

Quality Educational Programs, Inc.

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# **Introduction to Choice Theory: Teaching Students Responsible Behavior**

**A Distance Learning Graduate Course  
Based on the Work of Dr. William Glasser**

**Course Syllabus**

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When a superior man knows the causes which make instruction successful, and those which make it of no effect, he can be a teacher of others. Thus in his teaching, he leads and does not drag; he strengthens and does not discourage; he opens the way but does not conduct to the end without the learner's own efforts. Leading and not dragging produces harmony. Strengthening and not discouraging makes attainment easy. Opening the way and not conducting to the end makes the learner thoughtful. He who produces harmony, easy attainment, and thoughtfulness may be pronounced a skillful teacher.

– Confucius,  
Book XVI – *HSIO KI* (Record on the Subject of  
Education)

A boss drives. A leader leads.  
A boss relies on authority. A leader relies on cooperation.  
A boss says "I." A leader says "We."  
A boss creates fear. A leader creates confidence.  
A boss knows how. A leader shows how.  
A boss creates resentment. A leader breeds enthusiasm.  
A boss fixes blame. A leader fixes mistakes.  
A boss makes work drudgery. A leader makes work interesting.

Cited in Dr. William Glasser's  
*The Quality School, Managing Students Without Coercion.*

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# Rationale

## The Problem

Throughout the country, there is a growing concern that children are not as interested as they should be in gaining an education. Analysis of the facts supports this concern: drop-out rates are too high, attendance rates are too low, school progress records indicate too little concern on the part of students in committing themselves to the real work of learning and, in some urban settings, violent behavior is on the rise.

## More Control is Not the Solution

When problems become critical, those involved become desperate and look for a quick solution to their plight. And so it is in education. It would appear that the solution to education's discipline problems is simply to find better ways to control students. There are many authoritative models of classroom management designed to stop unwanted behavior. The problem is that stopping student's misbehavior does nothing to teach them how to behave more responsibly.

Children are taught that coercion has no place in a civilized world. To be consistent, coercion should have no place in education. Students cannot be coerced to learn, nor can they be forced to behave in a certain manner. The choice of how to behave is just that, "a choice." What education needs to do is to teach students how to make better choices.

## A Solution: Responsibility Training:

There is a distinct difference between "Teaching Students Responsible Behavior" and the behavior improvement programs offered by other organizations. Dr. Glasser has authored five books that present, refine, and apply the concepts of Choice Theory – a new and empowering explanation of human behavior. Responsibility Training, based on a solid foundation of Choice Theory, produces observable and continuing improvement in student performance. Students learn to take responsible and effective control of their lives because their teachers have gained knowledge and skills that produce those results. Over the past ten years, Choice Theory and Responsibility Training have dramatically improved the lives of teachers and their students throughout our country. Out of that real success comes "Teaching Students Responsible Behavior," a true state-of-the-art-program.

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# Choice Theory

Choice Theory teaches that the brain gives everyone the self-directing capability that is required to fulfill life needs. As a result, behavior is chosen in a continuing attempt to make life the kind of experience that everyone wants it to be – a "good life." To guide us in this life making effort, we have a built-in set of basic needs that require continuous fulfillment. To understand this good life process and its impact on education, one must understand the basic human needs and examine how the brain seeks to fulfill them.

These basic needs are built into our genetic code:

## Physical Needs

Surviving: This need mandates that we behave in ways that produce food, shelter, and safety.

## Psychological Needs

Belonging: This need requires that we be connected to our world: to be with people who know and care about us and to be accepted – or even better, appreciated.

Gaining Power: This need demands that we learn; i.e., gain knowledge and skill to use in our lives. The more we know, the more we can do. Knowledge and skill are the basic ingredients of self-esteem.

Having Fun: This need charges that we behave in ways that bring joy and satisfaction into our lives. Having fun strengthens us psychologically and physically. It results from accomplishment, recreation, and entertainment.

Being Free: This need obligates us to be in control of our lives; to set goals, to make plans, to choose behaviors, to evaluate results and to decide what to do next.

