Choice Theory

Objective – understand how Choice Theory can be used in the classroom, and develop your own opinions about this model.

Structure of tutorial:
- Presentation
- Interactive survey
- Fun group activity!

Dr William Glasser

- Born in 1925 in Cleveland, Ohio.
- Psychiatrist, author, founded The William Glasser Institute.
- Developed Reality Therapy and Choice Theory.
- www.wglasser.com
The Behaviour Management Model Spectrum

Management Theories
- Interventionist. E.g. B.F. Skinner, Lee Canter

Leadership Theories
- Interactionalist. E.g. Glasser, Bill Rogers, Rudolf Dreikurs

Non-directive Intervention Theories
- Non-interventionist. E.g. Thomas Gordon, Carl Rogers

Porter’s Continuum

Leadership Theories
- Teacher helps students learn to responsibly control their own lives.
- By providing students with choices, they will take on increasing responsibility for themselves.
- Help students recognise consequences of their behaviour.
- Guide changes in behaviour so better consequences result.
Leadership Theories

- Classroom is a democratic place – teacher and students share power.
- All parties should be involved in conflict resolution.
- Important to preserve teacher-student relationship.

Choice Theory

- Developed as an explanation of all human behaviour
- As human beings
  - All we do is behave
  - Each behaviour is the result of a choice
  - The choices we make are driven by 5 basic needs

Five Basic Needs

- Basic survival needs
- Need for belonging
- Need for power
- Need for freedom
- Need for fun
Basic Survival Need

- Physical and biological needs
  - Food
  - Air
  - Reproduction
  - Water
  - Warmth
  - Safety
  - Shelter
  - Sleep
  - Security
- If not met, our flight or fight response may be triggered
- If students are uncomfortable or feel they are at risk they cannot learn effectively

Need for Belonging

- Feeling loved
- Loving others
- Feeling unconditionally accepted
- If not met students may behave inappropriately or disruptively in an attention seeking attempt

Need for Power

- Feeling of control over own life
- Feelings of competency
- Feelings of achievement
- Students need recognition and self-efficacy in order to feel a sense of power over their own lives
Need for Freedom
- Having control over one's own life
- Being free from the control of others
- If not met students may rebel and create chaos in the classroom

Need for Fun
- Children are driven by it
- Everyone desires it
- If the classroom environment is fun, students are more likely to be willing, enthusiastic, motivated and engaged in the learning process

Choice Theory Overall
- The behaviour we display in any context is the behaviour that would provide the most satisfaction at that point in time
- Our five basic needs drive our choices, we choose to behave in a way that will satisfy one or more of these needs
- Essentially the only behaviour we can control is our own
Classroom Organization & Teaching Strategies
- Improve learning outcomes
- Competency based – setting students up for success!
- Shift from authoritarian to equalitarian approach

Classroom Organization & Teaching Strategies
- “The only persons behaviour I can control is my own”
- Respect and responsibility
- Classroom strategies

Classroom Organization & Teaching Strategies
- What we need to be asking ourselves as teachers?
- Wise choices
- Behavioural change in a positive atmosphere
Implementing Choice Theory

- Classroom rules
- Individual misbehaviour
- Cooperative learning

Implementing Choice Theory
- Classroom Rules-

1. As a class, determine what the goals of instruction will be.
2. Formulate rules that are instrumental in achieving the specified class goals.
3. Allow students to make suggestions, promoting a more enjoyable and productive learning environment.
4. Achieve commitment on goals, rules and procedures decided on.
5. Decide on consequences for violation of rules.

Implementing Control Theory
- Individual Misbehaviour-

1. Be personal
2. Ask the student to identify his/her problem behaviour.
3. Student to judge misbehaviour.
4. Plan a new behaviour.
5. Elicit a commitment.
6. Accept no excuses.
7. Don’t punish.
8. Never give up.
Implementing Choice Theory
- Cooperative Learning -
  - Teams of 3
  - Roles: recorder, checker, encourager
  - Meets basic needs → misbehaviour

Implementing Choice Theory
- Case Study -
  - Year 6 boy
  - Disruptive, becoming more and more distant
  - Hates school, and you
  - Used to being punished for misbehaviour

According to Glasser, what can be done?

