things should happen. First, the students will learn and value what is taught, and second, they will also value the messenger who delivered the message, and the way s/he delivered the message. That this is so is in accordance with Parish’s (1992) “five worlds” model that says that students will take well-taught and significant ideas to heart, placing them into their “All-They-Want Worlds,” or their “Quality Worlds,” and do likewise for those who taught them. The bottom line, however, is simply this: key concepts can be taught via “educational moments,” or through “teaching moments” even in lower level college classes, and get it done in less than an hour, and if teachers would endeavor to do this, their students would very likely come to place great value on what was taught, as well as the teacher(s) that taught it . . . all in a matter of a few moments, and not hours and hours of lecture, from which even Churchill and Glasser would quickly flee. The present study sought to determine if this contention is correct, i.e., that students can be introduced to “new material,” brought quickly to the realization that they are important concepts, and then be provided with ways to best implement what was taught in a matter of minutes (i.e., less than an hour), and not hours, and then see if the students recognized and appreciated these insights and what they might do with them.

METHOD

A total of thirty-six (36) college students voluntarily participated in the present study. These students were enrolled in a small, Midwestern, private university, and all were attending the initial session of a general psychology class. The students were introduced to the following concepts:

1. Cognitive Dissonance
2. Psychological Reactance
3. Educational Moments
4. Requesting a commitment
5. Needs Circle
6. Five Worlds
7. The Platinum Rule
8. Highlighting

To evaluate how important these concepts were to these students, and how well they were taught to them, a questionnaire was devised. This questionnaire is entitled “What Do You Think? The complete questionnaire appears in Table I. In essence, students were asked to rate, from 1 to 10, how important these newly taught concepts were to them (Part A), and then also asked to rate, from 1 to 10, how well the instructor explained each of these concepts to them (Part B).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Since there were no pretreatment scores to be compared to, only the posttreatment mean scores appear reflecting the
Table 1
WHAT DO YOU THINK (Part A)?

Kindly rate how important the following concepts are to you as you seek to (1) understand yourself, (2) communicate well with others, (3) motivate yourself and (4) influence others, e.g., 1 = very low importance to 10 = very high importance:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Rating</th>
<th>Concept Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>The notion that creating personal ownership (i.e., Cognitive Dissonance) is</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>important if you want to get people involved and/or committed to something.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>2. The notion that unnecessary intrusion (i.e., the creation of Psychological</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reactance) can actually interfere with your attempts to influence others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>3. The notion of “Educational Moments,” i.e., that it might only take a moment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>or two to convey to someone a very important message.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>4. The notion that asking a person what s/he wants gets them to make a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>commitment to it, whatever it might be.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>5. The focus on “Educational Moments” to facilitate real learning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>6. The “Five Worlds,” and the focus on others’ “All-They-Want Worlds,” while</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>avoiding their “All-They-Don’t-Want Worlds.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>7. The “Platinum Rule,” which basically recommends that we should “Do unto others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>as they want done unto them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>8. Getting people to “highlight” things, for in so doing, they will more likely</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>take a greater interest in them.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part A Grand Average = 8.8

Educational Moments - 9

Next, kindly rate how well the instructor explained each of these eight (8) concepts to you:

1. The need to create “Cognitive Dissonance,” i.e., the need to establish personal commitment/ownership. 9.6
2. The need to avoid “Psychological Reactance,” i.e., that you should not intrude on others. 9.4
3. The focus on “Educational Moments” to facilitate real learning. 9.2
4. The request for input from others fosters greater commitment from them. 9.2
5. The “Needs Circle,” i.e., everyone’s need levels may be different from others. 9.5
6. The “Five Worlds,” and that we should try to gain entry to others’ “All-They-Want Worlds,” while avoiding getting caught in their “All-They-Don’t-Want Worlds.” 9.1
7. The “Platinum Rule,” or the need to give others what they want. 9.1
8. Getting people to “highlight” things, for in so doing, they will more likely take a greater interest in them. 8.8

Part B Grand Average = 9.2

importance of each concept in Part A of Table 1, while the mean scores reflecting how well the concepts were taught appear in Part B of Table 1. So what do these results tell us? To begin with, these were initially-taught concepts of which the students had little—or no—foreknowledge, and yet after one class meeting, these concepts were being ranked very highly, with means ranging from a low of 8.4 to a high of 9.1, with a grand mean of 8.8. Such findings strongly suggest that in only a few moments, to a few minutes, the importance of these concepts to these students' lives was readily conveyed. That these concepts may be important, of course, is not the issue. What is important here, however, is how quickly they were taught and the impact they had on these students after only one class period (approx. an hour long). In addition, the ratings of how well the concepts were taught were also very high (ranging from 8.8 to 9.6, with a grand mean of 9.3), suggesting that the students were especially appreciative of learning such key concepts in a relatively short period of time. Truly, teaching isn't just sharing ideas. Rather, good teaching requires that students' needs be identified, solutions to their problems be described, and both should occur in a relatively short period of time. That's why "educational moments" are so important. At least, that is what the findings from the present study seem to be saying.

REFERENCES
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Comparing Students’ Classroom-Related Behaviors Across Grade Levels and Happiness Levels

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ABSTRACT

Hundreds of students and teachers were surveyed in the present study in order to ascertain if students’ happiness levels distinguished how well students did at school. The findings indicated that across grade levels, happier students, more so than their unhappy counterparts, did better at school, at least in terms of treating their teachers with respect, doing their best to learn, working cooperatively with other students, and treating other students with respect. These findings suggest that if teachers want to be happy and want their students to perform better in school, then it is very important that they help their students to be happier at school too.

According to Parish (2000), though teachers may be teaching the three R’s (i.e., reading, writing, and arithmetic) in our nation’s classrooms, they may be failing to convey the four C’s very effectively (i.e., care, concern, considerateness, & compassion) to the students that they are attempting to teach. If this is the case, then it would seem that the students are unlikely to care for how much their teachers know, until they know that their teachers genuinely care for them. That this might be an important consideration is attested to by the findings of Basic, Balaz, Uzelac, and Jugovac (1997), who reported that students in the first four grades placed greater importance on school than their counterparts did who were in the later grades. Might these findings lend support to the notion that primary school teachers simply seem to be more caring than teachers in the later grades, and so the primary-level students place greater importance on school because of it. Furthermore, school dropout rates are increasing, as is gang membership, both possible indicators that students are generally not pleased with what they are currently receiving in our nation’s classrooms.

Of course, many educators are scratching their heads and wondering what they need to do in order to find the happiness they seek as educators. The bottom line is that teachers will likely not be happy until they achieve the following four goals:

1. Have students that will treat them with respect.
2. Have students that will strive to do their best to learn.
3. Have students that will work cooperatively with other students.
4. Have students that will treat their fellow students with respect.

Truly, many teachers would become euphoric if they had students that would adhere to these descriptions, to the letter and without hesitation. Unfortunately, however, this isn’t happening on a general basis today in our nation’s classrooms, no is it likely to occur any time soon.

But why might this be so? What could the problem be that teachers must remain frustrated and distressed? Perhaps Winston Churchill said it best when he said that “He always loved to learn, but sometimes he hated being taught.” Well perhaps most students are like Mr. Churchill, and as George Bernard Shaw once suggested, if teachers want good students they must make sure that they are happy students.

Of course, these statements and ideas may be mere supposition. To determine if they are correct, the present study sought to answer the following questions:

Q#1: Do happy students, more so than unhappy students, treat their teachers with respect?
Q#2: Do happy students, more so than unhappy students, do their best to learn?
Q#3: Do happy students, more so than unhappy students, work cooperatively with other students?
Q#4 Do happy students, more so than unhappy students, treat other students with respect?

METHOD

A total of 709 ninth grade students and 465 sixth grade students, all from the same large, Midwestern school district, responded to a five question survey, which requested that they rank from 1 (i.e., “Never”) to 5 (i.e., “Always”) how often they did the following:

How often do you treat your teachers with respect?
How often do you do your best to learn?
How often do you work cooperatively with other students?
How often do you treat other teachers with respect?
How often are you happy at school?

