
Co-Operation and the Quality Classroom

Sample Lesson

Study Teams and Group Activities

If you register as an individual, ask a colleague or spouse to participate with you in discussion assignments. If that is not possible, use group activities for your own personal reflection.

Application Assignments and Access to a Classroom

If you are an administrator, counselor, or do not currently have access to a classroom, instead of reporting on implementation of application assignments describe how you plan to use the course concepts in your environment.

STUDY SESSION #1

Choice Theory and Cooperative Learning: An Introduction

SESSION GOAL:

To have participants explore the changes that schools need to consider if they are to adequately prepare their students for life in our changing world.

PREPARATION:

- ☞ Read and discuss the Overview and Expectations for this Session #1.
- ☞ Read chapter one in the course text, *Choice Theory in the Classroom* by Dr. William

Glasser. Discuss the following questions:

1) Discuss the specific goal that Dr. Glasser sets for the instructional group he calls a “learning team.”

2) What points does he make to support the need for this change?

3) In what ways does the experience of teachers on your team support or deny Dr.

Glasser’s points?

4) What do you believe Dr. Glasser means when he states that there is a need for creating “classes that are significantly more satisfying” than those we have now?

5) What is Dr. Glasser's definition of a good school?

OVERVIEW:

This first Study Session establishes a rationale for the course.

Schools today are suffering from a number of problems, not the least of which is that students are not learning at the pace we as educators would like them to.

As educators, we have been taught to “take choice in the classroom” and to “motivate students to learn.” The implication of this approach is that if students are not doing as we say, if they are not learning, then it is up to us to find some way to make them learn, to coerce them by giving them rewards when they do as they are told and/or by punishing them when they do not meet our expectations. These methods are based on the stimulus-response theory of behavior, which says that we are controlled by what happens in the world around us. Of course, if the stimulus-response theory is inaccurate, then nothing we do to motivate our students with extrinsic controls will ever have a lasting effect on their lives.

This course is about a different way of understanding behavior and working with students. It is based on Dr. William Glasser's Choice Theory, which states that behavior is guided by a set of basic needs that are genetically implanted in all of us. Knowing that your students are motivated by these internal needs (and not by external rewards or punishment), empowers you to design lessons and activities that increase learning as they fulfill those needs. One such approach to

classroom instruction and management is cooperative learning as developed by Drs. David and Roger Johnson.

The first session will look at how the concepts of Choice Theory and Cooperative Learning complement each other and together can form the basis for more effective instruction and behavior management.

You will first learn that students cannot be coerced to either learn or behave. External pressures and rewards are at best a very short-term solution. Rather, Dr. Glasser's Choice Theory states that student behavior is internally motivated by a desire to fulfill one or more of four psychological needs (to belong, to be free, to gain power and to have fun).

To work with students effectively, both in terms of instruction and behavior management, classroom strategies need to be designed that provide for basic need fulfillment. As what we do in the classroom satisfies these needs, students naturally become more involved and cooperative.

Co-Operation is the key to successful education. You will notice that ***Co-Operation*** is spelled with a hyphen. This is done to emphasize that the “operation” or management of the classroom should not be the sole responsibility of the teacher. It should be, indeed must be, the co-responsibility of the teacher and the students. Without ***Co-Operation***, the only alternative is coercion . . . and attempting to coerce students into doing anything can be a less than rewarding experience.

As you will learn throughout this course, there are practical ways to make user-friendly changes in classroom activities that meet students' needs, increase their productivity and improve the quality of their work.

The business community and society are both calling for a new high school graduate; an achiever, a can-do person who is motivated to continue learning, to be responsible, to solve problems, to think creatively and to relate positively to other people. By blending the concepts of Choice Theory and Cooperative Learning, this course introduces you to a new paradigm in education, a classroom partnership between teachers and students. Called ***Co-Operation***, the model empowers you to produce the new student we all want – an achiever.

EXPECTATIONS:

By the end of this session, participants will:

- ✧ Be able to distinguish between the stimulus-response and Choice Theory explanations of human behavior.
- ✧ Understand why it is not possible to coerce students to behave or learn.
- ✧ Be able to identify Choice Theory concepts that will improve their own classroom situations and help their students.
- ✧ Be able to explain how cooperative learning strategies can help students to satisfy their basic psychological needs.

GROUP ACTIVITY:

PREPARATION FOR VIDEO VIEWING.

As a team, prior to viewing the video, discuss each of the issues/questions and respond as directed.

TOO MANY STUDENTS IN TODAY'S SCHOOLS ARE NOT RESPONDING TO THEIR TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL EFFORTS. THESE STUDENTS ARE CALLED "UNMOTIVATED," "AT RISK," ETC.

WITH YOUR STUDY TEAM, DISCUSS WHAT YOU BELIEVE CAUSES THESE STUDENTS TO "DROP OUT" OF THE LEARNING PROCESS. AFTER YOUR DISCUSSION, LIST FIVE KEY FACTORS THAT HINDER STUDENT LEARNING. AFTER YOU HAVE LISTED THE FACTORS, RANK THEM FROM 1 TO 5; 1 BEING THE LOWEST AND 5 THE HIGHEST OF IMPORTANCE.

 Rank


With your study team, discuss what you believe educators, parents and/or politicians might do to neutralize each of the factors. After your discussion, describe actions that you believe can be taken to improve learning in our schools.


 Actions that could improve learning in our school.

Some educators take the position that if a student chooses not to learn what you are teaching, there is nothing you can do.