Choice Theory states that, with these ever present needs, students and teachers go about the work of living. They choose to work, play, eat, rest, talk, run, sleep and do countless other things that make up the daily flow of life. As they engage in each activity, they take in the scene around them by collecting information with their eyes, ears, nose, and skin – their sensory system. They use this input to help them determine if what is going on around them meets their needs. Their brain keeps asking the question, "Is what is

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happening here and now good for me?" To provide an answer to that question, the mind continuously presents "good life" pictures. These are pictures of being secure, having friends, being in charge, having fun, and being free. Simultaneously, the brain forms a picture of what is really happening. It is like having a split screen television: one side shows what ought to be happening, one side shows what is really happening. When these pictures do not match, there is distress. And when this distress is severe enough, the discomfort drives people to choose a different way to behave to produce a more satisfying result.

All children come to school with similar pictures in their minds. They want to belong and be liked. They want to gain power, to learn and have status. They want to have fun, to be recognized and be happy. They want to be free, to be their own person and make their own choices. In short, they want to fulfill their basic needs through school activities.

However, for many children, these "good life" pictures do not match reality. As a result, these distressed students have no choice but to change their pictures of a good life. To belong, they see themselves with students who are not accepted; to gain power, they adopt roles such as the clown, the rule-breaker or the enforcer; to have fun, they excel at keeping other people, especially teachers, off-balance by their unpredictable behavior; and to be free, they become increasingly independent and hard to control.

Responsibility is literally "the ability to respond," the ability to react to input, the ability to respond to the world around us. Those students that we call "irresponsible" or "disruptive," do not have this ability. They feel that they are trapped, that they have no control, no ability to respond to reality. And since they feel that they cannot change their pictures of reality, they must change their "good life" pictures, to down-grade them in an attempt to rationalize and be happy with their life.

Responsibility Training is Choice Theory in action. It empowers students to regain control over their lives. It is a means of giving students a step-by-step process to understand the factors that influence their behavior, to process that information and then to take control over their own lives, their "real-life pictures," and to grow toward being responsible, productive and happy members of society.

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## Course Title

"Introduction to Choice Theory: Teaching Students Responsible Behavior"

## Course Description

"Introduction to Choice Theory: Teaching Students Responsible Behavior" is a three semester (5 quarter) hour graduate course designed to give teachers the theory and skills to teach students how to take responsibility for their own behavior in school. Based on the work of Dr. William Glasser, this course leads participants through a series of learning activities designed to instruct them how to teach their students the concepts of Choice Theory and to plan and implement a program of Responsibility Training in their classrooms.

## Course Goal

The goal of this course is to teach participants how to work with all students in ways that will produce responsible behavior, enhance student self-esteem, and help students learn to take positive control of their own success in school and in life.

## Course Outline

In the following outline, the term "Course of Study" refers to a programmed study package that includes required reading, discussion questions, learning activities, worksheets, application assignments and progress reports.

### Phase I: Learning Dr. William Glasser's Choice Theory

#### Session #1: Choice Theory: It Makes a Difference

Goal: This session will provide course participants with an understanding of how using Choice Theory can make a positive difference in the education of their students.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Course of Study, Video: "Choice Theory: Successfully Educating Today's Students."

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**Session #2: Choice Theory In Schools: An Introduction**

Goal: This session will teach participants the concepts of Choice Theory and demonstrate how this knowledge can give them a better understanding of the behavior of their students.

Instructional Materials: Text, Resource Book, Course of Study, Video: "Choice Theory: An Introduction."

**Session #3: Choice Theory: Instructing from Posters**

Goal: This session will prepare participants for teaching Choice Theory to students as the foundation for their learning to behave responsibly in school and in life.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, Choice Theory Instructional Posters.

**Session #4: Choice Theory: Preparing a Teaching Plan**

Goal: This session will assist participants in preparing an instructional plan for teaching Choice Theory concepts to their students as the foundation for a Responsibility Training project.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, Posters, Video: "Starting with the Basics: A Choice Theory Vocabulary with Fourth Graders."

**Session #5: Choice Theory: Improving the Learning Environment**

Goal: This session prepares teachers to use Choice Theory concepts with their students as the basis for creating a learning environment that leads students to improve their classroom performance.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, Choice Theory Instruction Plan.

**Phase II: Teaching to be Responsible and Successful in School**

**Session #6: Responsibility Training: Learning the Concepts**

Goal: This session introduces the concepts of lead-management and Responsibility Training to course participants and guides them in the development of a unifying philosophy for their classroom.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Course of Study, Posters, Video: "Responsibility Training: An Introduction."