In addition, the teachers of 1,723 first through third grade students, also from the same Midwestern school district, ranked...
a similar set of five questions, asking them to describe each of their primary grade students' school-related behaviors:

How often does he or she treat his or her teachers with respect?

How often does he or she do his or her best to learn?

How often does he or she work cooperatively with others?

How often does he or she treat other students with respect?

How often is he or she happy at school?

**RESULTS**

A series of analyses of variance were conducted, using a median split to divide item #5 on the survey into two groups (i.e., “low-happy” students and “high-happy” students). As is shown in Table 1, across all grade levels, and regardless of who the respondents were (i.e., the students themselves or their teachers), and across all statements and/or questions listed above, the “high-happy” students were described to be significantly more pro-social in their school-related actions than their “low-happy” counterparts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade Level</th>
<th>No. of Respondents</th>
<th>Classroom-Related Behaviors</th>
<th>Happiness Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9* 704</td>
<td>Treats teachers with respect</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>4.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9* 704</td>
<td>Does best to learn.</td>
<td>3.31</td>
<td>4.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9* 709</td>
<td>Works cooperatively with others.</td>
<td>3.19</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9* 708</td>
<td>Treats other students with respect.</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>4.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6* 465</td>
<td>Treats teachers with respect.</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>4.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6* 460</td>
<td>Does best to learn.</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>4.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6* 460</td>
<td>Works cooperatively with others.</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>4.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6* 457</td>
<td>Treats other students with respect.</td>
<td>2.93</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3** 1,723</td>
<td>Treats teachers with respect.</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>4.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3** 1,722</td>
<td>Does best to learn.</td>
<td>2.46</td>
<td>4.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3** 1,716</td>
<td>Works cooperatively with others.</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>4.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3** 1,719</td>
<td>Treats other students with respect.</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>4.33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key: * Indicates that the students described themselves when they responded to these inquiries.

** Indicates that the students’ teachers responded to these inquiries in order to describe each of their students.

**DISCUSSION**

These findings, reported in the present study, certainly seem to lend substantial support to the notion that if teachers wish to be happy, then they should do all in their power to help their students to be happy too. After all, from the findings reported here, it seems clear that if students are happy, they will much more likely engage in classroom-appropriate behaviors. Hence, they will act better, be happier in their interactions with their teachers, and their teachers should, in turn, be happier with them. That greater happiness, greater connectedness, and better classroom performance all go hand-in-hand is in accordance with the ideas offered by William Glasser (1990) in his book entitled “The Quality School.” These findings even show that it is so! Truly, the quicker teachers learn to live in accordance with the “Platinum Rule” (i.e., We must do unto others [our students] as they want done unto them), the more likely it is that their students will do better and be happier, and that they will be happier too.

**REFERENCES**


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Morita Therapy and Constructive Living: Choice Theory and Reality Therapy’s Eastern Family

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ABSTRACT

While unique in many aspects, William Glasser’s Choice Theory and Reality Therapy have had their historical roots traced back to previous Western therapies such as Adlerian psychology [Peterson, 2005]. This article will outline the similarities between Glasser’s work and the Japanese therapy known as Morita Therapy, and its westernized version called Constructive Living as outlined by David K. Reynolds.

“Well, how did I get here?”
The Talking Heads

For those who are familiar with the work of William Glasser, please fill in the blank in the following quote;

“________ Therapy recommends the sensible life strategy of accepting uncontrollable aspects of life [such as feelings, other people, weather] while using energy and effort to affect that single element of life which we control directly, our behavior.”

Certainly, “Reality” could be the missing word, however, this is a quote from David K. Reynolds [1993, pg.5] and the key word is “Morita”. Coincidentally, I was first made aware of Constructive Living and Morita Therapy around the same time I began to study Glasser’s theories. This article is not meant to imply that Choice Theory and Reality Therapy directly stem from Morita’s work. Rather, like Joseph Campbell’s comparative studies of various cultures and religions across the world, it is noteworthy that the basic tenets of one psychology can cross borders and history to match the theories of another counseling method.

BACKGROUND

William Glasser’s writings are well known to most readers of this journal. Disenchanted with his earlier work in psychiatry, Glasser wrote the groundbreaking REALITY THERAPY [1965] and its companion piece CONTROL THEORY [1984] which created a needs-based, internal control psychology rooted in the present and based on the principle of client action to resolve problems. Dr. Glasser has recently updated these ideas, changing Control Theory to Choice Theory [1998] and Reality Therapy to Counseling with Choice Theory-The New Reality Therapy [2000]. The main principle within these books focuses on building and maintaining relationships as the key to mental health. Other previous aspects of Control Theory/Reality Therapy do remain intact as well.

Morita Therapy was named after its creator, Professor Masatake [Shoma] Morita, who practiced and taught in Japan during the early part of the 20th century. Its’ own origins lie in Zen Buddhism and it was used primarily to treat neuroses characterized by obsessive shyness, oversensitivity and feelings of inferiority. Originally, Morita Therapy was particularly known for its particular initial stage of complete bed rest for patients. The idea behind this technique was that any emotion will decline in intensity over time, and with extreme reactions diminished, the patient is prepared for treatment. This rechanneling of attention and energies away from the client and towards “constructive behavior” is now usually done in an outpatient method. Activities are assigned to clients that serve to focus them on the here and now, and demonstrate actions in accordance to what reality calls for being done. In focusing on the details of everyday living, the client moves away from a feeling centered life. Clients might keep a journal, for instance, that helps separate out feelings and behavior [Reynolds, 1976].

Constructive Living is a combination of two different therapies, Morita Therapy and Naikian Therapy as translated and reconstructed by David K. Reynolds. Reynolds is responsible for bringing these earlier therapies to the attention of the Western world over the course of the past 30 years. The Morita side of Constructive Living emphasizes character development and reeducation. It teaches that clients can learn to accept feelings and still do whatever needs to be done in a situation. Naikian Psychology was created by Ishin Yoshimoto in the mid-part of the 20th century. It is a reflective method of recounting one’s debts to the world and generating feelings of gratitude and actions of repayment for other’s services rendered towards us. For the purposes of this article, Naikian Therapy will not be a focus point, although an argument could be made that it fits quite nicely into the self evaluation process within Reality Therapy.

THEORY COMPARISONS

In constructing Reality Therapy, Glasser made it clear that unlike previous insight based therapies; Reality Therapy was grounded in the here and now. “When you focus on the past, all you are doing is revising the misery. The more you stay in the past, the more you avoid facing the present unhappy relationships that are always the problem.” [Glasser, 1998, pg. 130] The past cannot be changed. The present, each moment of every day can be, however. Wubbolding [2000] uses such maxims as “it is useless to water last year’s crops,” and “We do not need to find the pothole that ambushed the car in order to realign the
front end.” Morita Therapy and Constructive Living share a similar outlook to Reality Therapy in its present, not past, focus. [Not surprising, given its Zen origins.] From a Morita perspective, the past doesn’t determine what we do now [Reynolds, 1986]. One cannot see the past accurately as it was, so all new desires and feelings are created now. “Now” becomes the gist for the mill. “Our interest in Morita instruction is with the ordinary, the everyday moments in which we spend nearly all of our lives. There are good lessons to be learned by mastering these small moments” [Reynolds, 1986].

Morita and Glasser align themselves with a similar perspective on the issue of “mental health”. Morita saw only neurotic moments, not neurotic people. “Neurotic suffering was not a medical problem but rather a misunderstanding about life and should be treated through education. Instead of illness, there were bad habits of thinking and acting that led to suffering.” [Reynolds, 1984]. Reynolds has stated that he believes that much of psychiatry was harmful to patients. Glasser has rejected the idea of “mental illness”. “To call it that excuses the creator from what he does and we do him and our society a disservice.” [Glasser, 1984, pg. 98]. Glasser would view mental health as an ongoing series of behavioral choices that continually strengthen relationships and meet basic physical needs.

WHOSE REALITY IS REAL?