Developing Personal Student Behaviour Management Plans
Classroom rules are essential.

Regular classroom meetings recommended.

What happens when the rules are broken?

Reality Therapy

Is the process of teaching an irresponsible person to face existing reality, to function responsibly, and as a result fulfill one’s personal needs for love and self-worth (Larrivee, 2005).
Individual Interventions

A Consultation Corner
- Small hidden area for private conferences with students for discussions regarding class work, as well as, positive or negative behaviour.

Glasser’s 5 Basic Needs
- Love
- Belonging
- Power
- Freedom and;
- Fun
Cognitive Thinking
- Children make decisions about their own learning,
- Evaluate the quality of learning,
- Reflect on their own feelings and behaviour
- Choices behind behaviour

Affective Development
A sense of:
- Belonging
- Power
- Freedom
- Fun

Glasser’s Seven Caring Habits
- Negotiating Differences
- Supporting
- Encouraging
- Respecting
- Listening
- Trusting
- Accepting
In spite of its international appeal, Choice Theory is not without its limitations.

1. Needs a coordinated effort (whole school approach); otherwise inconsistencies can arise if not properly implemented.

2. Involves a radical shift in thinking (i.e. from an interventionist to a more interactive approach of management); school community to undergo hours of professional development and training which can be laborious, time consuming.

3. It therefore has the potential to place an unrealistic view on teaching.
Limitations of Choice Theory

4. It might also be financially unviable to implement, particularly for schools with limited resources.
5. No 'quick fix' remedy.
6. No failures!? 

Q1. There should be no failing grades in school.

1. Agree
2. Don’t Agree
3. Undecided

Q2. All long-lasting psychological problems are relationship problems.

1. Agree
2. Don’t Agree
3. Undecided
Q3. The only person’s behaviour we can control is our own.

1. Agree
2. Don’t Agree
3. Undecided

Q4. Do you think we, as future teachers, have the responsibility to ensure that all of our students five needs are met?

1. Agree
2. Don’t Agree
3. To some degree

Q5. Would you consider using elements of Glasser’s Choice Theory in your classroom?

1. Yes! Definitely! Love it! – I am naming my first child Glasser!
2. Sure – I think Glasser has some good ideas and I will be trying them.
3. Maybe – I’m not convinced but I will give it a go.
4. No way Jose! I’ve never heard such a load of airy-fairy rubbish in my life!?
5. Abstain.
Tutorial Activity

Please move into groups according to the colour of your ticket.

Creating Class Rules

- Today we are going to be creating rules for our class.
- Students should have input into writing classroom rules – they will have a greater understanding of the rules, take ownership of them, and will be more likely to adhere to them.
- This is an important aspect of Choice Theory and other leadership theories.
- Rules should help students achieve their goals and reduce impediments to learning.

Your Task Today.....

We will create a set of classroom rules, using the seven caring habits as our guide:

- Listening
- Encouraging
- Trusting
- Supporting
- Accepting
- Respecting
- Negotiating differences

These are the seven caring habits, identified by Glasser, that will help build relationships. These seven behaviours will improve a classroom environment, making it a place where children want to be.
Step 1

- In your group, discuss these seven caring habits and come up with one rule that relates to each habit (write this on the back of the ticket).

Step 2

- Now split into groups according to the caring habit that is written on your ticket.
- Share your ideas and decide on a rule for your caring habit.
- Write this on your cardboard flower petal.
- We will assemble the flower on the wall.

*These will be our classroom rules!*
Seven Caring Habits

Supporting

Seven Caring Habits

Encouraging

Seven Caring Habits

Listening

Seven Caring Habits
Seven Caring Habits

- Encouraging
- Listening
- Accepting
- Trusting
- Respecting
- Negotiating Differences
- Supporting

Negotiating Differences

- Respecting
- Trusting
- Accepting
- Listening
- Encouraging
- Supporting