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**Session #7: Responsibility Training: Planning a Program**

Goal: This session teaches and guides participants in the development of a viable program of Responsibility Training for their classrooms.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Course of Study, Responsibility Training Handbook, Video: “Making Time-Out a Plus: Getting Third Graders to Feel Comfortable with the Planning Forms.”

**Session #8: Responsibility Training: Planning for Implementation**

Goal: This session helps participants develop of a plan to successfully implement the Responsibility Training Program they have designed for use in their classrooms.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, Video: “Opening the Door to Self-Evaluation: Acquainting Seventh Grade Students with the Process.”

**Session #9: Responsibility Training: Implementing Your Program**

Goal: This session helps participants to learn how to teach their students the skills they must develop to implement their Responsibility Training Program.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Text, Course of Study, RTP Handbook.

**Session #10: Responsibility Training: Managing Your Program**

Goal: This session creates a classroom partnership for managing a successful Responsibility Training Program.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Text, Course of Study, PERT Worksheets.

**Phase III: Success-Making: Teaching Students To Be Responsible And Successful in School**

**Session #11: Success Making: A Problem Solving/Goal Reaching Strategy for Individual Students of Groups of Students**

Goal: This session introduces course participants to the concepts of Success Making, a process that converts problems into progress.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Text, Course of Study, Posters, Video: “ Success Making: An Introduction.”

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**Session #12: Success-Making: G-PAR, A Teamwork Activity**

Goal: This session helps teachers improve their Responsibility Training Programs by learning to organize a PERT process that uses G-PAR to solve classroom problem and increase student success.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, Project Evaluation, and Review Team Log.

**Session #13: Success Making: G-PAR, A Personal Approach**

Goal: This session helps teachers improve their Responsibility Training Program by learning to organize an Individual Assistance Program to use as a supplementary pathway to students success.

Instructional Materials: Resource Book, Text, Course of Study, Individual Assistance Paper, Video: “Helping Students Learn How to Be Responsible for Improving Their Life: A Demonstration.”

**Session #14: Success-Making: Planning for Continuing Success**

Goal: This session will assist teachers in assessing their Responsibility Training Program and in using the results to prepare for improving its success.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study, RTP Handbook, and Teaching Power Worksheets.

**Session #15: Success-Making: Sharing Success and Looking Ahead**

Goal: This session prepares participants to evaluate their own experience in the course. Participants will review progress, consolidate gains and lay a foundation for expanding success in continuing to implement their Responsibility Training Program.

Instructional Materials: Text, Course of Study.

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## Participant Characteristics

This course is designed for teachers and administrators in grades kindergarten through 12. Participants must have a bachelor's degree and a valid teacher credential (if applicable). There are no other prerequisites.

## Instructional Materials

Instructional materials for this course include:

a.) Basic text: *Choice Theory: A New Psychology of Personal Freedom*. William Glasser, M.D. New York: HarperCollins, 1998.

b.) Course media:

Video: "Successfully Educating Today's Students."

Video: "Choice Theory: An Introduction."

Video: "Responsibility Training: An Introduction."

Video: "Success Making: An Introduction."

Video: "Starting with the Basics : A Choice Theory Vocabulary."

Video:"Making Time-Out a Plus."

Video:"Opening the Door to Self-Evaluation"

Video:"Helping Students Learn Be Responsible for Improving Their Life."

c.) Course of Study Workbook:

This book contains summaries of course content, pre-video viewing activities, discussion questions, group activities, worksheets, application assignments, and journal recording. Included in the workbook are:

- i.) Choice Theory Posters.
- ii.) Choice Theory Practice Posters.
- iii.) Responsibility Training Posters.
- iv.) Success Making Posters.
- v.) Individual Assistance Paper.
- vi.) G-PAR Problem Management Logbook.
- vii.) G-PAR Teaching Materials.
- viii.) PERT Worksheets.
- ix.) Sample Personal Handbook.
- x.) Responsibility Training Plan Book.
- xi.) Basic Needs Indicator and Calendar.

d.) Bibliography and Recommended Reading

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## Learning Activities

1. For each of the fifteen (15) sections of this course, participants will complete the following activities:

- a.) Read the assigned chapters of the course text.
- b.) Read supplemental articles in the course of study book.
- c.) Participate in a study/preparation activity with a colleague.