For a therapy titled Reality Therapy, Dr. Glasser has frequently stated that a concept such as “reality” lies in the eye of the beholder. In Choice Theory [1998, pg. 47], he states, “Reality has a lot to do with what a lot of us or some important or powerful people say it is. But ultimately, whether people agree with us or not, we define reality in the way it works best for us.” Glasser views perception as creating our own individual reality, an inner reality. Morita Therapy and Constructive Living take a different position on reality. Reality is not a perspective or an inner reality but is seen as truth itself. The Western idea of “self” is replaced with the notion that the individual is part of the environment, not separate from it. As a result, reality requires that we fit ourselves to realities requirements. Each situation requires certain responses from us. There are issues and problems to be solved, so go solve them. However, we must fit our behavior to the circumstances. In losing oneself in constructive activity, problems seem to disappear. Feelings change, although that isn’t the stated goal. It’s a byproduct of taking action to produce one’s goals. Similar to Glasser’s concept of Total Behavior, change the action and the feelings will follow. “We are reality’s way of getting reality’s work done.” [Reynolds, 1981, pg.31].

A brief illustration. I awoke this morning planning a full day of writing. However, reality presented me with some other plans. I needed to do my back exercises for some sore muscles. However, since I was on vacation I had overslept and was out of my usual routine. I felt some anxiety at not having gotten up earlier. Lost time. I could skip the exercises. I had visited a sick friend yesterday so Friday’s food shopping had to be done today. More tension. I, then, acknowledged those feelings and asked myself What needs to be done now?” the answer was my exercises and shopping. Along the way, I picked up some of reality’s additional chores; getting ready to go to the dump, making breakfast for the family, folding the laundry, doing the dishes. All the while, not simply checking off a list, but engaging in each task with as much mindful attention as I could muster. Interestingly, I wasn’t feeling very tense anymore. I was ready to return to my writing when I found out that my wife and daughter were going out for the day together. That meant that I had responsibility for my son and his buddy who had slept over. Anxiety again. Tension in my neck. Disappointed feelings and thoughts. Perhaps some angry ones. Now what? Acceptance of those thoughts and feelings. What had to be done next? As it turned out, the two boys were happy most of the day playing video games despite my frequent questioning about doing something else. So I did get some writing done. At any rate, you get the picture of what a simple day might look like with “reality as the guru”.

“I wanted everything.”
The Ramones

“What you don’t have, you don’t need it now”
U2

Glasser states that our motivation stems from a part of our brain he entitles the Quality World which stores a group of specific pictures that best satisfy one or more of our basic needs of love and belonging, freedom, power, fun and survival. [Glasser,1984] These pictures tend to fall into three categories:

1. The people we most want to be with
2. The things we most want to own or experience
3. The ideas or systems of belief that govern much of our behavior [Glasser,1998]

Glasser says the power of these pictures is all consuming. It is the core of our lives.

Like Zen Buddhism, Morita Therapy and Constructive Living would not deny that those basic needs/human desires exist. Reynolds and Morita would agree, however, that those desires are the cause of our suffering. Whereas Glasser would have clients take action to relieve the pain of unmet pictures and meet needs, Morita would follow the route of acceptance of those desires and refocus onto reality’s doorstep. It’s not that setting goals is unrealistic or unacceptable to Reynolds or Morita. It’s simply the context in which one places those desires. A Constructive Living maxim is:

1. Accept your feelings.
2. Know your purpose.
3. Do what needs doing

Knowing your purpose can be seen to be analogous to Quality World pictures. Reynolds goes on to say “The gap between what we want and what is attainable creates tension and dissatisfaction. The effort we make in trying to close that gap teaches us about ourselves in the world.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg.91]. Reynolds explains he does not know what causes us to
do what we do. [Reynolds, 1986]. “A purpose orientation is quite another matter. The student of Constructive Living learns to determine and evaluate behavior in terms of proper purposes and goals. The focus is on what the behavioral effort is intended to accomplish in the real world.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg.29]. Quality world pictures would be seen in a “self-esteem” manner than a “reality-esteem” manner. To paraphrase John F. Kennedy, “Ask not what you can do for your Quality World pictures. Ask what your Quality World pictures and you can do for your environment/situation.”

“You’ve got to learn to live with what you can’t rise above”
Bruce Springsteen

The parallels between Morita Therapy/Constructive Living and Choice Theory/Reality Therapy in regard to the topic of feelings and actions is remarkable. Glasser discusses feelings as signals or warning signs that lead to behavioral change. [Glasser, 1998, 1984]. Reynolds recognizes the importance of feelings as signals as well. “It is perfectly alright to be fearful, angry etc. Each of these feelings points us toward some specific desire or purpose that needs to be satisfied or accomplished through constructive activity. In our constructive life we aim at recognizing and acknowledging all feelings and practicing the positive actions that are called for by those feelings.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg. 22]. Glasser admits that feelings may be our strongest motivator but that the therapist needs to downplay feelings and symptoms as there is no way to work on them directly and the greater the focus on them the more the client clings to them.” [Glasser, 2000]. Glasser views feelings as “chosen” within the context of Total Behavior. Total Behavior would be comprised of acting, thinking, feeling and physiology. According to Choice Theory, change the acting and thinking, then the feelings and physical symptoms will change accordingly. ‘If we learn that misery is a choice and that better choices are almost always available, we will make an active effort by ourselves or with help, to choose more effective behaviors.” [Glasser, 1984, pg. 181].

Discussions of feelings and the problems with leading a feeling centered life are prominent in Morita and Reynolds’ writings. “Focus on feelings may prolong them. The more we try to get rid of upsetting feelings directly, the more attention we pay to them and the more they intensify. It is more effective to leave feelings as they are while one undertakes the constructive action that will change our circumstances and indirectly affect our emotions.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg.24]. Reynolds argues for a “purpose-centered” life as opposed to a “feelings-based” life. People with a feeling orientation get distracted from the required tasks of everyday life. Every action is determined by if they feel like doing it instead of does the situation call for the action to be done. “The need these days is not to get on touch with feelings but to get in touch with the reality of the circumstances.” [Reynolds, 1991, pg.17]. Morita said that it is alright to give up climbing a mountain as long as one’s feet keep moving forward. Reynolds offers the notion that we don’t need to be patient, we just need to wait. The acceptance, not the suppression of feelings, is the answer according to Morita and Reynolds. “Acceptance in Constructive Living has two aspects.

The passive element involves giving up on trying to change one’s immediate feelings in any direct way and avoiding extended fantasies of what might have been or what ought to be. The active element of acceptance involves constructive action based on the reality that presents itself to us. Reality, too, must be accepted but we can work to change the circumstance in which we find ourselves.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg.27-28].

“If it’s raining and you have an umbrella, use it!”
Masatake Morita

Action steps are at the core of all three sets of theories, Morita Therapy, Constructive Living and Choice Therapy/Reality Therapy. Reality Therapy is a “doing” method. It takes effort to satisfy Quality World pictures and needs. A therapist will make plans with a client to take attainable and specific positive steps that begin to lead a person in a direction that is need fulfilling. “There’s a lot of security in a plan. There’s a sense of control. It’s what you can do, not what he can do” [Glasser, 1998, pg.172]. Reynolds and Morita concur with the idea of Total Behavior. “Constructive Living through Morita guidance is not a way of training the mind. It is a way of using the body-mind. The doing of a task at hand is not merely the action of the body. It is an action of the body-mind. Morita called this principle “shinshin doitsu” [literally, “mind-body, same-one”]. The physical movement of the body is both a reflection and a lever for changing the mind. Changed behavior is already changed mind.” [Reynolds, 1987, pg.43]. Reynolds has also stated that “Reality doesn’t reward intent. It can only respond to action.” [Reynolds, 1993, pg.25]. Action will change attitudes, although that is a secondary concern for a Morita therapist. One should take action to change what needs changing, to respond to your situation. “It is the action of walking that shows us where the path leads.” [Reynolds, 1984, pg. 24] A Zen master might tell a student in response to being asked “What is the essence of Zen?” to go “polish your shoes”. It is a repetitive questioning of “What is happening right now in this moment and what needs to done?” that matters. It is the attention given to every detail of every action that allows us to lead a mindful and purposeful life.