How do you feel about this statement? Share your reaction with the other members of your team.

Bring to mind a recent lesson that you feel really had students involved and excited about learning. How would you describe the lesson? Exciting? Involving? Fun? Challenging? Discuss this with your study team. See if you can identify elements that were common to all of your teams' successful lessons. Please write your description in the space provided below.

 Words to describe your successful lesson:

 Elements that were common to two or more lessons discussed in my study team.

VIEWING ACTIVITY:

As a team, view the video for session one, "Choice Theory and Cooperative Learning." This tape addresses the main problem in today's schools: many students are not learning. It presents Dr. Glasser's Choice Theory and shows how its application can help students succeed. Also presented is an introduction to cooperative learning and how it fits with Dr. Glasser's theories.

As you view the video, make notes, in the **STUDY SESSION NOTES**, of the ideas and activities that you will want to discuss with your group.

VIDEO DISCUSSION ACTIVITY:

After viewing the video, discuss the content presented with your study team. (You may want to view the video a second time stopping it as necessary to discuss the content.) Suggested topics for reviewing the content:

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- Discuss the differences between the stimulus-response and Choice Theory explanations of human behavior. Discuss each approach in terms of student responsibility.
 - Dr. Glasser states that external motivation (rewards and punishment) will have, if any, only short-term positive results. What has been your experience in attempting to externally motivate students? What has been the students' response
 - Discuss the difference between having “teachers and students cooperate in the classroom” and having “teachers and students *co-operate* the classroom.”
 - Dr. Glasser states that schools should be run without fear and that no students in school should be coerced into doing anything. What is your reaction to this?
 - What role has fear played in the ways schools have been run in the past?
 - Dr. Johnson states that the one room schoolhouse was a very cooperative place. Since the one room school, what is the most drastic change that has been made in the way we educate our children? What do you believe educators now do better than in the days of the one room school? What do they now do that is worse?
 - Drs. Glasser and Johnson agree that educators need to spend more time on why we are teaching something to our students. Do you believe you should tell students why it is important for them to learn what you are teaching? Discuss this in terms of Choice Theory and students' psychological needs.
 - How do you believe understanding Choice Theory may help you to reach students who have been identified as “at risk”?


VIDEO DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

Generalizations...

WORKSHEET

Instinctively, many teachers design lessons that meet students' basic psychological needs (belonging, freedom, power, fun). Now, take an inventory of the types of activities in your classroom that you feel satisfy one or more of your students' basic needs. Under each of the basic needs listed below, describe a lesson or activity that you have used in the past that you believe satisfies that need.

- The need to belong:

 The need to gain power:

 The need to be free:

 The need to have fun:

GROUP ACTIVITY

Share the above responses with your study team.

- Discuss which need fulfilling activities were common to members of the group. Why do you believe this is the case? Which of the activities listed seemed to be most popular with the students? How many of students' basic needs did this popular activity satisfy?
- What have you learned in this activity that you believe will help you design more effective lesson plans in the future? Please record significant ideas in the spaces provided below.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY:

Please read the following paragraph taken from Dr. Jane Bluestein's *21st Century Discipline*:

“ The bad news is that our systems of education are still, for the most part, set up to crank out factory workers. While present-day businesses lean more toward networking, cooperation, negotiation, flexibility, creativity and divergence, students schooled in a system that values factory-era skills might have difficulty making the transition to an information-age work place. Even when individual teachers recognize these needs and make a commitment to build toward the future, we

are so much a product of win-lose, competitive goal structures that our teaching may lack consistency between well-intentioned goals and our ability to carry them out. ”

- 📎 First of all, Dr. Bluestein refers to changes that have taken place in our society and the type of student that education now needs to produce. What types of societal changes have you observed that will affect the type of students our schools need to produce?
Changes...

- 📎 Now, reread the last sentence of the above paragraph. How do you believe an understanding of Choice Theory can help address Dr. Bluestein's concerns?
Your belief...

GROUP ACTIVITY:

- 📎 Share your answers to the above with your study team. With your team reach consensus as to an answer to Dr. Bluestein's concerns expressed in the last sentence. Write that answer below.

KEY POINTS:

- ⇨ OUR SOCIETY HAS CHANGED:
 - We no longer need to produce students who simply follow instructions and then fall into place in an industrial society.
 - We now need to produce students with confidence, self-esteem, creativity and a desire to achieve.
 - To produce different results, educators must use different methods.
- ⇨ CHOICE THEORY AND COOPERATIVE LEARNING
 - Students cannot be coerced to behave or learn.
 - Students are internally motivated by basic needs to behave/learn.
 - Choice Theory states behavior/learning is done to fulfill basic needs.
 - Cooperative Learning is a way of teaching that fulfills these needs.

⇒ WE NEED TO EMPOWER STUDENTS

- To see learning as valuable and need satisfying.
- To cooperate in the learning process.
- To take charge of their own learning.

CLASSROOM APPLICATION ASSIGNMENT

Have a brief discussion with your students regarding cooperation and the place it plays in their lives at school and at home. You should remain non-judgmental and keep the discussion open-ended. You may want to have your students consider whether cooperation is more important in today's world than it was in the past. Take notes during the discussion for the following Learning Report.

📎 Discussion Notes...

LEARNING REPORT

Please turn to the Learning Report for this section and complete the work as directed.

(Note: All Learning Reports have been placed at the back of the book so that they can be easily removed and submitted for evaluation.)

Notes from Study Session #1...

Ideas to discuss...