Rainshadow Community
Charter High School
Review 2012

SHINE

IN THIS ISSUE

Glasser's Choice Theory: A Review

Choice Theory

Glasser's work has been seminal in looking at human behavior. Not surprisingly, his work has translated well to transforming schools across the nation. The key aspect to William Glasser's work is his "choice theory." This theory states that:

1. All we do is behave
2. Almost all behavior is chosen
3. We are driven by our genes to satisfy five basic needs: survival, love and belonging, power, freedom, and fun.

After survival, the most key need is love and belonging as it is the requisite that satisfies and supports all other needs. Within a school system, working with students and groups, it is the major ingredient in successful classrooms.

The Seven Caring Habits

External control psychology is the psychology of most people throughout the world. Use of this type of control leads to the seven deadly habits within relationships: criticizing, blaming, complaining, nagging, threatening, punishing, and/or bribing/reward to control. These habits are ultimately destructive to relationships because they destroy the ability of one or both members in the relationship to find satisfaction within the relationship. As a result, one or both members can feel disconnected. Disconnectedness is the source of many human problems, including difficulties in school.

Glasser proposes seven caring habits that support his choice theory. These habits replace the external control psychology. The

Rainshadow Community Charter High School 2012

Creating Empowered Community Members Through Real World Education

As staff and faculty, we work hard to expose students to a variety of experiences in the local community. We want our students out learning from the world and feeling empowered to have an active voice in changing the world. Our students should be out there getting their hands dirty and their minds active as they grow as young adults.

seven habits include: supporting, encouraging, listening, accepting, trusting, respecting, and negotiating differences.

The Ten Axioms of Choice Theory

In looking at your relationships with your students and your fellow staff/faculty members, choice theory takes some burden off of you as the teacher. You don't have to be in control all the time. You can only take responsibility for your own actions. Using the Seven Caring Habits, you support positive relationships because you recognize that you cannot control anyone but yourself. You also model this idea to your students, and fellow employees.

Glasser has taken his Choice Theory and condensed it into ten axioms. These axioms should serve as reminders to you as you begin to work with the theory in your classroom.

1. The only person whose behavior we can control is our own.

2. All we can give another person is information.

3. All long lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.

4. The problem relationship is always a part of our present life.

5. What happened in the past has everything to do with what we are today, but we can only satisfy our basic needs right now and plan to continue satisfying them in the future.

6. We can only satisfy our needs by satisfying the pictures in our Quality World.

7. All we do is behave.

8. All behavior is Total Behavior and is made up of four components: acting, thinking, feeling and physiology.

9. All Total Behavior is chosen, but we only have direct control over acting and thinking components. We can only control our feeling and physiology indirectly through how we choose to act and think.

10. All Total Behavior is designated by verbs and named by the part that is most recognizable.

We cannot choose how our students will act. We can only choose how we both create the environment for them to act in, and how we will respond to their actions within the classroom. As educators, this may be the most important job/lesson we model for our students.

Glasser, William (1998). *Choice Theory: The New Psychology of Personal Freedom*. New York: Harper Paperbacks.

The Honeymoon is Over: Creating a Climate of Respect

So, you're in week five of the school year. Count day is over, and the new students entering has slowed down to a trickle. The early excitement over coming back to school has started to dwindle, and some of the real issues are beginning to appear. This is the time of the school year when the school climate can really start to deteriorate.

The first step in looking at the school climate is to identify what makes for a positive school climate. The authors of this article highlight the key elements of a positive school climate. In such a climate:

1. People are engaged and respected.

2. Students, families, and educators work together to develop and contribute to a shared school vision.

3. Educators model and nurture an attitude that emphasizes the benefits and satisfaction of learning.

4. Each person contributes to the operation of the school and the care of the physical environment (National School Climate Council, 2007)

To get to this ideal image, the authors of this article propose four key goals.

Goal 1: Create a Democratic Community

Listen to your students and families. Think about ways to involve students in the decision making processes of the school. What does Rainshadow do? Is it effective?