“I believe in you”
Neil Young

The practice of Reality Therapy has long stressed the importance of involvement between the therapist and client. “The only way I can help is to teach to reconnect if the person has someone they want to be close with, or to connect if he has no one. The way I work is to help him relate to me. He can use what he learns with me to relate better with other people in his life. My task is to create a good enough relationship with the client so that I can encourage them to live the life they want.” [Glasser, 2000, pg.95]. The therapist enters the client’s Quality World as a need fulfilling person. It is through the relationship that the client will trust the therapist enough to explore the self evaluation of wants and behaviors. While Reality Therapy is known as a directive therapy, this emphasis on establishing a relationship with the client seems to set the foundation for the sometimes tough self evaluation questions asked by a Reality Therapist. Early Morita therapy used the bed rest period to establish a pos-
itive relationship between the therapist and patient prior to beginning action steps. [Reynolds, 1976]. Those action steps were often very directive and authoritarian, however. A Morita therapist might meet with a client once a week for an hour. The emphasis is on assigning weekly homework assignments and reflecting upon those assignments. It is a teacher-student relationship with the therapist serving as a model for the client. Reynolds acknowledges two different therapy approaches in regard to Constructive Living. A “soft” approach emphasizes understanding and developing a relationship with the client. A “hard” approach emphasizes acceptance, endurance, advice, exercises and a “personal relationship with reality”, a style that Reynolds himself prefers. [Reynolds, 1990].

“Should I stay or should I go?”
The Clash

Self evaluation has often been called the cornerstone of Reality Therapy/Choice Theory. Wubbolding [2000] lists 22 different forms of self evaluation that a therapist can explore with a client including:

- Overall behavioral direction and purpose
- Specific behaviors: Effective or ineffective
- Specific actions: Acceptable or unacceptable
- Thinking behaviors: Ineffective or effective self-talk
- Global evaluation of Belief system
- Feeling behaviors: Helpful or harmful emotions
- Wants: Unrealistic or attainable
- Perceptions: Viewpoint
- Perceptions: Focus of control
- Level of commitment
- Evaluation of the plan of action

Glasser would focus on one main self evaluation question, that being “Is what I’m doing bringing the person in my relationship closer to me or is it pushing them further away?” Reynolds takes more of a “Just do it” focus, often skipping over the self evaluation part of therapy. “There is no need to make a decision or a commitment, no need to be empowered, no need to organize oneself or pull oneself together.” [Reynolds, 1992, pg.26]. However, Reynolds [1987] did organize a series of questions he titled Principles for Constructive Living that certainly could fall under the category of self evaluation. They include:

- What is the immediate problem?
- What is the cause of the problem?
- What kinds of solutions are there to the problem?
- What is the best way I can work a solution?
- What prevents me from acting on the solution now?
- Have I made fruitless efforts in unrealistic directions? How? What needs to be changed?

CONCLUSION

There is an opportunity here for further discussion between those who practice these theories. The William Glasser Institute is an international organization that holds training sessions, conferences and distributes a newsletter as well as promoting this journal. The ToDo Institute in Vermont sponsors workshops and long distance learning programs in Constructive Living. My own experience with both has led me to many answers and further questions. Are we in for a fruitless, never ending, fire extinguishing journey if we follow Glasser’s model? Is it ever truly possible to leave “the Self” behind and become “one with reality” as Reynolds and Morita suggest? I’m not sure of the answers. I might as well go do the dishes. One at a time.

REFERENCES


This article is dedicated to the memory of Ms Joan Gallagher. The author may be reached at 116 Willow Street, Acton, Massachusetts 01720 or at davideason@msn.com
How Problem Solving Helps Meet the Five Needs
Carla Atkinson

ABSTRACT

Foster children in the state of California are placed in out of home care for reasons beyond their choices; however, they are placed in Group Home care for behavioral choices they have made. Behaviors such as running away, physical violence, property damage, sexual offenses, threats against adults or peers, suicide, drug or alcohol use, truant school behaviors, and/or gang membership or affiliation.

Using Reality Therapy Choice Theory in our program, Atkinson Youth Services teaches the Five Needs, the Four Parts of Behavior, as well as the components of Quality, not only as a means of meeting our Needs and empowering our lives, but as a tool for problem solving. In our experience, problem solving skills are the most neglected skills in group home programs, and the most needed skills for group home children to succeed.

INTRODUCTION

Group home providers must address, by law, five areas of concerns; Social, Emotional, Mental, Physical/Health, and Functioning. When a child is placed in a group home a plan must be made within the first three weeks of placement in each of these five areas. The plan must then be signed by the placement worker and submitted to licensing.

Many programs have been developed to try to improve the number of successful graduates from the group home system. It is clear to me that the State has concentrated on five ineffective components. In Atkinson Group Homes we have significantly improved the odds for children graduating successfully from the group home system.

Paul Sunseri, of Sumitview Treatment Center completed a study of the success of children in group homes to determine what factors influence success. He found those who did well were able to graduate or move from a higher level of care to lower levels of care. One of the factors discovered is that of a relationship with at least one person outside of the group home system. The primary relationship was that of natural family. "There is a clear relationship between parental visitation of children in care and treatment outcome." Sunseri found that children who received more visits from parents were more likely to complete treatment. It is also noted that those families who participated in family therapy sessions had better results for success.

Dr. Henry Cloud and Dr. John Townsend, in their book on boundaries, "Boundaries Face To Face", describe how the most important benefit of a good confrontation is that it preserves love in a relationship. "The extent to which two people in a relationship can bring up and resolve issues is a critical marker of the soundness of the relationship".

PART 1: HOW WE BEGIN

Each staff must learn the same program intended for the children. The staff is then expected to model and teach the children. Before the hiring process is complete the staff must have 40 hours of training. In addition, training is also given in weekly in-service meetings.

As each child enters our program they are taught the Five Needs, the Four Parts of Behavior, The Pictures in Our Heads, the Components of Quality, how to take Responsibility, and Negotiating skills.

Most group homes are set up on a system of punishments, which are disguised as consequences because state law forbids punishment. Group home children do not trust adults, rules, systems, or rewards.

Because the children do not have any structure in their lives, it is difficult for them to learn structure. We begin with very simple "Rules for Fair Fighting". We start with very easy concrete rules, and then move into the more abstract ideas of the program.

RULES FOR FAIR FIGHTING

No Physical Violence: It is hard to reason with someone if you're hitting or pushing
No Yelling: It is hard to reason with someone if you are yelling or intimidating
No Labels: "Thief", "Liar", etc.
No Name Calling
No Put Downs: "Stupid, dumb, lazy, etc"
No Cursing: You cannot expect someone you are not respecting to problem solve with you
Use Present Only: Bringing up the past will not help problem solve today
One Problem Only: You may have more than one problem to solve, but only one at a time

No Universals: You always, You never

Only God is always or never

No Assumptions Bringing up what action was taken in the past and assuming it will be so this time, or interpreting an action to be something other than what is actually seen.

No One Else's Name 'Suzie made me do it'

No Interrupting: Everyone will get a chance to talk, one at a time

“I” Statements Only: No “You” statements, I feel, I believe, I saw, etc.

No Excuses: “I only”, “I just”, “But I”, “Because”

IDENTIFY THE PROBLEM

WHAT DO YOU HAVE LEFT??

A PROBLEM YOU CAN BEGIN TO WORK ON

PART II: PROBLEM SOLVING EFFECTIVELY

Anytime you problem solve your relationship should improve. The direct effect of a successful exchange of ideas – even if differing opinions prevail, should result in a better understanding of the other person’s beliefs, ideas, feelings, wants, etc.

During an exchange of ideas some amount of knowledge or information should be transferred. If the parties can keep the discourse to ideas and facts, and not to personalizing feelings or personalities, the relationship will be strengthened.

No exchange of thoughts can be made if assumptions or false perceptions are at the base of the disagreement. Therefore, the first step is to check your assumptions before you begin to exchange information. Many times what you think is true has no fact to support it. This can be done by saying, “I assume you meant....when you said...”, or something like this.

Successful problem solving can not be done, nor will relationships be built, if there is a lie anywhere in the conversation.

In some instances it is important to define roles, such as teacher-student, parent-child. It would be helpful to ask, “What’s my job, what’s your job?”

In order to build relationships, clear communication is the hardest thing we do in our lives. Therefore, it is so important to find a way to be sure you heard what you think the other person said and the same for the other person. A simple summary of what you came to agree on, or decided to do will leave no one to act upon faulty communication or assumptions.