NOTE: While benefits are greatest when participants take this course as a part of a study team, participants can successfully complete course requirements by working with a friend or colleague who is not enrolled in the course; or, by reflecting upon the material and considering how they might use it in their teaching situations.

- d.) View instructional videos.
- e.) Discuss (see above note) course material in terms of participants' own students.
- f.) Record summary of discussion activities in progress report
- g.) Design, implement, and evaluate an application of course content in their teaching situation.

NOTE: If participants are taking this course during the summer or at a time when they do not have access to a classroom, they follow these directions with respect to classroom application projects.

1. If they choose to design a classroom lesson or activity for their project, they design it for a class that they have had in the past.
2. Instead of implementing their activity in a classroom, they share their activity design with a colleague and ask for their input.
3. Based on the input received from their colleagues, they make whatever changes they feel are appropriate to improve their activity design.

- h.) Summarize classroom application design, application experience, and evaluation in progress report.

2. Submit a final paper.

## Course Outcomes

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As a result of their work in this course, participants will be able to:

- 1.) Develop, utilize, and evaluate Choice Theory strategies for motivating students to produce quality academic performance.
- 2.) Demonstrate a comprehension of human behavior as a response to basic human needs.
- 3.) Develop, utilize, and evaluate strategies for teaching students to replace unacceptable behaviors with responsible behaviors that produce success.
- 4.) Develop, utilize, and evaluate alternative classroom activities based on Choice Theory concepts.
- 5.) Develop, implement, and evaluate classroom activities to teach Choice Theory concepts to students.
- 6.) Develop, implement, and evaluate a responsibility education program.
- 7.) Develop, implement, and evaluate success-making strategies designed to help students develop problem-solving skills.

## **Progress Reporting and Evaluation**

Participant achievement will be measured by a combination of the following:

1. An evaluation of participant's 15 progress reports. (Outcomes 1, 2, 3, and 4.)

Each progress report will be evaluated for:

- completeness and quality of responses.
- accuracy of information.
- appropriateness of classroom application.
- quality of reflection.

2. An evaluation of participant's professional paper. (Outcomes 5, 6, and 7.)

The professional paper will be evaluated for:

- inclusion of required components.
- synthesis and analysis of course concepts.
- presentation in an organized, professional manner.

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## Bibliography

### Books:

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- Floyd, Carleen, *My Quality World*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1990.
- Glasser, W. *Choice Theory in the Classroom*. New York: Harper & Row, 1986.
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- Glasser, W. *The Quality School, Managing Students Without Coercion*. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.
- Glasser, W. *The Quality School Teacher*. New York: Harper Collins, 1993.
- Gossen, Diane. *Restitution*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1991
- Gossen, Diane. *My Child is a Pleasure to Live With*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1985.
- Good, Perry. *In Pursuit of Happiness*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1992.
- Haberman, Delores, *Guidebook for In Pursuit of Happiness*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1992.
- Johnson, D.W., Johnson, R. with Holubec, E. *Structuring Cooperative Learning: Lesson Plans for Teachers*. Edina, Minnesota: Interaction Book Company, 1987.
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- Sullo, Robert *Teach Them to Be Happy*. Chapel Hill, North Carolina: New View Publications, 1989.
- Walton, Mary. *The Deming Management Method*. New York, Perigee Books, 1986.

### Periodicals:

- Glasser, W. "The Quality School." *Phi Delta Kappan* 71, 424-435.
- Glasser, W. "Self-Importance Boosts Learning." *The School Administrator* 45, 1: 16-18.

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## Recommended Reading

- Coles, Gerald. *The Learning Mystique*. New York: Pantheon, 1988.
- DeVries D., and Edwards, K. "Learning Games and Student Teams: Their Effects on Classroom Process." *American Educational Research Journal*, 10, 307-318.
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- Gardner, H. *Frames of Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 1983.
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- Kidder, T. *Among Schoolchildren*. New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1989.
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- Pepitone, J. *Children in Cooperation and Competition*. Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, 1980.
- Powers, W. *Behavior: The Control of Perception*. Chicago: Aldine, 1973.
- Shaefer, R. J. *The School As A Center of Inquiry*. New York: Harper & Row, 1987.
- Wubbolding, R. E. *Using Reality Therapy*. New York: Harper & Row, 1988.