Goal 2: Support Students and Teachers

A common reason people act disrespectful is because they feel disrespected themselves. "Emotions are contagious." When we feel listened to, taken seriously,

appreciated, and respected, we tend to put forth the same behaviors towards others. But it is not only students who need to be supported. Teachers need to have nonjudgemental forums for sharing ideas and concerns. Opinions and ideas need to be shared and valued.

Goal 3: Ensure a Safe School
Having a safe school means that both teachers and students feel socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically safe. If students or teachers feel unsafe, it can undermine any kind of respectful norms the school aspires to.

"To promote safe schools, we must help students, parents, and school personnel become upstanders, that is people who notice and respond in socially responsible ways to cruel, mean, or bullying behavior" (Cohen, Cardillo, and Pickeral, 2011). Rather than promoting "upstander" behavior through signs, posters, or pledges, it may be important to promote more visible learning objectives into curriculum to address school safety.

Goal 4: Promote Student Engagement
Students who are engaged, rather than bored, are more likely to feel safe and supported to foster positive change in their school community in authentic and rich ways. Students who are engaged have bought in to the model of the school, and are therefore more protective of it.

As you look to create a positive climate in your classroom, remember these things: respect fosters respect. There are many ways that your students will feel respected. One key way is for your students to feel as though they have a say in the way that the school and classroom are operating. This doesn't mean that all the school norms should be changed, but it does mean that subtle changes can be made to the classroom to invite more student involvment. Create opportunities for group decision making, and discussion. Think about using more group projects in your class. Find ways to allow more students to share their ideas in the classroom, not just through speaking and writing. Finally, open communication lines with a little conflict in the classroom. Discuss a controversial issue, and show students how to have an appropriate conversation that is productive and centers on the issue and its potential solutions.

As an instructor, you have a job to pay attention to how you are interacting with students and how they are interacting with each other. Promote a positive climate through your words, behaviors, and actions in the classroom. Students will model your behaviors.

Cohen, J., Cardillo, R., & Pickeral, T. (2011). Creating a Climate of Respect. *Educational Leadership*, 69(1), 80-82.

Using Technology as a Tool: Teaching with Interactive Whiteboards

Marzano discusses his findings on research related to the success in using interactive whiteboards. Previous to his research, little was available as to how successful this technology was. Some of his key findings include:

1. In general, the use of interactive whiteboards was associated with a 16 percentile point gain in student achievement

2. Students were even more successful, with a 26 percentile point gain, using learner-response devices such as handheld voting devices

3. Use of graphics and other representations of information (pictures, Google Earth, video clips, etc.) was also associated with a 26 percentile point gain.

These findings, however, were not all perfect. In fact, in 23 percent of the classrooms observed in the study, better results were achieved without the interactive whiteboards. Some pitfalls of the technology included:

1. The learner response devices were used, but little was done with the findings.

2. Enough time to analyze the visual and engaging content, no interaction with each other related to the content being presented, rushing through

3. Too much stimuli and visuals

4. Too much attention to reinforcing features and "gadgets"

The tools we now have available to us can create a classroom of investigation and discovery, provided we are using the technology well. Some suggestions from Marzano include that teachers think through how they

intend to organize information, developing meaningful segments before jumping into the creation of the digital slideshow or other presentation.

Teachers should continue to use engaging visuals, but only if they compliment important information. Too much stimuli can become a distraction.

Teachers need to allow time to process information through discussion after using responsive devices, such as voting devices. Discussion of both correct and incorrect responses should be encouraged.

Finally, when teachers use reinforcing features (of any kind), the focus needs to remain on why the answer/response is correct or incorrect as opposed to merely for the extrinsic reward. Interactive whiteboards are a powerful teaching tool, however they are no replacement for great teaching.

Marzano, Robert J. (2009). Teaching with interactive whiteboards. *Educational Leadership*, 67(3), 80-82.

Assessment Is...

Directly linked to what we value as a school. Assessment can take on a variety of appearances in the classroom, and ultimately there is no "one size fits all" approach that will paint the perfect picture of student understanding. This brief review will be revisited as we continue to evaluate our portfolio system and its effectiveness. In this review, formative assessment will be discussed as well as sample assessments and their effectiveness for different types of learning targets.