Agreements and/or directives can be written, especially when you are learning this method. A form can be made that lets each person in the problem solving finish the statement, “I agree to.....”, or “I understand the rules....”

Evaluation is another key to building relationships through problem solving. Again, the same form can include, “I did what I said I would do....”, “The result of our agreement......” It is also a good idea to think about what else would have been helpful. Even though “hind sight” doesn’t help the present problem, it will help strengthen the relationship to know you can solve problems for the future.

Ask yourself, “What did I expect?” Ask others involved, “What did you expect?”

Listening is something that we can teach ourselves to do. Although it is difficult to get started, hearing the words of the other person’s will encourage a good exchange of information. Listen for the words and the behavior that follows.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WORDS</th>
<th>BEHAVIORS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“I won’t”</td>
<td>Doesn’t</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I will”</td>
<td>Doesn’t</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I won’t”</td>
<td>Does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I will”</td>
<td>Does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t want to”</td>
<td>Doesn’t</td>
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<tr>
<td>“I don’t want to”</td>
<td>Does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know how”</td>
<td>Gives up/doesn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I don’t know how”</td>
<td>Asks for help/does</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t”</td>
<td>Gives up/doesn’t</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“I can’t”</td>
<td>Tries anyway/does</td>
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All these can be problem solved by using the exchanges above. As long as none of the seven dis-connecting habits are used, the problem will be solved, knowledge and/or information will be imparted, understanding will happen and the relationship will be strengthened. According to Dr. William Glasser, the seven dis-connecting habits that destroy relationships are:

PART III: CHECK YOUR BEHAVIOR

THE SEVEN DIS-CONNECTING HABITS:

CRITICIZING
BLAMING
COMPLAINING
NAGGING
THREATENING
PUNISHING
REWARDING TO CONTROL
In Choice Theory, Dr. William Glasser suggests we replace the above with these seven alternatives:

THE SEVEN CONNECTING HABITS:
- SUPPORTING
- ENCOURAGING
- LISTENING
- ACCEPTING
- TRUSTING
- RESPECTING
- NEGOTIATING ALL DIFFERENCES

Self esteem is no more than the ability to take responsibility for your own behaviors and make a better plan, as well as the ability to make and keep safe and comfortable boundaries for your life.

How can problem solving improve relationships? By helping us fill our Five Needs.

PART IV: THE FIVE NEEDS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

SURVIVAL
Atmosphere/setting
Feel safe to share feelings?
Feel safe to share thoughts?
Feel comfortable to challenge or be challenged?

If a person feels threatened, criticized, blamed or in fear of eminent punishment they are not likely to feel safe enough to problem solve. Can you see here that problem solving actually helps self esteem when it is done in a non coercive manner because it encourages an exchange of opinions, ideas, information and/or facts. Here again, a person cannot fill their survival need when lies are a part of the problem, because they cannot feel confident that the environment is safe enough to freely share. When self esteem is raised, relationships are strengthened. What more rewarding result can you find than to be a part of helping a person build self esteem?

LOVE, BELONGING
Feel respected?
Feel trusted?
Feel cared for?
Feel accepted?

When any exchange of information, ideas, opinions brings about these feelings the relationship will be strengthened, and so will the self esteem of the parties involved. There can be no room for the seven dis-connecting habits if love and belonging needs are to be met.

POWER
Feel empowered?
Feel in control of yourself?
Feel listened to?
Can you take responsibility for your actions, even if you were in the wrong?
Can you make a better plan?

Each person involved in a dispute or disagreement can fill their power need by staying in control of themselves and recognizing they cannot control the other person. Being in control of yourself simply means that you use no external method to try to control the other person, but use all your power to control yourself and present your ideas while listening to the other person. As long as your views are heard as you presented them, as long as you can take responsibility for your own thoughts and behaviors then you can find a solution.

One thing we should look at here is complaining. Jill Atkinson, PhD., in her staff training, teaches that sometimes we don't really intend to solve a problem – we only want to complain. Complaining is ok, one time through. You can listen to the complaint if it is only one time, but if you are the third person to be told, or if you are one of several to be complained to then it is not ok. Complaining one time may help a person organize their thoughts, and prepare them to solve the problem. Complaining may bring a person to the realization that they have a problem that needs to be problem solved. Then you can go from there. It is important here to state that this is a complaint, but problem solving will follow. If a person is complaining to a boss, etc., the person receiving the complaint should facilitate the problem solving session, or at least help the person solve their problem.

FREEDOM
Do you have personal choices?
Were you able to use your creativity to listen and solve the problem?
Did you exercise negotiation skills?

It is important here to stay away from bribing. Bribing takes away from your creative process and gets in the way of building the relationship through solving the problem in a manner satisfactorily to all parties. Negotiating is such a fun and positive process it becomes a strong force in building relationships as well as self esteem.
Remember, in a negotiation it is important for all parties to be able to say:

What I expected was....
What I was offended, hurt, upset, etc. by......
What I believe I could have done differently...
Or, what I would have liked you to have done differently...
What I have to offer now....
Or, what can you offer now...

Remembering while we are working on this negotiation, Glasser suggests, “BETTER MAKES BETTER”, so what we do next has to be better than what we just did
What can we do that will make things better, specifically, what ONE thing could we do that will help the situation?
When will it be done?
When will we evaluate?

FUN
Did we learn something?
Did we enjoy the experience?
Do we now look forward to more time together?
Do we now look forward to more interactions?

PART V: EVALUATE YOUR RESULTS
NOW THE BIG QUESTION:
DID THE RELATIONSHIP GET STRENGTHENED?
DO YOU APPRECIATE/ RESPECT EACH OTHER MORE?

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<th>WW</th>
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<td>LW</td>
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ONLY ONE OF THESE IS ACCEPTABLE. WHICH ONE??

NOW, FOR THE LAST PART OF YOUR PROBLEM SOLVING EXPERIENCE:

CHECK THE QUALITY OF YOUR WORK:
Was it the best you could do?
Was it respectful and legal?
Can it be repeated?
Can it be evaluated
Do you feel satisfied?
What did you use – Connecting behaviors or Dis-connecting behaviors?

REFERENCES

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Ritalin Vs. Choice Theory and Reality Therapy

La Cena Jones and Thomas S. Parish

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ABSTRACT

A critical look at the use of Ritalin with ADD individuals. Recommends that RT/CT be used as the first intervention step instead of reliance on medication.

Ritalin belongs to a class of drugs known as “stimulants,” and is closely related to the drug “amphetamine.” Interestingly, it is thought to have a paradoxical effect on people, i.e., it serves to “calm” children, but usually has an “excitatory” effect on adults. Stimulants like Ritalin, caffeine, and amphetamines, for example, seem to have a generalized effect on people’s organ systems, particularly in their heart, blood vessels, and brain; in short, they all seem to increase blood pressure, while minimizing states of drowsiness (Diller, 1999).

Over the last few decades, there have been some noteworthy developments regarding the instances of “Attention Deficit Disorders” or “Hyperactivity Disorders.” More specifically, this disorder has been found to increase over 500% in the last thirty years. Notably, since Ritalin has been the “drug of choice” by many physicians in the treatment of this disorder, Ritalin’s production has likewise increased over the same time period. The unfortunate part of this scenario is that those using Ritalin are actually buying into an idea that they can “live better through chemistry,” and that it is okay to have your life regulated by a drug, and by others who administer it, with little thought given about the “free will” and “personal choices” that recipients ultimately give up.

In contrast to having people use drugs like Ritalin to control their various problems and difficulties, be they medical or otherwise, William Glasser has offered a very different, less intrusive, alternative. Specifically, Glasser’s (1998) “Choice Theory” proposes that we are all responsible for our own choices, and Parish (1987) further points out that while we may not be responsible for what happens to us, we are responsible for the way(s) we deal with what happens to us. This type of approach, as compared to the use of Ritalin and other similar drugs, stresses being very non-intrusive in nature. Truly, Choice Theory basically says that you are in charge of you, and that no one else may do so without your permission. Glasser (1965) offers those wishing to take more effective control of their lives Reality Therapy, whereby we can systematically determine (1) what we want, (2) what we’re doing, and (3) whether are not what we’re doing is working. Armed with these notions, each of us can learn to make better choices, direct our respective lives better, and realize when we have control of ourselves, as opposed to when others control us externally, perhaps by the use of drugs or some other externally-imposed remediation program over which we have little, if any, personal control. So while drugs may help in some ways, they can hurt their users too.

In contrast, with Choice Theory and Reality Therapy, you are “in control,” and will remain in the driver’s seat, until you relinquish or forfeit your right to do so. Each individual is actually responsible for assessing the level of his/her needs (e.g., love & belonging, power, fun, freedom), specifying his/her specific wants, and then doing whatever is necessary to fulfill them. Beyond a doubt, Choice Theory and Reality Therapy basically teach people ways to direct their lives (e.g., behaviors, thinking) more efficiently, foster greater strength within them to handle life’s “little surprises,” and “big surprises,” too, and helps them to know the difference between the things that they have control over, as well as the things that they have little or no control over. For instance, those with “ADD” may turn control over to others who, in turn, place them on Ritalin, or they can set goals, work plans, and find things that they can do to counteract their “ADD.” In the former instance, coping may result, but the individual has no control and little say in the matter. Hence, individuals with “ADD” are more likely to feel extremely frustrated since they don’t understand and don’t control many aspects of their own lives. In contrast, CT and RT both teach people how to do what they need to do in order to feel better, because they are more likely doing what they want to do.

The underlying theme for CT and RT is that people don’t need to be pawns or chess pieces that are externally controlled by others. Rather, they are thought to have an internally controlled motivation and value system that is required to stand ready and take responsibility for their own actions to form goals, execute plans, and value the results of their thinking and/or actions.

So why is the CT/RT approach to handling ADD better than employing Ritalin? Simply stated, the former is the better solution primarily because of its amazing side effects. More specifically, those using CT/RT, and not Ritalin, learn to accept greater personal responsibility for their lives, are better at governing their appetites and their passions, and experience greater personal growth as a result. In addition, they will less likely experience diminished psychomotor skills, and any harmful effects on their organ systems, plus they don’t have to rely on taking medication routinely, locating sources for refills, etc.
Truly, CT/RT is far less intrusive than Ritalin, and only seeks to put the individual back in charge, rather than try to take charge of another person’s life. Isn’t it obvious that CT/RT should at least be the first type of therapy to be used to overcome such problems as ADD, as well as for many other types of psychosocial disorders? Doesn’t it make sense that we should approach problems like “ADD” by using the least intrusive approach first, and then use more intrusive approaches only after the less intrusive strategies have failed?

**Bottom line:** therapists shouldn’t simply be “pill-pushers,” and individuals with various problems shouldn’t long for their “next fix.” Rather, both should be working in tandem in order to help the latter individual to take more effective control of his/her life. Otherwise, doctors would not be helping people to overcome a problem; instead, they would simply be providing them with a new, and in many ways, a more dangerous problem.

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*The first author may be contacted at 13115 Spinning Avenue, Gardena, California, 90249*
A caring older minister offers his congregants advice and support during the hurting time of losing a love. Many ministers offer help for keeping a love alive and a marriage intact. But, what of those whose love life has not been successful, whether their fault or not? The author uses reality therapy methods without mentioning them in suggested helps for those who have just lost love and are experiencing the pain of heartbreak.

Pain hurts!

Isn't it amazing what one learns through the benefits of growing older? Of course, pain hurts . . . that is what pain is. There are different kinds of pain, of course, and each has its own particular kind of hurt.

That which we most often associate with pain is physical. We cut our finger and it hurts. In sport, we get hit with a ball and it hurts. We sprain our ankle and it hurts. We know well the hurt of physical pain.

We also know better how to deal with physical pain. We cut our finger, we doctor our finger. We get hit with a ball. We rub where we were hit, or “walk it off.” We sprain our ankle; we soak it, or pack it in ice. Physical pain hurts . . . but we can better understand it. And, if necessary we can live with it, not liking it, but live with it. Because physical pain, when it is in our house of experience, is more like a monster . . . at least we know where it is and what it looks like. And, an enemy seen is better fought.

But, what of those who are experiencing an entirely different kind of pain . . . a pain that is more like a ghost? It hurts like the dickens but is unseen and not able to be rubbed, or doctored, or passed off.

People who have been rejected experience a pain that hurts more than many physical pains they have experienced in their lives. There are those here today, by all possibilities, going through such hurt.

If you are one of those, I would love to tell you I know how you feel . . . but, that would be a lie. Each of us experiences our own hurt, our own pain. While the experiences may be similar, our support systems, our personalities, our own emotional make up, make each one of us different. Therefore, because you are uniquely you, there is no one else who is suffering just like you right now.

The pain of rejection, of depression, of loneliness, and of lost love, hurts.

God, it hurts . . . there are times when you believe it will never stop hurting.

But, it will.

The question isn’t will the pain stop hurting? The question is what is the pain going to do to you?

The only reason you are suffering is because you dared to love. You dared to give all you are to someone else, only to experience all that you are being rejected. With that rejection come the pain of loss of self worth, self respect, and self confidence.

“What is wrong with me?” is an unfair question, yet, it is one you will ask yourself repeatedly.

“What did I do wrong?” is another unfair question.

“What could I have done differently?” is a question that is immaterial as far as your lost relationship is concerned. There is nothing you can do to change the past . . . it is over. Actions done, words said, opportunities lost, are . . . lost.

They are gone. The only benefit you can gain from them is to recognize them as learning experiences . . . no, more than that, growing experiences.

“No pain, no gain” the athlete would say as he strained under the weights, or she pushed herself to run that extra mile. And, because they endured the pain, they have fine, healthy bodies.

“No pain, no gain” can be said, also, of life itself. Life is hard, but then, anything that is exciting is hard. It is hard to push yourself into a scary roller coaster for the first time, but the excitement made it worth while. It was hard to push yourself in sports, academic, or professional goals, but the rewards made it worth while.

It will be hard to push yourself into relationships again. But, the excitement of shared friendship, love, and relationship is worth the effort, worth the price, worth the struggle.

I have discovered, I believe, spiritual and biblical principles God has given us to help us through our pain time. Perhaps you have heard me preach these principles many times . . . perhaps you know them well. But please take a moment to reconsider them again.
There is the principle of "Staying in Love" (Rev. 2:1-7). In your case, you need to come into the back door and see how these same principles can be used to bury a dead love. And, my hurting friend, painful and hurtful as it is, you know it is time to bury your dead relationship. Hold anything to you long after it dies, and it begins to stink and can make those around it ill. When something dies . . . as much as it was loved . . . it still must be buried.

How do you bury a dead relationship? Look at the principles Christ gave to His church. His bride, for falling in love with Him again. Only, look at them from the negative side . . . from this side, they work for walking away from a lost love.

First, change the things you have been remembering. Christ said, "Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen," verse five.

You need to remember, not the good times, but the bad times. My hurting friend, you are reliving every touch, every smile, and every beautiful thing that happened between you two. Ordinarily, that would be wonderful, but in this case, it is destructive. Remembering the good times is keeping the fires burning at their brightest. And, if the relationship were alive, that is exactly what you would need to do.

But, the relationship is dead . . . so bury it by remembering the bad times. Remember the times your loved one acted like a donkey; the times he or she looked his or her worse; the times your lover behaved in the most unloving manner. Remember the times you became so angry you could have clobbered the person. Remember the times you wanted to pull your hair out because you were so frustrated.

Rule one: Change your memories.

Second, change your self statements and thoughts. The scripture said, "Repent," verse five. This simply means, turn around, go another direction.

You are telling yourself every second of every day either consciously or unconsciously, statements like: "I love him so." "I can't live without her." "She is so beautiful." "I'll never find another like him."

Repent of those actions.

Stop yourself that you love her or him. Meditate on the hurt you have accepted and tell your self, "That person doesn't deserve my love after the way I have been treated. I don't love that person anymore." At first your emotions will tell your actions that you are lying, but, keep saying it, "I don't have romantic love for this person anymore. I don't love him or her. They have killed it."