Formative assessment has the purpose of improving learning and achievement, rather than measuring knowledge attainment at the end of the experience (summative). It is a process, and is carried out day by day, minute by minute. Formative assessment is focused on the learning process, is collaborative in nature, and is fluid. Both teachers and learners work together, adopting the role of "intentional" learners.

In formative assessment, which really is the heart of the Rainshadow assessment plan, students are the most integral part of the process. It is through their goal setting and self-assessment that the greatest growth occurs. Added to this, teachers help facilitate the process through ongoing feedback that "feeds forward," development of shared learning targets, and strategic questioning.
Formative assessment is a philosophy of collaboration that recognizes that students learn best when they know and understand the learning goals. Teachers also recognize students as individuals who can regulate their own learning. The teachers role in the process is one of knowing student ability levels, providing meaningful feedback, conducting strategic conversations between students, and helping students to develop the motivation to be successful in the classroom.

There is no prescriptive way to conduct formative assessment. It is more of a philosophy. Some examples of this assessment include discussion, journaling, conversation, project rubric, portfolio. It can be a test item, or a test, but only if that is the method that the target information is to be gathered. The ultimate goal of the process is that students will understand their own learning habits, and become motivated through self-efficacy, self-assessment, self-regulation, and self-attribution to learn and be/do more.

There are two important ways that we can begin this process in our classrooms come August 29. The first is that we begin our class with the philosophy of a partnership, one which will hopefully result in students feeling more self-sufficient and independent in the classroom. To do this, it is important that we as teachers lay the groundwork to show that their input in their own learning process is valued and important. The second way we can begin the process is by involving students in a benchmarking process and/or a goal setting process. The information gathered through this process will support the student throughout the semester, and perhaps the school year.

In your day to day efforts, strive to use some of these key formative strategies:

1. Questioning: This can be through direct discussion, warm-ups, journaling, or think-pair-sharing. Do this daily, and think about ending your class with the same strategy. Listen to your class.

2. Planning and envisioning: students create a plan for a project, what they wish to know, how they will go about their learning.

3. Using examples: use examples, good and bad, of previous assignments. Allow students to critique and discuss.
4. Using rubrics: teacher made rubrics can be handed out at the start of the assignment, and students can re-word the rubrics into more meaningful words. Students can use throughout the project to assess and revise their own work.

In the chart below, there are suggestions as to what types of assessment are appropriate to different forms of student targets. Once again, this has been printed with the goal of expanding discussion. There may be components that you disagree with on this chart. It is meant to be a starting point.

As you begin your class, think about how you can create a community of collaborators and goal setters, and think about how you can be conducting assessment as a process rather than a final outcome.

Moss, C. & Brookhart, S. (2009). *Advancing Formative Assessment in Every Classroom*, Alexandria, VA: Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1-43.

Chappuis, S., Chappuis, J. and Stiggins, R. (2009). The quest for quality. *Educational Leadership*, 67(3), 14-19.

"Screenagers"

The student population has changed. We now teach in a world where screen time is on the increase for all of our students: ipods, cell phones, television, computers have become as integral to a students educational experience as books. How a modern educational system uses this information is debated.

Can we enrich a students educational experience through technology? Are there any pitfalls of too much technology? How can cell phones and websites be used to enhance learning rather than be a sticking point for discipline? Are online learning experiences valid? These are the questions that a modern day teacher faces. Balance these questions with whatever school policies are in place, standardized goals, and technology limitations, and the debate becomes

Target to Be Assessed	Assessment Method			
	Selected response	Extended Written Response	Performance Assessment	Personal Communication
Knowledge Mastery	Good match for assessing mastery of elements of knowledge.	Good match for tapping understanding of relationships among elements of knowledge.	Not a good match—too time consuming to cover everything.	Can ask questions, evaluate answers and infer mastery—but a time-consuming option.
Reasoning Proficiency	Good match only for assessing understanding of some patterns of reasoning.	Written descriptions of complex problem solutions can provide a window into reasoning proficiency.	Can watch students solve some problems and infer reasoning proficiency.	Can ask student to "think aloud" or can ask followup questions to probe reasoning.
Skills	Not a good match. Can assess mastery of the knowledge prerequisites to skillful performance, but cannot rely on these to tap the skill itself.		Good match. Can observe and evaluate skills as they are being performed.	Strong match when skill is oral communication proficiency; not a good match otherwise.
Ability to Create Products	Not a good match. Can assess mastery of knowledge prerequisite to the ability to create quality products, but cannot use to assess the quality of products themselves.	Strong match when the product is written. Not a good match when the product is not written.	Good match. Can assess the attributes of the product itself.	Not a good match.