Stop telling yourself that you can't live without the person. You can, you will, and you'll be a bigger and better person because of it . . . "no pain, no gain."

Stop telling yourself how beautiful or handsome the person is. Instead of seeing them through the eyes of strong love, you need to look at them through futuristic eyes. When one gets my age, one develops the ability to see youthful features that are fore signs of future development.

Perhaps she has a cute little poignant look now, but imagine her as a sour faced older woman. See her becoming a sour puss in the years ahead. Or, perhaps, he is a serious looking handsome devil today, but realize you enjoy life too much to appreciate one who always is looking on the dark side.

Rule two: Stop looking for the good, look at the bad.

Three, change your actions. The Bible says, "and do the first works," verse five.

William Worden, in a book on grief, shares that in order for grief to be walked through; there are four steps or actions that one needs to take. These are: 1. accepting the reality of the death, or loss; 2. working through the pain of the loss; 3. adjusting to the environment where the loss is missing; and, 4. emotionally relocating the loss, and moving on with life.

These "works" are not the "first works" of verse five, but they will lead to the first works. These are things you can do to help you face your loss. Look at them again.

Accept the reality of the loss: the love is gone. No matter how much you want it back, it is gone. The person has a mind and a heart of his or her own, you have to accept that. It will not be easy and you will have to work at it, but the sooner you do, the sooner you will be able to function again as a whole person.

Work through the pain of the loss: You'll be doing this for a long time to come. Don't let me or anyone else tell you to "snap out of it." It isn't that easy, even though thoughtlessly, we may say, or come across as saying, that it is. Some of the ways in which you can work through the pain I have already given, but these are only methods that you will have to work to make work.

Adjust to the environment where the lover is gone: I remember my heartbreak when I was a young man. I remember the ceremony where my two college roommates and I burned my ex-sweetheart's letters and her picture. One of my roommates sang "Precious Memories" as the smoke made its way into the evening sky. Corny, I know, but it was my funeral of a dream. It was my adjusting to the emptiness of her not being in my environment.

Emotionally relocating the loss and moving on with life: the love is not yours. The new lover in their life does not have your former love checked out like a library book and will have to return the person to you. Your loved one is gone, and even if they break up in a short time, it'll be very unlikely that your former love will return into your world. Move on with life. It will not come easily, but, as I said, the exciting things of life usually are not easy. And, there is yet excitement to be found, love to be shared, a life to be lived.

Someone has said, "It isn't over until the fat lady sings." Listen, she is singing. Let her sing, my hurting friend, let her sing.

Some of you, I have known all of your lives, and I love you, and I hurt for you. If I could . . . no, I'll not say what I was
going to say. I was going to say, “If I could I would take your pain for you.” But, if I could, and did, I would be cheating you out of one of the memorable events of your life. You will never forget these days. They will always be a part of who you are and what you are. Your growth as a person and as a Christian will benefit through the suffering of these days. It would be unfair for me to cheat you of this experience.

Yet, after having that . . . I still hurt because you are hurting.

God bless you, my hurting friends. I pray for you each day. Call me when you need to, or want to . . . and if I call and you don’t feel like talking just then, feel free to tell me so. Believe me, I understand.

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Purpose of Behavior: Language and Levels of Commitment

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ABSTRACT

Behavior is a language or method of communicating with the world and, therefore, choice theory offers a two-fold purpose for behavior: impacting the outside world and sending it a message or a signal. Because of this added purpose of total behavior, users of reality therapy deal with behavior as a communication system that can be effective or ineffective. They can help clients, students, and children speak a more effective language through their total behaviors for the purpose of gaining quality world fulfillment. Firm levels of commitment or the intensity of expression during conferences point toward learning a new language and making effective choices.

Impacting the external world in order to put a mental scale in balance, i.e., to create a match between a desired want and the perception of it as unfulfilled has constituted the conventional and exclusive purpose of behavior (Glasser, 1985, 1996, 2003). A closer examination of choice, total behavior and the manifold impact of language on other human beings as well as the specific role of communication on satisfying wants reveals another purpose of human behavior.

The second goal of human behavior, especially actions and language, is to send a signal to the external world. In fact, it might be said our actions are a language, i.e., a means of communication and the primary vehicle for maintaining or destroying human relationships. In speaking of the language component of human actions, Glasser and Glasser (1999) state, "Choice theory language helps us to work out problems with one another; external control language increases them" (p. viii). The practical implication for the significant addition to choice theory of behavior as a purposeful language is extensive. First, users of reality therapy can ask clients and students about the signals they intentionally or unintentionally wish to send out to the world around them. Second, addressing the language of clients and students opens another area for using the WDEP system of reality therapy as it applies to the thinking behaviors accompanying actions (Wubbolding, 2000). Third, for genuine change to occur, human beings need to evaluate not only the effectiveness of their actions but the quality of their thoughts, the consequences of their communication efforts, and the appropriateness of their self-talk. The following dialogue illustrates a brief conversation between an adult and an adolescent, and illustrates several of the above points.

Adult: I wanted to ask you about a few things that we've discussed a while back.

Adolescent: Yeah, I figured you would.

Adult: You previously told me that you wanted to be left alone, people off your back, free from all those oppressive rules. You said you feel victimized by school, home, the law and few other nasty forces.

Adolescent: Man, life would be much better if everyone would quit telling me what to do. Everybody wants to run my life. I want to run my own life. I'm 15 years old.

Adult: So it is very important to you that they leave you alone?

Adolescent: Yeah, I'd like that more than anything. Nothing is more important to me right now than people getting off my back and leaving me alone.

Adult: That's your viewpoint, how you see your situation. Now let's talk about action. Describe how you're doing in school. Your grades and anything else you would like to say.

Adolescent: I'm flunking 3 subjects. I hate school.

Adult: Do the teachers think you're a cooperative student who just can't do the work?

Adolescent: No, they're always yelling at me and telling me I don't study.

Adult: Are they right or wrong about studying?

Adolescent: They're right, but they're terrible teachers and they don't know what they're talking about. They don't know anything about being 15 years old.

Adult: Other than grades, what do they yell about?

Adolescent: They pick me out to yell at when everybody's talking and messing around and having fun.

Adult: But you'd like them to leave you alone?

Adolescent: You bet!

Adult: Do you ever get a kick out of aggravating them?

Adolescent: Yeah, we all like to annoy them.

Adult: So if the teachers saw you as cooperative and got off your back, you would miss out on the fun.

Note to reader: The Adult juxtaposes a reason for changing and a reason for not changing in the same sentence and then follows with a self-evaluation question based on this double bind and on contrasting pain and fun.

Adolescent: Yeah, I guess so.

Adult: How painful would it be to miss this kind of fun and have the teacher leave you alone?

Adolescent: It's fun to mess around with my friends.
Adult: So if the history teacher, for instance, gave you less grief, you would have less fun?
Adolescent: I guess so.
Adult: So you have a very good reason for not making any change. Do you really want the hassle from school, at home, from your probation officer and from other people, or do you want to be free of it?
Adolescent: I told you, I want them off my back.
Adult: But you’ve given me quite a logical argument for not working toward that goal.
Adolescent: What do you mean?

Note to reader: The adult now provides reasons for not changing.

Adult: Your friends – kind of a band of brothers locked in heavy combat. What I get from you is that you get a lot of camaraderie and besides it’s fun to upset the teacher, especially the history teacher!

Why would you want to change this?
Adolescent: Wait a minute! I want the teachers and everybody else to leave me alone!
Adult: Are they doing what you want them to do?
Adolescent: No!
Adult: Are you sure? Friends, camaraderie, fun, etc.? Look what you’re getting now by making all these choices.
Adolescent: But I get detention, suspension, and that silly “connecting room” or whatever they’re calling it this year. It’s nothing but in-school suspensions with the same old worn out lectures and questions.
Adult: Believe me, I understand what you’re saying. But what message are your actions sending to the teachers?
Adolescent: I don’t care.
Adult: I know but you’re signaling them something.
Adolescent: To leave me alone.
Adult: So you’re trying to tell them “get off my back.” But what signal are they in fact getting from you?
Adolescent: I don’t know.
Adult: Let’s put it another way. If you draw attention to yourself by acting out, they’re getting a message about not only your actions but about what you want.
Adolescent: What I want? I don’t want a load of crap from them!
Adult: How are they supposed to know that? They can only go by what they see!
Adolescent: I get it. They see me messing around and mistakenly think I want them to pay attention to me.

Adult: Right! Do you want to give them a different message like the message, “I want to be left alone.”
Adolescent: I’d sure like to.
Adult: How?
Adolescent: Maybe I could be more careful.
Adult: Have you tried to be more careful in the past?
Adolescent: Yes, many times.
Adult: So, careful has done what?
Adolescent: Gotten me messed up.
Adult: How about another kind of commitment?
Adolescent: Like what?
Adult: Let’s put it this way. If you have a weak commitment to getting what you want, what are the chances of getting it?
Adolescent: Not much.
Adult: So how badly do you want to be free of trouble in history class and how serious are you about getting people off your back? They’re sure not getting the message now, are they?
Adolescent: No, they’re not, and man I want them off my back.
Adult: I don’t hear firm determination in your voice.
Adolescent: I want it. I really want it.
Adult: Enough to back up words with solid actions? I’m speaking only about one class – history.
Adolescent: I’ll try.
Adult: I can tell you “trying” won’t make it. Every losing team can say they tried.
Adolescent: But I can’t stop the teacher from yelling.
Adult: Maybe not, but you can control someone else’s choices and messages that accompany actions.
Adolescent: Whose?
Adult: He is in this room and it’s not me.
Adolescent: All right, all right.
Adult: Will you make a firm commitment to bust your butt to behave for one day, one week, or whatever you think you can handle?
Adolescent: I can do it for a week.
Adult: I’m not sure. You’ll miss out on a lot of fun with your band of brothers.
Adolescent: Yeah, but that’s not really a big deal. I’d like to have a week of peace for a change.
Adult: If you’re willing to make a firm commitment I can help you learn a new language that they might understand.
Adolescent: Sounds good to me.

The adult helps the adolescent to change his language from that of a weak and unclear statement to a strong statement of commitment. The reason is that one of the best proven indicators for change is the strength of the language used in the therapy sessions (Author, Harvard Mental Health Letter, 2005), “When a commitment is stated strongly and explicitly, fear of disappointing oneself, the therapist, and others make it difficult to renege” (p.5).
Based on the principle that the only behavior we can control is our own (Glasser, 2005), the explicit strong statement can be expressed by level of commitment. Wubbolding (2000, 2006) has described five levels of commitment:

Level 1. “I don’t want to be here. Leave me alone.”
Level 2. “I’d like to have the outcome but not the effort.”
Level 4. “I’ll do my best.”
Level 5. “I’ll do whatever it takes.”

The levels of commitment help teachers, counselors, therapists, parents and others to operationalize the proven fact that strong and explicit statements bring about change in behavior. They apply to individual or group conversations, and in the “connecting room or whatever they’re calling it this year.”

In summary, total behavior, especially actions, can be described as a language or method of sending signals to the outer world. Oftentimes, the signals send the opposite message of that contained in a person’s quality world. The adolescent wants “to be left alone” while sending a very effective message “don’t leave me alone, punish me and give me nothing but negative attention.” Choice theory thus presents another avenue for the application of reality therapy. Counselors, teachers and parents can explore with their clients, students, and children methods to impact their external worlds for enhancing human relationships by a fearless examination of their ineffective language (behavior) and making a commitment to learn a new language.

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Growing Relationship and Power Trees That Bear Self-Evaluation Fruit

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ABSTRACT

A ongoing classroom activity which fosters individual power and the building of relationships through acts of kindness and helpfulness.

This activity was developed for an inner city school in which the students found it difficult to acknowledge their own and each other's strengths. The culture was one where power was enhanced by degrading others. Working hard at anything was considered "un-cool", and small acts of cruelty were the norm. The object of the activity was to foster a sense of belonging and support among the students and teachers, and an atmosphere where hard work and helpfulness were viewed in a positive light.

METHOD

A bare branched tree for each student and teacher was mounted along the top of the walls where the hundred and fifty students had class. No comment was made and curiosity was aroused. After a week, small class meetings were held and handouts were distributed to the homes of the students explaining the purpose of the trees. It was explained that a leaf could be earned by helping someone with a task or achieving something through hard work. Test grades were excluded, unless unusual obstacles had been overcome. Leaves were to be posted on the trees once a week. The leaves were different colors depending upon the person awarding them. The five teachers involved were each assigned a shade of green or yellow for his or her leaves. A parent's leaf was orange. A student awarding a leaf to another student had a brown leaf. A student could award himself or herself a red leaf. Each leaf contained a short statement explaining why it had been awarded. Cutting out the leaves was time consuming. However, it was used as a filler activity for students who finished their assignments before the entire class was finished. Parents also volunteered to do some of the cutting. It is now possible to buy leaf shaped templates which will stamp out leaves.

We found that we had created a visual record of who was affirming each student without the need for extensive record keeping. In the beginning, some of the students were awarding themselves a lot of leaves, but they soon noticed that all of their leaves were the same color. One teacher became aware that he was awarding all of his leaves to girls, and not boys. All of us realized that attention was paid to the aggressive, those who acted out, and those who needed extra help. It became apparent that the well-behaved, diligent students were less likely to be affirmed. There was an increase in positive student to student interaction and constructive behavior.

This inevitably increased the sense of belonging in the classroom, and made it possible for an atmosphere which stressed the "we" over the "I". Yes, friends tended to give leaves to one another. However, the increase in positive acts of kindness and helpfulness became the norm in the classroom. Parents were elated at the opportunity to praise their children for such things as working hard at music lessons and at having their quiet, "good" students recognized. Because leaves were only awarded when someone had worked hard to achieve a goal, the sense of power in the classroom increased tremendously, and the culture of striving and hard work became an accepted part of the value system.

The major drawback was that some of the teachers became lax in posting the leaves, much to the disappointment of the students. This activity might be more effective in a self-contained classroom or with a smaller, more committed team of teachers.

CONCLUSION

This visual representation of positive, relationship building behaviors seemed to enable the students to gain power through public, non-verbal affirmation, and encouraged the students to work hard towards making their trees bloom. Because no comment was made as to whose trees were blooming, internal control and self-evaluation became the impetus for each student to strive to do things worthy of earning a leaf. There were greater levels of helpfulness and hard work in the classroom, changing the classroom climate in a positive manner. In addition, it helped the teachers self-evaluate and become more aware of their relationships with individual students, and prompted them to make particular efforts with those they had inadvertently neglected.

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Dr. Glasser responds to Larry Litwack

I wish to thank Larry Litwack for giving me the opportunity to respond to his comments in the recent issue of the Journal. Basically he is criticizing not only me, but also Linda and the Board of Directors of the Institute. I can’t answer for any of them but I do hope he will provide some space if they care to respond.

I want to start by saying that I have never interfered with the editorial content of the Journal and I will not begin now. He has always been free, as editor, to speak for himself and to print what he wants. That’s what the Journal is for and I respect that right. From what he wrote, there is every indication he believes he has that freedom.

In this instance, however, he is not criticizing my theoretical work. He is criticizing the way I administer the organization that teaches my ideas. He names people who chose to leave the Institute because they did not feel free to teach the way they wanted. Further, he states it is his opinion that the Institute is worse off because they left.

But from a philosophical standpoint, especially since the theories I have developed that led to the founding of the Institute are very important to me, I would argue that the Institute is better off as it is now. I say that because I believe we have an obligation to teach the people who come for training what they tell us they want: to learn to use my ideas in both their work and in their lives.

The people who left are also better off because they are now free to use my ideas any way they want, teach them in ways they believe are better than the way I teach them, and do this with no interference from me.

From the extensive feedback I have been receiving for many years, I believe I and my teaching staff have created a large body of work that is easy to understand, teach and put to work in our lives. I have created The William Glasser Institute to spread these ideas. I also believe that I have an obligation to defend and protect the legacy of not only what I have created over the past forty years, but also what I am still in the active process of creating.

I appreciate this opportunity to express how seriously I take this legacy.
Guidelines for Contributors

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