Source: Adapted from *Student-Involved Assessment for Learning*, 4th ed. (p. 69), by R. J. Stiggins, 2005, Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill/Prentice Hall. Copyright ©2005 by Pearson Education, Inc. Adapted by permission of Pearson Education, Inc.

more and more muddled.

The Next Generation

To current and future generations of learners, "the smartphone, the internet, and everything technological are not 'tools' at all-- they simply *are*" (Rosen, 12). The expectation of our current generation is that technology is there to do whatever it is they need it ito do. The "iGeneration" is a generation that has grown up with technology as an integral part of their existence and they are defined by their love of technology and media use, their love of networking and electronic communication, and their need to mulitask.

With this information in mind, lets now look at the strengths and pitfalls associated with this new "iGeneration."

Rosen, Larry D.. (2011). Teaching the igeneration. *Educational Leadership*, 68(5), 10-15.

Complex Text Concerns

More and more students are leaving high school not prepared to tackle the demands of college. 43% of students at two-year public colleges, and 29% of students at four-year institutions are not ready for the demands of college life. Bauerlaein feels that technology in high school classrooms does not help with this phenomenon, especially in the area of reading. Blogs, Facebook, wikis, even websites with embedded traditional texts are often causing students to have difficulty with more complex texts (those texts characterized by dense meanings, elaborate structure, more elaborate vocabulary, and subtle intentions) (Bauerlein, 29). The biggest difference between complex texts, and less complex texts is that complex texts require more work on the reader's behalf. Slow readings, reading and rereading, using a dictionary to support the reading: these are all examples of the strategies that one must employ to read a complex text. Students today are used to having the information at their fingertips, and are therefore less likely to work to decipher the meaning of more complex works.

The demands of complex texts include: 1)a willingness to look deeper, to probe into the text, and to read more slowly, 2) the capacity for uninterupted thinking, and the ability to let go of multitasking, 3) a receptivity to deep thinking, and the recognition that one may need to think for a while about the information before responding, and 4) develop a habit of slower reading.

Understanding this concept, and knowing what we know about the iGeneration and their need to be using technology and multitask, does this mean that we should completely discard our use of technology? No, but perhaps we need to make sure that we are finding a balance and utilize technology in a way that will support, not replace, the use of ones mind.

From reading this article, I am struck by the fact that I just recently gave and assignment to analyze a passage of Shakespeare and shared a website that would analyze his work and translate his work. Was this helpful to students? After thinking about it, the answer is no. It would have been better to cut out the computer for this assignment all together, and have students work through the meaning through their own experience of the text. Perhaps they wouldn't have gotten the answer right away, but they would have had the sense of understanding on a deeper level when they did decipher the meaning.

Bauerlein, Mark. (2011). Too dumb for complex texts? *Educational Leadership*, 68(5), 28-32.

Using Technology as a Tool

As a school, we are very technologically savvy. We use websites, class websites, projectors, video clips, etc. with ease. Our lessons are integrated with technology. We must be clear on our learning and performance goals for students, and not get caught up in the use of technology for technologies sake.

That being said, there is a new phenomenon that is being employed in the classroom. The use of the cell phone is now becoming more and more common place. Cell phones can be an inexpensive tool that students have more access to than they have access to computers and other devices. There are many reasons to use cell phones in the classroom. The first reason is that students love them, and are using them with greater ease than most adults. The learning curve to emply this technology is virtually nothing because most students are very comfortable with texting on their cell phones. The second reason is that cell phones have the capacity to

"facilitate learning antime, anywhere, from any source, at any pace" (Kolb, 40). Besides these main reasons, cell phones also allow for greater discussions into cell phone etiquette, 21st century preparedness, and they can even support visually or hearing impaired students.

What are some ways to use the cell phone in the classroom?

1) creating a podcast, oral quiz, or oral recording using a google voice account (google.com/voice) that will provide a free local phone number where students can leave recorded homework assignments or test answers. Teachers can also create a podcast account through iTunes that students can subscribe to.

2) using the GPS system in most phones, students can take pictures, audio clips, video, or text from different places and share the geography of their findings. Websites, such as flagr.com or geograffiti.com will actually create the map of the locations and findings at the location. This strategy encourages local research, historical understanding, geographic knowledge, and habitat knowledge among other things.

3) creating photo projects or photo stories by sending students away from school with a task to take certain types of pictures. For example, in a math class, perhaps students have to take pictures of various geometric shapes.

4) have an classroom response system, or clicker, so that students can take instant polls and quizzes using the cell phone as the clicker. Websites such as polleverywhere.com, wiffiti.com, and textthemob.com allow cell phones to turn into data capturing tools in the classroom. After asking a question of students, such as "define genre," students will text their answers which will immediately show up on the whiteboard with the use of these sites. This can serve as a great opening to the lesson.

These are just some of the many ways that cell phones can be used to support student learning in innovative ways. Engagement, and the "if you can't beat them, join them" mantra are two of the biggest reasons that the use of the cell phone may be the next great tool in the classroom.

Kolb, Liz. (2011). Adventures with cell phones. *Educational Leadership*, 68(5), 39-43.

The Use of Powerpoint

Once again, the focus of this discussion is not whether or not technology is being used, but how its being used. Much like the idea that technology can actually cause students to have difficulty with more complex texts, this discussion will propose that PowerPoint can actualy cause students to need to do less thinking and therefore less work.

The notion of presenting is a very one-sided notion, and perhaps this is the greatest concern. Students are happy to blindly copy the "important" information placed on the slide, rather than interact and question the information critically. Is the information being covered, or are we "dumbing down" the information by neatly packaging it for students?

So, should PowerPoint be eliminated, and should we teach as we did 20+ years ago? Again, the answer is an emphatic "no." The reality is that technology is a tool, but we must continually and consistently evaluate how we are using this tool to create lessons that stimulate students minds to work harder. Some tips to use PowerPoint more effectively include 1) create presentations with more questions than answers allowing students to derive information from discovery and discussion rather than a predetermined list of facts, 2) don't worry about the bells and whistles like transitions and sound effects and instead focus on creating challenging questions, and 3) don't turn off the lights while presenting as this can cause students to slip into sleep mode. (Isseks, 74)

The lessons from this magazine issue are that "good teaching trumps good tools." In athletics, there are those athletes who are naturally gifted and don't need to work hard. There are those athletes who are not athletically gifted and work hard to become talented. Finallly, it is those athletes who are both talented and work hard that excel in their sport. As teachers in the 21st century, it should be our goal to utlize the tool of technology in combination with our knowledge of good teaching to become the best teachers we can be.

Isseks, Mark. (2011). How powerpoint is killing education. *Educational Leadership*, 68(5), 74-76.

Technology Apps and Sites

Cool Apps! (Yes, apps... we are moving forward!)

EduTecher: This app allows you to find great educational links and other apps, video clips, and allows you to make a list of your favorite sites for next time. I found all my links from this app for today!

Common Core: An app that will provide you with the common core standards in a very usable format.

Google Sky: If you are looking out at the night sky, this is a great app that allows you to look through your phone and see the stars, planets, constellations in real time based upon where you are looking.

NASA: Great app that allows you to find current, up to the minute information related to all things NASA, including their extensive photo library and video clips.

Mindfulness Bell: So, you want to switch gears and get students focused on the present moment. Try this mindfulness bell in your classroom!

Classroom DOJO: If you are having behavioral issues in your classroom, this app will allow you to collect data on a day to day basis to show how your class is functioning.

Socrative: Use as an instant student response system on either your phone or computer! There is an app for students and an app for the instructor. Students login to a classroom (designated by a number) and you can ask questions for them to instantly respond to. The information is stored in your account. Really neat!

How Stuff Works (HSW): Great little snipits that you can read about, or watch, that describe "how stuff works."

MoMA: Museum of Modern Art App that shows works of art and tells their story.

Youth Group Games: Team builders galore! Check it out for descriptions of all kinds of team building experiences and ice breakers.

Toontastic: Students can create their own cartoons while learning about story maps. Awesome!

7 Billion: What will our world look like when we reach 7 billion people? National Geographic special with articles and images related to this concept.

Color Uncovered: Exploratorium exhibit focused on how we see color. Fun for a class starter.

Youth Group Games: Team builders galore! Check it out for descriptions of all kinds of team building experiences and ice breakers.

Pearltrees: Create mindmaps of your favorite webpages organized by theme and topic. Embed these maps on your website!

Cool Websites

WCSD Pacing Guides by Course: http://www.washoecountyschools.org/district/departments/public-policy-accountability-assessment/assessment/instructional-resources

NASA Math: http://spacemath.gsfc.nasa.gov/

Visual.ly: create cool infographics, somewhat like Prezi, but with some different tools embedded. www.visual.ly

GeoTrio: create a virtual tour using Google Maps. www.geotrio.com

Edufy: science based learning with different learning styles in mind. Uses STEM education. www.edufy.org

For the college bound: Campus explorer is a one stop shop to go through the process of applying and getting to college. Acceptly helps students get to their target college. www.campusexplorer.com and www.acceptly.com

eCove: You can download this as for your general education, special education, or administration needs. It allows you to monitor your classroom collecting real-time data.

Online Poster Creation: www.glogster.com or www.glogster.edu

Smart Student Response System: www.socrative.com

Possible portfolio option: www.jux.com

Free educational films: http://learning.snagfilms.com or snagfilms.com (This site features free documentaries.)

Math tutoring: www.motuto.com

Real-Time Classroom Updates to Parents: http://snappschool.com

10 Great History Lessons: http://zinnedproject.org/posts/12353

Math Skills in Science Lessons: http://go.hrw.com/hrw.nd/gohrw_rls1/pKeywordResults?HS5%20MW-TOC

Geometry and Algebra: www.geogebra.com

10 Minute Lesson Plans (Eric Jensen brain-based lesson planning tool): www.10minutelessonplans.com

Technology Apps and Sites (cont.)

Real-Time Classroom Updates to Parents: http://snappschool.com

Online Textbooks for Free!! (all subjects): www.ck12.org/flexbook/

For use of cell phones in the classroom:

Podcasting and phone lines: http://google.com/voice

Polling: http://polleverywhere.com, http://wiffiti.com, and http://textthemob.com

Mobile GPS: http://flagr.com, http://geograffiti.com

Web-based Informational Reading Systems

Awesome Stories: www.awesomestories.com

Discover Magazine: www.discovermagazine.com

Mathematics: www.mathops.com, www.learner.org/interactive/dailymath

The History Place: www.historyplace.com

Web-based Instructional Learning Systems

National Library of Virtual Manipulatives: http://nlvm.usu.edu/en/nav/vlibrary.html

Google Lit Trips: www.googlelittrips.org

Math Support: www.ixl.com

Sample Thematic Plan for a Four Year Cycle of High School

The Four Year Cycle			
Year One: *The Quality of Life*	*Year Two:* *An Expanding Universe*	*Year Three:* *Microworlds and Models*	*Year Four:* *Mapping, Documenting, Remembering, Dismembering*
Exploring Our Town Science, Technology, Society Social and Human Resources Ecosystems **Project class focus: Health**	Explorers: From Pre-Columbians to Columbus to Fremont Telescopes to Intergalactics: Aristotle to Galileo to ? Science Fact/ Science Fiction/Science Future Your Expanding Universe **Project class focus: Computer Literacy**	The Truckee Microcosm The Lives of a Cell The Lives of an Atom Utiopias and Dystopias: One Individual's Place **Project class focus: Media Literacy, Outdoor Field Experience**	History Far and Near; Personal and Global History of Language and Writing Knowledge Systems The Book of Myself: A Knowledgeable Autobiography **Project class focus: Film, Project Citizen**